

[Data Training Webinar: Poverty Area Measures - YouTube](#)

Good afternoon everyone, My name is Ashley Murdie – your host for today's webinar. On behalf of USDA's Economic Research Service, welcome and thank you for joining us in the ninth segment of our Data Training Webinar Series. Today's webinar spotlights our Poverty Area Measures – a resource also known as PAM, which includes measures that have been used by policymakers and stakeholders since the 1960s to target, implement, and monitor Federal programs supporting a range of initiatives.

As part of the Data Training Webinar Series, this webinar expands our continued efforts to teach those interested in ERS data how to access and fully utilize our many data products. And what better way to do so than connecting you directly with the experts? Over the last year, this webinar series has connected viewers with ERS specialists on a variety of data products. If interested, recordings of these Data Training Webinars, along with future webinar announcements, can be found on our website, which we'll link to in the message center here shortly.

Now, before I introduce our speakers, I'd like to note that this webinar is being recorded and will be posted on the ERS website next week. If at any time during the webinar, you have questions, please enter them into the chat feature at the bottom left-hand corner of the screen, and our speakers will help answer those at the end of today's presentation.

Now, without further ado, it's a pleasure to introduce today's speakers. Our presenters for this webinar are ERS Geographer Tracey Farrigan and ERS Economist Austin Sanders. Tracey and Austin both serve in the Rural Economy Branch of our Resource and Rural Economics Division, where Tracey conducts research related to rural household well-being with a focus on economically distressed communities and vulnerable populations, and Austin produces data products and analyses that highlight economic and demographic conditions in rural America. Thank you both for joining us today. The floor is yours.

Thanks Ashley, and thank you everyone for joining us for today's Data Training Webinar on Poverty Area Measures. Again, I am Tracey Farrigan, and I am the Poverty Area Measures data product manager along with my co-host Austin Sanders.

The Poverty Area Measures Data Product, one second please, my slides are not advancing. Okay, looks like we're on track now. I'm sorry about that. The Poverty Area Measures Data Product, also referred to as PAM in this webinar, is an online resource for researchers, Federal agencies, policymakers, and practitioners working to better understand and address issues of poverty, rural development, and equitable access. PAM was initially released by the USDA Economic Research Service in November of 2022 and is updated periodically.

This Data Webinar includes a brief discussion of what are poverty areas and why do we care about them? What are poverty area measures, and how are they used? Then we turn to the PAM data product specifically, focusing on what it includes, how is it accessed, and how are the data used? I will provide some background along with highlights of what is unique about this data product. I'll introduce and explain the poverty area measures included in PAM, along with some

illustrations. Then I'll turn the presentation over to my colleague, Austin Sanders, who will demonstrate how to access the downloadable PAM data file and what it contains.

What are poverty areas? There is no one definition of a poverty area, but in the U.S., the term generally refers to a geographic area that has a relatively high incidence of income-based poverty among the resident population. Throughout this webinar and with respect to the contents of PAM, the incidence of poverty refers to the Official Poverty Measure published by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau uses a set of money income thresholds that vary by family size and composition to determine who is in poverty. The thresholds represent the Federal Government's estimate of the point below which a family of a given size has cash income insufficient to meet basic needs. The official poverty thresholds do not vary geographically, but they are updated annually for inflation.

Poverty status is determined by first calculating family total income, which includes money income before taxes and does not include capital gains or cash benefits. If a family's total income is less than the family's threshold, then that family and every individual in it is considered as being in poverty.

This information forms the basis for calculating the incidence of poverty used to develop the PAM measures, or rather, the spatial aggregation of families or individuals in poverty. The incidence of poverty is reported as an areawide headcount or as a percentage of an area's population, otherwise known as a poverty rate.

