

# The Social Determinants of Health: Making the Most of the American Community Survey

Stephen Borders, PhD, MSHP

School of Public and Nonprofit Administration  
Community Research Institute



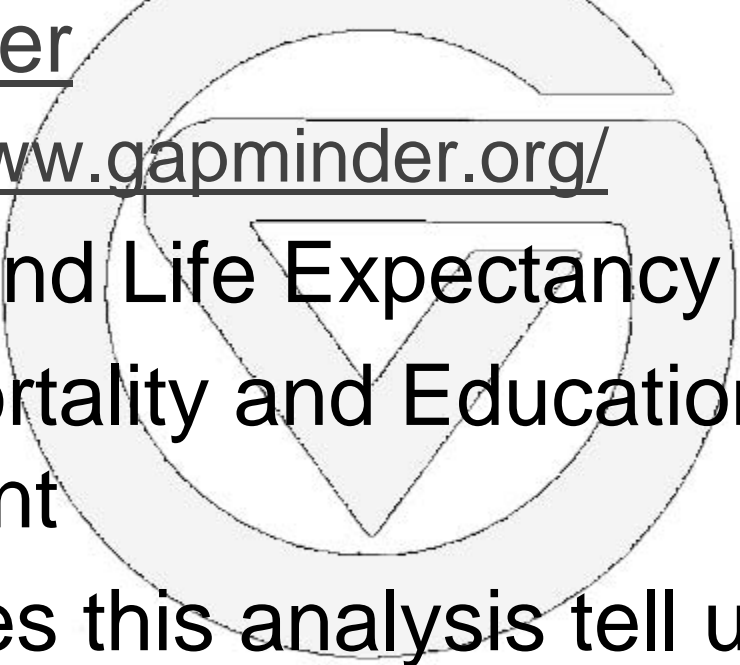
## Big Picture for This Session

- Thinking about health data
- The product we're trying to create
  - Social Determinants of Health Indicator
- Strategies for creating indicators or measures at the community level
- A couple of examples
  - Web Resources
- Q&A

## Working with Health Data



## Why We Don't Necessarily Need Health Data To Identify Health Disparities

- Gapminder
    - <http://www.gapminder.org/>
  - Income and Life Expectancy
  - Infant Mortality and Educational Attainment
  - What does this analysis tell us?
- 

## Working with Health Data



## Developing an Indicator

- Let's think about the process of developing an indicator
- Handout (Two Parts)
  - Example of an indicator using data from the American Community Survey (ACS)
  - Creating the indicator involves different steps than what it might seem

# American Community Survey

- US Census Product

## What is the American Community Survey?

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides data every year -- giving communities the current information they need to plan investments and services. Information from the survey generates data that help determine how more than \$400 billion in federal and state funds are distributed each year.

