Release Note: January 17, 2012

ACS Mapping Extensions for ArcGIS (version 3)

Since the release of the second versions of the ACS Mapping extensions for ArcGIS 9.3 and 10 in August 2011, we continued to receive feedback and comments. Meanwhile, new developments in the Census Bureau in disseminating ACS data affect some procedures in our extensions. Major changes in the current version fall into two general areas: accommodating the release of ACS data through the New American FactFinder (AFF2) and an additional function for comparing estimates. The versions of the extensions have the following enhancements:

- We have updated the instruction to download ACS data from the new AFF.
- ACS data downloaded from the new AFF have formats different from the legacy AFF. Therefore, we have modified the tool to merge ACS tables with shapefiles.
- We have added a fourth mapping function, Identify Areas of Significant Differences (from all selected estimates). This function allows users to compare estimates in multiple selected areas to the rest of the region. This is similar to the second mapping function (Identify Areas of Significant Differences (from an estimate)), but allows users to select multiple units as the reference units. The function will identify units with estimates significantly smaller, larger than and different from those estimates being selected.

Limitations:

1) Because the legacy version of AFF will be decommissioned soon, and all ACS data accessed through the legacy AFF will be available through the new AFF, the latest versions of the extension will not be able to merge ACS tables produced/downloaded from the legacy AFF.
2) The function to merge ACS tables with ESRI shapefiles may have difficulties in handling tables with more than 255 columns. This limitation is partly a problem with the dbf format used by shapefiles, but the capabilities of local machine can also affect the performance. We will address this issue more thoroughly in the next version.
3) The current version still does not work with ESRI Geodatabases. This limitation will be addressed in the next version.