
U.S. Census Bureau Strategic Plan FY 2013 – 2017



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1 Introduction

1.1 Overview

Census Bureau information shapes important policy and operational decisions that help improve the nation's social and economic conditions. We conduct the constitutionally mandated census of population and housing every 10 years, which is used to apportion seats in the House of Representatives and informs congressional redistricting. We also conduct a census of all business establishments and of all governmental units, known respectively as the Economic Census and the Census of Governments, every five years. The Economic Census is the benchmark used for measuring Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and other key indicators that guide public policy and business investment decisions. In addition, we conduct several ongoing business and household surveys that provide the information in several of the Nation's key economic indicators and which is used to allocate over \$400 billion in federal funding annually.

<http://www.census.gov/aboutus/>

Our production of high quality, relevant statistical information relies on openness to user and respondent concerns, independence and neutrality, strong statistical standards, and protection of confidentiality. This foundation reflects the U.S. Office of Management and Budget guidelines for the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated by federal agencies. Census Bureau activities involve survey and census design, implementation, data processing, analysis and dissemination. Enabling activities include geographic infrastructure and residential address updates. Research to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of these and related activities is essential to the Census Bureau's success.

1.2 History of Innovation

Since the Census Bureau became a permanent statistical agency in 1902, it has built a reputation as an innovator in survey methodology and information technology. Examples of the Census Bureau's innovations include the punch card and electronic tabulator technology developed by [Herman Hollerith](#) to speed the tallying of the [1890 census](#). The Census Bureau continued updating and using Hollerith's electronic tabulators until the [1950 census](#) when they were replaced by [UNIVAC I](#), the first modern computer installed by a civilian government agency. In

The Census Bureau's mission is to serve as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. We honor privacy, protect confidentiality, share our expertise globally, and conduct our work openly. We are guided on this mission by scientific objectivity, our strong and capable workforce, our devotion to research-based innovation, and our abiding commitment to our customers.

Our vision is to be the leading source of high quality, timely, relevant, and cost-effective statistical information supporting the nation's decision-makers.

the 1970s, the agency developed Dual Independent Map Encoding (DIME) files and the [TIGER](#) system designed in the 1980s laid the groundwork for today's geographic information system industry. The global positioning systems many Americans rely on in their automobiles and cell phones, as well as online mapping websites owe their existence to the Census Bureau's geographic and cartographic innovations. The early adoption of the computer tape in the 1970s, CD-ROM technology in the 1980s and the [Internet](#) in the 1990s made Census Bureau information widely available to a growing number of data users. After the 2000 Census, internet data dissemination that allowed users to self-tabulate information through American Fact Finder became the norm. Leading up to the 2010 Census, Census Bureau employees used small hand held devices with GPS systems to list addresses that would receive questionnaires.

In 1940, the Census Bureau pioneered modern statistical sampling in its surveys and developed appropriate statistical analyses. For the 1960 decennial census, the Census Bureau mailed out questionnaires for the first time to households in urban areas. Householders were asked to complete the questionnaire and hold it until an enumerator came by to pick it up. In 1970, the Census Bureau implemented a mail-out/mail-back enumeration for households in larger metropolitan areas (approximately 60 percent the U.S. population). In the 1990s, the Census Bureau developed electronic data collection methods. New interviewing techniques, including computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) and computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) complemented mail-out/mail-back procedures and helped cut costs. Electronic reporting, employing computer tape, diskettes, e-mail, and electronic questionnaires, made it easier for businesses to respond to economic surveys and censuses. The successful launch of the [American Community Survey](#), which is administered continuously throughout the decade, meant that in 2010, the long-form sample questionnaire was no longer used in the census itself. Other important methodological advances have been in [industrial classification](#), where the Census Bureau has taken a leading role in developing both the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS) and the North American Product Classification System (NAPCS).

1.3 An Obligation for the Future

The world we are measuring is changing at a rapid pace, even as expectations continue to grow from census data users and other stakeholders who depend on us for timely, accurate, and trusted information about our nation's people and economy. Our jobs have become more challenging due to budget reductions, declining public response rates, growth in the amount of information available to the public from myriad sources, rapidly changing technology, and competition in the workplace for highly skilled, dedicated, and innovative employees. In order to continue as a worldwide leader among statistical data providers, we must plan strategically, set goals, work across directorates, and implement the changes that are necessary in order for us to achieve them. We must also keep pace with the transformative impact of technology and the Internet. Successful and competitive businesses are scaling their operations and are achieving agility through the modernization of people, process, and the technology. To fully leverage technology we can no longer operate in technology silos and work at cross purposes as we invest for the future. We must leverage secured shared business and computing services whether they are

created internally or externally to the Census Bureau. The Census Bureau must redouble its efforts to tackle our challenges with effective, innovative and efficient solutions even as we continue with our core activities.

1.4 Purpose

This strategic plan provides the Census Bureau's organizational goals for the next five years. These goals must be achieved to deliver our current and anticipated statistical program commitments. The plan focuses on the organizational goals and objectives associated with our core programs and operations covered by our annual budget submission and it ties directly to the Department of Commerce's strategic plan. Another document, [*The Census Bureau Business Plan for Change*](#) describes the specific transformational objectives and initiatives that are crucial to successfully meeting our goals. The change plan will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis to measure our progress in achieving our desired outcomes. In addition, a short paper, [*The Direction of Future Census Bureau Operations*](#), lays out 10 guiding principles for our approach to making enterprise-wide changes.

