Marriage

Counting Couples, Counting Families
Marital Status Question

• American Community Survey
  – What is this person’s marital status?
    • Now married
    • Widowed
    • Divorced
    • Separated
    • Never married
• National Survey of Family Growth
  – What is your current marital status?
    • Married
    • Not married but living together with a partner of opposite sex
    • Separated because you and your spouse are not getting along
    • Divorced
    • Widowed
    • Never married
Limitations

• Cohabitation data for ACS or CPS
• No information on duration or order of marriage
• Lack of partner data for NSFG unless partner data are gathered.
ACS (2008-)

• In the past month, did this person get
  Yes  No
  Married
  Widowed
  Divorced

How many times has this person been married?
  Once
  Two times
  Three or more times
• In what year did this person last get married
• ____ ____ ____ ____
• What is this person’s sex?
• How is this person related to Person 1 (person 2, 3, 4, etc)?
  – Husband or wife
  – ...
  – Unmarried partner
Advantages of ACS

• New information on marriages formed in the previous year.
• Large sample sizes
  – National
  – State
  – Local levels
• Special populations (racial/ethnic minorities, immigrants, same sex relationships)
• Link marital or cohabiting couples into couple records
Suggestions to Modify Marriage-Related Questions

• What is this person’s marital status?
  – Married
  – Cohabiting
  – Separated
  – Divorced
  – Widowed
  – Never Married
• When did this person last get –
  – Year
  – Married? _ _ _ _
  – Cohabited? _ _ _ _
  – Separated? _ _ _ _
  – Divorced? _ _ _ _
  – Widowed? _ _ _ _
• How many times has this person been married?
  – Once
  – Two times
  – Three or more times
Marital History

• Longitudinal surveys
  – NLSY
  – SIPP

• Detailed marital history of the spouse?