Center for Public Policy Priorities Recommends:
The best uses for the Current Population Survey and the American Community Survey

CPS *versus* ACS

RELEASED **SEPT. 12**

RELEASED **SEPT. 13**

BEST FOR: National data	BEST FOR: Comparing states and sub-state areas of 65,000 or more

Key Facts: CPS Data

- Data available for U.S. and states
- Sample size: 72,000 nationally
- Households interviewed in rotation 8 times over the course of 16 months; asks questions about the previous 12 months

Health Insurance Data

- Asks whether the person had health insurance at any time during 2017
- "Uninsured" = no health insurance for all of 2017
- "Insured" = had health insurance at any point in 2017, even for a short period of time.
- Subcategories include:
  - *Private insurance* = employment-based coverage, union-based coverage, or insurance purchased independently from an insurance company.
  - *Government insurance* = purchased through public insurance programs (i.e. Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP), or military-based health care (i.e. TRICARE, VA, or other)
- Data over time*: 1987-2013, 2013-2017

Population, Income and Poverty Data

- Official source of national poverty data
- Includes alternative poverty estimates that consider non-cash benefits and tax credits
- Data over time*: 1987-2013, 2013-2017

Key Facts: ACS Data

- Data for states, as well as geographic areas with populations of 65,000 or more *(including 50 Texas counties, all U.S. Congressional Districts, and all 25 Texas metro areas)*
- Sample size: 3.3 million nationally
- The survey is collected throughout year; it asks questions about the previous 12 months

Health Insurance Data

- Asks whether individuals had health insurance at the time the survey was completed
- "Uninsured" = no health insurance at time of survey
- "Insured" = had insurance at time of survey
- Sub-Categories include:
  - *Private* = employment or union-based coverage, insurance purchased independently from an insurance company, or TRICARE or other active military health care coverage
  - *Public* = coverage through public insurance programs (i.e. Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP) or through the Dept. of Veterans Affairs)
- Data over time: 2008-2017

Population, Income and Poverty Data

- Population data = Avg. family size; poverty rates (by age, race/ethnicity, gender, education); median income (for families/non-family households and by race or age); housing costs as percentage of income
- Data available for the state + geographic areas w/ population of 65,000 or more, including 50 Texas counties, all U.S. Congressional Districts, and all 25 Texas metro areas
- Data over time: 2002-2017

NOTE*: Two sets of **CPS** estimates are available for 2013 due to a recent redesign of the survey. For 2013 national data, you will see tables based on both the "traditional" and "redesigned" survey questions. For pre-2013 comparisons, use 2013 data based on "traditional" questions. For post-2013 comparisons, use 2013 data based on "redesigned" questions. When comparing pre- and post-2013 health insurance estimates, we recommend using ACS.