

DIRECTIONS FOR USING AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY DATA TO IDENTIFY HIGH-POVERTY AREAS IN URBAN OR RURAL AREAS

Posted: April 30, 2020

The following directions are based on guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Section 1: Determining if an Individual Lives in a High-Poverty Area Based on Their County of Residence

Use the following steps to determine if an individual's county of residence has a poverty rate of 25 percent or above:

- Go to [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov) or click on <https://www.census.gov>.
- In the middle of the page, go to **Quick Facts: Access Local Data** and click on the arrow.
- On the top of the page that comes up type in the name of the individual's county of residence and then click on the county from the list provided of places with the same name. Scroll down near the bottom of the table to **Income and Poverty** and it will give you the county's poverty rate.

If the county poverty rate is 25 percent or above, the individual resides in a high-poverty area.

Section 2: Determining if an Individual Lives in a High-Poverty Area Based on Their Street Address

There are two steps to this—first determining the Census tract in which the street address is located, and second determining the poverty rate of the Census tract.

1) Use the following steps to determine the Census tract in which the street address is located:

- Go to <https://geocoding.geo.census.gov/geocoder/geographies/address?form>. There will be two choices: **Find Locations Using...** and **Find Geographies Using...** Click on the second option to Find Geographies.
- Type in the street address, city, and state. You don't need to type in the zip code. Then click on Find.
- A list of information come up giving geographic identifiers first by state, then by Census block, then by County, then by Census Tract. Scroll down near to bottom of the page to Census Tract. In the middle of the information for Census tracts there will be listed **Name**. This will give the Census tract number of the street address.

2) Use the following steps to determine the poverty rate of the Census tract:

- Go to the American Community Survey home page by clicking on <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.

- On the right-side menu on the American Community Survey home page click the fourth option **Data**.
- When the Data page comes up, in the middle column in the middle of the page under Data Tables and Tools click on **Subject Tables**.
- On the top right-hand corner of the page in the Search Box type in **S1701**.
- The Table Title will come up as "Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months" and click on the table title **Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months**.
- At the top of the page it will say 2018: ACS 1-Year Estimates. Click on that and a dropdown list of tables will come up. Click on **2018: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables**. You need 5-year data because 1-year data will have too small of a sample size to show data on Census tracts. Then right next to where you have selected the 2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates click on CUSTOMIZE TABLE.
- After you have clicked on CUSTOMIZE TABLE you will be taken to a page with several options across the top of the page. Click on **Geographies**.
- After you click on Geographies you will be taken to a page with a list of options on the left of the page, including Nation, Region, Division, State, County, and Tract. Click on **Tract**.
- Then there is a dropdown menu for you to select your state, and after you have done that there is a dropdown menu for you to select your county, and then a dropdown menu of the various Census tract numbers in the county. Select the Census Tract number you have found for the street address. Keep clicking on the Census Tract number until you see that it registers at the bottom page as Selected Geographies. You have to keep clicking on it until it shows up there.
- After your Census tract shows up under Selected Geographies at the bottom of the page, go up to the top of the page and click on the data set you selected 2018: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables. A table will show up showing the total population of the Census tract, the population in poverty, and the poverty rate.

Section 3: Using Census Data to Identify Contiguous High-Poverty Areas in Advance

Local WDBs and service providers can use Census data to map out in advance entire neighborhoods or large sections of a city or county that meet the 25 percent poverty rate threshold. In most cases local WDBs serving a city will not need to map out every Census tract within the city's border as staff are already familiar with where their high-poverty areas are located. Rural counties that do not meet the 25 percent poverty threshold can also map out Census tracts within the county that meet the threshold.

Use the following steps to identify contiguous high-poverty areas in advance:

- 1) Go to the American Community Survey home page by clicking on <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs>.

