

Caveats on Using the ACS County to County Migration data

The American Community Survey has released five, 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
- 2009-2013 – Ability to Speak English, Place of Birth and Years in U.S.
- 2010-2014 – Household Type, Housing Tenure and Relationship to Householder

Caution is urged, however, when using or analyzing the flows by socioeconomic characteristics for the 2007-2011, 2008-2012, 2009-2013 and 2010-2014 data sets. Because of suppression of individual data flows by characteristic for outmigration, the outmigration totals by characteristic may not represent the full outflows from the particular geography.¹ Hence the net migration (in-migration minus out-migration) may also not present the complete picture because of the under representation of the outflows.

For example, the interstate² out-migration from Maryland for “Place of Birth” from the 2009-2013 data is 149,244. However, the out-migration sum of all jurisdictions (all counties and Baltimore City) in Maryland for this characteristic is only 103,271 or 45,973 less than the reported statewide total. The smaller sum of Maryland’s jurisdictions compared to the

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.

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 Place of Birth Status is 148,430, compared to the sum of jurisdictions' total of 146,423.

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 “Comparison of Maryland to County totals” tables for comparisons of Maryland and sum of jurisdictions for each ACS migration dataset. Not all datasets contain suppressed outflows.

Finally, users should note that in-migration to Maryland from foreign countries includes migration from Puerto Rico, U.S. Island Areas, and foreign countries. However, foreign out migration only captures migration from Maryland to Puerto Rico.

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