

Central Texas Economy in Perspective

By Beverly Kerr, Chamber Vice President of Research
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Last week brought the release of 2009 estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS). While another Census program, Population Estimates, provides annual counts of population by age, sex, and race and Hispanic origin for states, metros, and counties, the ACS is the source for data on the demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics of the population. Most geographic areas with a population of 65,000 will have new data annually in the ACS.* The ACS has been available since 2002 and the data it provides corresponds to what had previously been collected in the Decennial Census' long form questionnaire.

Here's a sampling of findings from the 2009 ACS for the 5-county Austin Metropolitan Statistical Area:

- Population is estimated at 1,705,075 and households at 614,047.
- Median age is 32.4 years, compared to 36.8 years nationally.
- The population over 65 is estimated at 134,124 or 7.9%, compared to 12.9% nationally.
- The Hispanic population is 30.7% compared to 15.8% nationally.
- The percent of the population aged 25 and over with a bachelor's degree or higher is 38.7%, compared to 27.9% nationally.

Educational Attainment 2009: Top 10 for Percent with at least a Bachelor's Degree among 50 Largest Metros

	Population 25 years & over	Percent of population with at least a			Rank: % with at least a bachelor's degree
		H.S. diploma or equivalent	Bachelor's degree	Graduate degree	
Washington MSA	3,625,144	90.0%	47.3%	22.6%	1
San Francisco MSA	3,028,503	86.9	43.5	16.9	2
San Jose MSA	1,226,606	85.4	43.3	18.6	3
Raleigh MSA	728,019	89.4	42.2	13.3	4
Boston MSA	3,132,664	90.6	42.2	18.3	5
Austin MSA	1,096,143	86.6	38.7	13.1	6
Denver MSA	1,698,221	88.8	37.6	12.9	7
Minneapolis MSA	2,164,041	92.5	37.6	12.4	8
Seattle MSA	2,320,986	91.3	37.4	13.0	9
New York MSA	12,948,724	84.3	35.6	14.7	10
United States	—	85.3	27.9	10.3	—

- The population enrolled in college or graduate school is 148,329 or 31.2%, compared to 27.9% nationally.
- The percent of the population 16 years and over in the labor force is 72.7%, compared to 65.3% nationally.
- Management and professional occupations account for 42.1% of jobs held by the civilian employed population, compared to 35.7% nationally.
- The self-employed total 93,043, or 10.6% of the civilian employed population, compared to 10.0% nationally.
- Migrants in 2009 total 116,234 or 6.9% of the population aged one year and over in the metro area, compared to 4.5% for all U.S. metros.

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Geographic Mobility in 2009: Population 1 Year & Over Living in a Metropolitan Area Top 10 for In-Migrants among 50 Largest Metros

	Total population 1 year & over	Same house 1 year ago	Different house 1 year ago			Moved from a different metro or non-metro area in the U.S. or abroad	
			Same metro	Elsewhere in the U.S.	Abroad	Total	Percent
Austin	1,677,011	1,315,514	245,263	103,682	12,552	116,234	6.9%
Raleigh	1,110,887	943,368	95,228	64,154	8,137	72,291	6.5
Virginia Beach	1,652,424	1,343,962	202,776	92,106	13,580	105,686	6.4
Salt Lake City	1,111,620	938,089	111,882	52,118	9,531	61,649	5.5
Riverside	4,083,820	3,283,039	579,285	198,946	22,550	221,496	5.4
Oklahoma City	1,207,827	968,818	174,388	59,476	5,145	64,621	5.4
San Diego	3,009,272	2,498,268	354,861	122,530	33,613	156,143	5.2
Las Vegas	1,875,169	1,457,609	320,879	83,774	12,907	96,681	5.2
Washington	5,399,439	4,569,830	553,856	216,627	59,126	275,753	5.1
Sacramento	2,101,500	1,653,524	341,202	96,618	10,156	106,774	5.1

- The mean travel time to work is 24.9 minutes, compared to 25.1 minutes nationally.
- The percent driving alone to work is about the same as nationally, 76.0% vs. 76.1% nationally. Those commuting to work via public transit is only 2.8%, compared to 5.0% nationally, but more work at home, 5.9%, compared to the 4.3% nationally.
- Median household income is \$56,218 compared to \$50,221 nationally.
- Median earnings for a male full-time, year-round worker is \$44,881, 1.3% below the national earnings. Median earnings for a female full-time, year-round worker is \$38,025, 7.0% above the national earnings.
- Health insurance covers 79.5% of the civilian noninstitutional population, compared to 84.9% nationally.
- Of the 385,985 family households, 9.5% have incomes below the poverty level, compared to 10.5% nationally; and 14.8% of the 198,733 family households with own children under 18 years are in poverty, compared to 16.6% nationally.
- The median value of an owner-occupied home is \$189,300 compared to \$185,200 nationally. Renters pay a median rent of \$909, compared to \$842 nationally.
- Foreign-born total 249,240, or 14.6%, compared to 12.5% nationally. A larger portion of these are not naturalized (71.3%) compared to the nation (56.3%).

The Census Bureau makes the ACS data available through its American FactFinder query system. There is an array of means in FactFinder to drill into what you want, whether you want a diverse range of data for one geographic area, or limited set of variables for a large number of geographies. Users usually need to experiment a bit to find the most expedient way to download the data they need. A basic set of data for each geographic area is presented in FactFinder's 4-table "Data Profile." I've assembled the data from each of the Data Profiles for the Austin MSA, Texas, the U.S., as well as the metro counties (Bastrop, Hays, Travis, and Williamson) and the metro cities (Austin and Round Rock) available in the 1-year estimates.

* If you'd like my Excel file as a starter for delving into the ACS, [email me](#).

**Smaller geographic areas are also covered by the ACS, but due to sample size issues, estimates for these areas are for 3-year or 5-year spans, rather than 1-year estimates.*

Courtesy of JB Goodwin