

Internet Access in Texas and the 2020 Census



There are only about 100 days before the decennial census on April 1, 2020. The 2020 Census marks the first time respondents will have the option to respond online. The majority of Texas households, or 72.1%, initially will be invited to complete their census form online. Another 24.4% of Texas households will receive an online invitation as well as a paper questionnaire and have a choice to respond online. The remaining 3.5% of households will receive a hand-delivered paper form. How closely these contact types correspond with the internet access of households in Texas in part will determine the success of a complete count in Texas in 2020.

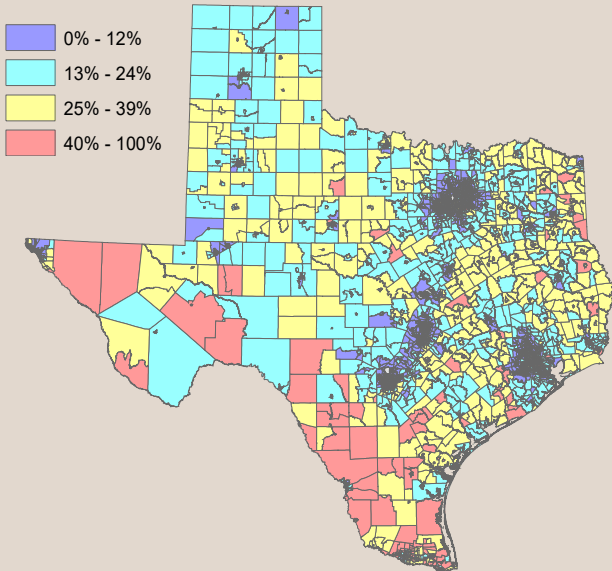
The U.S. Census Bureau released new five-year estimates from the 2014-2018 American Community Survey (ACS). The ACS includes over 40 demographic topics, and the 5-year estimates are one of a few sources of data available for small geographic areas, including counties, places, and neighborhood geographies, such as census tracts and block groups.

The 2018 ACS estimates (available at data.census.gov) indicate there are over 1.6 million households in Texas without internet access, making up 16.9% of all Texas households. Of

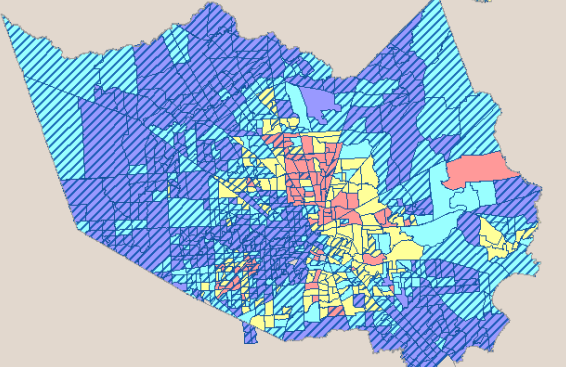
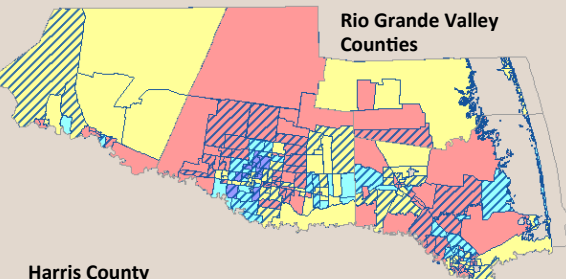
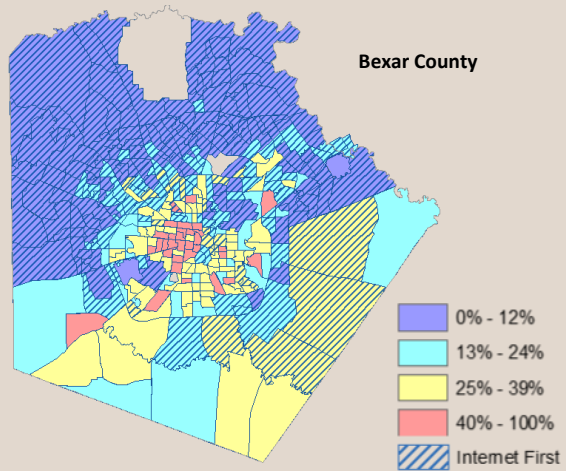
households with internet access, 1.1 million, or 14.7%, only have access to the internet via mobile phone or cellular plan.

Internet access varies geographically as well as by socio-demographic characteristics. Those living in more rural parts of the state, including parts of West Texas, East Texas, and South Texas, households with incomes less than \$20k (47.2%), children (11.3%), Hispanics and African Americans (14.2% and 12.0%, respectively), those with less than a high school degree (16.7%), and those who are unemployed (12.1%) are more likely to live in households without internet access.

Percent of Households without Internet Access



Percent of Households without Internet Access and Internet First Contact



The maps shown here depict internet access by areas that will be invited by the Census Bureau to respond to the 2020 census online, or Internet First invitations. Areas not in the blue hatch will receive a paper form either by mail or hand-delivered. The maps reveal pockets of low internet access exist even in large metro areas of the state. However, as in the case of Bexar County, these areas are not planned to receive the Internet First invitation from the Census Bureau. The maps also reveal areas of the state with low internet access and Census Bureau plans for Internet First invitation, such as the Rio Grande Valley and Harris County. These areas will likely need additional outreach in order to ensure these communities are able to complete their census forms. Regardless of the type of invitation received, communities can complete their census form online, by phone, or by mail.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2018 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; U.S. Census Bureau, 2020 Mail Contact Strategies