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# ACS Data User Perspectives

Association of Public Data Users  
Annual Conference, Washington, DC

Mark Mather

September 2016

POPULATION REFERENCE BUREAU | [www.prb.org](http://www.prb.org)

# Focus of Presentation

- Background on ACS Data Users Group
  - Key Activities
- Results from ACS Data User Survey
- Lessons Learned

# What is an ACS Data User Group?

- PRB and Sabre Systems established the group in 2012 in partnership with U.S. Census Bureau
- Goal is to help data users communicate with each other about key ACS data issues and applications
- Steering Committee formed to help guide the selection of topics and activities
- Membership is free and open to all ACS data users

# Why Form an ACS Data User Group?

- Complex survey, always changing
  - Changes to questionnaire
  - Changes to sampling design and methods
  - Changes to data products
- Widely used by diverse group of data users, many working in isolation
- Unmet need related to ACS data and issues



## ■ Activities Include:

- Webinars on ACS data issues and applications
- Organized sessions at professional meetings
- ACS Data Users Conferences
  - Held conferences in 2014 and 2015
  - Planning Spring 2017 Conference (More info coming this fall)
- ACS Online Community
  - Nearly 1,700 members

# AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY DATA USERS GROUP

The ACS Online Community is a site where people can share messages, materials, and announcements related to ACS data, methods, and events.

## My Groups

- ACS Basics
- ACS Data for Small Geographic Areas and Population Subgroups
- ACS Documentation
- ACS Public Use Microdata Samples (PUMS)
- ACS Summary Files
- American FactFinder
- Application Programming Interface (API)
- Data Products Redesign Group
- Mapping ACS Data / GIS Applications
- Measuring Trends Over Time with ACS Data

## Need Help?

View a [Tutorial](#) on the New ACS Online Community website (PDF)

## Upcoming Events

No events start on this date.

## Latest Activity

12 Aug 2016



**Javier** in [Application Programming Interface \(API\)](#)

[Using the Census API with the American Community Survey Webinar](#)

The Census Bureau Application Programming Interface (API) lets developers customize Census Bureau statistics into apps that provide users access to publicly available datasets, including the American Community Survey (ACS). In this webinar, we will discuss how to access the API, identify ACS variables and geographies to build queries, and provide additional resources. Date and Time: Monday, August 15th from 2:00-3:00 p.m. EDT Join WebEx Meeting Join by Phone (to access the audio portion of...

Like 18 days ago More

10 Aug 2016

## #ACSdata



**Todd Graham**  
@MetroGram

ICYMI, state of residence greatly determines un/insured outcome for low-income pop.  
[census.gov/did/www/sahie/...](http://census.gov/did/www/sahie/)  
#ACSdata



1h

**KSDC** KY State Data Center  
@ky\_sdc

Mark your calendar on 9/6 at 10 am! #Free webinar: Making Sense of the ACS for Kentucky via [@uscensusbureau](http://bit.ly/2bzetwW)  
[bit.ly/2bzetwW](http://bit.ly/2bzetwW)

# ACS Online Community Word Cloud

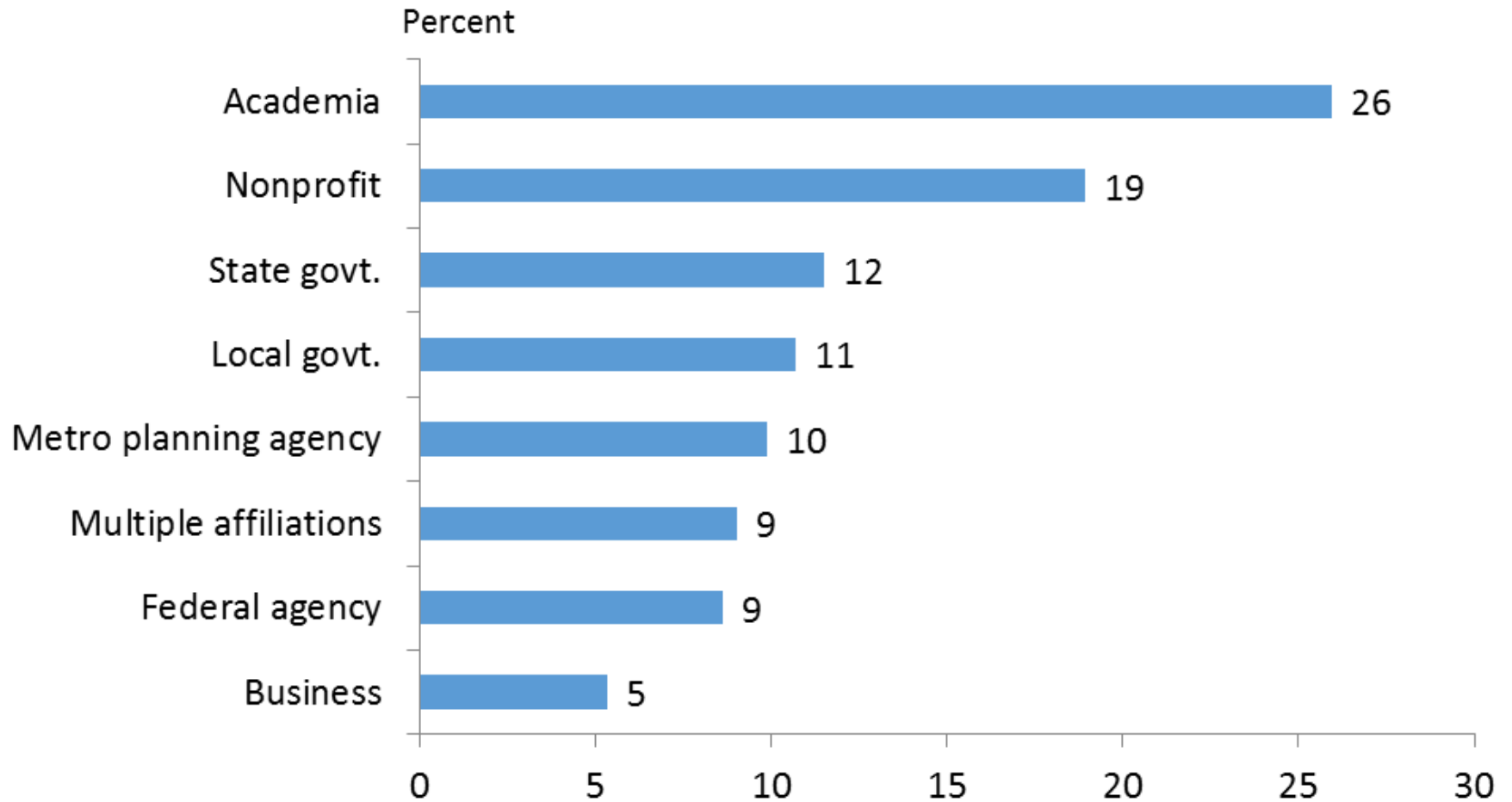
access **acs** american anyone area bureau **census** change created  
**data** different documentation download error **estimates** excel  
**file** geographies **gov** group help household import include information looking  
number population presentation problem provide **puma** **pums** question  
release sample state summary survey **table** thanks think transportation used  
users variable webinar work **year** yr

