



The John D. Calandra Italian American Institute
Director for Research and Education

Special Report

The United States Census Bureau Releases the First Annual Census Data of Italian Americans

The first tabulations of the American Community Survey (ACS) summarizing annual data on Italian-American demographics nationwide are now available. The data summaries released in January 2006 are for year 2004, and for the first time the ACS provides a national profile of Italian Americans in the middle years of the decennial census data collection. Selected metropolitan areas may be available with PUMS (Public Users Micro data Sample) to conduct yearly demographic analysis. The PUMS are sample data records that can be processed to report various statistical profiles of the Italian-American community.

These data provide a profile of the demographic, social, economic, and other statistics of Italian Americans based on data collected in the 2004 ACS. The 2004 ACS provides an incremental view of how the nationwide Italian-American community is changing from the 2000 census “long form” survey. In these four years the Italian-American community increased approximately by a 1,093,880 people to approximately 16,817, 286. Interestingly, the Italian-American population change is approximately 26% of the overall United States population increase. Since family size and immigration statistics have not drastically changed at this magnitude the higher reporting of Italian-Americans is probably due to the increased awareness of Italian-American identity. The Italian-American family is changing with increases in unmarried partners and non-family households and a reduction in married-couple families. Italian Americans nationwide are still increasing their educational accomplishments. Of Italian Americans 25 years and older, more now have a high school diploma, a bachelors degree, or an advanced degree representing graduate study. With subsequent generations there are fewer Italian Americans who are foreign born; of these an estimated one out of four come from Latin America.

The ACS is an annual demographic survey developed to replace the 2010 Census long form. The decennial census has been redesigned such that the short-form enumeration of basic characteristics will continue to collect data once a decade, and the decennial census long-form survey will be replaced by the ACS. The ACS is conducted every year, and data on Italian Americans will now be available annually instead of once a decade.

Basing decisions on current data, instead of data that could be as much as ten years old, is important for informed decision making: for example, to help identify services needed for Italian Americans in the areas of healthcare and education.

The ancestry responses within the Census Bureau data collection are critical to documenting the Italian-American and multicultural history of the United States as well as recent global migration. The Census ancestry question allows for multiple responses to an individual's ancestry background. The Census Bureau categorizes the respondent's first ancestry as well as secondary ancestries with no particular importance in preference. It is a self-identification of the individual's experience within one or more cultures.

The Census Bureau has decennially collected data of the self-identification of ethnic multiple ancestry of Americans since 1980. Prior decennial census surveys only identified immigrant- or first-generation ethnic ancestry from birthplace responses. While the United States Census Bureau annually updates the racial population data, ethnic ancestry data are only updated every ten years with the decennial census survey. However, the ACS is the new way in which the Census Bureau collects data about the characteristics of the population throughout the decade, on a continuous basis, rather than once every ten years. The ACS will determine how communities will receive federal funds for schools, roads, senior citizen centers, and other services

This information will help identify services needed for Italian Americans. It will help identify changes in the demographic characteristics of Italian Americans, can assist policy managers in developing appropriate educational and senior-citizen programs. Such programs are specially needed in areas where there are large concentrations of first-generation Italian Americans, such as communities in the New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut Tri-state metropolitan area. Annual data from the ACS can also help track the progress of ancestry groups such as Italian Americans in meeting goals related to their health, economic status, and well being.

The opportunity to document the United States' multicultural background within the ACS could have been lost if it had not been for a review of the ACS form by the Calandra Italian American Institute. An early version of the questionnaire had not included space for respondents to note more than one ancestry. We addressed this inadvertent oversight early in the testing phase of the ACS after a review of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was modified to reflect that change, well before full implementation of the ACS began in early 2005. We stated: "Since 1980 the United States census data have been an invaluable tool to not only understand the Italian-American community but also to help address some of its community concerns. The census data were instrumental in identifying the alarmingly large high-school dropout rates in New York City in the 1980s and early 1990s and measured its turn-around to the lowest dropout rate in 2000s' due to the Italian-American community's outreach to its youth and schools."

