

Notice for ACS 5-year Migration Flows Break in Series

Beginning with the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year 2017-2021 estimates, The U.S. Census Bureau's annual ACS 5-year migration flow data product will transition to a new flow format, linking recent movers' previous residence state to their current residence county. This notice summarizes the series break in the 5-year ACS migration flows table package.

The U.S. Census Bureau has released a supplemental set of ACS-based migration flow tables to accompany the standard 5-year ACS data release for each data year beginning with the ACS 5-year 2005-2009 estimates. This is a collection of tables that provides distributions of origin-to-destination pairs for recent movers. While this table package is derived from standard ACS 5-year data, it is not part of the standard annual ACS data release. It is a special tabulation that has varied in geographic summary levels across years in accordance with evolving disclosure protection requirements.

Beginning with the ACS 5-year 2009-2013 estimates, the migration flows table package has included origin-to-destination pairs for three types of geographic combinations, including county-to-county, county/minor civil division (MCD)-to-county/MCD, and metropolitan statistical area (MSA)-to-metropolitan statistics area (MSA) migration flow estimates. These geographic combinations were produced annually up to and including the release of the ACS 5-year 2016-2020 dataset. Beginning with the ACS 5-year 2017-2021 dataset, the release of these geographic flow combinations will be discontinued, as will the Census Flows Mapper data visualization tool associated with the county-to-county flows.

Migration flows associated with the ACS 5-year 2017-2021 dataset will be the first in a new migration table package series that includes state-to-county flows. Estimates of migration flows between these two geographies will be organized by where movers lived at the time of interview (current county residence) and the specific state from which they moved, forming a state-to-county migration flow. This break in series and transition away from previously used geographic combinations is the result of decisions made by the U.S. Census Bureau's Disclosure Review Board regarding disclosure avoidance. Additional data quality concerns also factored into this decision.

Prior years of 5-year ACS migration flows will remain available in tabular form on the U.S. Census Bureau's migration topic page. The Census Flows Mapper tool will be discontinued in calendar year 2024.

Note that the U.S. Census Bureau has also produced annual state-to-state migration flows based on the ACS 1-year data. The 1-year state-level migration flows are not affected by this break in series and will continue to be published annually after each standard ACS 1-year data release.