

Summary Data or Micro Data

Depending on the content of your course and the type of analysis you would like your students to perform, you will need to make a decision on the type of data to use in your module. American Community Survey and Census data come in two main formats: summary data and micro data.

Summary Data

Summary data are usually files that have geography-level data. They are tabulated results that typically describe the frequency or percentage of a certain attribute within a geography. For example, the percentage of people living below the poverty line in Michigan or the number of people with graduate or professional degrees in Los Alamos County, New Mexico both describe a characteristic summarized for a geography.

- [American FactFinder](#)
- [Census Reporter](#)
- [Social Explorer](#)
- [NHGIS](#) (and most GIS data)
- Most other web-based tools

Micro Data

Micro data are files that have respondent-level data. They allow for much more sophisticated analyses and the ability to produce custom tables. However, these data do not offer the geographic resolution that the summary data provide.

- [Public Use Microdata Sample](#) (PUMS) files
- [IPUMS](#) and [IPUMS Online Analysis \(SDA\)](#)
- [WebCHIP](#)
- [DataFerrett](#)

ACS 2016 1-year

Table universe: Total Bachelor's Degree Majors Tallied for People 25 Years and Over With a Bachelor's Degree Attainment

Column	→	Alabama	Alaska
Science and Engineering		±	±
Computers, Mathematics and Statistics		4.1% ±0.3%	3% ±0.6%
Biological, Agricultural, and Environmental:		5.6% ±0.4%	10.5% ±1.3%
Physical and Related Sciences		2.9% ±0.3%	4.8% ±0.9%
Psychology		4% ±0.4%	4.9% ±0.8%
Social Sciences		5% ±0.4%	8.1% ±1.2%
Engineering		7.6% ±0.5%	6.6% ±1%
Multidisciplinary Studies		0.5% ±0.1%	0.7% ±0.3%
Science and Engineering Related Fields		10.5% ±0.5%	10.3% ±1.2%
Business		22.9% ±0.8%	14.1% ±1.4%
Education		16.3% ±0.7%	12.9% ±1.2%

Source: CensusReporter.org - Table B15012 for states

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Source: ACS 2016 1-year, PUMS file (csv format)
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