

Community Profile Builder Guide

<http://www.thearda.com/DemographicMap/>

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What is the Community Profile Builder?

The Community Profile Builder allows you to examine the demographic, religious and cultural contours of your community online. Using just a ZIP code (or an address) and setting the parameters for how large an area you would like to examine, the ARDA's Community Profile Builder provides a wealth of information about your community and shows how your community is changing.

To build your community's profile, go to: <http://www.thearda.com/DemographicMap/>

What types of information are available in the Community Profile Builder?

The Community Profile Builder offers you information on the residents and the religious organizations in your community.

I. Information on Residents

The foundation of a community profile is demographic data such as the age, race, education, income and family structure of community residents.

II. Information on Religious Congregations

The Community Profile Builder shows the location of each congregation in your selected area, gives you a list of the congregations, and summarizes the overall religious makeup of your county, metro area or state.

What types of communities can I profile?

The types and sizes of communities that you will be able to profile using the ARDA's Community Profile Builder online tool are completely at your discretion. You are in charge of how large a net is cast around your community.

How do I decide what community level to profile?

The community level (town, county, state, etc.) that you choose to profile should be based on both your own interests and how the data will be used. Typically, you will want to profile the community or area your organization is seeking to serve, although you also may be interested in comparing your area with nearby communities, counties, or states.

First Steps

Using the ARDA's Community Profile Builder online tool is easy. The following are step-by-step instructions on how to start gathering quality data on your community:

1. First, go to the following address: <http://www.thearda.com/DemographicMap/>
2. Enter your U.S. ZIP code, city and state, or complete address in the box at the top of the page and click "Go." After clicking "Go," the map will take you to your community and show you all of the congregations in the area.
3. Enter the radius (in miles) that you would like the online tool to include. One option is to think of driving distance. How far do people typically travel to come to your congregation?
4. Click on the map to set the center point for the radius you selected. A dashed circle will appear showing you the areas from which the tool will draw its data.
5. Finally, click the "Profile" button. Doing so will generate your report for the area you selected.
6. Investigate your community!

ARDA Community Profile

The report generates eight different types of community profile information. You can cycle through each type of information using the gray tabs toward the top of the page. The following section provides a description of what can be found under each tab (labeled "Navigating"), where the numbers come from ("Sources"), what certain terms mean ("Definitions"), as well as suggestions on how the community profile can be used (labeled "Application").

Introduction

This page provides a map of the area you selected. The dashed circle represents the radius you designated on the previous page. The map also shows the [census block groups](#) (areas of 600-3000 people) that are included in the report. It is important to realize that any census block group that is touched by the radius you designate is included, even if the radius only covers a small portion of the total census block group. The map also provides markers for each congregation on the map.

In the text above the map, you find the total number of block groups included in the report, the counties from which these results are drawn, and the total population included in the report. This information is repeated at the top of each tab.

Religion

Navigating

Under the religion tab, you will find a list of the congregations in the area you specified. This list provides both the name of each congregation as well as its denomination. Is your congregation missing? Please [contact us](#) to have it added to our databases.

Use the hyperlinks for many of the denominations to further explore their history, membership data, trends and member profile on the ARDA.

Below the list of congregations you will find a religious change report from 2000 to 2010 for the counties included in your selected area. This report shows the growth or decline of the various religious groups operating in your community over a 10-year period.

Sources

2000-2010 change data were collected by the [Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies \(ASARB\)](#) and include statistics for 236 religious groups, providing information on the number of their congregations and adherents within each state and county in the United States.

Definitions

Percent change: Percent change from 2000 to 2010 highlights the growth or decline of each religious group over that period. Positive numbers denote growth; negative numbers indicate decline. Please note that the size of the religious group's change does not equal its total size in the community (i.e., sometimes smaller groups grow more quickly).

Application: Understanding Your Religious Ecology

The information under the "Religion" tab gives an overview of your congregation's religious environment. This information may help you find other congregations for partnering to more

effectively serve the community. It also reveals the religious changes in your area and shows you what religious groups have grown or declined most dramatically.

