



Urban–Greater DC Comparison Tables by Geographic Area, District of Columbia: Data Documentation

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General Notes

Urban–Greater DC created these comparison tables to help users compare the same population, economic, and housing indicators across different geographic areas in the District of Columbia. Separate data files, in comma-separated value (CSV) format, are provided for each type of geography. These files can be opened in spreadsheet software or analyzed with common data tools. A separate data dictionary workbook provides a complete list of the data columns in the CSV files.

Data used to create the comparison tables by geographic area for the District of Columbia come from a variety of sources, including the decennial U.S. Census, the American Community Survey, and local administrative data. Urban–Greater DC standardizes the data so that indicators can be compared across places and over time.

Some source data are available only for census tracts or block groups, which do not exactly match wards, ZIP Codes, and other DC geographies. In those cases, Urban–Greater DC uses population-based weighting methods to estimate values for the requested geography. As a result, some figures are estimates rather than exact counts.

Geography

ANCs: **Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs)** are political jurisdictions designed to represent the views of neighborhood residents to the District government. There are 37 ANCs in the city, each of which has an advisory board made up of neighborhood residents. ANCs are redrawn following the redistricting process for council wards after each decennial census; the boundaries used in the comparison tables were established in 2023.

Census tracts: **Census tracts** are small locally defined statistical areas used by the U.S. Census Bureau for collecting and tabulating census data. Most tracts have between 2,500 and 8,000 persons and, when first defined, are intended to be homogeneous with respect to population characteristics, economic status, and living conditions. Tract definitions change every 10 years with the decennial census. For the 2020 census, there were 206 census tracts defined in the District of Columbia.

City: This geographic level is for the entire **District of Columbia**. No comparison data are provided in the city data file.

PSAs: **Police Service Areas (PSAs)** are organized by the Metropolitan Police Department to allocate services within the city. The 57 new PSA definitions were established in 2019.

Neighborhood clusters: There are 46 **neighborhood clusters** throughout the city, each made up of three to five neighborhoods. Neighborhood clusters were established by the DC Office of Planning and are being used by the DC government for budgeting, planning, service delivery, and analysis purposes. The boundaries of the neighborhood clusters are intended to remain stable to allow for comparisons over time.

We do not use single neighborhoods as a geography because there is a substantial amount of debate about the boundaries of single neighborhoods and these boundaries tend to change over time even where there is agreement.

2022 Wards: The eight Council Wards are political areas used to elect members of the [Council of the District of Columbia](#). As part of the regular redistricting process, the Ward boundaries were redrawn in 2022 based on the 2020 decennial census to maintain roughly equal populations.

ZIP codes: [ZIP codes](#) are set by the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) for the purpose of facilitating the delivery of the U.S. mail. ZIP code boundaries are not fixed; they can change over time based on the needs of the USPS. Some ZIP codes do not even represent geographic areas, rather they might be assigned to post offices or other mail delivery locations. We have created comparison tables for the 28 most common 5-digit ZIP codes in DC.

Data Sources

American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS is a national survey of households and housing units, administered by the U.S. Census Bureau on an ongoing basis. The ACS replaced the decennial Census long form, last administered in 2000, which was administered only once every ten years, collecting much of the same information on demographics, poverty, employment, housing, and other detailed characteristics. Though the ACS offers the advantage of more frequent data collection, it has a smaller sample size than the long form. To obtain reliable estimates for small areas, multiple years of ACS data must be combined to produce a single indicator. For subareas in DC, we must use the ACS 5-year estimates, which combine data for 60 consecutive months of surveys. The actual value can be thought of as an average over each 5-year period. The ACS data in the comparison tables are provided for non-overlapping 5-year estimates and are updated based on the most recent 5-year ACS data.

Margins of Error. With each ACS estimate, the Census Bureau reports a margin of error (MOE) at the 90 percent confidence level. The MOE is a measure of the variability of the estimate due to sampling error and enables data users to measure the range of uncertainty around each estimate. For a given estimate, we can be 90 percent confident that the true value is the estimate plus or minus the amount of the MOE. The larger the MOE, the lower the accuracy of the estimate, and the bigger the range for the 90 percent confidence interval, which means there is greater uncertainty that the estimate is close to the true value. Urban-Greater DC calculates MOEs for indicators that are derived from published tract-level ACS data [using formulas provided by the Census Bureau \(PDF\)](#). This includes combining separate cells of ACS tabulations (e.g., summing workers by commuting time categories), calculating percentages or ratios (e.g., percentage of children below the poverty level), and creating DC-specific geographies from census tracts (e.g. ward-level summaries based on tracts),

Because the ACS is a survey based on sampling housing units, MOEs are likely to be larger for smaller geographies (like census tracts) and for subpopulations (e.g. child poverty rate will have a larger margin of error than the overall poverty rate) due to fewer respondents in that geography or subpopulation that are part of the survey sample. Users should be cautious about using and interpreting data with large margins of error.

More information on the ACS can be found on the [Census Bureau's web site](#) and in [their user guide](#).

Variable notes:

- **Commuting:** This indicator is available for workers ages 16 and older who did not work from home and who spend less than 45 minutes traveling from home to work each day--whether by car, public transportation, or some other means. Remote workers are excluded from the denominator.
- **Education:** The percentage of persons without HS diploma is the percentage of persons ages 25 and older who have not earned a high school diploma or GED certificate.