Why do we care about poverty areas? The circumstances for the existence of a poverty area and its impact on the community are context-specific. However, universally, it is understood that poverty areas face a number of capacity challenges that can be a detriment to the well-being of poor and non-poor residents alike. This includes economic, social, institutional, community, environmental, and infrastructure capacity challenges. All of which can influence and be influenced by each other. Further, the longer a poverty area exists, the more entrenched these challenges become and the greater the likelihood that individual outcomes will be negatively impacted. This has been shown to be particularly true for children who grow up in poor areas – their developmental outcomes are not only affected by their individual household well-being but also by the circumstances to which they are exposed in their community.

What are poverty area measures? Poverty area measures broadly consist of indicators that capture spatial-temporal variations in the incidence of poverty. They are most often generated as categorical variables. For instance, with a value equal to one if the geographic area of interest is determined to be a poverty area and equal to zero if it is not a poverty area. All of the measures in PAM are categorical variables. My co-presenter, Austin, will go over this in more detail when he discusses the downloadable PAM data file.

How are poverty area measures used? Poverty area measures have been used in countless research and policy applications. For example, since at least the 1960s, poverty area measures have been relied upon to target, implement, and monitor Federal programs designed to support a range of initiatives including but not limited to educational and employment opportunities, health care services, and healthy food access, transit services and community facility improvements,

housing assistance, and land development loans, fiscal health and administrative capacity of local governments, energy savings, and climate change resilience, aid to historically underserved population groups, access to telecommunication, including broadband.

The USDA Economic Research Service, or ERS for short, was an early innovator of poverty area measures used for research and policy by the Federal government, developing and producing measures for identifying the extent and duration of poverty in rural areas in particular since its establishment in 1961. The most recognized and widely used of those measures is persistent poverty counties, which captures the persistence of high poverty rates in a given area over a 30-year period. More information about this measure and its history can be found on the PAM website. Also, historical data files that include persistent poverty, as well as persistent child poverty counties, can be found on the ERS County Typology Code website.

The Poverty Area Measures data product builds upon ERS's rich history in this area of work by continuing to innovate and publish poverty area measures that are relevant to a broad range of stakeholders. For instance, Federal legislation in the early 2020s reinforced and expanded upon the demand for poverty area measures data by Federal agencies and non-federal stakeholders. For example, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 contained various poverty area definitions in conjunction with Federal program funding and allocation criteria. This included demand for poverty area measures at the census tract level of geography, which are administratively defined areas that are often used as neighborhood proxies and to delineate political boundaries, such as Congressional districts. There was also demand for the ability to adjust persistent poverty area measures, in particular, using different years of data and data sources. The PAM data product built upon existing ERS poverty area data products to provide these capabilities and more.

Specifically, the PAM data product includes commonly used poverty area measures at the county and census-tract levels. It contains a unique measure of enduring poverty, which captures the entrenchment of poverty over time. Most of the measures are available for decennial years from 1960 to present. All measures are geographically standardized to allow for direct comparison over time and space. PAM also offers end-users the flexibility to adjust temporal measures to meet their unique needs. It includes diverse geocoding that can be used with GIS software and supplemental data products, and the methodology for most poverty area measures incorporates data reliability metrics. Austin and I will go over each of these highlights in more detail through the remainder of this webinar.

PAM contains four poverty area definitions, which represent different types of poverty phenomenon based on the extent and duration of poverty in an area. The first is high poverty, which serves as the base for all of the other measures. It is defined by a poverty rate of 20 percent or more in a single time period. The second is extreme poverty, which is a subset of high poverty areas where the poverty rate is 40 percent or more in a single time period. It is generally understood that areawide poverty rates between 20 and 40 percent have the greatest marginal impact on individual well-being. Therefore, high and extreme poverty area measures can be thought of as critical bounds for impact and intervention.

The third measure is persistent poverty, which builds upon the high poverty area measure by taking time into account. Persistent poverty areas are defined by a poverty rate of 20 percent or more for four consecutive time periods, about 10 years apart, spanning approximately 30 years – this includes a baseline time period plus three evaluation periods. Persistently high poverty rates are likely to produce areawide poverty conditions that are structurally and demographically systemic. This entrenchment of poverty in an area is difficult to overcome.

