Current Population Survey

• Sponsor: Bureau of Labor Statistics
• Collector: Census Bureau
• Purpose: Monthly Data for Analysis of Labor Market Conditions
  – CPS is **Household** survey measuring unemployment rate
  – “serves as part of model-based estimates for individual states and other geographic areas”
Secondary Purpose

• Supplemental studies on other topics
• Census Bureau partners with other federal agencies to gather data on:
  – Health Insurance Coverage
  – Food Security
  – Computer Usage
  – Fertility and Childbearing
Advantages of the CPS

• Timeliness – Quick Turnaround
• Long History
• Expert Interviewers
• Topical Modules

The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a monthly survey of households conducted by the Bureau of Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It provides a comprehensive body of data on the labor force, employment, unemployment, persons not in the labor force, hours of work, earnings, and other demographic and labor force characteristics.

For Your Information

» IMPORTANT Notice for missing latest number box
» IMPORTANT Changes to data collected on unemployment duration
» IMPORTANT Changes to the household survey "A" tables of the Employment Situation News Release
» Issues in Labor Statistics: Sizing up the 2007-09 recession: comparing two key labor market indicators with earlier downturns (PDF), December 2010
» Issues in Labor Statistics: Ranks of those unemployed for a year or more up sharply (PDF), October 2010

Next Release: March 4, 2011

The Employment Situation for February 2011 is scheduled to be released on March 4, 2011, at 8:30 A.M. Eastern Time.
Current Population Survey (CPS)
A joint effort between the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau

The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a monthly survey of about 50,000 households conducted by the Bureau of the Census for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The survey has been conducted for more than 50 years.

The CPS is the primary source of information on the labor force characteristics of the U.S. population. The sample is scientifically selected to represent the civilian noninstitutional population. Respondents are interviewed to obtain information about the employment status of each member of the household 15 years of age and older. However, published data focus on those ages 16 and over. The sample provides estimates for the nation as a whole and serves as part of model-based estimates for individual states and other geographic areas.

Estimates obtained from the CPS include employment, unemployment, earnings, hours of work, and other indicators. They are available by a variety of demographic characteristics including age, sex, race, marital status, and educational attainment. They are also available by occupation, industry, and class of worker. Supplemental questions to produce estimates on a variety of topics including school enrollment, income, previous work experience, health, employee benefits, and work schedules are also often added to the regular CPS questionnaire.

CPS data are used by government policymakers and legislators as important indicators of our nation’s economic situation and for planning and evaluating many government programs. They are also used by the press, students, academics, and the general public.
CPS: Target Population

- US Residents
- Civilian
- Non-Institutional
CPS: Sampling Frame

- National household frame based on the most recent Census of Population and Housing
- Coverage during the decade augmented by lists of building permits
CPS: Design of the Sample

- Monthly Sample Size of 72,000 addresses
- Sample expanded in 2001 to meet needs of SCHIP
- State based sample design
- 1st Stage - 754 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs) chosen from US total of 2,007
- 2nd Stage - Clusters of 4 HUs selected
- 60,000 HUs eligible (occupied, usual residence)
- Yields 110,000 individuals aged 16+
- Household Rotation 4 months in – 4 out – 4 in
CPS: ASEC (March) Items

- Demographic Characteristics
- Usual Monthly Labor Force Status
- Work Experience
- Income
- Noncash Benefits
- Migration
- Health Insurance
CPS: Data Collection

- Personal Interview (CAPI) in Months 1 and 5
- Telephone Interview (CATI) in Months 2-4 and 6-8
- Questions are asked of the first in-scope adult encountered in the household
- The respondent provides proxy responses for all other in-scope residents of the household
Non-Response

• Non-Interview Households
  – 7-8 % of Sample

• Item Non-Response
  – 0.5 % - household relationships
  – 2.0 % - demographic characteristics
  – 2.4 % - labor force status
  – 10.0 % - industry and occupation
  – 18.5 % - earnings
Census Bureau Imputation Procedures:

- Relational Imputation
- Longitudinal Edit
- Hot Deck Allocation Procedure
“Hot Deck” Allocation

Labor Force Status

• Employed
• Unemployed
• Not in the Labor Force
Weighting Procedures

• First-stage ratio adjustment
• Differential selection probabilities
• Adjust for nonresponse
• Reduce variance
First-Stage Ratio Adjustment

Stratum Population Total from Frame

\[ \frac{\text{Stratum Population Total from Frame}}{\text{(Pop of Selected PSU)}} \]

Probability of Selecting PSU
### First-Stage Ratio Adjustment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pop Total</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
<td>2,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop PSU</td>
<td>50,000</td>
<td>65,000</td>
<td>40,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob Select</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.025</td>
<td>0.025</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>0.77</td>
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</table>
## Selection Weight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>199,500,000</th>
<th>24,937,500</th>
<th>174,562,500</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pop Total</td>
<td>125,000</td>
<td>62,500</td>
<td>62,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pop PSU</td>
<td>1/1,596</td>
<td>1/399</td>
<td>1/2,793</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prob Select</td>
<td>1,596</td>
<td>399 or 1</td>
<td>2,793 or 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Nonresponse Weight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
<th>Nonresponse Adjustment Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12-44</td>
<td>31,250</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45+</td>
<td>31,250</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Tallying Weights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>12-44</th>
<th>45+</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Latino 12-44</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino 45+</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Latino 12-44</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Latino 45+</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Poststratification Weight

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Post-Strat Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>0.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Final Weight

First-Stage Ratio Adjustment Weight
X
Selection Weight
X
Nonresponse Weight
X
Poststratification Weight
Poststratification Controls

For the CPS they are:

- Census Bureau estimates of state population by:
  - Age
  - Sex
  - Race
  - Hispanic Origin
Which Weight?

