

Overview of the New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey

The New York City Housing and Vacancy Survey (NYCHVS) is a representative survey of the New York City housing stock and population sponsored by the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development (HPD). It is the longest running housing survey in the country and is statutorily required. The 1962 Local Emergency Housing Rent Control Act (LEHRCA) requires that a survey be conducted to establish a net rental vacancy rate for New York City as well as collect information on the inventory of the housing supply, condition of housing in neighborhoods, and the continued need for rent regulation:

“The continuation... of the public emergency requiring the regulation and control of residential rents and evictions within cities having a population of one million or more shall be a matter for local determination within each such city. Any such determination shall be made by the local legislative body of such city on or before April first, nineteen hundred sixty-seven and at least once in every third year thereafter following a survey which the city shall cause to be made of the supply of housing accommodations within such city, the condition of such accommodations and the need for continuing the regulation and control of residential rents and evictions within such city. Such survey shall be submitted to such legislative body not less than thirty nor more than sixty days prior to the date of any such determination.”

For more information on rent regulation, see the New York State Homes and Community Renewal Fact Sheets: <http://www.nyshcr.org/Rent/FactSheets/>.

The Census Bureau has conducted the survey for the City since 1965. HPD is the only non-federal agency that sponsors a Census product. The 2017 NYCHVS is the 17th such survey.

Data from the NYCHVS can be useful for planning, program development, policy analysis, research, and public information. In addition to being the official data source for the NYC vacancy rate, data from the NYCHVS can be used in a multitude of ways. Some of its unique features include:

- It is the only Census product that categorizes public housing and other forms of rental assistance;
- Data from the NYCHVS facilitate comparisons among housing types (e.g., public housing, unregulated/market, stabilized);
- The NYCHVS is the only source of data on rent stabilized and rent controlled

- tenants;
- The consistency of content and design enables comparisons over time for many measures.

Sample and Data Collection

Approximately 19,000 units throughout the city were selected as a representative sample of the housing in the five boroughs of New York City. The 2017 NYCHVS is the third survey based primarily on a sample of housing units from the 2010 Census (along with the 2011 and 2014 NYCHVS). The 2011, 2014, and 2017 cycles share the same main sample which is supplemented each survey cycle to reflect changes to the housing stock. The sample for the 2017 cycle therefore represents the entirety of the stock at a given time point. Each sample unit represents approximately 170 similar housing units.

The Census Bureau conducts face to face fieldwork for the NYCHVS. Data collection for this cycle occurred from January through May of 2017. Field Representatives conducted in-person observations of sampled units. Occupied interviews were conducted with the current occupant and collected proxy information about each member of the household. Vacant interviews were conducted with a key informant. The interview rate for the 2017 NYCHVS was 81%. Refer to the Source and Accuracy Statement for more detail on sample design.

Data

Data from the survey cover many characteristics of the City's population, households, housing stock, and neighborhoods, including:

- Size and Composition of the Housing Inventory
- Housing Costs and Affordability
- Housing Quality
- Housing Subsidy
- Tenure and Building Characteristics
- Demographics, Education, and Income
- Household Composition and Length of Residence
- Vacancy Status

See the questionnaire for a full list of questions that were asked as part of the 2017 NYCHVS.

Data are released in three separate public use files:

1. Occupied units (household level)
2. Population (person level),
3. Vacant units (household level)

These files can be combined to create one dataset. The Data Record Layouts itemize which variables can be found in which file and the glossary defines key terms.

Additional Resources for Users

There are a variety of resources and documentation available to users of the NYCHVS.

- NYC HPD website: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/hpd/about/nychvs.page>
 - FAQ
 - Selected Initial Findings (current and historic)
- US Census Bureau website: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/nychvs.html>
 - Overview
 - Glossary
 - Microdata
 - Geographic information
 - Technical documentation
 - Data record layouts
 - Sample Design, Weighting, and Error Estimation (formerly known as Sample Design, Estimation Procedure and Accuracy Statement)
 - Replicate Weights user guide
 - Questionnaires