

# Demographic Data for Congress: CRS

Congressional Research Service

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## About CRS

- Part of the Library of Congress
- Established in 1914 as the Legislative Reference Service
- Became CRS under the Legislative Reorganization Act of 1970

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## CRS, continued

- Is required to be nonpartisan, objective
- Works only for Congress—Members, committees, congressional staff—and work is confidential
- Emphasizes analytical work and support to congressional committees
- Responds to more than 500,000 requests yearly from all Members and committees

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## CRS, continued

- Provides research, analysis, and information in reports, memoranda, briefings, and seminars, also quick-turnaround responses by email and phone
- Has roughly 600 employees, including about 400 analysts, attorneys, and information professionals

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Five research divisions in CRS

- American Law
- Domestic Social Policy
- Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade
- Government and Finance
- Resources, Science, and Industry

Plus a Knowledge Services Group

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Scope of these divisions indicates breadth of congressional interests

And areas where demographic data can be useful

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Such as for

- Knowing the context in which policies and programs operate
- Developing new legislation
- Conducting oversight
- Staying updated about district and state characteristics
- Interacting with local and state officials
- Assisting constituents

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## Examples of data

- Apportionment and redistricting data (from the decennial census)
- Demographic, social, economic, housing, and business profiles of congressional districts (My Congressional District, using data from the ACS and *County Business Patterns*)



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## Examples, continued

- Demographic, educational, employment, and income profiles, English proficiency, citizenship status, and geographic distribution of the U.S. foreign-born population (ACS and CPS data, *Historical Statistics of the United States*)

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## Examples, continued

- Data on the well-being of veterans in states and localities, including poverty status and whether veterans own or rent their housing (ACS)
- Information about the economic status of families in which grandparents are the primary caregivers of children, to gauge the impact of possible policy proposals on these families (CPS)

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## Examples, continued

- Data on the U.S. travel and tourism industry (BEA's U.S. Travel and Tourism accounts)
- Data on housing vacancies, home ownership, (decennial census, CPS, Housing Vacancy Survey)
- Farm operators/owners by race (African American and American Indian) and Hispanic/Latino ethnicity (Census of Agriculture)

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## Examples, continued

- Agricultural commodities and values, by congressional district (Census of Agriculture)
- Population thresholds for census blocks, to determine eligibility for various rural development programs (decennial census)
- Use of MSA and urban area criteria to determine whether geographic areas are “rural” (ACS, decennial census, OMB designations)

# Demographic Data for Congress: CRS

And, CRS cites for Congress books, journal articles, other publications that use/analyze demographic data