



## Using AFCARS, NCANDS, and Census Data to Obtain Demographic Data for your State/City/County

The Adoption and Foster Care Analysis and Reporting System (AFCARS) is a federal reporting system for children who are in foster care or who have been adopted in state child welfare agencies. To be reported to AFCARS, the children must be covered by the state's Title IV-B Plan. The National Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) is a voluntary federal data reporting system that is also administered by the Children's Bureau, Administration on Children, Youth, and Families, Administration for Children and Families. The data files for both AFCARS and NCANDS are housed at the National Data Archived on Child Abuse and Neglect (NDACAN) at Cornell University. For purchasing information you can go to the NDACAN website at [http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu/NDACAN/Datasets\\_List.html](http://www.ndacan.cornell.edu/NDACAN/Datasets_List.html). Access to some AFCARS and NCANDS data can be obtained freely from the following sites:

**The Children's Bureau** – The Children's Bureau is the original source for both AFCARS and NCANDS and information can be obtained by going to <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/dis/index.htm>. Here you can retrieve AFCARS reports (the most recent report is #9), state-by-state statistics, and you can also access maltreatment reports.

**The National Data Analysis System (NDAS)** – NDAS is a part of the Child Welfare League of America's National Center for Research, Data and Technology, and is one of the most comprehensive and integrated set of child welfare and related data in the country. NDAS has the raw data files for AFCARS and the summary files for NCANDS and most of this data, which are in easy-to-read tables, can be accessed for free by going to <http://ndas.cwla.org/>. The data are available state-by-state and site users can create customized tables and graphs. There are 10 main topic areas from which to choose including: Out-of-Home Care (Foster care), Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities, Fiscal Data, and Outcomes data, etc. Race/ethnicity data are provided for most topics. Additionally, NDAS has devoted an entire section to the issue of children of color in the child welfare system<sup>1</sup>.

### **More Information about AFCARS Data**

Any county or organization requiring specific AFCARS data not available on the NDAS site and who are unable to locate their specific state contact, can contact Christine Frederick via e-mail [cfrederick@cwla.org](mailto:cfrederick@cwla.org) for that information. Additionally, as a free service to our sponsor states, customized AFCARS analysis can be provided.

Any state requiring technical assistance for AFCARS can contact the National Resource Center for Child Welfare Data and Technology (NRCCWDT) and speak to Julie Ohm [johm@cwla.org](mailto:johm@cwla.org) or Tom Hay [thay@cwla.org](mailto:thay@cwla.org). You can also visit their website at <http://www.nrccwdt.org/>.

### **Child Maltreatment Reports and Kids Count 2004**

NCANDS data are reported in the Child Maltreatment reports which are available at <http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/publications/cmreports.htm>. The reports can be viewed in either HTML or PDF format and available years are 1995 – 2003.

Kids Count is a project of the Annie E. Casey Foundation that provides national and state-by-state indicators of child well-being. Kids Count data are available at <http://www.aecf.org/kidscount/> where you can download the entire Kids Count data book in a PDF file or create customized reports.

<sup>1</sup> The Children of Color site is currently being updated and will be available in June 2005.

## Census Data

The Census Bureau offers many products and is a good resource for researchers, social workers, and administrators who work in child welfare. The purpose of this presentation is to illustrate how to use Census to quickly obtain demographic data for your professional needs. Most of the information for this presentation comes from the Census 2000 Gateway site. Those wishing to learn more about the various Census products available can contact the Census Bureau directly.

Anyone wishing to get demographic data for their state, city, or county can easily do so by accessing Census data via the Internet.

1. First, go to Census homepage at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov)
2. Go to the section titled **United Census 2000** and click on [Your Gateway to Census 2000](#). This will open the Census Gateway 2000 page and this is where you can access the sources illustrated in this presentation.
3. The two most commonly used sources on this page are **American Fact Finder** and **State & County Quick Facts** which allows you access data by geography. They are described later in the presentation.

### Census Data of Interest to the Child Welfare Community

**Street Level data** - This link can be found on the Census 2000 Gateway homepage under the American Fact Finder section. Information about voting districts, traffic, Congressional districts, and school districts can be obtained at the street level.

**Data Highlights** – by clicking on this link located under the State & County Quick facts section, you can obtain just the highlights from the American Fact finder. While the same data is included in American Fact Finder, it may be easier to get them here. Some 2000 data highlights that can be found are:

- **17 Age Group Categories** – General Demographics Characteristics table (DP-1).
- **Number of disabilities for population age 5 - 20, Number of grandparents who are caregivers** – Selected Social Characteristics table (DP-2).
- **Percent below poverty** – Selected Economic Characteristics (DP-3)

**Race/Ethnicity data for Children under 18** – When addressing the issue of disproportionality of children of color in the child welfare system, there is often the need to obtain the most recent population totals for children under 18 by race/ethnicity. Population estimates are used to provide the most recent figures.

1. On the Census Bureau home page at [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov), go to the section titled **'People'** and click on the word **'Estimates'**.
2. Once on the Population Estimates page, go to the menu bar located near the top of the page, place your mouse over **'Estimates Data'** which is the first item on the menu. You see several items from which to make a selection.
3. Under the title **'by Geography'**, select **'National'**. This will take you to the National Estimates page. On the left side of the page you must chose **'National estimates by demographic characteristics'**.
4. Once on the National Population Estimates page, go to the dropdown box under the section titled **'Popular tables'** located on the right side of the page and select the table titled **National Sex, Age, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 2000-2003**. **This particular table is not available by state or county.**

## More Census Data that May Be of Use

### American Fact Finder

You can use the American Fact finder to get a quick demographic fact sheet for your state, city or county. This can be very useful if you just need some general demographic information. Click on the 'go' button next to the title and this will take you to a page where you enter the geographic information for which you would like the data. The data provided in the fact sheet are in four areas:

1. **General Characteristics** - Population by age, sex, and race/ethnicity).
2. **Social Characteristics** - Number of high school graduates, college graduates, and people age 21 to 46 with disabilities, marriage status, etc).
3. **Economic Characteristics** – Number in the labor force (16 years and older), commute time, median household and family income, poverty status.
4. **Housing Characteristics** – Number of homeowners, median home value, median monthly costs, etc.

### State & County Quick Facts

State & County Quick facts provide more detailed data in the form of percentages and allow you to quickly view trends. The information provided here is based on frequently requested data from various Census Bureau programs. You can access the State & County Quick facts area by clicking on the 'go' button next to the title located on the Census Gateway 2000 homepage. This will take you to a page where you must select the state for which you would like information. After you select the state, you then have the option to narrow your search to the city or county. The information provided here are some quick facts about the people, business and geography.

At the bottom of the page is the option to download the data in other a delimited table or an Excel table. This can be useful if you would like to do some analysis or to create charts and graphs.

*If you would like to request information requiring the use of AFCARS, NCANDS, or Census data you are welcome to contact Christine Frederick at the National Data Analysis System at [cfrederick@cwla.org](mailto:cfrederick@cwla.org).*