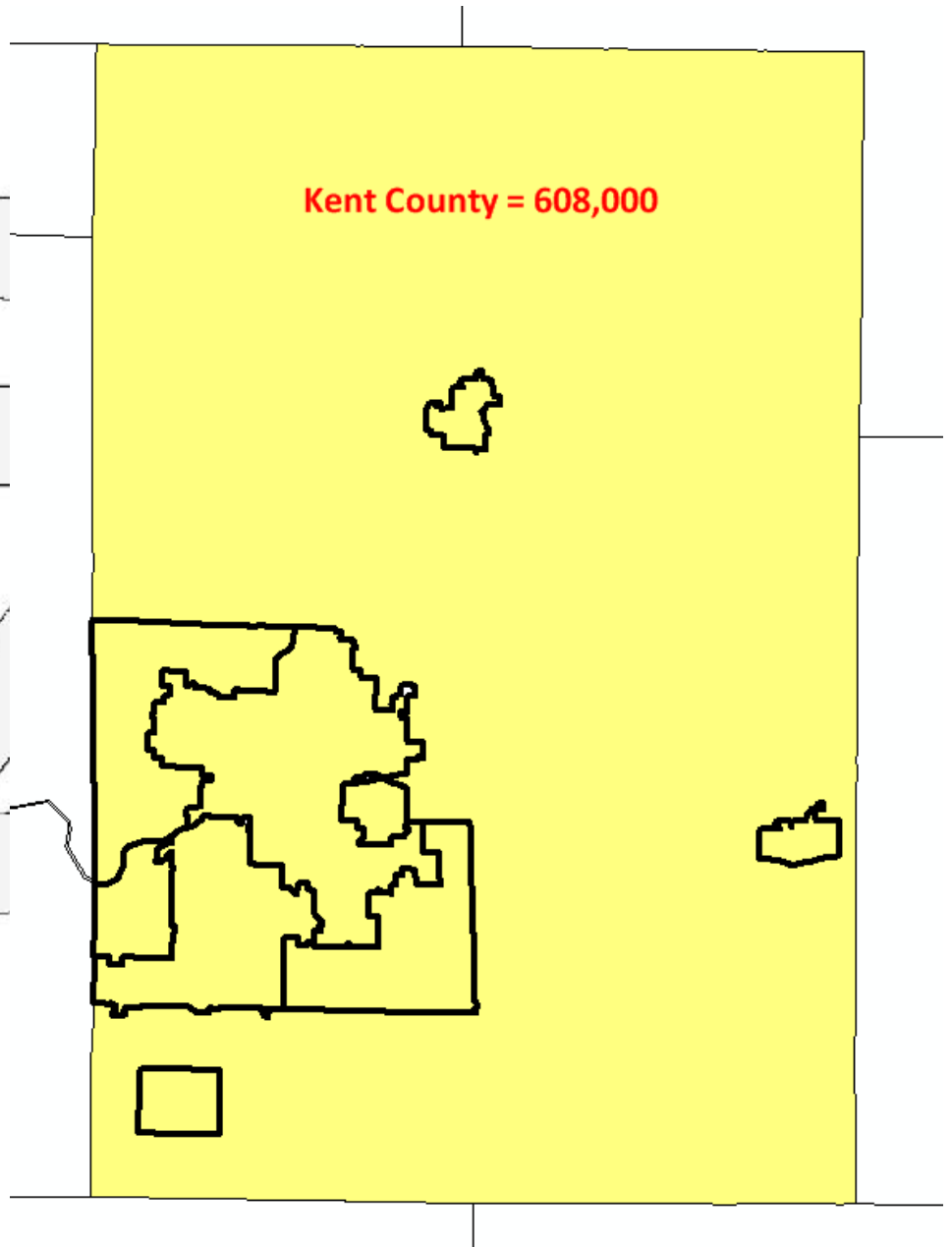
To help communities, state governments, and federal programs, we ask about:

- age
- sex
- race
- family and relationships
- income and benefits
- health insurance
- education
- veteran status
- disabilities
- where you work and how you get there
- where you live and how much you pay for some essentials

All this detail is combined into statistics that are used to help decide everything from school lunch programs to new hospitals.