That difficulty is reflected in the fourth measure, enduring poverty, which was first published by ERS in 2022 through the PAM data product. Enduring poverty areas are a subset of persistent poverty areas. They are defined by a poverty rate of 20 percent or more for at least five consecutive time periods, about ten years apart, spanning approximately 40 years or MORE. In other words, the enduring poverty area measure captures the duration of high poverty for a longer time period than does the persistent poverty area measure.

The four PAM measures are available for counties and census tracts within the 50 states and Washington, DC. The county measures include those derived from Decennial Census of Housing and Population data for the years 1960 through 2000. The Decennial Census was the primary nationwide data source for sub-state income and poverty statistics up until the early 2000s. In 2005, the Census Bureau launched the American Community Survey, which replaced the Decennial Census for income and poverty data collection. Nationwide poverty statistics for counties and census tracts have since been reported by the Census Bureau as 5-year period estimates. The November 2022 edition of PAM includes county measures derived from the estimates for 2007-2011 and 2015-2019. The census tract level measures use the same data sources and are available for the same years except for 1960, given the limitations of census tract geography and data collection at that time. The Census Bureau did not delineate census tract geography for the nation as a whole until 1990. Therefore, up until that time, census tract geography and corresponding poverty data was limited.

The geographic boundaries for the PAM measures are standardized to allow for comparison across each data time period as well as between census tracts and counties. That is, county and census tract geography and related geographic coding of Census Bureau data changes over time. This is particularly true of census tracts, which are in large part defined by population density. Therefore, for instance, tracts may split in half or be combined as population size changes. This creates difficulty when comparing data across years because the geographic boundaries and related geocode in the data will not align. PAM eliminates this problem by providing consistent geocoding over data years. The Nov 2022 edition references Census Bureau boundaries current as of December 31st, 2019. This includes 3,142 counties and 73,057 census tracts for potential examination in each data period, which allows for direct comparison of the poverty area measures over time. Census tract geography aggregates to county geography, which also allows for direct comparison of the measures across the two geographic scales.

However, poverty area measures are not reported for 100% of all possible counties and census tracts. For example, for the 2015-2019 data period, high poverty status was determined for 3,135 counties out of the 3,142 possible number of counties. The difference between these two numbers is due to missing data or low data reliability. These issues are more prevalent for census

tracts than for counties but improve over time. For example, for the 1970 data period, high poverty status was determined for 51,923 census tracts which is about 71% of the total possible tracts. In the 2015-2019 data period, that number increased to 71,989, which is nearly 99% of the total possible.

This table shows the resultant number and percentage of high poverty counties and census tracts. For example, in 1970, there were 2,412 counties determined to be high poverty areas or 77.6 percent out of the 3,110 counties for which poverty status was determined. In the 2015-2019 data period, the number of high poverty counties was lower, with a total of 585 counties or 18.7 percent out of those for which poverty status was determined. Further examination of the differences between these data periods can be useful for identifying patterns, such as areas where poverty has consistently been high.

For example, this map provides an illustration of the distribution of high poverty counties over time, highlighting those with consecutive decades of high poverty status since 1960. The light green counties are those classified as high poverty areas in 1960 only, meaning that their poverty rates had dropped below 20% by 1970. All of the other counties that are colored in on the map had poverty rates of 20% or more in 1960 and continued to have high poverty as of 1970. Moving forward in time, the dark purple counties are those classified as high poverty areas in each of the data periods, meaning that they have consistently had poverty rates of 20 percent or more for a period spanning at least 60 years. Therefore, the darkest color on the map illustrates the highly regional pattern of entrenched poverty among counties. This static map appears in an ERS Chart of Note and is discussed further in that publication. Also, an interactive version of it is available on the PAM website, which allows the user to advance the map through time, visualizing decade-by-decade changes.

