

## Census Data Overview

The US Census Bureau provides useful population information that you can use to locate underserved forestland owners such as race, income, education level, and number of people living under the poverty line. The highest data resolution you can find from census data is at the **census block** level. The size depends on the number of people living in an area. In highly populated areas (e.g. cities), it is the size of a city block. In rural places, a block can cover a much larger area. Below is the hierarchy of census data:

USA → State → County → Census Tract → Census Block Group → Census Block

Census data is presented in Summary Files (SF). There are 4 Summary Files (SF1 to SF4). Each differs in data resolution, the kind of information it contains, and whether they are derived from a total count (100%) or a sample of the population.

SUMMARY FILE	DESCRIPTION
SF1 (Summary File 1)	This is a 100% sample of the whole population of the United States, down to the Census Block level. It has information on age, sex, race, Hispanic/Latino origin, household relationship, whether residence is owned or rented.
SF2 (Summary File 2)	This is a 100% sample of the whole population of the United States, down to the Census Block level. It has the same information as SF1, but is organized by race or tribe. No tables are available for geographic areas having a population of less than 100.
SF3 (Summary File 3)	This is a 1-in-6 sample of the population, down to the Census Block Group level (less resolution than SF1 and SF2). It presents detailed population and housing data (such as place of birth, education, employment status, income, value of housing unit).
SF4 (Summary File 4)	This is a 1-in 6 sample of the population, down to the Census tract level (less resolution than SF1, SF2 and SF3). It has the same information as SF3, but is organized by race or tribe.

### Free Online Census Data Sources

#### **North Carolina State Data Center: Census Lookup (<http://census.osbm.state.nc.us/lookup/>)**

Contains SF1 and SF3 data for the State of North Carolina. The tables are customizable, which means that you can choose which counties, zip codes, municipalities or townships you want to focus on and what kind of information you need (e.g. number of African Americans in Warren county) using a series of drop down menus and check boxes. Data is displayed in html tables. There are limits to how much data you can download at any one time, but you can download as many times as you want. Most data is from the 2000 census.

#### **American Fact Finder**

#### **([http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?\\_lang=en&\\_ts=](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DatasetMainPageServlet?_lang=en&_ts=))**

Contains all Summary Files (1-4) for all 50 states and US territories from the 2000 census and SF1/SF3 data from the 1990 census. The tables are customizable, and can be downloaded in either Excel or Text format. You can also choose from a selection of interactive thematic maps. The maps can be customized to display features such as schools, hospitals, railroads, etc.

#### **ESRI (Environmental Systems Research Institute)**

#### **([http://arcdata.esri.com/data/tiger2000/tiger\\_download.cfm](http://arcdata.esri.com/data/tiger2000/tiger_download.cfm))**

Besides having SF1 and SF3 data for all 50 states, this site contains boundary files from Census block to State level in shapefile format. This data can be used with ArcView or ArcMap software for displaying and querying maps. Data can be selected by county or by layer (e.g. 1990 County demographics, Native American Areas, Roads, etc). Files are downloaded as zip files. You can only download 20 GB of data at any one time, but you can download as many times as you want. Data are from the 1990 and 2000 census.