## Understanding Check

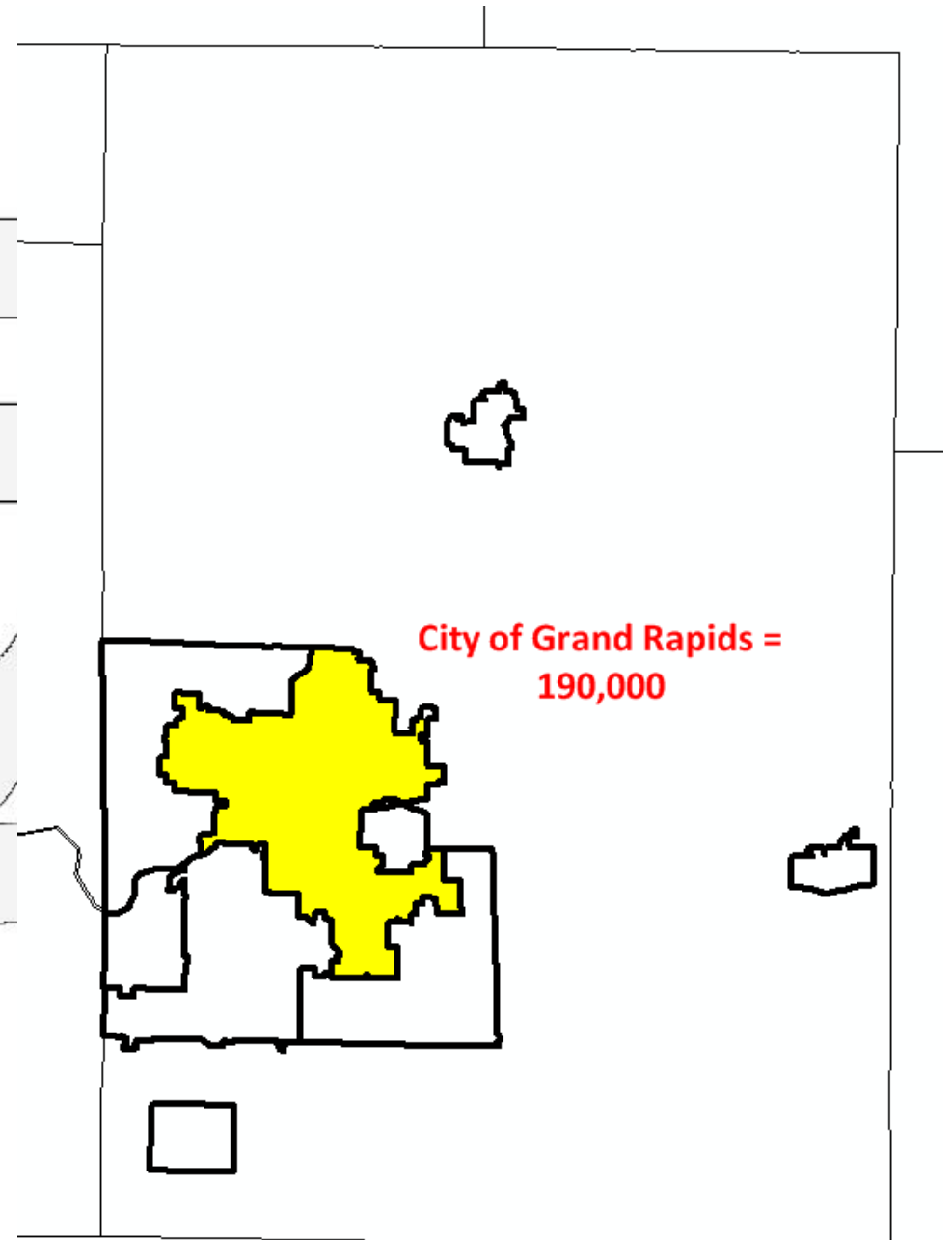
- Can I make est. about poverty each year for Kent County?
- Every 3 years?
- Every 5 years?