# ACS Data User Survey

- Conducted in April 2015
- 243 responses
- Topics
  - Affiliation
  - ACS knowledge and use
  - Key ACS data issues
  - Tools and capabilities

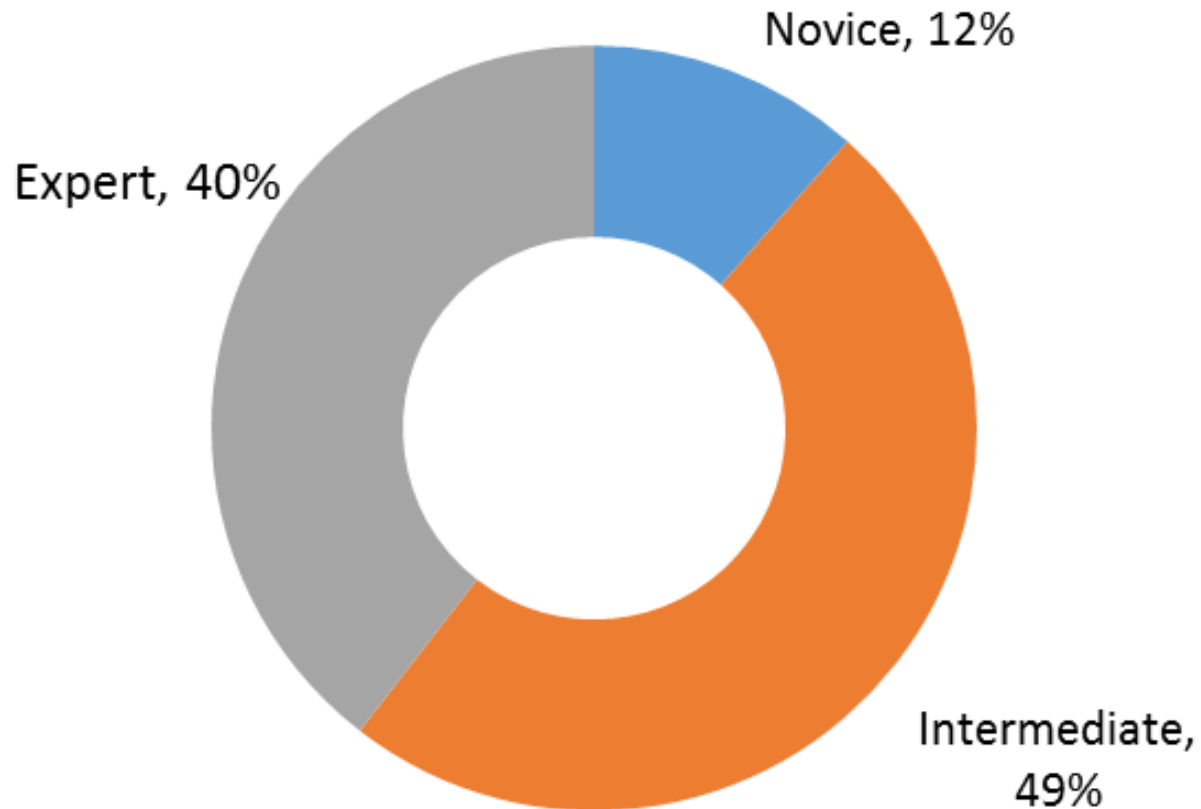


# Affiliations of Survey Respondents



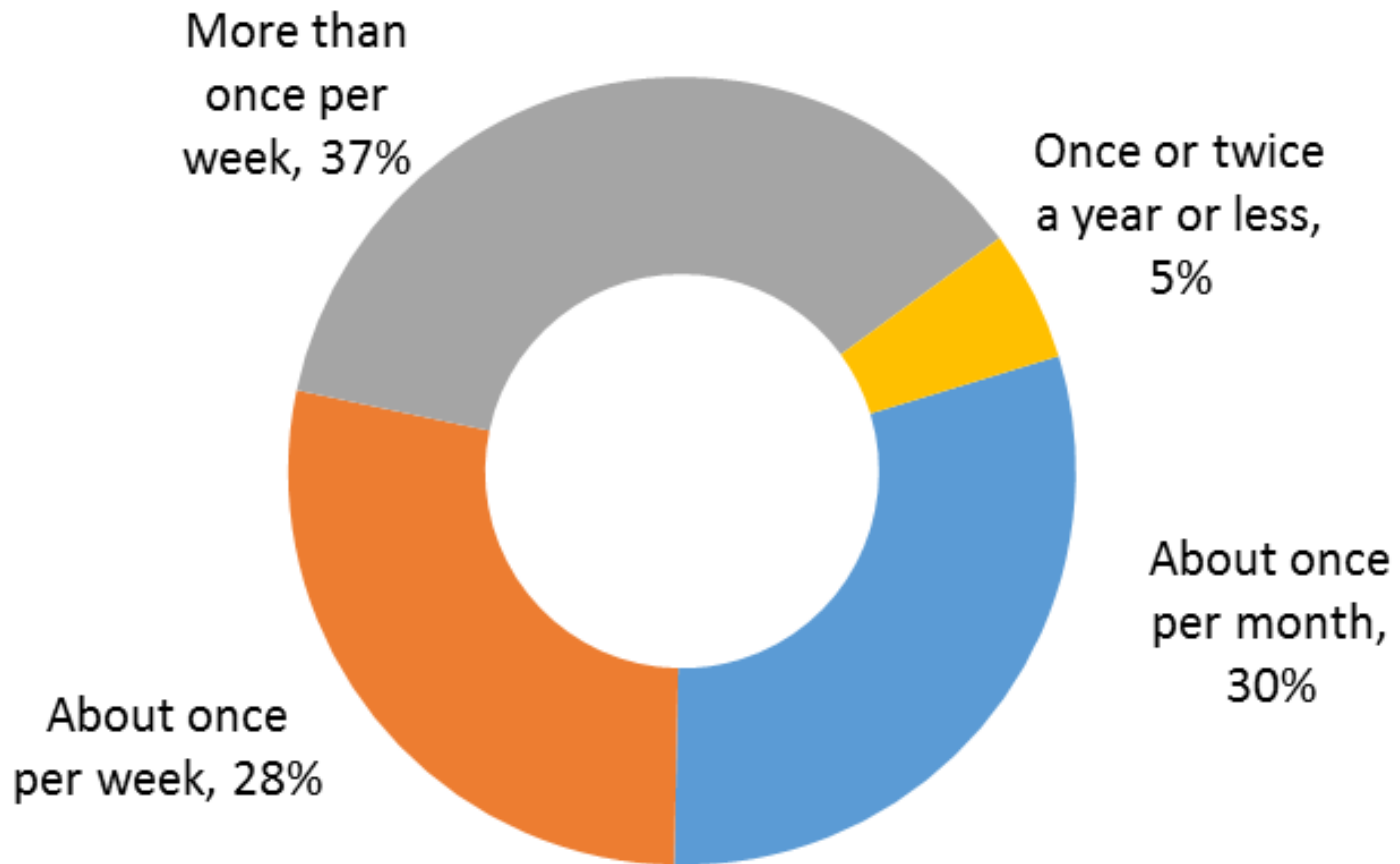
Source: ACS Online Community Survey (N= 243)