- 2) On the right-side menu of the American Community Survey home page, click the fourth option **Data**.
- 3) When the Data page comes up in the middle column in the middle of the page under Data Tables and Tools click on **Subject Tables**.
- 4) On the top right-hand corner of the page in the Search Box type in **S1701**.
- 5) The Table Title will come up as Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months. Click on the table title **Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months**.
- 6) At the top of the page it will say 2018: ACS 1-Year Estimates. Click on that and a dropdown list of tables will come up. Click on **2018: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables**. You need 5-year data because 1-year data will have too small of a sample size to show data on Census tracts.
- 7) Look at the left side of the page and there will be four options (ALL, TABLES, MAPS, PAGES). Click on **MAPS**.
- 8) A map of the continental United States will come up, but you can use **Minus Toggle Switch** at the bottom right hand corner of the map to reduce the magnification of the map. Find your state and click on it and you will get an option to either select the state or get a profile of the state. Click on **Select** right below the name of the state. Your state will now be highlighted on the map. Note: Sometimes the map of the United States will not fully load, and you will need to go back to the TABLES page and select **MAPS** again and the map will then fully load.
- 9) In the exact middle of the very top of the page click on the word **State**, and this will give you a list of different geographic area classifications. Click on the sixth item **County**. The map will then show the counties in your state. You can just click on your county based on its shape, but if you need to see the names of the county you will need to use the **Plus Toggle Switch** to increase the magnification of the map. Once you have clicked on your county, you will be given the option to either select it or get its profile. Click on **Select** right below the name of the county. Your county will now be highlighted on the map.
- 10) Rural areas can skip this step, but urban areas should go back to the exact middle of the very top of the page and the word County now should be there. Click on the word **County** and this time click on the eighth item **Place**. You see the name or shape of your city within your county. Click on your city's shape or name and then click on **Select**. Your city will now be highlighted on the map.
- 11) Once rural areas have their county highlighted and urban areas have their city highlighted, go back to the top of the age and click on the word **County** for rural areas or the word **City** for urban areas. When the list of geographic classifications come up, scroll down about 25 items and click on **Census tract**.

12) The map will now show Census tract boundaries, but not the Census tract numbers, so you will need to use the **Plus Toggle Switch** to increase the magnification of the map until you can see all the Census tract numbers.

13) Now you are ready to identify Census tracts within your city or county to make up your target area. Use your cursor as the pointer and click on each Census tract that you want to add and then click on **Select** for the Census tract. The first time that you click on a Census tract it will increase the magnification of the map, so you may need to use the **Minus Toggle Switch** to adjust the magnification of the map.

14) If you click on Census tracts and nothing happens and you are not given an option of selecting them, go back and make sure that you have selected the 5-year data set, as the sample size in the 1-year data is not sufficient to provide Census data.

15) As you select the Census tracts they will appear as different colors on the map depending on their population. Don't worry about that. Some Census tracts will have a light gray color if they have low populations. Don't worry about that either.

16) After you have selected all the Census tracts that you want, go to the top of left side of the page and click on **TABLES**.

17) A table will come up showing the Total Population, the Number in Poverty, and the Poverty Rate. Currently, the data is not loading properly and at first only the overall U.S. data will load and you will not be able to scroll any further to the right to see anything else. Go to the very top of the page and Click on **2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables** and you will be given the option to select other data sets. Click on **2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables**, and the 2017 Census tract data should now load on to the table. Then you can go back to the top of the page and click on **2017 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables** and you will be given the option of selecting other data sets and you can re-select **2018 ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables** and the 2018 data will now properly load on the table.

18) We are only interested in the top row of the table which shows the total population and the total number in poverty. Use the right directional arrow on your keyboard to scroll to the right to see all of the Census tracts that you selected. Note that in addition to the census tracts chosen in steps 13-16, the table also displays state, county, and city level poverty data.

19) You can now make a handwritten table in a notebook which you can later copy into Excel. Put three columns in your table; the Census tract number, the Total Population in the Census tract, and the Number in Poverty in the Census tract. You do not need to, but you may want to add a fourth column showing the percentage in poverty in the Census tract. Individual Census tracts can have a poverty rate of below 25 percent as long as the overall poverty rate of the target area is 25 percent or above, but it may be useful to you later to know the poverty rate of each tract if you need to go back and remove some Census tracts with low poverty rates to get to a poverty rate for the entire target area of 25 percent or above.

20) After you have copied your table into Excel, add up the Total Population and the Population in in Poverty columns, and divide the Population in Poverty by the Total Population. If the poverty rate of the combined Census tracts is 25 percent or above, you are done. Save your work at this point as described in step 22. Also, you may wish to go back to the left side of the page and click on MAPS to take you back to the map of your city to do a Print Screen of the map, which you may need later as you implement your project.

21) If the poverty rate of the combined Census tracts is below 25 percent, you can go back to the left side of the page and click on **MAPS**, which will take you back to the map of your city with the selected Census tracts to add or delete Census tracts. You can delete Census tracts with low poverty rates by clicking on the tract and then clicking on **De-Select**. You can go back and forth from the map to the table until you get a target area with an overall poverty rate of 25 percent or above.

22) To save your work, either save the table you were working on or save the map, as either one will take you back to the other. You can also save both. To save the table or the map, click and save the URL at the top of the page and then copy it using the Clipboard **Paste** option onto a Word document. The URL will be too long to past into an e-mail, so that is why you need to paste it into a Word document and then save and e-mail the document to yourself. When you are saving the URL make sure that by clicking on the URL you are copying the entire URL at one time. When you are ready to go back to work on the table or map just click on the URL that you have saved.

Please contact DETWIOAnalysts@dwd.wisconsin.gov for assistance with these directions.