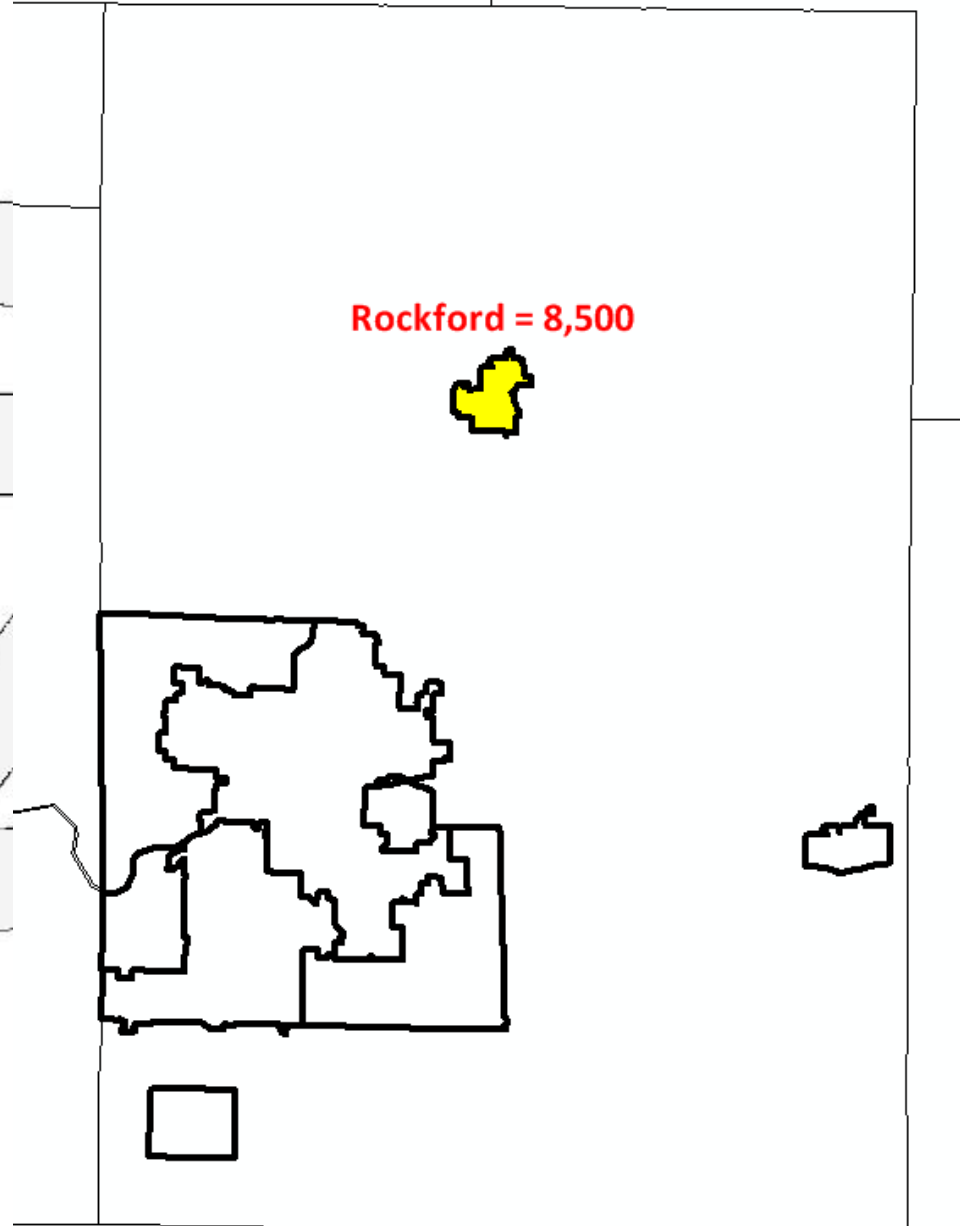
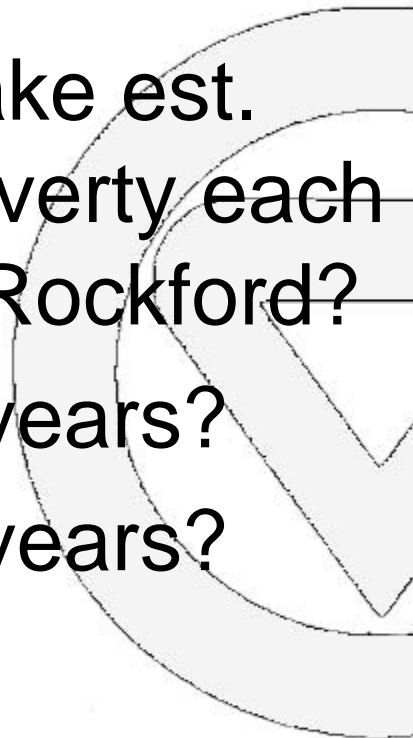
## Understanding Check

- Can I make est. about poverty each year for GR?
- Every 3 years?
- Every 5 years?