American Community Survey data on Ancestry for Italian-Americans:

United States:

http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/IPTable?_bm=y&-context=ip&-reg=ACS_2004_EST_G00_S0201:543;&-qr_name=ACS_2004_EST_G00_S0201&-qr_name=ACS_2004_EST_G00_S0201T&-ds_name=ACS_2004_EST_G00_&-TABLE_NAMEX=&-ci_type=A&-tree_id=304&-all_geo_types=N&-redoLog=false&-_caller=geoselect&-geo_id=01000US&-search_results=01000US&-format=&-lang=en

Then select state of county.

American Community Survey home page on the Census Bureau's web site:

<http://www.census.gov/acs/www/>

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Italian Americans in the United States

Comparison of 2000 and 2004 Population

Census 2000*

2004 American Community Survey**

Subject	Number	Percent	Subject	Number	Percent
USA population	281,421,906		USA Population	285,691,501	
Italian American population	15,723,406	5.59%	Italian American population	16,817,286	5.89%
SEX AND AGE			SEX AND AGE		
Male	7,788,454	49.50%	Male	8,358,191	49.70%
Female	7,934,952	50.50%	Female	8,459,095	50.30%
Under 5 years	1,184,934	7.50%	Under 5 years	1,311,748	7.80%
5 to 24 years	4,685,597	29.80%	5 to 24 years	4,944,282	29.40%
25 to 34 years	2,282,502	14.50%	25 to 34 years	2,219,882	13.20%
35 to 44 years	2,636,778	16.80%	35 to 44 years	2,623,497	15.60%
45 to 54 years	2,005,807	12.80%	45 to 54 years	2,371,237	14.10%
55 to 64 years	1,152,425	7.30%	55 to 64 years	1,513,556	9.00%
65 to 74 years	909,363	5.80%	65 to 74 years	891,316	5.30%
75 years and over	866,000	5.50%	75 years and over	941,768	5.60%
Median age (years)	33.80		Median age (years)	34.70	
18 years and over	11,353,835	72.20%	18 years and over	12,133,432	72.15%
21 years and over	10,676,378	67.90%	21 years and over	11,486,206	68.30%
62 years and over	2,056,903	13.10%	62 years and over	2,186,247	13.00%
65 years and over	1,775,363	11.30%	65 years and over	1,833,084	10.90%
Male	775,862	0.44%	Male	815,722	44.50%
Female	999,501	0.56%	Female	1,017,362	55.50%
RELATIONSHIP			RELATIONSHIP		
Population	15,723,406	100.00%	Population	16,817,286	100.00%
Householder or spouse	8,923,860	56.80%	Householder or spouse	9,737,209	57.90%
Child	5,351,147	34.00%	Child	5,717,877	34.00%
Other relatives	505,401	3.20%	Other relatives	639,057	3.80%
Nonrelatives	671,776	4.30%	Nonrelatives	723,143	4.30%
Unmarried partner	305,748	1.90%	Unmarried partner	353,163	2.10%

Italian Americans in the United States

Comparison of 2000 and 2004 Population

Census 2000*

2004 American Community Survey**

	Number	Percent
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE		
Households	5,880,958	100.00%
Family households (families)	3,948,381	67.10%
With own children under 18 years	1,927,882	32.80%
Married-couple family	3,192,729	54.30%
With own children under 18 years	1,520,717	25.90%
Female householder, no husband present	543,166	9.20%
With own children under 18 years	304,477	5.20%
Nonfamily households	1,932,577	32.90%
Householder living alone	1,508,832	25.70%
Average household size	2.52	
Average family size	3.08	
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT		
Population 3 years and over enrolled in school	4,685,795	100.00%
Nursery school, preschool	372,431	7.90%
Kindergarten	248,125	5.30%
Elementary school (grades 1-8)	2,022,325	43.20%
High school (grades 9-12)	930,722	19.90%
College or graduate school	1,112,192	23.70%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		
Population 25 years and over	9,852,875	100.00%
Less than high school diploma	1,277,518	13.00%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	2,892,921	29.40%
Some college or associate's degree	2,834,958	28.80%
Bachelor's degree	1,843,321	18.70%
Graduate or professional degree	1,004,157	10.19%
Percent high school graduate or higher	87.00%	
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	28.90%	