# ACS Expertise of Survey Respondents



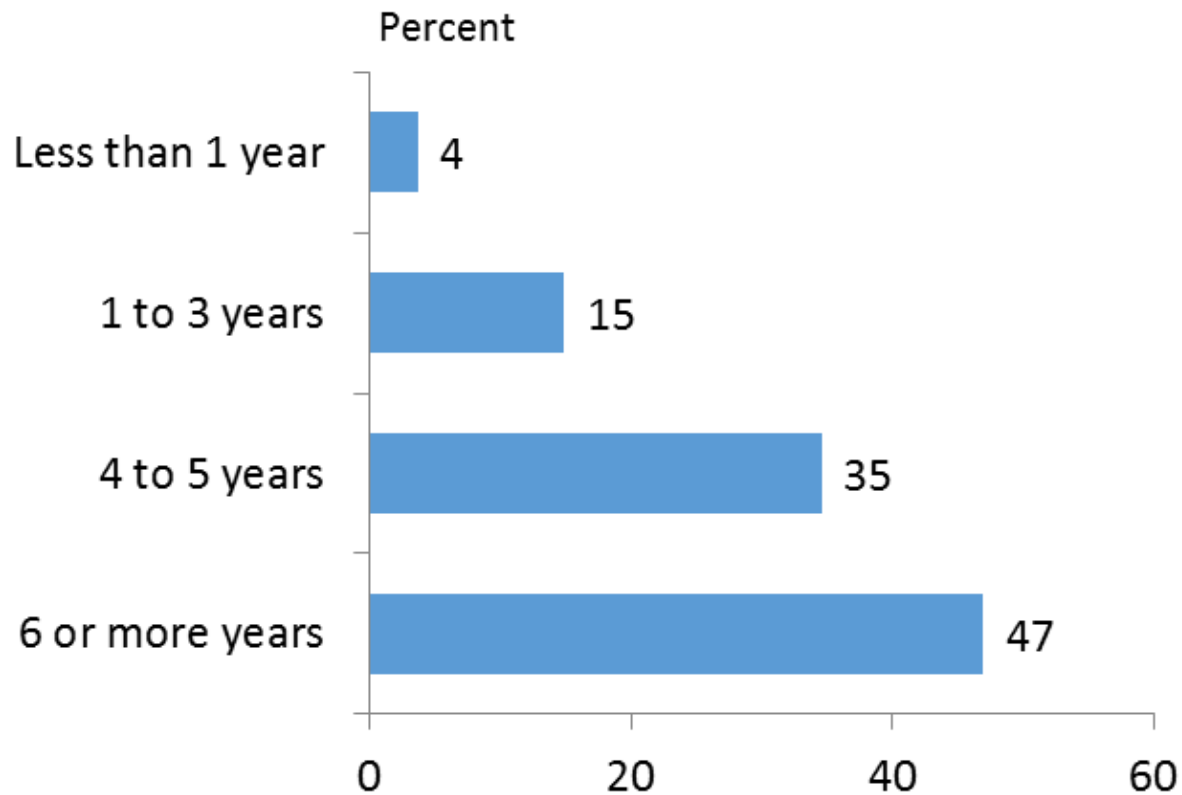
Source: ACS Online Community Survey (N= 243)

# Frequency of ACS Use Among Survey Respondents



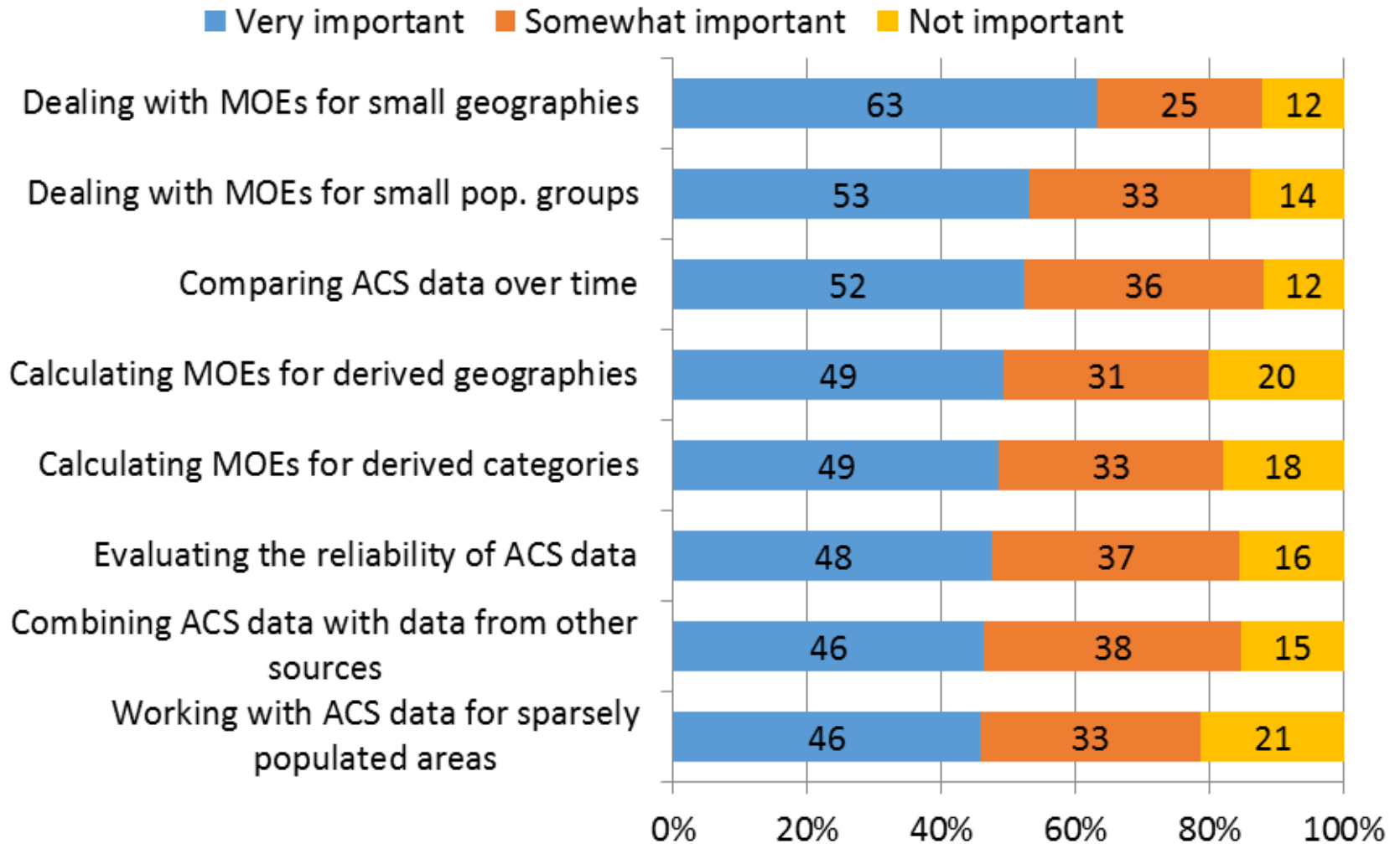
Source: ACS Online Community Survey (N= 243)

