



Weights in the March CPS – A Summary

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The survey weights are the theoretical number of people/families/households that a person, family, or household represents in the population. For example, if a household has a weight of 1,500 then the household is theoretically representing 1,500 other households. The Current Population Survey selects households to be in the sample with varying probabilities. The probability of selecting a household can depend on what state its in, whether its within a Metropolitan Statistical Area, or whether minority group members reside in it (e.g., Hispanic households are oversampled in the Annual Demographic Supplement). Not only are households selected with varying probabilities, but certain types of households and people also vary in their likelihood to participate in the survey. In order to control for differential nonresponse, the CPS adjusts the CPS survey weights (household/family/person weights) to be roughly equal to a set of population controls taken from Census Population Estimates. For many purposes it is essential to use these weights to obtain unbiased estimates and to obtain population counts.

1) Basic (final) person weight:

The basic person weight is used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics to construct the monthly labor force status estimates. The Basic (final) person weight is equal to zero for populations not sampled in the monthly surveys other than the Annual Demographic Supplement (e.g., armed forces, Hispanic oversample)

2) Annual Demographic Supplement person weight (also called the March Supplement person weight):

The March supplement weight should be used for producing estimates using the *Annual Demographic Supplement (ADS)* data. The ADS weight can be used to work with the *Hispanic population over-sample* and/or analysis with an interest in members of the *armed forces*.

- 3) March Supplement family weight:
The ADS family weight should be used when tabulating estimates of *families and family composition*. The family weight is the ADS weight of the family head. For persons in group quarters, the family weight coincides with the March supplement person weight (except when there is a family living in a group quarter). Note that related subfamilies have different family weights from the primary family they belong to. This could produce inconsistent estimates for some very specific family composition questions.
- 4) March Supplement household weight: The ADS household weight is equal to the household reference person's ADS person weight. This weight should be used when tabulating estimates of households. For group quarters, the household weight usually corresponds to the March supplement person weight of the first person in the group quarter.
- 5) Earnings weight (also sometimes called outgoing rotation weight):
Only *adult civilians in the two outgoing rotations* (4 and 8) receive an earnings weight. Note that the earnings weight is roughly 4 times the original person weight. In non-ADS files, only rotations 4 and 8 were asked certain earnings questions (usual hourly and weekly earnings). Hence, if one wants to compare the ADS data with data from other months, the earnings weight should be used. If, on the other hand, the analysis is restricted to the ADS data only, then there is no need to use the earnings weight

References:

- (1) "Design and Methodology," Technical Paper 63(R), Current Population Survey, March 2000.
- (2) "Design and Methodology," Technical Paper 40, Current Population Survey, January 1978.
- (3) "The Current Population Survey: A Report on Methodology," Technical Paper 7, Bureau of the Census, 1963.