This table is similar to the table last shown for high poverty, but it provides the geographic coverage in PAM for persistent poverty areas. As previously noted, the persistent poverty area measure requires four data periods. For example, the data period ending in 1990 includes high poverty status determined from 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990 Decennial Census data. While the data period ending in 2015-2019 includes high poverty status determined from 1980 and 1990 Decennial Census data as well as 2007-2011 and 2015-2019 American Community Survey five-year period estimates. In the latter period, ending in 2015-2019, there were 346 persistent poverty counties, or 11.1 percent of the total for which poverty status was determined. At the census tract level for the same time period, there were 8,299 persistent poverty tracts, or 12.1 percent of the total for which poverty status was determined.

The enduring poverty measure extends the persistent poverty area timeframe as far back as comparable poverty area data are available in PAM, which is 1960. It requires a minimum of five time periods. Therefore, while the data period ending in 2015-2019 for persistent poverty begins with 1980, the data period ending in 2015-2019 for enduring poverty begins with 1970 or earlier. This example compares enduring and persistent poverty areas at the county level. In the period ending in 2015-19, there were 310 enduring poverty counties compared to 346 persistent poverty counties. Among the 310 enduring poverty counties, six of them consistently had high poverty for the minimum five time periods spanning 1980 to 2015-19. None of them fall into the six-time

period category. The vast majority, 304 counties, were determined to have high poverty for seven consecutive time periods, spanning data years 1960 to 2015-2019. Since enduring poverty counties are a subset of persistent poverty counties, with an 89.6 percent overlap for 2015-2019, this means that most of the counties designated as persistent poverty have actually had consistently high poverty going all the way back to 1960. This relationship is perhaps best understood by considering a visual illustration.

All of the counties highlighted in blue and yellow on this map are persistent poverty counties for the data period ending in 2015-2019. The counties highlighted in blue alone represent the enduring poverty county subset. The ones that are light blue, which may be hard to see, are the six counties with high poverty for the minimum of five time periods needed to qualify as an enduring poverty county. The counties highlighted in the darker blue color are the remaining 304 enduring poverty counties that have consistently had high poverty since at least 1960. These are the counties where poverty has historically been and remains the most entrenched. This map and further discussion of it is published on the PAM website in the Descriptions & Maps subpage.

The last aspect of the PAM data product that I'll discuss is its comparability and use with other data products. The downloadable PAM data file can be linked to most ERS and Census Bureau data products using the diverse geocode provided. This map offers one example, combining the high poverty area measure for the data period ending in 2015-2019 with demographic data from the American Community Survey for the same 5-year period. The map highlights nonmetro counties only – the metro counties are the areas that appear in white on the map. As reflected in the legend at the bottom, the color scheme represents a racial and ethnic typology of nonmetro counties that are defined as high poverty areas. The areas highlighted in dark green are high poverty nonmetro counties characterized by poverty among the American Indian or Alaska native population. The areas highlighted in blue are those characterized by Black or African American poverty, the light green are areas characterized by poverty among the white, non-Hispanic population, and the yellow are areas characterized by poverty among the Hispanic population. The counties shown in orange are high poverty nonmetro counties where there is no dominant racial-ethnic make-up among the poor. This map illustrating regional and racial patterns of high poverty in rural America, and further discussion of it is published online in ERS's Charts of Note product.

I'll now turn the presentation over to Austin, who will demonstrate how to access the data file and what it contains.

Thank you, Tracey and hello everyone. My name is Austin Sanders, and I will be walking you through the Poverty Area Measures data file, pointing out features of both the product and the data. To access the Poverty Area Measures webpage from ERS website, select the 'Data Products' dropdown at the top of the ERS homepage, then click on 'Rural Economy & Population.' From here, you will scroll down through the data products until you find the 'Poverty Area Measures' link shown here in the red box. This link will take you to the 'Overview' landing page of the Poverty Area Measures website.

The first thing I would like to direct your attention to is the webpage's navigation pane, shown here in the red box. If you would like to learn more about anything we discuss today, I encourage you to explore these pages as they contain more detailed information on the data product's uses, history, methodology, and descriptive analysis than we are able to cover in this webinar.