- **Employment:** The unemployment rate is the percentage of all civilians ages 16 and older in the labor force who were not employed at the time of the decennial census and have looked for work during the previous 4 weeks (e.g. by visiting an employment agency, writing cover letters, applying for jobs online, etc.). For the American Community Survey, the definitions of employed and unemployed are based on the respondent's status during the previous week. The percentage of persons ages 16 and older employed is the percentage of all persons ages 16 and older who were employed in the civilian labor force or who were in the armed forces.
- **Income:** Household income is the total cash income from all sources for all household members; incomes are adjusted to constant dollars using the Consumer Price Index. Average household income is calculated by dividing the aggregate income for households by the number of households in that geography.
- **Internet:** Broadband includes high speed internet services including cable, fiber optic, or DSL service. These types of services are more likely to meet the download speeds needed for normal internet use. A household is considered to have no access to the internet if no member has access via a cellular data plan or broadband, satellite, or dial-up subscriptions.
- **Phone:** The percentage of households with a phone is the percentage of households that had a working telephone in their home, whether that is a landline, cellular phone, or other phone service.
- **Poverty:** The poverty rate is the percentage of all persons living in families or households with incomes in the past 12 months below the federal poverty threshold, out of persons for whom poverty status was determined. Poverty status is not determined for certain classes of people, such as those who live in institutions or other group quarters. The amount of the poverty threshold varies by family size and is adjusted annually for inflation. Similarly, the child poverty rate is the percentage of all children (ages 17 and younger) living in families with incomes in the past 12 months below the federal poverty threshold, out of children for whom poverty status was determined.
- **Race and ethnicity:** See below under Decennial Census.

Crime Incidents. Reported crime incidents in DC are from the Metropolitan Police Department's (MPD) Analytical Services Application crime report database and available on DC's [Open Data portal for each year](#) dating back to 2008. Data prior to that were provided through agreement with MPD's Central Crime Analysis Unit. To allow for comparison across geographies with different sized populations, we create crime rates per 1,000 population by interpolating population in the intervening years between decennial censuses. Data from 2020 and later uses the 2020 decennial census population. Comparison tables exclude undated cases and cases for which no geography could be identified. We report part I crime rates, which are measures of particularly serious offenses that local law enforcement must report to the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) on a regular basis. The FBI include these part I crimes in their uniform crime reporting program. The classification of Part I crimes in the incident data is preliminary and subject to change due to late reporting. To obtain crime rates for 2000-2010, we divided incidents by the Census 2000 and 2010 populations, interpolating population in intervening years; likewise for crime rates for 2010-2020, we divided by the Census 2010 and 2020 populations, interpolating population in intervening years. For 2020 and later, we use 2020 population.

Variable notes:

- **Part I Violent Crime Rate:** Includes the following types of crimes: murder, rape, aggravated assault, and robbery. The total number of violent crime incidents is divided by the total population and multiplied by 1,000.
- **Part I Property Crime Rate:** Includes the following types of crimes: arson, burglary, larceny-theft, and motor vehicle theft. The total number of property crime incidents is divided by the total population and multiplied by 1,000.

Decennial Census. Decennial Census data from 1980 to 2010 are from the [CensusCD Neighborhood Change Database \(NCDB\)](#) created by GeoLytics and the Urban Institute with financial support from the Rockefeller Foundation. The NCDB is based on Decennial Census data from 1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010, and remapped to 2000 census tract boundaries. Decennial Census 2020 is the most recent US population count. The data used in the profiles are the PL94-171 Redistricting data for the District of Columbia, released on August 12, 2021. We constructed population weights using census blocks to transform 2010 decennial census data to 2020 census tracts. For earlier census data, we used the previously created 2000 tract data for the 1980, 1990, and 2000 decennial censuses and applied successive weightings to go from 2000 to 2010 tracts and from 2010 to 2020 tracts.

Variable notes:

- *Race and ethnicity:* Urban–Greater DC uses a series of decision rules detailed in “[2020 Census Overview for the Greater DC Region: Redistricting Data](#)” to facilitate comparison of racial and ethnic groups over time when the Decennial Censuses and American Community Survey have varied how these data are collected over time. The populations for these race and ethnicity indicators are mutually exclusive. Due to small populations, some groups were combined into an “other races” category to produce more reliable estimates. We acknowledge that these statistics are inadequate for describing members of these groups.

Integrated Tax System Public Extract. Data on property sales reported in the comparison tables are drawn from the DC Office of Tax and Revenue’s [Integrated Tax System Public Extract \(ITSPE\)](#) file. Urban–Greater DC staff downloaded this file and its predecessors at least annually over the past 25 years and maintain a longitudinal record of property sales at the parcel level. This longitudinal is used to calculate the median sales price and number of sales in each geographic area. Because we have parcel-level data, no weighting is needed to aggregate data into each geographic area (see general note). Data are suppressed for a geographic area if there are fewer than 10 sales in a year.

Variable notes:

- *Median sales price:* Median sales prices have been adjusted to constant dollars using the Consumer Price Index to allow for comparison over time. Indicators for annual percentage change in median sales prices are similarly adjusted for inflation. Separate indicators are included for sales of single-family homes and condominium units. Rental apartment buildings and all cooperative units are excluded from both indicators.

Citation Requirements

Urban Institute. 2026. Urban–Greater DC Comparison Tables by Geographic Area, District of Columbia. Accessible from <https://datacatalog.urban.org/dataset/DC-comp-tables>. Data compiled at the Urban Institute and made available under the ODC-BY 1.0 Attribution License.