- Person
- Family
- Household
Sample Size

- Sample size is “mandated” by Congress
- At 6 % National Unemployment Rate
- +/- 0.2 % must be significant
PUF / IUF

- All Months and Topics
- All Records
- State/MSA
- Top Coding
- Collapsed Categories
- No Administrative

- ASEC (March) Only
- All Records
- Tract
- Full Distribution
- Full Distribution
- Details of Collection
Resources

- Census Bureau
- BLS
- IPUMS
- ICPSR
- NBER
- Census Bureau / CES
IPUMS-CPS is a project dedicated to integrating and disseminating data from the Current Population Survey. Its goals are to:

- Collect and preserve data and documentation
- Harmonize data to be compatible over time and with IPUMS-USA
- Disseminate the data absolutely free!

Use it for GOOD -- never for EVIL
Current Population Survey Series

Investigator: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Summary

The Current Population Survey (CPS) is a household sample survey conducted monthly by the Census Bureau to provide estimates of employment, unemployment, and other characteristics of the general labor force, estimates of the population as a whole, and estimates of various subgroups in the population. The March survey, Annual Social and Economic (ASEC)...(more)

What Can I Do With This Collection?

- Explore
  - View related literature
  - View studies in the series
- Variables:
  - List all variables in this series
  - Search the variables in this series
- Receive Notification
  Use any of the notification links to add this series to your RSS feed; you will then receive notification if a new study is released in the series, or a study in the series is substantively updated.
NBER CPS Supplements

CPS Supplement Files at NBER

This page contains an index to the NBER collection of Census/BLS format micro data files from the Current Population Survey. The collection includes many of the most interesting monthly surveys, but is not intended to be comprehensive. (Basic monthly data files are also available online.) Additions and replacements are subject to the needs of the NBER research program.

A housing unit in the CPS is interviewed for four consecutive months and then dropped out of the sample for the next eight months and is brought back in the following four months. So, when the system has been in operation for a full year, 4 of the 8 rotation groups will have been in the survey for the same month, 1 year ago. Matching information and Stata do files from NBER Working Paper T0247 by B. Madrian and L. J. Lefgren are available for March-to-March matches and can be modified for use in other matches. Technical Paper 63 contains more information about Design and Methodology.

The following discussion assumes that you are familiar with the use of CPS tapes in other environments and deals only with the NBER specific information. You will certainly have to be familiar with a serious statistical package or programming language to make use of these files.

All the CPS data files are ASCII files compressed with the Unix compress command. You can decompress them with either the standard Unix uncompress command, DOS gzip, or Winzip. To check your ability to uncompress these files, download the small file compress.zip. This files give an example of how to read in .Z and .zip ASCII files into SAS for UNIX without decompressing the files. The compressed files are 15-20 Mb, and they expand to about 150-200 Mb.

SAS, SPSS, and Stata data definition file statements are available for some files. To download files in Internet Explorer, right click on them and select 'Save Target As...'. If the pdf documents appear to be all blank pages or your screen just blinks, get the latest Acrobat Reader at www.abobe.com.

All of the data files use MS-DOS line ending conventions. That is, instead of just a line feed after each line (the Unix convention) there is a carriage return and a line feed (the DOS convention). This should not disturb any Unix programs, and makes the files more accessible to DOS software. It does change the record length for any program using fixed length records. Select here for more information, including a table listing the record length and the name of any supplements that may be included with the files.

Updates and changes.
CPS
Current Population Survey March Supplement

Description
The Annual Demographic Survey or March CPS supplement is the primary source of detailed information on income and work experience in the United States. Numerous publications based on this survey are issued each year by the Bureaus of Labor Statistics and Census. A public-use microdata file is available for private researchers, who also produce many academic and policy-related documents based on these data. The Annual Demographic Survey is used to generate the annual Population Profile of the United States, reports on geographical mobility and educational attainment, and detailed analysis of money income and poverty status. The labor force and work experience data from this survey are used to profile the U.S. labor market and to make employment projections. To allow for the same type of in-depth analysis of hispanics, additional hispanic sample units are added to the basic CPS sample in March each year. Additional weighting is also performed so that estimates can be made for households and families, in addition to persons.

Observations
The total sample size is approximately 72,000 assigned households per month located in 754 primary sampling units.

Coverage
Every year from 1967 through 2008