

## Census of Population and Housing

Census 2000 data can be accessed online without coming to the library

- American FactFinder web site

### Census Basics

- Census is a Latin word meaning "to tax"
- Taxation is mandated by the US Constitution
  - All representatives and taxation are apportioned by relative number
  - Constitution declares how and when the people should be counted
- Conducted every 10 years
- 2 counts are done concurrently (people and dwellings)
- Census is very expensive and time consuming to conduct (1990 census cost \$2.6 billion)

### History

- 1790 - 1<sup>st</sup> census. No census bureau. Conducted by US Marshals on horseback. Consisted of 6 questions (#people, name, #free white males over 16, # women, # children, # slaves)
- 1850 - 1<sup>st</sup> time the government asked about income, social statistics collected
- 1870 - public maps, diagrams, and charts were developed
- 1940 - sampling technique used for the 1<sup>st</sup> time
- 1950 - census tabulated by computers for the 1<sup>st</sup> time
- 1960 - US Post Office used for the 1<sup>st</sup> time in data collection - "self-enumeration"
- 1970 - 1<sup>st</sup> time data was published in "census blocks"
- 1990 - data available at block level for the entire US

### How is Census Conducted?

Census 2000 - questionnaires were sent in the mail

- hand-delivered to rural areas or areas without clear addresses
- dorms, rest homes, trailer parks etc. were included

Deadline was established for the return of the census forms

- if deadline was missed, a census worker would call

2 forms were used

- some questions were answered by everyone (short form)
- some questions were answered by just a small percentage (sample items)
- Short Form measured the general population characteristics
- Sample items measured social and economic characteristics

Census records are confidential

- Census records are not made available for public view until 72 years after collection
- 1920 census data is the latest available for viewing by the general public. It is located in the National Archives.

### How is Census Data Used?

Data from Census 2000 had to be given to the President of the US by 6/1/00 so that decisions could be made about # seats in the House of Representatives and certain federal funding. It is also used for:

- Grant Applications and justifying needs for grants
  - School districts (example: programs for Hispanics)
  - Non-profit organizations and local government
- Businesses
  - Marketing and assessing needs for new products and sites for retail
- Realtors - study the development of an area
- Academics - example economics or geography departments
- Individuals - genealogical research

### Census Geography

Two categories:

- Governmental unit - states, places, cities, political entities
- Census Block Tracts - statistical units created by Census Bureau
  - Block - smallest entity