

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY: Coming to a Mailbox Near You

What is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is a nationwide survey designed to give detailed demographic information about communities. The Survey replaces the "long form" questionnaire currently sent every 10 years. The Census Bureau sends the Survey to a random sample selected from its file of housing unit addresses. Approximately one household out of 480 throughout the U.S. will receive the ACS questionnaire every month. No household will receive the survey more than once every five years. The Census Bureau determined that doing a continuous survey in this manner would provide much more up-to-date demographic information on American communities than using the traditional long form every 10 years.

What types of information does the Survey ask for?

First, the questionnaire asks for basic information about each person who lives in the respondent's household, such as age, gender, race, and marital status. The next section asks questions about the respondent's house, apartment, or mobile home. Some of these questions include a description of the house, when it was built, the home's value, cost of mortgage or rent and utilities, and whether or not the unit has basic services such as kitchen facilities, plumbing facilities, and telephone service.

Next, the questionnaire asks questions about each person in the household.

CURRENT POPULATION ESTIMATE 138,280	CHANGE IN POPULATION SINCE 9/30/04 2.1%
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Some of these questions include:

- Citizenship
- Ethnicity
- Level of education (high school, college, etc.)
- Whether the person has a disability
- Type of job
- Commute (length, mode of transportation, etc.)
- Status of employment
- Income
- Military service

How is the information used?

The extensive data collected by the American Community Survey is used by federal, state, and local governments to more effectively manage their programs and provide better service to their constituents. Among the many uses of the data include: providing appropriate services for children, families, and the elderly; determining the type of housing a community needs; determining where to locate highways, schools, and hospitals; and showing a large corporation that a town or county has the workforce the company needs. Businesses use Survey data as well to tailor their products and services appropriately.

When will data for Charles County be available?

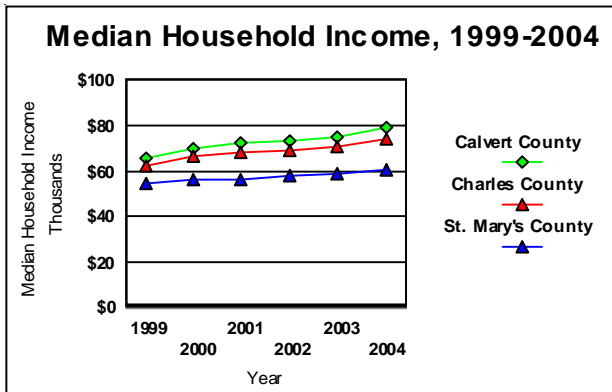
The Census Bureau will release annual data for all areas with a population of 65,000 or more (which includes Charles County) beginning in 2006. The County Planning Division will provide data as they become available, both in this newsletter and on the County website.

Must I respond to the Survey?

Response to the survey is required by law. Federal law protects the confidentiality of responses and specifies that the Census Bureau cannot publish or release information that would identify any individual. It is very important that every person responds so that the County can have the most accurate picture of its residents. Stand up and be counted!

COUNTY PERSONAL INCOME ON THE INCREASE

Median household income for Charles County residents has risen almost 19 percent since 1999, according to estimates provided by the Maryland Department of Planning. The median household income in the County increased from \$62,200 in 1999 to \$74,000 in 2004. Charles County ranks fourth among all 23 Maryland counties in median household income. In 2004 Charles County's median household income was higher than that of St. Mary's County (\$60,550), but lower than that of Calvert County (\$79,600). *Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Maryland Department of Planning. 1999 income figures are Census figures; 2000-2004 income figures are estimates only.*



POPULATION DENSITY INCREASING IN CHARLES COUNTY

The County's population density has been steadily increasing since 2000. In 2000, there were 263.1 persons per square mile in the County. By 2004, that figure had risen to 294.6 persons per square mile, reflecting an increase in density of 31.51 persons per square mile, or a 12 percent increase, during that time period. By comparison, Calvert County had a density of 401.9 in 2004, while the population density in St. Mary's County was 262.8 persons per square mile. Calvert County's density increased by 15% from 2000 to 2004; the density in St. Mary's County increased by only 9.7% in the same period. *(Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates Branch)*

County	Land Area (Sq Mi)	Persons per Sq Mile 2000	Persons per Sq Mile 2004	% Change 2000-2004
Calvert	215.2	349.4	401.9	15.0%
Charles	461.0	263.1	294.6	12.0%
St Mary's	361.2	239.5	262.8	9.7%

BUILDING PERMIT ISSUANCES (Third Quarter 2005)

COMMERCIAL: Between July 1 and September 30, 2005, the county approved 148,023 new square feet of commercial/industrial space. This total includes new commercial and/or industrial buildings, as well as additions to existing space and conversion of residential space to commercial space. Of all the newly approved commercial space, 72% (106,110 square feet) is located inside of the County's Development District.

RESIDENTIAL: The Charles County Permits Office issued a total of 473 residential building permits for the period July 1, 2005 through September 30, 2005:

Detached residential dwellings	221
Attached residential dwellings (apartments)	<u>252</u>
Total New Residential	473

Of the 473 residential permits issued by the County permits office, 79% (375) were located inside of the County's Development District.

The **Town of Indian Head** issued 6 permits for new residential dwellings (all single-family detached) during the third quarter of 2005. The **Town of La Plata** issued a total of 55 new residential building permits during this period, including 31 permits for single-family detached dwellings, 8 permits for town house units, and 16 permits for duplex/triplex/quadruplex (single-family attached dwelling) units.



Mission Statement

The mission of the Charles County Government is to provide our citizens the highest quality service possible in a timely, efficient, and courteous manner. To achieve this goal, government must be operated in an open and accessible atmosphere, be based on comprehensive long and short term planning, and have an appropriate managerial organization tempered by fiscal responsibility.

This information is provided by the Charles County Government, Department of Planning and Growth Management, Planning Division, Post Office Box 2150, La Plata, Maryland 20646, home page address www.charlescounty.org/ Amy M. Blessinger, Editor