# Length of ACS Use Among Survey Respondents



Source: ACS Online Community Survey (N= 243)

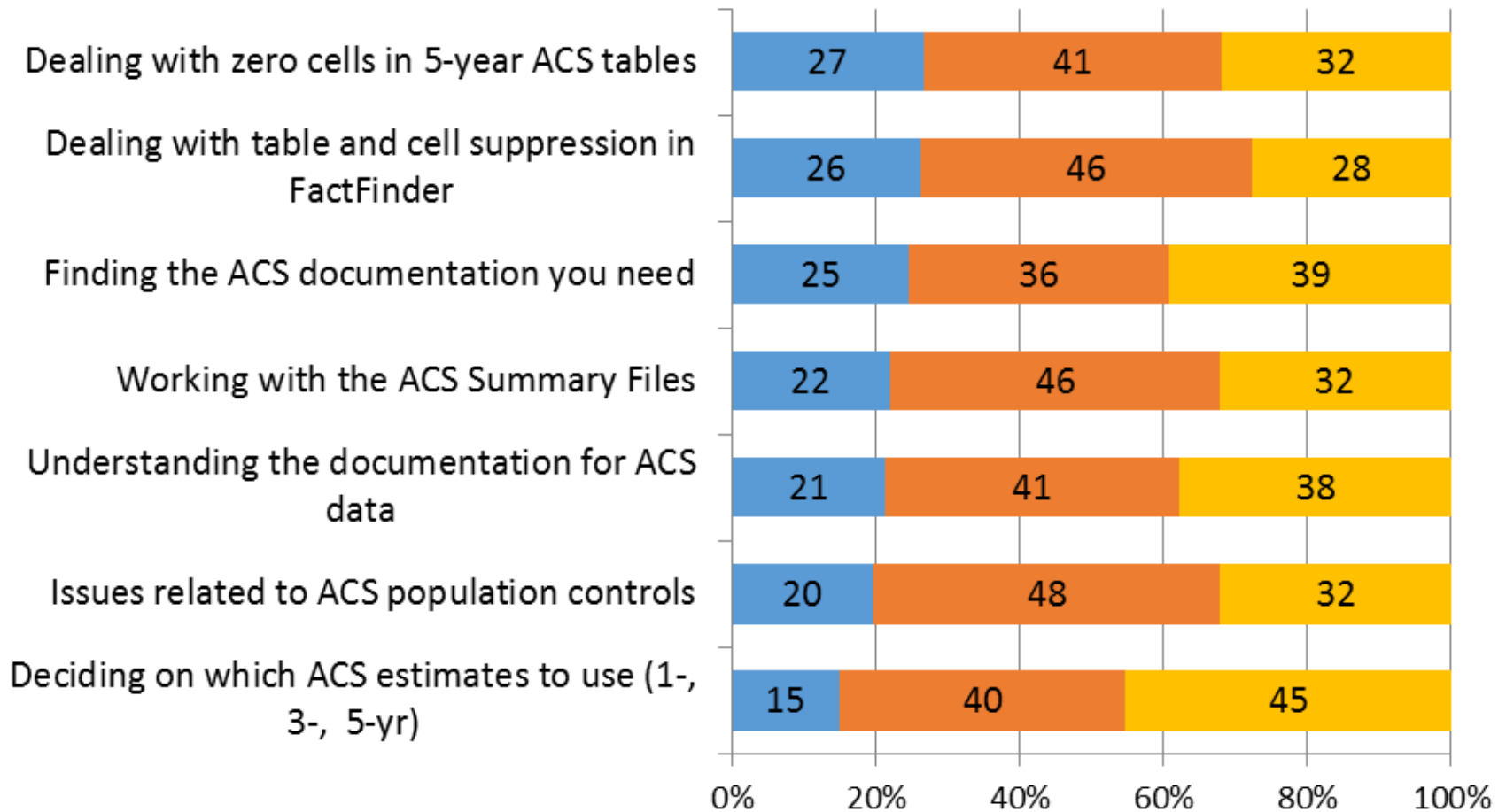
# Key Challenges for ACS Data Users



Source: ACS Online Community Survey (N= 243).