	Number	Percent
HOUSEHOLDS BY TYPE		
Households	6,276,839	100.00%
Family households	4,142,714	66.00%
With own children under 18 years	2,008,588	32.00%
Married-couple families	3,307,894	52.70%
With own children under 18 years	1,544,102	24.60%
Female householder, no husband present	596,300	9.50%
With own children under 18 years	345,226	5.50%
Nonfamily households	2,134,125	34.00%
Householder living alone	1,682,193	26.80%
Average household size	2.55	
Average family size	3.13	
SCHOOL ENROLLMENT		
Population 3 years and over enrolled in scho	4,877,349	100.00%
Nursery school, preschool	365,801	7.50%
Kindergarten	238,990	4.90%
Elementary school (grades 1-8)	2,063,119	42.30%
High school (grades 9-12)	1,063,262	21.80%
College or graduate school	1,146,177	23.50%
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		
Population 25 years and over	10561491	100.00%
Less than high school diploma	1,087,834	10.30%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	3,147,324	29.80%
Some college or associate's degree	2,988,902	28.30%
Bachelor's degree	2,133,421	20.20%
Graduate or professional degree	1,193,448	11.30%
Percent high school graduate or higher	89.60%	
Percent bachelor's degree or higher	31.50%	

Italian Americans in the United States

Comparison of 2000 and 2004 Population

Census 2000*

2004 American Community Survey**

	Number	Percent
MARITAL STATUS		
Population 15 years and over	12,038,967	100.00%
Never married	3,580,255	29.70%
Now married, except separated	6,485,205	53.90%
Separated	185,986	1.50%
Widowed	697,094	5.80%
Divorced	1,090,427	9.10%
GRANDPARENTS AS CAREGIVERS		
Grandparent responsible for grandchildren	59,980	34.80%
VETERAN STATUS		
Civilian population 18 years and over	11,293,400	100.00%
Civilian veteran	1,380,913	12.20%
NATIVITY AND PLACE OF BIRTH		
Total population	15,723,406	100.00%
Native	15,118,929	96.20%
Foreign born	604,477	3.80%
REGION OF BIRTH OF FOREIGN BORN		
Total (excluding born at sea)	604,452	100.00%
Europe	459,004	75.90%
Asia	5,757	1.00%
Africa	6,279	1.00%
Oceania	1,792	0.30%
Latin America	110,594	18.30%
Northern America	21,026	3.50%
LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME		
Population 5 years and over	14,538,472	100.00%
English only	13,196,026	90.80%
Language other than English	1,342,446	9.20%
Speak English less than "very well"	396,000	2.70%

	Number	Percent
MARITAL STATUS		
Population 15 years and over	12,903,097	100.00%
Never married	3,883,832	30.10%
Now married, except separated	6,941,866	53.80%
Separated	193,546	1.50%
Widowed	709,670	5.50%
Divorced	1,174,182	9.10%
RESPONSIBILITY FOR GRANDCHILDREN UNDER 18 YEARS		
Responsible for grandchild(ren)	69,624	38.50%
VETERAN STATUS		
Civilian population 18 years and over	12,090,873	100.00%
Civilian veteran	1,305,814	10.80%
PLACE OF BIRTH, CITIZENSHIP STATUS AND YEAR OF ENTRY		
Total population	16,817,286	100.00%
Native	16,225,872	96.48%
Foreign born	591,414	3.52%
WORLD REGION OF BIRTH OF FOREIGN BORN		
Foreign-born population excluding populatio	591,414	100.00%
Europe	430,549	72.80%
Asia	2,957	0.50%
Africa	4,731	0.80%
Oceania	1,774	0.30%
Latin America	130,702	22.10%
Northern America	20,699	3.50%
LANGUAGE SPOKEN AT HOME AND ABILITY TO SPEAK ENGLISH		
Population 5 years and over	15,510,643	100.00%
English only	14,331,834	92.40%
Language other than English	1,178,809	7.60%
Speak English less than "very well"	341,234	2.20%

Reference: Calandra Italian American Institute, Research and Education

*U.S. Census 2000 Ancestry: Italian (030-031, 051-074)

**Data Set: 2004 American Community Survey