Census Data is Here

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T he long awaited decennial event has occurred. Census data for 2000 is now available. The data is used to draw boundaries for legislative districts, determine the number of representatives for House seats, apportion federal and state funds to communities, and provide information to business and community leaders on age, gender, race, housing, and social, economic, and financial characteristics of the population.

Census questions have evolved over the years to reflect changing lifestyles and emerging sensitivities among the people of the United States. The first census was conducted in 1790. The earliest censuses were simple tallies of individuals in each household. In the early 1800s questions concerning industry, citizenship, and disability were added. The mid-1800s saw the inclusion of questions concerning place of birth, education, and occupation. By the late 1800s, questions were asked regarding marital status, home ownership, and languages spoken in the home. Many more housing questions were added to the census in the 1900s along with questions regarding income, education, and work status. In 1980, a question was added to determine if there was a telephone in the home.

Concerned about burdening citizens with too many questions, the Census Bureau introduced modern sampling techniques in the 1940 census. For Census 2000, five out of every six households in the U.S. received the short form, six pages containing only the most basic demographic questions. One out of every six households received the long form, twelve pages asking the same questions as the short form plus 26 additional population questions and 20 additional housing questions.

Important changes

The Census 2000 featured two major changes. The first involves data concerning racial and Hispanic origins. The federal government considers race and Hispanic origin to be two separate and distinct concepts. The Office of Management and Budget defines Hispanic or Latino as "a person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race." Persons identifying themselves as Hispanic could also be Black, a Jamaican for instance. For the first time, persons with diverse backgrounds had the option of choosing more than one race category.

The second change was a question concerning grandparents as caregivers. This question reflects an important evolution in the changing family dynamics of the United States.

Data available

The Census Bureau to date has released Redistricting Data, which includes Total Population and Age 18+ by Race and Hispanic Origin. Data is available at various geographic levels including Borough/Census Area, (which the Census Bureau recognizes as county equivalents in Alaska), Census Tract, Block Group, Block, Senate and House District, and Voting Precinct. The Census Bureau will continue to release information over the next three years, as it becomes available. Housing Unit data was released in May 2001, followed by data that includes population, age, sex, race, household, group quarters, and some housing data.

For complete data files, visit the U.S. Census Bureau web site at http://www.census.gov. To be notified of upcoming releases, you can subscribe to the Census Product Update, a

biweekly e-mail newsletter. For easy access to data on population, housing, economic, and geographic information, and a user-friendly search engine, visit http://factfinder.census.gov. Some products that cannot be accessed on line, such as printed maps and CD-ROMs, can be ordered from the census site at http://www.census.gov/mp/www/censtore.html.

Information is also available on the State of Alaska's web site. Go to http://www.state.ak.us and click on the icon for Alaska 2000 Census & Redistricting Data. (If you use Windows Explorer you should be able to access the data files directly. If Netscape is your browser, you will need to accept the terms in order to download the information. The high-risk warnings you receive from Netscape are a result of the software used by the state to load these files, and are not an information gathering effort from your hard drive as suggested by the messages.)

Sample data

Exhibit 1, an alphabetic list of all boroughs and census areas in the state with population numbers by race, is a sample of the available data. The state as a whole is predominantly white. However, particular areas exhibit varying degrees of racial diversity. American Indian/Alaska Native populations predominate in seven areas: the Wade Hampton, Bethel, Yukon-Koyukuk, Nome, and Dillingham census areas, and the Northwest Arctic and Lake and Peninsula boroughs.

For more detailed census and related information, visit the Department of Labor and Workforce Development's Research and Analysis web site at http://www.labor.state.ak.us/research/cgin/cen.htm.

Alaska 2000 Redistricting Data 1

Borough/Census Area	Population Total	One Race Total	White	Black African-American	American Indian, Alaska Native	Asian	Native Hawaiian, Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races	Hispanic or Latino (of any race)
Aleutians East Borough	2,697	2,618	646	45	1,005	715	8	199	79	339
Aleutians West Census Area	5,465	5,276	2,188	165	1,145	1,344	34	400	189	573
Anchorage Municipality	260,283	244,708	188,009	15,199	18,941	14,433	2,423	5,703	15,575	14,799
Bethel Census Area	16,006	15,389	2,006	61	13,114	168	9	31	617	140
Bristol Bay Borough	1,258	1,228	661	7	550	3	6	1	30	7
Denali Borough	1,893	1,794	1,623	27	90	29	7	18	99	47
Dillingham Census Area	4,922	4,593	1,065	18	3,452	30	1	27	329	111
Fairbanks North Star Borough	82,840	78,375	64,439	4,843	5,714	1,720	245	1,414	4,465	3,440
Haines Borough	2,392	2,281	1,974	3	275	17	2	10	111	33
Juneau City and Borough	30,711	28,590	22,969	248	3,496	1,438	116	323	2,121	1,040
Kenai Peninsula Borough	49,691	47,764	42,841	229	3,713	480	86	415	1,927	1,087
Ketchikan Gateway Borough	14,070	13,326	10,460	70	2,109	603	22	62	744	372
Kodiak Island Borough	13,913	13,195	8,304	134	2,028	2,232	110	387	718	848
Lake and Peninsula Borough	1,823	1,696	342	1	1,340	4	3	6	127	21
Matanuska-Susitna Borough	59,322	56,610	51,938	411	3,264	414	74	509	2,712	1,485
Nome Census Area	9,196	8,809	1,777	35	6,915	62	2	18	387	92
North Slope Borough	7,385	6,901	1,262	53	5,050	437	62	37	484	175
Northwest Arctic Borough	7,208	6,941	888	15	5,944	64	4	26	267	57
Prince of Wales-Outer Ketchikan CA	6,146	5,707	3,265	9	2,377	22	3	31	439	107
Sitka City and Borough	8,835	8,170	6,052	28	1,641	335	31	83	665	290
Skagway-Hoonah-Angoon CA	3,436	3,257	1,998	5	1,203	13	5	33	179	97
Southeast Fairbanks Census Area	6,174	5,880	4,877	122	785	42	9	45	294	167
Valdez-Cordova Census Area	10,195	9,626	7,738	33	1,351	362	27	115	569	286
Wade Hampton Census Area	7,028	6,851	333	4	6,503	7	2	2	177	23
Wrangell-Petersburg Census Area	6,684	6,162	4,882	15	1,074	108	9	74	522	132
Yakutat City and Borough	808	744	407	1	320	10	6	0	64	6
Yukon-Koyukuk Census Area	6,551	6,295	1,590	6	4,644	24	3	28	256	78

Source: U.S. Census Bueau; prepared by Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development, Research and Analysis Section