

Spring Census Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting

Director's remarks as prepared for delivery

March 14, 2024

INTRODUCTION

- Good morning and thank you, everyone, for joining us.
- The Census Scientific Advisory Committee is so important. I thank the members for their time, their contributions, and their volunteerism.
- Now, let me start with some committee updates.
- I want to acknowledge and honor those members participating in their last committee meeting having served two terms.
 - **Jay Breidt**
 - **Mario Marazzi**
 - **Jessica McKellar**
 - **Kunal Talwar**
- Special thanks to Jay for his leadership during two terms as chairperson.
- And I'd like acknowledge and thank **Mainak Mazumdar**, whose first term ends next month.
- Next, I want to announce and acknowledge our new chairperson, **Barbara Entwistle**.
- Barbara, we're honored to benefit from your leadership.
- Finally, I bring you greetings from our deputy director, Ron Jarmin,
- He's unable to join us, participating in the Conference on Research in Income and Wealth down the street...he sends his regards.
- So let's get on to the update.
- First I'd like to start with an update on the **American Community Survey (ACS) disability content**.
- As you probably know, we're in the process of revising ACS content, of which the disability questions are a part.
- I know many stakeholders and members of the public care deeply about this topic.
- An important step in the 5-year revision process includes a request for public feedback.
- We posted a Federal Register notice In October 2023 seeking public feedback on the suite of proposed revisions that included disability, household roster, educational attainment, health insurance coverage, labor force questions, and the addition of questions on solar panels, electric vehicles, and sewage disposal.
- These changes would begin in 2025.
- We received over 12,000 comments in response, the vast majority expressing concern about the disability proposal.
- By the way, the comments are posted at <regulations.gov>.
- We are greatly appreciative of all who took the time to submit a response.

- The U.S. Census Bureau and the National Center for Health Statistics, or NCHS, reviewed the public feedback,
- And—with the approval of the ICPS (International Cooperative Programs Staff) Subcommittee on the ACS—are retaining the current ACS disability questions for collection year 2025.
- We all want to better understand the disability data needs from the perspective of the stakeholders. Y’see, we see this as a bigger issue than just the ACS.
- Now, we’ll be preparing a final package to OMB (Office of Management and Budget) this spring for approval on the changes proposed to the other topics.
- That package will be accompanied by a Federal Register notice detailing the final recommendations. It will again seeking public comment.
- We’ll then review the feedback and submit a final content package for OMB review and approval.
- But, to be clear—this upcoming proposal package to OMB will not include any changes to the existing disability questions.
- Beyond the mechanics of the ACS content revisions protocol, we will be engaging further with the public on the topic of disability.
- This is in response to a significant theme emerging from the feedback we received from the Federal Register notice—a strong desire for more comprehensive engagement.
- And in the spirit of a whole-of-government approach, the Census Bureau, NCHS, OMB, and other federal partners are working together to make that happen.
- Such engagement is critical to providing the highest quality and most relevant data to our nation.
- In fact, this spring, the Census Bureau, NCHS, OMB, and others are in the planning stages for convening federal agencies, disability stakeholders, disability community representatives, data users, researchers, and disability advocates.
- The purpose is to discuss data needs and data uses surrounding the topic of disability.
- More details on the meeting will be provided soon.
- In closing this important update, let me again thank all of organizations and individuals who provided us with their valuable feedback to and engagement with the ACS program.
- We look forward to meeting, learning, and further exploring the informational and data needs of the disability community.

2030 CENSUS PREPARATIONS

- Of course, another key area of work this year will be our preparations for the 2030 Census. We’re doing a lot of exciting work and research ahead of the next census.
- In January, we announced that our initial operational plan for the 2030 Census will be released in early 2025.
- And we’ll be holding a major field test in 2026.
- Soon we’ll release strategy documents outlining how we’re approaching fundamental aspects of our census preparations, including stakeholder engagement.
- I want to point out—especially to members of the public—our redesigned website at <www.census.gov/2030census>.
- The content there will give you a better idea of all the work that we’re doing.
- And as part of our commitment to open and transparent communication, we’ll be continuing our series of webinars to share information about our preparations.
- As you know, our main goal for the 2030 Census—and for every decennial census—is a complete and accurate count of the nation’s population.

