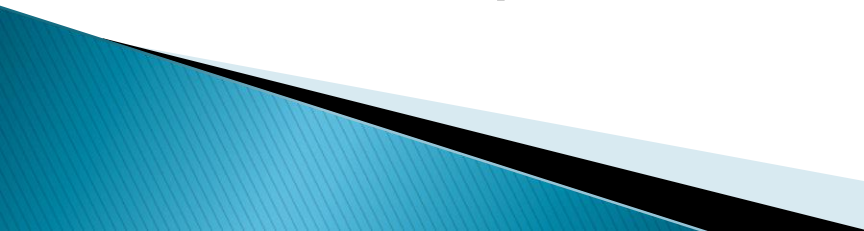


# American Community Survey


“It Don’t Come Easy”, Ringo Starr



# Why so difficult?

- ▶ Period Estimates – not point in time, not easy for people to understand or explain
  - ▶ Different residence rules – not usual place of residence as with decennial; ACS is current residence (living in place for 2 mos)
  - ▶ Smaller sample size than decennial – was 1 in 6 now approx. 1 in 40 – need to check reliability
- 

# Why so difficult? Cont'd

- ▶ 5 Year data only data set available for ALL geographies (starting Dec. 2010)
  - ▶ Don't mix and match single year with multi-year – will not be able to use most current single yr. data when comparing with small areas
  - ▶ Did I mention Margins of Error, Standard Errors, confidence intervals and coefficients of variation?
- 

# Finding the ACS Sample Size

- ▶ Tables B98\_\_\_ in American FactFinder detailed tables provide the number of initial addresses selected and the final interviews for states and most if not all counties

B98001. UNWEIGHTED HOUSING UNIT SAMPLE - Universe:  
HOUSING UNITS  
Data Set: 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates  
Survey: American Community Survey

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey

	Maryland
	Estimate
Initial addresses selected	136,754
Final number of housing unit interviews	96,236

B98002. UNWEIGHTED GROUP QUARTERS POPULATION SAMPLE -  
Universe: POPULATION IN GROUP QUARTERS  
Data Set: 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates  
Survey: American Community Survey

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey

	Maryland
	Estimate
Initial sample selected	9,614
Final number of group quarters person interviews	6,998

B00001. UNWEIGHTED SAMPLE COUNT OF THE POPULATION - Universe:  
TOTAL POPULATION

Data Set: 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

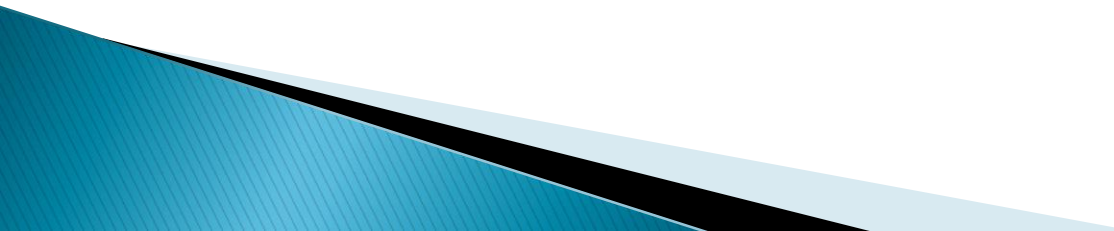
Survey: American Community Survey

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2006-2008 American Community Survey

	Maryland
	Estimate
Total	233,819

Small samples mean greater possibility for unreliable data need to look at statistics to determine whether to use data

# Issues to Consider

- ▶ May want to see if there are additional data sources to verify what the ACS data show
  - ▶ How to treat funding for programs and grants when new data are coming out annually
    - A locality may be eligible for funding based on criteria one year and not be eligible the next
    - A discussion needs to take place about how to treat MOEs with regard to eligibility for programs/funds/grants
- 