Housing

Navigating

The next tab provides information on housing for your community. The first table highlights the overall population mobility for your area. This data can give you a sense for how much turnover there is in a given area.

This tab also provides a housing report that displays the total housing units in your community and the proportion of those that are rental units. In addition, the ages of the housing units and their value are listed.

Sources

The information shown here is drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS), which is the largest household survey in the United States. Each year, about one in 38 U.S. households are invited to participate in it. The ACS collects the information shown in this tab and other important data in order to describe the characteristics of population and housing in the United States. For more information, go to the [U.S. Census](#).

Definitions

Percent change: The percent change column under “Housing Report” shows the growth or decline in the total number of housing units that exist in your selected area, as well as the growth or decline of certain types of housing units. Positive percent change denotes a greater number of units while negative percent changes signals fewer units.

Application: Population Turnover

Under the “Housing” tab, you will find information about the percentage of residents in your community who were in the same house, in the same census tract, in the U.S., or outside of it one year ago. This information sheds light on the amount of turnover there is in your community. High levels of turnover can result in various ministry challenges for a congregation. However, such challenges may result in unique opportunities to serve an area with high population turnover.

The percent of your community living in rental housing also may signal unique areas of ministry for your congregation.

Income

Navigating

The income tab first displays the percentage of residents in your area that are either at the poverty level or near the poverty level.

The next table provides data on how many residents in your area are employed, in the armed forces, unemployed or not in the labor force. This report also shows the types of occupations that are employing the workforce.

The final table provides the percent of residents that are at each level of household income, as well as the average income for your selected area.

Sources

The information shown here is drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS) which is the largest household survey in the United States. Each year, about one in 38 U.S. households are invited to participate in it. The ACS collects the information shown in this tab and other important data in order to describe the characteristics of population and housing in the United States. For more information, go to the [U.S. Census](#).

Definitions

Poverty level: A collection of money income thresholds that varies by family size and composition is used by the Census Bureau to determine who is at or near the poverty level. You can find out more about how the Census Bureau measures poverty, read examples and view the income thresholds used by the Census Bureau [here](#).

Percent change: The percent change column in each table shows the growth or decline in total numbers for each row. Positive numbers signal growth in total numbers, while negative numbers signal decline.

Census tract: Census tracts are small, relatively stable geographic areas that usually have a population of 1,200 to 8,000. For more information on these areas and how they are defined, go to the [U.S. Census](#).

Unemployed vs. Not in Labor Force: Find out about the categories the government uses to determine employment status [here](#).

Application: Poverty and (Un)employment

Using the employment data found under the “Employment/Income” tab can highlight areas within your community that your congregation may be able to serve. For some communities, there are high numbers of military. This group may benefit from particular types of ministries. Similarly, a large population of unemployed individuals in your community may signal an area

that your congregation can more effectively serve. Finally, a large number of individuals counted as “not in labor force” may highlight large numbers of young people or retired individuals in your community. Comparing this to the age breakdown of your community may generate areas of ministry to the specific needs of the people surrounding your congregation.

The poverty and household income data can provide a great look at whether there are people in your community in need of assistance. Congregations in areas with people at or near the poverty level could find ways to serve those who need assistance in meeting their physical needs.

Gender/Age

Navigating

This tab first provides the total population for the selected area. Directly beneath this is the gender distribution for the total population.

Below, you will find the age distribution for the total population, with general and more detailed tables.

Sources

The information shown here is drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS) which is the largest household survey in the United States. Each year, about one in 38 U.S. households are invited to participate in it. The ACS collects the information shown in this tab and other important data in order to describe the characteristics of population and housing in the United States. For more information, go to the [U.S. Census](#).

Definitions

Percent change: The percent change column in each table shows the growth or decline in total numbers for each row. Positive numbers signal growth in total numbers, while negative numbers signal decline.

Application: Youth Groups or Bingo Night?

Or both? Looking at the age distribution of your community under the “Gender/Age” tab can provide your congregation with useful information as to whether there are a lot of young people in your area or a significant number of older individuals who may be best served by different ministries. Perhaps, your community has many individuals in both age ranges.

