Housing Type

Source 1. American Community Survey (2021)

![Diagram: Housing Type Question in 2021 ACS Questionnaire](source)


![Diagram: Housing Type Question in 2017 AHS Questionnaire](source)
Source 3. PSRC Household Travel Survey (2019)

![Image](image.png)

Figure 5: Housing type question in 2019 PSRC questionnaire (source)

Comparison

All three questions are quite similar, offering several categories to describe the respondent’s housing type such as house, apartment, mobile home, or vehicle. Of the three sources, AHS provides the greatest number of specific categories, though its responses do not differentiate much within individual categories (e.g., there is no small vs. large apartment building). The surveys all have different distinctions between types of houses and apartments. ACS and PSRC split the house category into attached and detached options, while AHS only has one house designation. Likewise, ACS defines six different sizes of apartment building, PSRC uses two apartment sizes, and AHS includes only one “Apartment, flat” category. Lastly, there are minor differences in phrasing: ACS asks “Which best describes…”, AHS asks “Is this…”, and PSRC asks “What type of…”?

Recommendation

We recommend using the PSRC question as stated. PSRC’s responses are straightforward, exhaustive, and clear. Their question captures important distinctions between densely spaced attached houses and detached homes, as well as small and large apartment buildings, without requiring respondents to be highly
knowledgeable of their residence (for instance, residents might not know whether their building has 10 to 19 or 20 to 49 units in the ACS question).