# Hypothetical example of funding or grant concern

- ▶ Jurisdictions with a poverty rate for persons below 18 yrs of age that is 20% or greater will be eligible for funds relating to programs to provide services to underserved children:
- ▶ Are only jurisdictions where the “estimate” is 20% or greater eligible or should MOEs be considered
- ▶ In the past census data were only available every 10 yrs so data for localities did not change – now may qualify one year but not next

## Baltimore city, Maryland

Data Set: 2006-2008 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

Subject	Total	<u>Margin of Error</u>	Below poverty level	<u>Margin of Error</u>	<u>Percent poverty level</u>	<u>Margin of Error</u>
Population for whom poverty status is determined	617,829	+/-2,274	121,024	+/-5,518	19.60%	+/-0.9
<b>AGE</b>						
Under 18 years	150,856	+/-800	40,978	+/-2,936	27.20%	+/-1.9

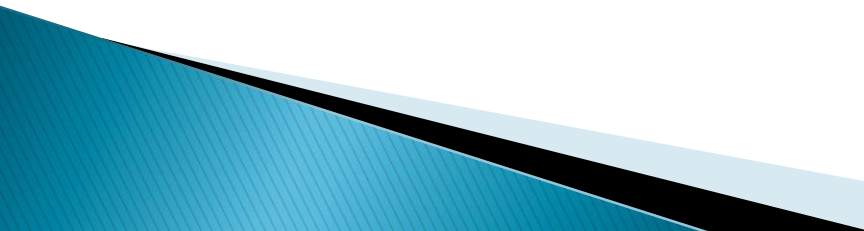
## Dorchester County,

Subject	Total	<u>Margin of Error</u>	Below poverty level	<u>Margin of Error</u>	<u>Percent poverty level</u>	<u>Margin of Error</u>
Population for whom poverty status is determined	31,159	+/-409	3,951	+/-751	12.70%	+/-2.4
<b>AGE</b>						
Under 18 years	6,383	+/-275	1,167	+/-392	18.30%	+/-6.1

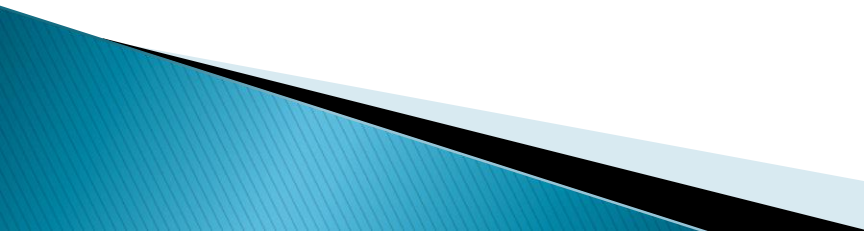
# Who Gets Funded?

- ▶ Baltimore – yes Persons <18 below poverty is 27.2% with a MOE of +/- 1.9%
- ▶ Dorchester – ? Persons <18 below poverty is 18.3% (estimate doesn't meet requirement, however with MOE of +/- 6.1% the spread is 12.2% – 24.4%)
- ▶ What happens if a jurisdiction qualifies one year, but not the next; how does one plan for uncertainties relating to funding?

# RECAP

- ▶ Sept. 28<sup>th</sup> – ACS 2009 single year data for areas over 65,000
  - ▶ Dec. – ACS 2005–2009 data aggregated over 5 years for *ALL* areas including census tracts and block groups
  - ▶ ACS 2007–2009 3 year data will be available for all areas over 20,000 in Jan. 2011
- 

# RECAP cont'd

- ▶ Areas over 65,000 population will receive 3 different data sets – 1 yr.; 3 yr.; and 5 yr.
  - ▶ ACS should not be used as counts of population (use the Census Bureau estimates) but for “characteristics” of the population
  - ▶ Don't mix and match data sets – if preparing table/report with geographies of different sizes – use the same data set for all
- 

# Finding ACS data

- ▶ [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
  - American FactFinder
- ▶ <http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>
  - ACS page on Census site
- ▶ <http://planning.maryland.gov/msdc/>
  - MD State Data Center