Education

Navigating

The first table indicates different levels of educational attainment for adults (age 25+). Below there is a table showing the types of schools in which people (age 3+) are enrolled.

Sources

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Definitions

Percent change: The percent change column in each table shows the growth or decline in total numbers for each row. Positive numbers signal growth in total numbers, while negative numbers signal decline.

Application: High-school Dropouts and College Students

The information in this tab can be helpful in exploring whether there are high school dropouts or college students in your community. Perhaps your congregation could offer a college student ministry or GED test help.

If there are many school children or college educated people in your community, additional ideas include offering after school programs and book studies for highly educated adults.

Family

Navigating

The first table shows the marital status of people (age 15+). Below there is a table showing the household and family types in your community.

Sources

The information shown here is drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS) which is the largest household survey in the United States. Each year, about one in 38 U.S. households are invited to participate in it. The ACS collects the information shown in this tab and other important data in order to describe the characteristics of population and housing in the United States. For more information, go to the [U.S. Census](#).

Definitions

Percent change: The percent change column in each table shows the growth or decline in total numbers for each row. Positive numbers signal growth in total numbers, while negative numbers signal decline.

Household: All people who occupy a housing unit as their usual place of residence.

Householder: A person (age 15+) who rents or owns a housing unit.

Family household: A household where at least one person is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Nonfamily household: A household where the householder lives alone or where the householder shares the living quarters with someone to whom he/she is not related.

Application: Single, Divorced, or Widowed

Information on marital statuses in the “Family” tab may provide unique opportunities for ministry and service for your congregation. Particular ministries could serve single adults, people who have experienced divorce, and people whose spouse has died.

Your congregation may also find the information about household and family types to be helpful. Perhaps you could serve married couples, single parents, or people living alone.

Race/Ethnicity

Navigating

The final tab first provides information about how many people were born in a foreign country. The next table shows the relative size of the different racial groups present in your community. Below there is a table showing the languages that are spoken in the homes of your community.

Sources

The information shown here is drawn from the American Community Survey (ACS) which is the largest household survey in the United States. Each year, about one in 38 U.S. households are invited to participate in it. The ACS collects the information shown in this tab and other important data in order to describe the characteristics of population and housing in the United States. For more information, go to the [U.S. Census](#).

Definitions

Percent change: The percent change column denotes the overall increase or decrease in the total numbers of people in your chosen area who identify with each particular racial category.

White (non-Hispanic/Latino): A person with origins from the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East, or North Africa, including, for example, people who say “White,” Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Arab, Moroccan, or Caucasian. (This definition is drawn from the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).)

Hispanic/Latino: Individuals who report that they are one of the specific Spanish, Hispanic or Latino categories listed – “Mexican,” “Puerto Rican” or “Cuban” – as well as those who indicate they are “another Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin.” Those who do not identify with one of the specific origins listed but indicate they are “another Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin” are from Spain, the Spanish-speaking countries of Central or South America, or the Dominican Republic. (This definition is drawn directly from the [U.S. Census Bureau](#).)

Black/African-American, American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, other race, multi-racial: Find out more about how the U.S. Census Bureau defines these racial categories [here](#).

Application: Diversity

Like much of the other information found in the Community Profile Builder, the diversity of your community highlighted in the “Race/Ethnicity” tab may provide unique opportunities for ministry and service for your congregation. It could be that there is an enclave of a particular ethnic group in your community. Particular ministries or service projects could serve this group.

At the bottom of this page you may find that Spanish or another language is commonly spoken in the home. Knowing this could shape outreach efforts into the community.

Wrapping Up: Comparing Congregation and Community Profiles

Congregations are integral parts of their communities. However, not all congregations and their congregants reflect their surrounding communities. Using any data you have on who worships in your congregation and comparing it to your community profile will give you an idea as to whether your congregation reflects your surrounding community. Some areas that you may be able to directly compare are:

- Gender
- Age
- Race/Ethnicity
- Marital status

It also may be possible to indirectly compare the educational level, income level, and poverty status of your congregants with that of the surrounding community.

If your congregation does not reflect the surrounding community, you may want to use the information from this Community Profile Builder to strategize about how your congregation might better serve or reach out to individuals and families in your area.