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Deaf Statistics

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Deaf population of the U.S.

Local and regional deaf populations

Holt and Hotto, in *Demographic aspects of hearing impairment: questions and answers*, say that demographic statistics for individual U.S. states and localities are not available, due to deficiencies in current demographic sampling surveys.

However, the Bureau of the Census has made its own estimates for both deaf and hard of hearing populations in each of the 50 U.S. states and the District of Columbia. These estimates shown below have been extracted from the Bureau's many charts posted on the World Wide Web, and compiled here. Note: When using this data, it must be remembered that it is *not* based on any actual counting of deaf people, and could be different from reality.

Some other estimates or "guesstimates" may (or may not) be available from the various state associations of the deaf and/or the state office on deafness, if the state has one. The *American annals of the deaf* annual directory issue (no.2 of each year) lists the addresses of each state association of the deaf under "Organizations and Associations-- National Association of the Deaf". In the same *AAD* issue, under "Regional and Local Programs", are listed various agencies, some of which may be able to provide estimates for their areas.

The following figures are model-based **estimates** based on **American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate** data for **2012**, for "non-institutionalized civilians" (e.g., those in the prison system are not counted). This is the latest information available as of February 2014. All of this data is available at Census.gov and the [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#) for 2013, in [Table 1.8](#), covering working-age civilians, ages 18-64. For a discussion on why this limit is imposed, see [page 6](#) in the [NTID Collaboratory](#) report.

Note that the U.S. Census Bureau identifies only "hearing difficulty" in its ACS estimates; as such, the following figures are estimates that include a wide range of hearing loss from deafness to "slight difficulty hearing on the telephone."

State	Population ages 18-64 with hearing disability (est)	Total population ages 18-64 (est)	Deaf pct (est)
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Alabama	83,376	2,937,335	2.8
Alaska	16,552	460,946	3.6
Arizona	82,244	3,866,694	2.1
Arkansas	52,197	1,761,365	3.0
California	363,508	23,798,381	1.5
Colorado	67,322	3,270,163	2.1
Connecticut	36,730	2,233,159	1.6
Delaware	9,656	561,217	1.7
District of Columbia	4,412	442,390	1.0
Florida	211,049	11,578,613	1.8
Georgia	118,214	6,117,277	1.9
Hawaii	15,857	833,610	1.9
Idaho	27,539	944,959	2.9
Illinois	126,710	8,006,505	1.6
Indiana	98,209	3,998,258	2.5
Iowa	37,882	1,862,753	2.0
Kansas	42,974	1,729,836	2.5
Kentucky	82,461	2,685,735	3.1
Louisiana	78,451	2,804,831	2.8
Maine	25,705	830,767	3.1
Maryland	55,235	3,708,246	1.5
Massachusetts	70,648	4,246,935	1.7
Michigan	137,702	6,104,749	2.3
Minnesota	63,688	3,344,084	1.9
Mississippi	49,323	1,783,844	2.8
Missouri	99,982	3,661,457	2.7
Montana	16,554	616,796	2.7
Nebraska	24,715	1,121,006	2.2
Nevada	38,405	1,705,729	2.3
New Hampshire	18,443	844,577	2.2
New Jersey	69,426	5,520,629	1.3
New Mexico	38,856	1,246,884	3.1
New York	185,731	12,402,577	1.5
North Carolina	130,610	5,966,410	2.2
North Dakota	9,476	436,041	2.2
Ohio	159,814	7,076,483	2.2
Oklahoma	71,442	2,281,244	3.1
Oregon	160,899	2,428,162	2.8
Pennsylvania	164,601	7,867,912	2.1

Puerto Rico	58,198	2,218,215	2.6
Rhode Island	12,427	666,700	1.9
South Carolina	67,426	2,868,533	2.3
South Dakota	14,074	499,064	2.8
Tennessee	103,809	3,971,009	2.6
Texas	357,574	15,858,474	2.3
Utah	30,716	1,677,068	1.8
Vermont	10,868	401,075	2.7
Virginia	79,940	5,085,461	1.6
Washington	105,878	4,321,655	2.4
West Virginia	47,463	1,140,973	4.2
Wisconsin	70,800	3,542,388	2.0
Wyoming	10,256	358,028	2.9
Total	4,022,334	195,697,202	2.1

Deaf people, as deaf people, have not been counted in the U.S. Census since 1930. The last census of the U.S. deaf population was privately conducted in 1971, sponsored by the National Association of the Deaf. For figures since then, only estimates are available. See the [introduction](#) for a short discussion of the problems of and cautions about deaf demographic statistics.

The Gallaudet Research Institute offers an excellent summary of the estimated population of deaf individuals in the United States in their [2005 answer](#) to this perennial question. Some of their results are here reproduced.

Note that the Gallaudet Research Institute conducts demographic surveys only for deaf and hard of hearing children of school age. It does not manage surveys of the adult deaf and hard of hearing population. Nonetheless, because of repeated inquiries, it has developed its own rough estimates based on 1997-2003 data:

	"Have hearing problems" (includes both deaf and hard of hearing)	
Total U.S. population: 294,043,000	38,225,590	13%
>6 years old	691,883	1.81%
Ages 18-34: 67,414,000	2,309,000	3.4%
Ages 35-44: 38,019,000	2,380,000	6.3%
Ages 45-54: 25,668,000	2,634,000	10.3%
Ages 55-64: 21,217,000	3,275,000	15.4%
Ages 65 and over: 30,043,000	8,729,000	29.1%

How many of the above are specifically deaf and not hard of hearing? Note how the numbers in the Gallaudet Research Institute's figures from an older analysis, below, change depending on which of three different definitions of "deaf" is used:

Deaf (definition: "in both ears")	421,000	0.18%
Deaf (definition: "cannot hear and understand any speech")	552,000	0.23%
Deaf (definition: "at best, can hear and understand words shouted into the better ear")	1,152,000	0.49%

The Gallaudet Research Institute offers additional breakdowns of these figures in *Demographic aspect of hearing impairments: questions and answers, third edition*, <http://research.gallaudet.edu/Demographics/factsheet.php>.

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