The 'Overview' page is where you will find the highlights of the data product, brief definitions of the poverty area measures included in the product, and the data download files themselves. Tracey has already demonstrated a few of the highlights, such as the unique census tract-level classifications provided, the new measure of enduring poverty, and the flexibility afforded to users by including single-measurement-period high and extreme poverty classifications. As I walk you through the data file, I will also point out how the geocodes included in the product allow users to link the poverty area measures data to datasets from other sources and how the data product allows for comparisons of census-tract poverty to county-level poverty.

The download files are located at the bottom of the 'Overview' page and include a flat CSV file for programmers wishing to quickly connect to the data product as well as an Excel file which includes more detailed information. When you open the Poverty Area Measures Excel file, you will see that it contains five sheets, seen here in the red box. The first sheet contains documentation for the data product. This includes documentation on how each of the poverty area measures were defined; high-level notes on the methodology behind the Poverty Area Measures product, including how poverty rates are calculated, and resources for learning more about poverty thresholds and the data reliability index used for this product; and data sources used to create the poverty area measures product.

The second sheet is the codebook for the data product. The data product includes several geographic variables. Some of these – such as the GEO_ID, fips code, and Census tract numbers – are unique area identifiers that can be used to merge the poverty area measures with data from other sources, such as ERS' Rural Atlas or the Census Bureau's American Community Survey. Other geographic variables that are included classify counties and tracts by the geographic region of the United States where they are located or by their location on the urban-rural continuum, allowing for easy comparisons of poverty by region and by urban or rural status. The codebook gives definitions and codes for each of these geographic variables and for each of the poverty area measures.

The poverty area measures included in the data product are high poverty, extreme poverty, persistent poverty, and enduring poverty. The number at the end of each variable name - seen in the red box - represents the last year of data used to define that variable. We provide poverty area codes for each year where there was enough data to determine a county's or tract's poverty status. As you can see in the yellow box, high, extreme, and persistent poverty are coded as 'negative one' if the area classification is not available, 'zero' if the area is classified as not high, extreme, or persistent poverty, and 'one' if the area is classified as high, extreme, or persistent poverty.

To review, high and extreme poverty are defined using a single year of data, so, as you can see on the timeline on the screen, there are as many high and extreme poverty variables as there are years of available data. High and extreme poverty variables are available for counties beginning

in 1960 and are available for tracts beginning in 1970. The high poverty variables are used as the building blocks for the persistent and enduring poverty variables. By making these available, end-users can identify for which data years a county or tract was high poverty and can even construct their own poverty codes using time periods other than those used by persistent and enduring poverty.

Persistent poverty is defined using four data-years covering a three-decade period. The earliest persistent poverty variable available for counties is 1990, which uses data from 1960, 1970, 1980, and 1990. The earliest persistent poverty variable available for tracts is 2000. As you can see on the screen, the four data-year interval is moved forward one decade each time a new persistent poverty variable is defined.

Instead of using a fixed number of data-years, enduring poverty is defined using all years of available data. This variable captures the duration of high poverty beyond the four data-years used to define persistent poverty. For example, it indicates if a county had high poverty for five or six consecutive data-years, instead of just the four used for persistent poverty.

Therefore – as you can see in the red box - enduring poverty codes increase as the duration of poverty in an area increases. If a county or tract had five consecutive measurement periods of high poverty, it is classified as enduring poverty and coded with a 'one,' indicating that it had one additional measurement period of high poverty beyond what is used for persistent poverty. The current maximum amount of time for which a county can be classified as enduring poverty is from 1960 to 2015-19, and this is coded with a 'three', indicating that the area had three consecutive data-years of high poverty before the period used to determine persistent poverty. Enduring poverty area classifications for a given geography and year may also be coded as 'negative one,' which indicates that data was either unavailable or that data was deemed unreliable based on the reliability index used.