- To accomplish that, it's so important that we engage with and value diverse voices and perspectives.
- After 2020, stakeholders asked us to do more earlier in the decade—and we listened, and we're acting on that.
- We need to hear from people across our nation about how to reach historically undercounted populations, how to leverage technology, how to collect information in an easy and efficient manner.
- We need to work with stakeholders to identify hard to find populations and tailor our strategies to reach them.
- We cannot complete our mission alone.
- We need a community-of-the-whole approach that involves support from the wonderfully diverse people of our nation.

ACS AND DECENNIAL CENSUS STEERING COMMITTEES

- And speaking of gathering input and feedback...I want to alert you to another opportunity to engage with the Census Bureau.
- In partnership with the Population Reference Bureau, we're soliciting applications for members of two steering committees to help us plan activities for engaging data users.
- First, there is the American Community Survey Data Users Group Steering Committee.
- It will provide feedback to on ACS-related activities, data products, dissemination channels, and methods.
- In turn, this will help the Census Bureau develop innovative data products and dissemination tools that best meet ACS data users' needs.
- The second is our new Decennial Census Data Users Group Steering Committee, which is different from the 2030 Advisory Committee which I'll get to.
- This new steering committee will help guide the development of a new online community forum for decennial census data users to discuss decennial census data products and issues.
- This committee will first assist with defining the scope of forum, its website design, and implementation strategy. Subsequently, committee members will participate in the release and monitoring of the new online forum.
- We're looking for enthusiastic, hands-on data users to serve on these committees and anticipate 3-year terms for members to promote continuity of group discussions.
- If you are interested in being considered for membership on either committee, please apply! The deadline is Thursday, April 4.
- More information on these committees and how to apply is available at our Newsroom at <census.gov>.
- Turning to the 2030 Advisory Committee, our work to form this committee continues. We thank the public for their nominations.
- We are eagerly doing our due diligence to assemble a group of members that spans the depth and breadth of community representation and expertise that's needed to inform our 2030 Census planning.
- We're hoping to make an announcement soon and planning for an inaugural meeting later this year.
- This outreach represented an important part of our overall commitment to engaging with stakeholders, tribes, partners, and communities.

BUDGET

- Lastly, I want to give you an update on our agency's budget.
- The FY24 Enacted appropriation is \$102.5 million less than the FY23 Enacted appropriation. Given the challenging fiscal environment and the need to make tough decisions, we sincerely appreciate Congressional consideration of our funding request.
- The enacted appropriation, along with carryover from FY23, will enable us to allocate resources to our highest-priority requirements.
- We will continue our multiyear process of transforming its organization and operations from a survey-centric model to a data-centric model that blends survey data with administrative and alternative digital data sources.
- The FY 2025 budget request, which the President released on March 11, totals just under \$1.6 billion for the Census Bureau—or \$195 million over the FY24 Enacted budget.
- The FY 2025 request supports the Census Bureau's core operations, while investing in new data products, improving data methods and quality, investing in crosscutting research techniques, and investing in enterprise technology.
- Some of the investments planned in the FY 2025 budget are:
 - The 2030 Census program, which continues planning as it transitions from the Design Selection Phase into the Development and Integration Phase. That is the first year in which the 2030 Census program establishes the initial design framework and prepares for critical testing in FY26.
 - The data releases of the 2022 Economic Census, and the start of planning efforts for both the 2027 Economic Census and Census of Governments.
 - And, of course, the development of new data products for use by researchers, policymakers, and the public; improved data collection methods and quality; investments in new data and crosscutting research and capabilities; and continued investments and enterprise technology.
 - Some of the specific items in those categories are:
 - Establishing an annual Puerto Rico economic survey, resolving a longstanding gap in data on Puerto Rico's economy.
 - Improving SIPP's (Survey of Income and Program Participation) use of administrative records and restoring the SIPP sample to 53,000.
 - Supporting improvements to intercensal population estimates.
 - Supporting development of an online panel to support timely and efficient collection of high-quality data for research and production purposes.
 - Continuing to integrate our IT capabilities and enterprise investments. [DICE]
 - Finally, in support of Executive Order 14110 on the "Safe, Secure, and Trustworthy Development and Use of Artificial Intelligence," the Census Bureau will partner with the National Institute of Standards and Technology to leverage privacy-enhancing technologies to protect Americans' privacy against AI threats.

CONCLUSION

- Thank you so much for joining us today, and for all your efforts on behalf of the Census Bureau.
- Our work with advisory committees is such an important aspect of our commitment to openness and transparency, and in engaging with stakeholders and experts so we can do our best work on behalf of the nation.
- I look forward to today's presentations and discussions.