

Group Quarters and The CTPP

On Friday, April 18, 2003, the Census Bureau (CB) conveyed a “decision” that at least 10 more CTPP Part 1 tables could not be released. This is in addition to 3 tables that were already expected to be denied. FHWA staff has determined that if the same logic were applied to Part 3, it would severely impact the Part 3 tables (flow between work and home). The tables in Part 3 are among the most important CTPP tabulations, and if they are prohibited from release, the value of the CTPP is lessened to the point that it may not make sense to continue with the project—or at minimum it would require the American Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (AASHTO) contract with the CB to be re-negotiated.

What is a Group Quarter (GQ)?

Institutionalized Population
Correctional Institutions
Nursing Homes
Other Institutions

Noninstitutionalized
College Dormitories
Military Quarters
Other Noninstitutional GQ

The Goal

The goal is to restore ALL the tables that were agreed upon as a result of the Disclosure Review Board decision in 2001, except for the 3 specific tables, which have Group Quarter population explicitly, tabulated. The Census Bureau should allow all the tables of workers in households whether or not someone could estimate workers in Group Quarters by subtraction.

Background and History

In December 2001, after several months of negotiation, the CB Disclosure Review Board (DRB) approved the list of tables that would make up CTPP. During the negotiation process, it was agreed that all the tables in the CTPP would have to be rounded, and that some of the Part 3 (flow) tables would be limited to those origin/destination pairs with a threshold of 3 unweighted records. Several tables were reduced in size (number of cells) to minimize the disclosure potential. A contract for the production of the CTPP was then signed between the CB and the AASHTO on behalf of the state Departments of Transportation.

CTPP Part 1 was targeted for release in October 2002.

In January 2003, the CTPP Working Group was first informed that there may an issue with the tables relating to Group Quarters (GQ). By early February, the Working Group learned that the CB management had concerns with the release of GQ data due to high imputation rates and questions about the reliability of the data--a policy would be forthcoming.

At its February 27 meeting, the CTPP Working Group decided that if the CB had not decided which tables were or were not allowed by March 7, 2003, CB staff would blank out the 3 tables that were determined to be the most likely to be problematic, and that the universe of four other tables would be changed to "All Workers" instead of just "Workers in Households". This would allow the CTPP Part 1 production to move forward, and any decision from the CB that allowed these 3 tables might necessitate re-release of Part 1. AASHTO management communicated with the CB and it was understood that the CTPP Part 1 as discussed, would be delivered in April 2003. On March 7, AASHTO sent a letter to its Standing Committee on Planning members conveying this information.

Census Bureau Rationale for "not" Releasing the CTPP Tables

As the CTPP Working Group understands it, the CB does not want to release ANY CHARACTERISTICS OF PERSONS IN GROUP QUARTERS. Furthermore, the CB does not want to release any data from which a characteristic of persons in GQ could be estimated by subtraction. Summary File 3 (SF3) has already released tabulations of journey-to-work characteristics such as Means of Transportation to Work and Travel Time to Work for ALL WORKERS. The CB does not want to release any tables limited to WORKERS IN HOUSEHOLDS, because one could estimate WORKERS IN GROUP QUARTERS by subtraction (ALL WORKERS – WORKERS IN HOUSEHOLDS = WORKERS IN GROUP QUARTERS).

The Transportation Community's Concern

Many in the community believe that the CB should stand behind the quality of the household data, and release the tabulations of workers in households. If the quality of the GQ data is so worrisome that it is not valid, then that should be known and, in the extreme situation, SF3 data should be recalled and then re-released, omitting persons in Group Quarters. In short, it does not make any sense to throw out 99 percent of the data because less than one percent is presumed to be bad.

The CTPP tables that combine household characteristics, especially household income, vehicle ownership, combined with journey-to-work characteristics (means of transportation, travel time, and departure time), are of critical importance to the MPOs and State DOTs. For the last two years, various transportation agencies have been awaiting these tables and planning for them in their analysis, model development long range plans and survey data weighting. The continuing delay in the CTPP production is causing a strain on many agencies, at the state and local level while also impacting the ability of consultants to complete contracted work for these agencies. Ultimately, it is having an impact on the transportation projects around the country.

Detailed Table Information

What Tables have Changed from the DRB Approved Specifications?

February 2003 Table Changes	
Blanked Out Tables	Universe Moved to All Workers
Table 1-29: Means of Transportation to Work (11) by Residence Type (3-total, household, group quarters)	Table 1-33: Age (8) by Worker Earnings in 1999 (12)
Table 1-57: Sex (3) by Age (12) of People Living in Households	Table 1-36: Poverty Status in 1999 (4) by Means of Transportation to Work (11)
Table 1-58: Sex (3) by Age (12) of People Living in Group Quarters	Table 1-40: Poverty Status in 1999 (4) by Time Leaving Home to go to Work (14)
	Table 1-46: Poverty Status in 1999 (4) by Hispanic Origin (3) by Race of Person (5) by Means of Transportation to Work (8)

The Most Recent Targeted Tables:

Part 1 Tables (according to April 18th information)

- 1-32: Vehicles available (6) by Poverty status in 1999(4)
- 1-34: Household income in 1999 (26) by Means of transportation to work (11)
- 1-35: vehicles available (6) by Means of transportation to work (11)
- 1-37: Number of workers in households (6) by Means of transportation to work (11)
- 1-38: Age group of youngest child in the household (5) by Means of transportation to work (11)
- 1-39: Household income in 1999 (11) by Worker earnings in 1999(12)
- 1-41: Vehicles available (60) by Length of US residence (5)
- 1-42: Household income in 1999 (5) by Vehicles available (6) by Means of transportation to work (8)
- 1-44: Household income in 1999 (5) by Hispanic origin (3) by Race of person (5) by Means of transportation to work (8)
- 1-45: Vehicles available (3) by Hispanic origin (3) by Race of person (5) by means of transportation to work (8)

Part 2 Tables (Tabulations at the work location)

At this time, it is unknown what the CB logic will be use in deciding which work place tables will be allowed.

Part 3 Tables (assumed using CB logic)

- 3-2: Vehicles available (4) by Means of transportation to work (8)
- 3-3: Poverty status in 1999 (4)
- 3-7: Household income in 1999 (5) by Means of transportation (5)

What is the Scope or Magnitude of the Group Quarter Issue?

There are several different ways at looking at this but in all cases the GQ numbers are very small and should not be the basis for eliminating good data. The table below shows Oregon data, which is the only data we have where GQ data could be extracted. Oregon was the test data site for the beta release of the CTPP extraction software. As can be seen, workers living in GQ are less than one percent of the total resident workers (0.77%). Further, if one considers that primarily non-institutional residents are likely to go to work, the percentage would drop another 50%.

State of Oregon		
Total Population	3,421,399	
Resident Workers	1,601,378	47%
in Households	1,589,090	99.23%
in Group Quarters	12,288	0.77%
Total GQ Population	77,491	
Institutional	37,901	49%
non-institutional	39,590	51%

Is the Group Quarter Issue a Disclosure/Confidentially Issue?

Based upon what we understand about confidentiality, this is not a disclosure issue. The way it has been explained, disclosure is having the ability to identify some characteristics about a single individual and not the characteristics about a group.