

Caveats on Using the ACS County to County Migration data

The American Community Survey has released three, five-year county-to-county migration data sets which, besides reporting county-to-county total flows, also include additional socioeconomic characteristics of the migrants. The following characteristics are reported in these data releases besides total migration flows:

- 2006-2010 – Demographics (race and age)
- 2007-2011 - Education and Income
- 2008-2012 – Employment, Occupation and Work Status

Caution is urged, however, when using or analyzing the flows by socioeconomic characteristics for the 2007-2011 and 2008-2012 data sets. Because of suppression of individual data flows by characteristic for outmigration, the outmigration totals by characteristic do not represent the full outflows from the particular geography.¹ Hence the net migration (in migration minus outmigration) will also not present the complete picture because of the under representation of the outflows.

For example, the interstate² out-migration from Maryland of the population ages 16 and over by “Employment Status” (i.e., in labor force: employed, unemployed or in armed forces, or not in the labor force) from the 2008-2012 data is 124,374. However, the out-migration sum of all jurisdictions (all counties and Baltimore City) in Maryland for this characteristic is only 86,829, or 37,545 less than the reported statewide total. The smaller sum of Maryland’s jurisdictions

¹ Data is reported only if there are three or more unweighted people from different households for the previous county of residence or remainder of the previous state of residence. Otherwise, the flow(s) are suppressed and are not reported.

² Interstate migration measures the migration between Maryland and all other states

compared to the statewide total is due to the suppression of outflow data at the county level. There is a similar but much smaller difference with the intrastate³ out-migration flows where the Maryland outmigration for the population ages 16 and over by Employment Status is 128,983, compared to the sum of jurisdictions' total of 126,849.

While these differences exist for interstate and intrastate out migration flows by characteristic, there is *not* a difference for the in migration flows by characteristic between Maryland and the sum of jurisdictions or for the foreign in-migration flows. See [Table](#) for comparisons of Maryland and sum of jurisdictions.

³ Intra state migration measures the county-to-county migration within Maryland