The next sheet contains the poverty area measures data at the county-level. As mentioned before, the fips codes provided can be used by researchers and data analysts to join these data with other county-level datasets, such as ERS' Rural Atlas or County Level Datasets. In addition, policymakers and practitioners can filter the data by state, County, and poverty status to obtain a list of the counties in the region of interest to them.

The Census Tract Measures sheet contains the tract-level poverty area codes, the geographic identifier codes for the tracts – shown in the yellow box – and the geographic identifiers for the counties where the tracts are located – shown in the red box. By adding (or technically concatenating) the 'Tract' code to the end of the 'fips' code, you obtain a unique identifier code for each tract that can be used to join these data with other tract-level datasets, such as the Census Bureau's American Community Survey or ERS' Food Access Research Atlas.

The 'Combined (county & tract)' sheet includes poverty area measures at both the county-level and the tract-level and contains the same data that are in the CSV download file. This sheet is particularly useful for comparing the poverty status of census tracts to the poverty status of the counties where they are located. Looking at the yellow box, you can see that labels for the

county-level poverty area measures end with an "underscore c," and labels for the tract-level measures end with an "underscore t".

To better understand the value of comparing the poverty status of tracts to the poverty status of the counties where they are located, we can look at this map of Missouri's persistent poverty areas. Persistent poverty counties are shown with a red outline, persistent poverty tracts are shaded red, and urban areas – defined here as all places with a population of at least 2,500 – are included for reference and shown in grey. This map shows how patterns of persistent poverty may vary. The blue arrow points to a persistently poor county where the only tracts that are persistently poor are those containing portions of the County's urban area, suggesting that urban poverty may be the driver of persistent poverty in this County. The green arrow points to a group of persistently poor census tracts in a county that is not classified as persistently poor. These persistently poor tracts are near the urban core of a large metropolitan area and would be overlooked if persistent poverty were examined only at the county level. The purple arrow points to a persistently poor county where there are no persistently poor tracts.

This is Wayne County, Missouri, and if you use the 'Combined' sheet in the Poverty Area Measures Excel file to search and filter for Wayne County, you can examine the data for the four tracts within the County – shown here in the purple box at the bottom of the screen. Looking here, you can see that each tract in Wayne County was classified as high poverty in at least two of the four data periods used to determine persistent poverty. So, while none of the individual tracts qualified as persistently poor, poverty levels in the County as a whole were high enough in each data period for the County to be classified as persistently poor. Deciding on whether to use counties, Census tracts, or both as the poverty area of choice is up to the user and will depend on the user's purpose.

If you would like to see more illustrations of how these data are used, you can go to the descriptions and maps page on the Poverty Area Measures webpage. Thank you for your interest and attention. And now we look forward to fielding any questions that you may have.

Thank you both for sharing these insights and helpful tips when using our Poverty Area Measures. At this time, we'll go ahead and open the floor for questions. As a reminder, questions can be submitted through the chat feature located at the bottom left-hand corner of your screen.

Okay, let me pull up these questions. The first that we have is, how do you see what census tract you are in?

Austin, would you like to take this first question?

Yes, thank you Tracy. So using the poverty area measures product, you can see which tracts are located within a county, but to identify which census tract you are located in, you can use the Census Bureau's tract reference maps which allow you to search by County and gives you a map of all of the tracts within each County in the U.S.

Okay, thanks, and are you planning to report zip code level data as well?

No, we are not reporting zip code level data. The data product is limited to counties and census tracts.

Okay, and another question. Can you say more about what is meant by the ACS 2015-2019?

Yes, American Community Survey estimates are period estimates that describe average characteristics of the population over the period of data collection. So, these estimates can't be used to describe what is going on in any particular year in that period, only what the average value is over the full five-year period. So, the 2007 – 2011 and 2015 – 2019 five-year period poverty rate estimates used to delineate the poverty area measures are not provided in the PAM data product, but they are available to the public through the Census Bureau's website and can easily be linked to the PAM measures using the geocode provided.