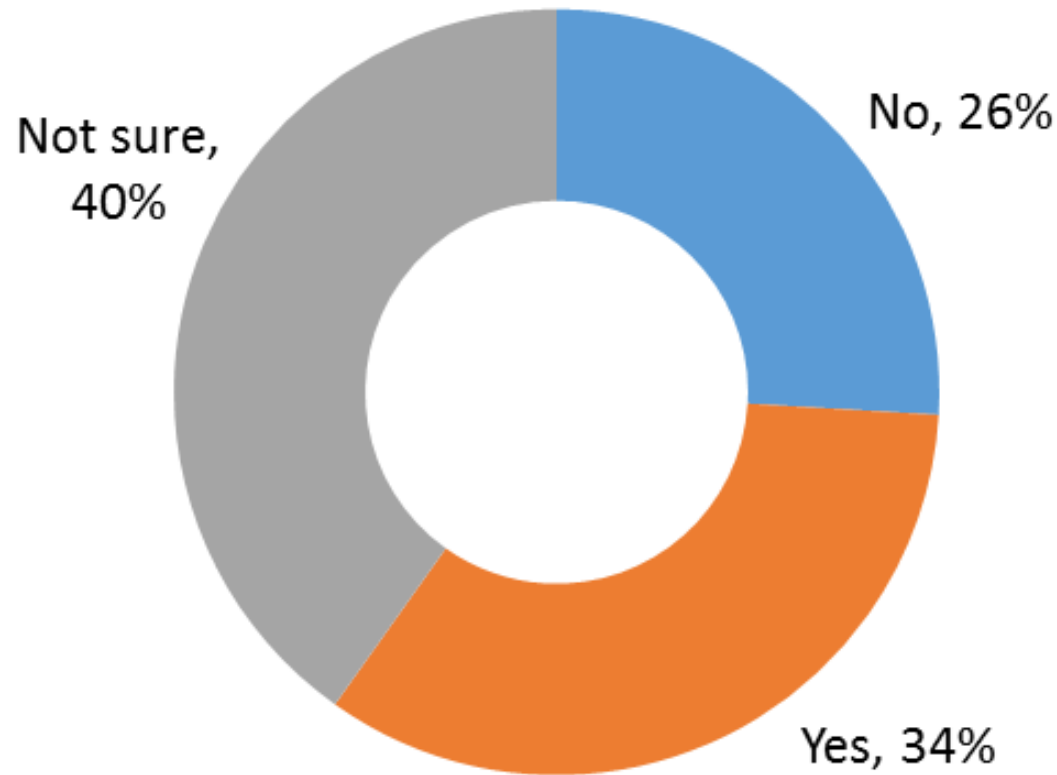
# Less Critical ACS Issues

■ Very important   ■ Somewhat important   ■ Not important



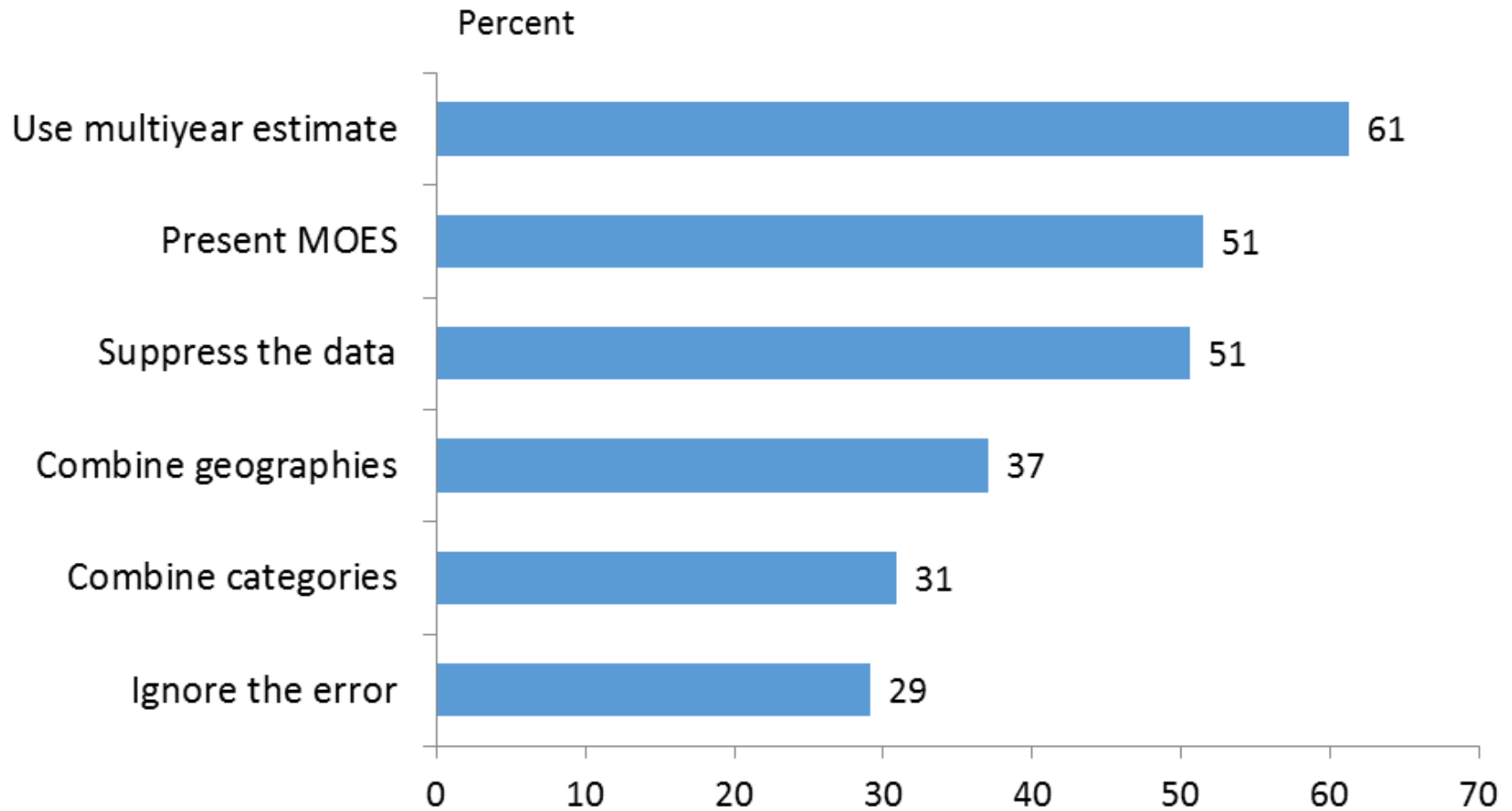
Source: ACS Online Community Survey (N= 243).

