

**CENTER FOR PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES RECOMMENDS**  
The best uses for the Current Population Survey and the American Community Survey

**CPS**

RELEASED SEPT. 16

*versus*

**ACS**

RELEASED SEPT. 18

**BEST FOR: National data and long-term trends**

**BEST FOR: Comparing states and sub-state areas of 65,000 or more**

**Key Facts: CPS Data**

- Data available for U.S. and States
- Sample size: 100,000 nationally
- Survey collected in February, March and April of each year; asks questions about the previous calendar year

**Health Insurance Data**

- Asks whether the person had health insurance at any time during 2013
- “Uninsured” = no health insurance for all of 2013
- “Insured” = had health insurance at any point in the 2013, even for a short period of time.
- Subcategories include:
  - *Private insurance* = employment-based coverage, union-based coverage, or insurance purchased independently from an insurance company.
  - *Government insurance* = purchased through public insurance programs (i.e. Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP), or military-based health care (i.e. TRICARE, VA, or other)
- Data over time: 1987-2012, 2013 (*2013 data are based on a revised survey and are not comparable to previous years*)

**Population, Income and Poverty Data**

- Official source of national poverty data
- Includes alternative poverty estimates that consider noncash benefits and tax credits

**Key Facts: ACS Data**

- Data for states, as well as geographic areas with populations of 65,000 or more (*including 50 Texas counties, all U.S. Congressional Districts, and all 25 Texas metro areas*)
- Sample size: 3 million nationally
- Survey collected throughout year; asks questions about the current point in time

**Health Insurance Data**

- Asks whether individuals had health insurance at the time the survey was completed
- “Uninsured” = didn’t have insurance at the time of survey
- “Insured” = had insurance at the time of survey
- Sub-Categories include:
  - *Private* = employment or union-based coverage, insurance purchased independently from an insurance company, or TRICARE or other active military health care coverage
  - *Public* = coverage through public insurance programs (i.e. Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP) or through the Dept. of Veterans Affairs)
- Data over time: 2008-2013

**Population, Income and Poverty Data**

- Population data = Avg. family size; poverty rates (by age, race/ethnicity, gender, educational attainment); median income (for families/non-family households and by race or age); housing costs as percentage of income
- Data available for the state + geographic areas w/ population of 65,000 or more, including 50 Texas counties, all U.S. Congressional Districts, and all 25 Texas metro areas
- Data over time: 2002-2013