Thanks Tracy. This next question asks, they may have missed what went into these indices, but does persistent poverty include use of the USDA-SNAP program for school lunch?

No, it does not because that is not included in the income measure used to determine poverty status through the official poverty measure.

Good to know. All right, another question asks, how do you incorporate the changes in census tracts in each decennial data?

There's a specific methodology that's used in order to do that. Our data product do allow for what's called normalization of the data at the census tract level over time as a proprietary data product.

All right just pulling up another question here. How many people live in persistent poverty counties versus persistent poverty tracts, and does that vary region to region?

Austin, can you take this question, please?

Yeah, so the number of people living in system poverty tracts versus counties will vary over time and also across space, so from region to region. We do not currently have any statistics published on this at the moment, but you can use the poverty area measures data product and link it to the American Community Survey decennial censuses and calculate those – the population living in these areas.

Thanks Austin. Does the data include the military?

Yes, it includes anyone who reports their income level through the Census Bureau data collection process. So, that would not include active duty necessarily, but as long as they are reporting their income and information through their home residents.

Okay, our next question. Is there a way to generate or view a map like the Missouri map for other states?

We don't have those capabilities provided on our website, but you can download and import the data into any GIS or mapping software program, and again the diverse geocode that we provide

allows for easily linking those to the spatial boundaries used in those products in order to generate any type of map.

Got it. This next question, are other demographic variables included in the PAM data? What other data does ERS have that can be linked to these files?

Austin, would you like to take this question?

Yes, so there are no other demographic variables included in the PAM data product, but as we've said, you can use the geo codes to link to other county and tract level data. So, for example, you can link the county level data to ERS' Rural Atlas or to our county level data sets, and you can link the tract level data to the ERS Food Access Research Atlas and to other census tract level data such as the American Communities.

Thanks Austin. All right, next question. Are the observations in PAM household level or individual level?

There are areawide so the official poverty measure used to derive the poverty rates used for the PAM measures are based on family income and apply to every individual within that family, and then the data are aggregated to the area of interest. So, I guess, essentially, you can consider this as individual level information.

All right, another question. Are the Poverty Census Surveys multilingual?

I believe they are. The Census Bureau does provide that information on their website. The data that we use for PAM comes from the Census Bureau, so I would refer you to their website for additional information about that thanks.

Can you give an example of how poverty area measures can be used to improve fiscal health?

Sure, for example, high poverty over a period of time can impact fiscal health, such as through the inability to collect adequate taxes given income limitations of the residential base, and then lack of fiscal health could thereby contribute to other capacity issues, such as the inability to maintain community facilities. So, poverty area measures could be used in this case to identify this issue and to qualify for federal assistance programs that use poverty area measures as part of their funding criteria such as those that are listed under the 2021 Consolidated Appropriations Act that I mentioned earlier.

Got it. Is there more recent data available than 2019, or do you happen to know when PAM will be updated again?

Austin, would you like to take this question?

Sure. So, we do not have a set date on when the poverty area measures product will be updated, but we will be updating using the 2017 to 2021 American Community Survey data.

Thanks Austin. I'd like to add to that just by mentioning if you'd like to receive notification of new data releases, then please consider subscribing to the ERS listserv

Great, thank you both. Our next question. Are census tracts the smallest level of geography you can look at?

Census tracts are the lowest level of geography available in the PAM data product. Census Bureau geography on which PAM geography is based does go below census tracts to blocks and block groups, but counties and census tracts are the most commonly used sub-state geography.

Next question. How can a persistent poverty county have no tracts in it with persistent poverty?

Austin, would you mind elaborating on that for us?

Yes, so using the example that I had before of Wayne County, Missouri, you can see that over the period used to determine persistent poverty, the high poverty status of the four tracts within the County came in and out of high poverty status. So, one tract would drop out of high poverty, but another would move in. So, while none of the tracts maintained the high poverty status over the four measurement periods in order to be classified as persistent poverty, the County itself maintained that high level of poverty throughout the entire measurement period and was classified as persistently poor.