# Will Loss of 3-Year ACS Data Affect Your Work?



Source: ACS Online Community Survey (N= 239).

# How ACS Data Users Deal with Large Margins of Error

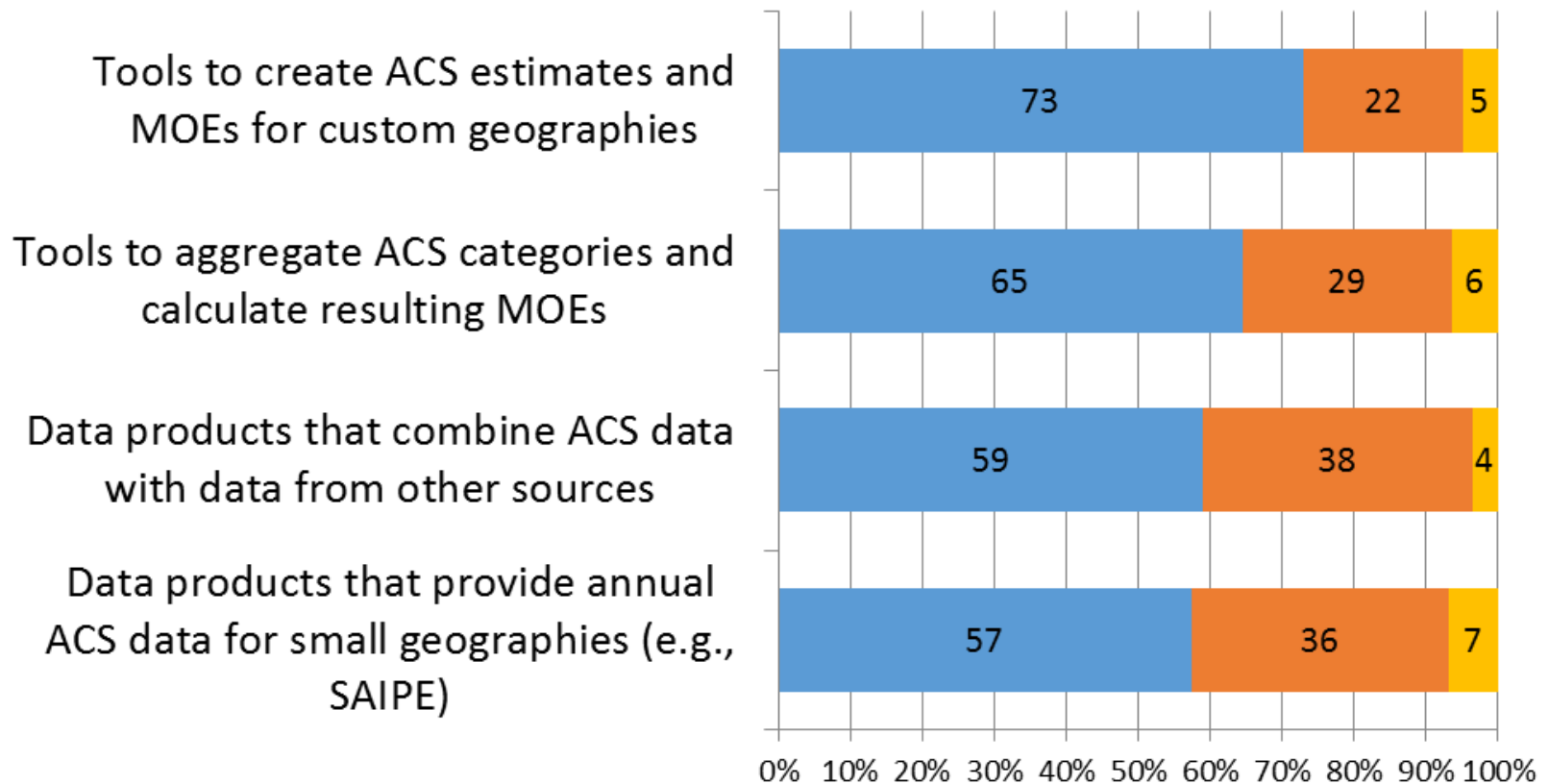


Source: ACS Online Community Survey (N= 243)



