

Request for Applications

Analyzing Poverty and Socioeconomic Trends Using the American Community Survey (ACS) June 23 to 27, 2008

**A week-long workshop directed by Reynolds Farley and
sponsored by the National Poverty Center**

**Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan**

DEADLINE for receipt of applications: February 29, 2008

The National Poverty Center at the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy invites applications for participants in a five-day workshop that will take place in Ann Arbor during the last week of June, 2008. Participants will be provided with training in the use of the micro-data from the Census Bureau's annual American Community Survey (ACS) to understand social and economic issues affecting low-income populations and carry out their own analyses. For those unfamiliar with the ACS, please see description at the end of this document.*

The workshop will be directed by Reynolds Farley, the Dudley Duncan Professor Emeritus at the Population Studies Center in the Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, in collaboration with his colleagues: Albert Anderson and Lisa Neidert. There will also be presentations by nationally recognized poverty researchers, including some whose research is based upon ACS data. The National Poverty Center will pay the costs of travel, lodging, and meals for participants.

Aims for this workshop include the following:

- ❑ Familiarize participants with the concepts used by the Census Bureau and the way the Bureau codes and tabulates information, including measures of earnings, household income, poverty, race, ethnicity, labor force status, and migration. The workshop will provide practical tips for handling the complex sample design associated with the ACS sample.
- ❑ Provide hands-on demonstrations with user-friendly software that allows anyone with access to the Internet to tabulate data from Census Bureau micro-data and obtain summary descriptive statistics such as means, standard errors, median and percentile points.
- ❑ Provide hands-on demonstrations with user-friendly software that allows anyone with access to the Internet to select and download observations and variables for use with standard statistical packages. Participants will become familiar with accessing and obtaining data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples available from the University of Minnesota.

- ❑ Familiarize participants with tabular data products from the Census Bureau. These allow investigators to build profiles of neighborhoods or catchment areas.
- ❑ Work on a project focused on their own interests and produce preliminary findings by the end of the workshop and an appropriate data set that can be used when the participant returns to her/his home institution.
- ❑ Provide opportunities for participants to discuss the current status of key research and policy issues regarding poverty with nationally recognized experts.

The workshop will be held from Monday June 23rd through Friday June 27 in Ann Arbor. Classes will meet for two and one-half hour sessions in a computer classroom each morning and afternoon. Participants will also hear presentations from University of Michigan scholars and those from other universities or institutes whose research focuses on issues related to the causes and consequences of poverty and economic disadvantage. Participants will analyze, work with, and extract data from the microdata files from the American Community Survey.

This workshop will not offer instruction in statistics or formal research methods but the presentations will cover the use of weighted data, tests of significance, analysis of variance models and both OLS and logistic regression models and participants might incorporate findings from such models in their presentations. Participants may want to consider attending other summer courses offered in Ann Arbor by the Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (www.icpsr.umich.edu) or by the Institute for Social Research (www.isr.umich.edu).

Expense Reimbursement

Successful applicants will be reimbursed for travel, lodging, and meals according to University of Michigan guidelines. Participants will not receive a stipend for their participation.

To Apply

Applications will be accepted from faculty, postdoctoral fellows, advanced doctoral students, federal and state-level policy and research analysts, and others who would benefit from this workshop. Preference will be given to applicants who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- ❑ Analysts who work for government agencies and nonprofit organizations that do not have access to instruction on how to use the American Community Survey or other Census Data products.
- ❑ Emerging scholars (Assistant Professors, Postdoctoral Fellows, and Advanced Doctoral Students) working at universities and colleges that do not offer instruction in the use of the American Community Survey or other Census Data products.
- ❑ Persons who are members of groups that are under-represented among poverty researchers. Faculty members from Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU), Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU) and Hispanic Serving Institutions (HSI) are particularly encouraged to apply.

To apply, send **4** copies of the following to the address below (applications sent by fax will not be accepted):

1. a cover sheet with your name and institutional affiliation with mailing address, email address, phone and fax numbers;
2. a curriculum vita or resume;
3. a brief summary of your current research or analysis activities;
4. and a description of how analyses of the American Community Survey Microdata will benefit your research or the analysis needs of your agency.

Items (3) and (4) together need not exceed 2-3 pages.

Applications should be sent to:

National Poverty Center
 Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy
 University of Michigan
 735 South State Street
 Weill Hall, Suite 5100
 Ann Arbor, MI 48109
 ATTN: Summer Workshop

Direct Questions to:

Sarah Marsh, Program Manager
 E-mail: skmarsh@umich.edu
 Phone: (734) 615-3890

DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS IS **February 29, 2008**. SELECTED APPLICANTS WILL BE NOTIFIED BY Friday March 28, 2008.

Funding for this workshop is provided to the National Poverty Center by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) at the U. S. Department of Health and Human Services and by the University of Michigan.

***Description of the American Community Survey**

Traditionally, the long-form questionnaire imbedded in decennial censuses provided the data needed to analyze social, economic, and demographic trends. The censuses presented detailed information about small groups such as the impoverished elderly or those who worked full time but remained below the poverty line. They also gave us information about geographic areas with small populations such as many rural counties and census tracts. But there was one tremendous disadvantage: these data appeared only once a decade and many of them were released two or three years after the enumeration date.

Beginning in 2000, the Census Bureau initiated an annual American Community Survey (ACS) to provide exactly the same information but on a more timely basis. Currently, the ACS samples about three million households each year. The Bureau releases these ACS data annually; results from the 2006 survey were available to the public in September, 2007. At present, the ACS provides microdata – the characteristics of individuals and their households with appropriate confidentiality restrictions - for geographic units of 100,000 or more. Tabular data are provided for geographic locations of 65,000 or more. Following the 2008 ACS, the Bureau will begin to release pooled data for several years for geographic units of 20,000 or more. In 2010, data for census tracts will be available from 5-year pooled data and will be available on an annual basis from that point on. The ACS questionnaire includes all questions asked in Census 2000.

There will be no long form questionnaire in Census 2010. In the future, analyzes of social, economic and demographic trends – even for small groups and at local levels – will be based upon data gathered in the American Community Survey.