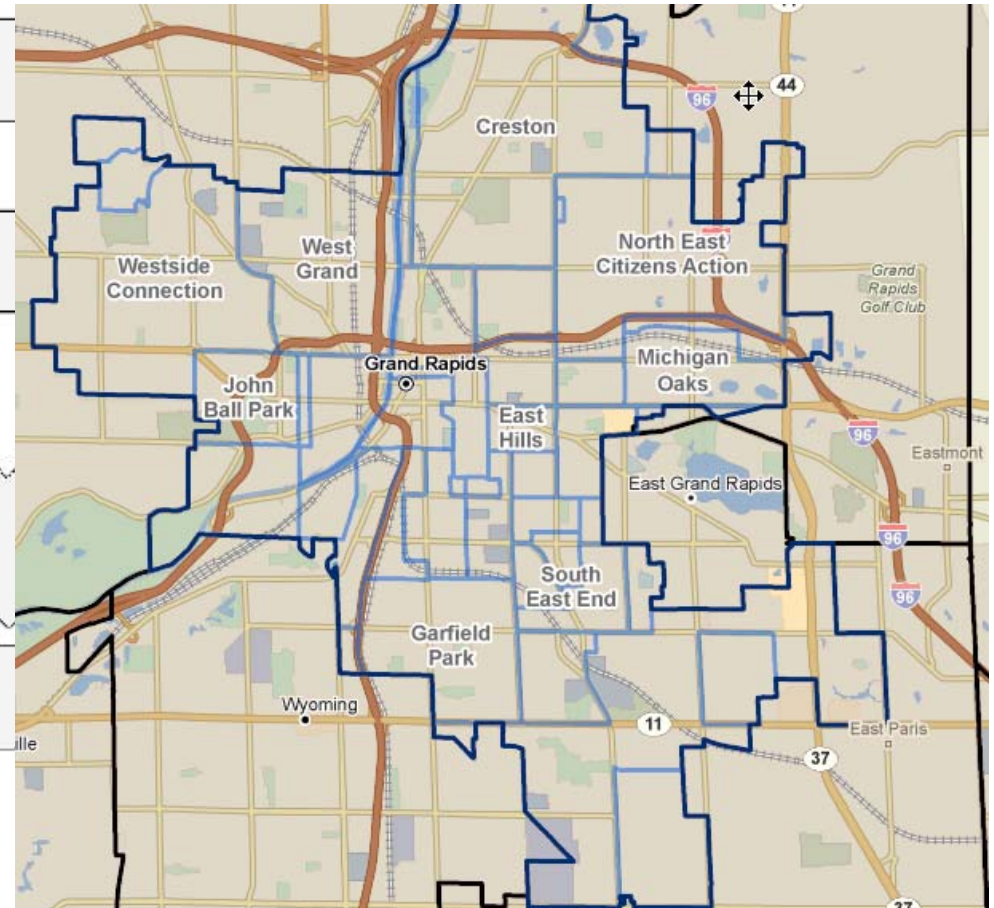
## Understanding Check

- Can I make est. about poverty each year for Rockford?
- Every 3 years?
- Every 5 years?



## Understanding Check

- Can I make est. about poverty each year for GR neighborhoods?
- Every 3 years?
- Every 5 years?



## Work with ACS Poverty Data

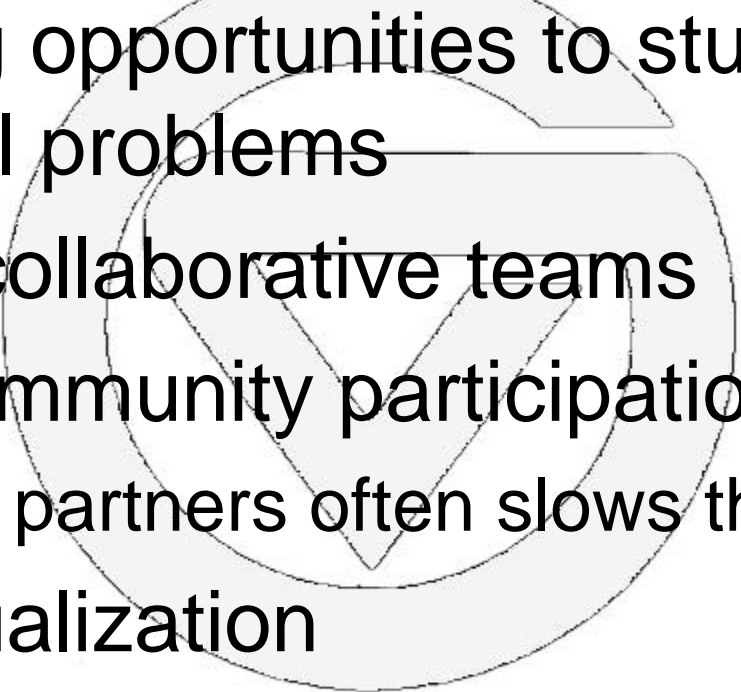
- Process
  - Lit Review
- What ACS Data are Available?
  - American Fact Finder
- Comparisons
  - Trends
  - Benchmarks
- ACS Calculator



## Shameless Plug

- Student Consulting Center and we're looking to build student competencies while providing technical assistance!
- GVSU Student Consulting Center
  - Fremont Area Community Foundation
  - Ottawa County Health Department

## Final Thoughts

- Providing opportunities to students to solve real problems
  - Work in collaborative teams
  - Broad community participation
    - Multiple partners often slows the process
  - Data visualization
  - Low-cost
- 

## Contact Information for Questions

Stephen Borders, PhD, MSHP

Borderss@gvsu.edu

616-331-6569

<http://faculty.gvsu.edu/borderss/index.html>