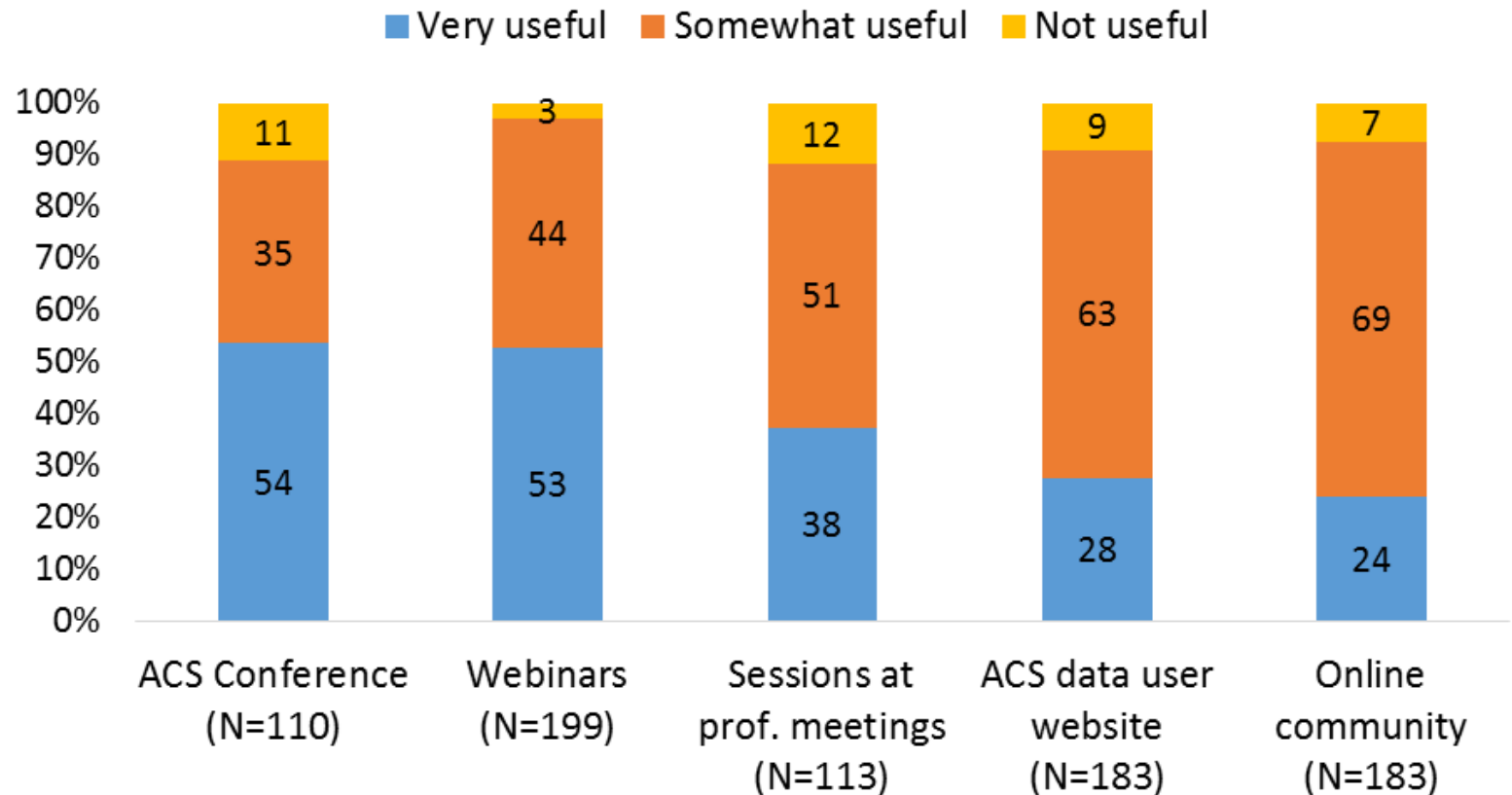
# Tools and Capabilities that Would be Useful to ACS Data Users

■ Very Useful   ■ Somewhat Useful   ■ Not Useful



Source: ACS Online Community Survey (N= 243).

# Perspectives on ACS Data User Group Activities



Source: ACS Online Community Survey.

# Lessons Learned

- Make a special effort to reach out to data users outside of your discipline
- Reach out to data users to determine their key issues and needs (don't assume)
- Provide opportunities for data users to network, face to face
- Provide information and tools that make their (work)lives easier

# For More Information

- Visit the ACS Online Community website  
(<https://acsdatacommunity.prb.org>)

- Contact

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# THANK YOU

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