Thanks. All right. Another question. Have you looked at residential mobility and enduring poverty counties or census tracts? Are people living in those counties more likely to reside in them for longer periods of time?

We do not provide any residential mobility metrics in the PAM data product, and research pertaining to that could be located on the ERS website, which you can search by those keywords or by poverty itself.

Okay, thanks. How can I find my area's poverty rate?

Your area's poverty rate can be found by the various supplemental data products that we have mentioned already, such as by going to the Census Bureau web page and looking at American Community Survey or other data products that they publish there. We do not include the poverty rates in PAM, but all those poverty rates are available through those other data products, and if you wanted to link them to the poverty area measures, you could use the geocode in order to do so that you have both the poverty rate and the poverty area measure classification.

Thanks Tracy. Next question. Do you have analysis of counties in like Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, California along the Mexico border?

There is nationwide analysis that we have done using our Poverty Area Measures that is published in some of our various products. I'll scroll back to one of the slides from earlier – the map that shows the racial-ethnic typology code. So, this is just one example from our publications. Again, this map provides a racial and ethnic typology of nonmetro high poverty counties. The areas in yellow, which are "Hispanic, any race," are typically the southwestern counties, many of them in Texas, that do qualify as high poverty and have consistently been so through the majority of our data periods. Additional information that has to do with race and ethnicity can be found in some of our other publications, and again you can refer to the ERS website to do a search of that information.

Thanks, next question. Are codes provided for Puerto Rico or other U.S. territories?

No, the PAM geographic coverage only includes the 50 states and Washington D.C. This is largely because there are greater data availability and reliability issues for these geographies than for those included in PAM, and this is particularly true going back in time. We do seek to be as inclusive as possible and continue to consider how we might address this issue, but as of right now, we do not have plans to add these areas to the PAM data product.

Thanks Tracy. This next question asks, how is poverty determined? Is it a household measure, and is it adjusted for inflation or cost of living differences between areas?

Yes, as I described early on in the webinar, it is based on family income and applied to individuals within that family. So, if a family is determined to be in poverty, then any individual in that family is considered to be in poverty as well, and this is based on income thresholds that are relative to the size and make-up of the family itself, and those thresholds are adjusted for inflation over time, but they are not adjusted geographically.

Thanks Tracy, another question here. How is deep poverty different from enduring poverty, and do you have a measure of people below 50 percent of the poverty line in your database?

Enduring poverty and the other measures included in the PAM data product refer to income levels below 100 percent of a family or individual's poverty income thresholds, as I just described. This means that they have less than 100 percent of income necessary to meet their basic needs. The term deep poverty typically refers to poverty rate below 50 percent of one's poverty income threshold, meaning that the total income amount for that family or individual is less than half of what they need to meet their basic needs. This measure is not included in the PAM data product, but again we do have some Publications that discuss deep poverty that can be located through our website.

Thanks, another question asks are you able to overlay other data sets, such as distressed zip codes, and run analysis using a mapped product?

Yes, there's no reason why you shouldn't be able to do so, as long as the software that you're using has those capabilities.

All right, that's all we have for today. Tracy and Austin, thank you for sharing your insights and expertise on ERS' poverty area measures, and thank you to our listeners for taking time out of your busy days to join us. We hope this has been helpful for you.

Before closing, I'd like to share a few ways to stay up to date on ERS research. First being the ERS website – specifically our Newsroom, where you can find the latest news on trending topics and recordings of past webinars, and helpful shortcuts to popular ERS resources, including a link to our recorded webinars at the bottom left of the screen. Second is our Chart of Note mobile app, which delivers digital snapshots of ERS research straight to your mobile device. With this app, you also have 24/7 access to our digital library, including thousands of charts on a range of topics. Lastly, you can also like, share, and follow us on Twitter and LinkedIn. That's it for now. Again, thank you all for joining us; this concludes our webinar.