2 Goals

The Census Bureau's goals fall into four dimensions of excellence: mission, customer service, organizational, and workforce. Each goal has specific objectives, which describe what we need to accomplish to attain the goals. For each objective, one or more tactics are described to explain how the objectives are to be achieved. High level performance measures are also included. The goals associated with the four dimensions of excellence are summarized below.

- **Goal 1: Mission Excellence:** The Census Bureau is the leading source of reliable, high quality, relevant statistics measuring a rapidly changing nation.
- **Goal 2: Customer Service Excellence:** The Census Bureau is valued by data users, trusted by the public, and supported by influential stakeholders.
- **Goal 3: Organizational Excellence:** The Census Bureau is an anticipatory, responsive, cost-effective, and adaptable organization that will function through a portfolio management and governance process.
- **Goal 4: Workforce Excellence:** The Census Bureau's workforce is diverse and highly motivated with the right skills in the right jobs to carry out the mission.

The next section of this document describes each of the four goals in more detail, along with related objectives and tactics.

For additional information on the Census Bureau mission, programs, stakeholders, and other supporting information related to *The Strategic Plan*, please see the appendices.

2.1 Goal 1: Mission Excellence

The Census Bureau is the leading source of reliable, high quality, relevant statistics measuring a rapidly changing nation.

Through our surveys, censuses, and other statistical programs, we continually collect, process, analyze and distribute data as information products to a wide array of stakeholders. The products must be timely and at an appropriate level of quality to inform sound decision-making by data consumers, whether businesses, citizens, or policy-makers.

Outcome for Mission Excellence: Decision-makers continue to rely on Census Bureau statistics about the nation's people, businesses, and institutions.

We have developed six objectives that will help us achieve our Mission Excellence outcome. These are:

- **Collect, process, and release high-quality statistical benchmarks to meet constitutional and legislative mandates.**
- **Produce up-to-date current economic and social measures to advance informed decision-making in business and society.**
- **Provide measures of labor market dynamics to inform decisions that foster economic growth.**
- **Produce comprehensive public-use and restricted-use data on business dynamics.**
- **Produce measures of export activity to inform decisions that enhance economic growth.**
- **Meet geo-spatial and frame-related requirements of all Census Bureau programs.**

Each of these six objectives is described in more detail below.

Objective 1.1: Collect, process, and release high-quality statistical benchmarks to meet constitutional and legislative mandates.

The Census Bureau's periodic surveys and censuses, including the American Community Survey, meet constitutional and legislative mandates. They also provide critical information required by governments, businesses, entrepreneurs, and other organizations to make informed decisions. These data provide the economic and social benchmarks for key indices that measure our economic health, such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Further, population estimates and information from the American Community Survey are used annually for allocating over \$400 billion in federal funding to states and localities. See Appendix D for additional information on how Census Bureau periodic information is used for essential purposes by a variety of users.

Outcome: Economic, Government, and Decennial Censuses, including the American Community Survey, meet targets for quality, cost, and delivery schedule.

The four tactics below will help us achieve these outcomes.

Tactic 1.1.1: Successfully complete the 2012 Economic Census and use the operational results and implementation of the North American Product Classification system to inform the reengineering of the 2017 Economic Census.

Tactic 1.1.2: Successfully complete the 2012 Census of Governments and use the results to inform the modernization of the 2017 Census of Governments.

Tactic 1.1.3: Implement new planning, budgeting, research and testing processes for the 2020 Census, with sustained attention to cost-effective new ways to collect, process, and disseminate information on time while achieving quality targets.

Tactic 1.1.4: Build on the results of the American Community Survey Program Review to continue strengthening the survey’s outreach to the public, program management and technical infrastructure.

Implementing Programs:

2020 Decennial Census	American Community Survey
2012 Economic Census	Economic Census Reengineering Initiative
2012 Census of Governments	Governments Modernization Initiative
Intercensal Population Estimates	Field Support
Research and Methodology	

Objective 1.2: Produce up-to-date economic and social measures to advance informed decision-making in business and society.

The Census Bureau conducts multiple surveys on a monthly, quarterly, and annual basis to help entrepreneurs and businesses identify market opportunities and to inform decision-makers and policymakers across sectors and at all levels of government. The information from these surveys and administrative record data collections are a critical part of the Nation’s economic indicators, GDP calculations, National Income and Product Accounts, unemployment rate, and other widely disseminated information released regularly by the Census Bureau and other federal statistical agencies. Ongoing household surveys provide current information on a wide variety of topics such as income, poverty, health insurance coverage, housing, and other characteristics of our society.

Outcome: Data product consumers continue to rely on Census Bureau statistical products because these products are widely recognized as being accurate, consistent across geographic areas, timely, and providing important longitudinal and cross cutting views. Research to continually improve and create new data products is supported and encouraged.

The five tactics below will help us achieve this outcome.

Tactic 1.2.1: Deliver up-to-date monthly, quarterly and annual statistical products to inform the nation of changes in society and the economy.

Tactic 1.2.2: Release effective information products that enable communities, particularly those that are economically distressed, to build their capacity to attract businesses and sustain economic growth.

Tactic 1.2.3: Release information products (e.g., small area poverty estimates) that enable policymakers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, and the public to assess opportunities, needs, and challenges and to make effective decisions, for example, about emergency management, planning, and delivery of services.

Tactic 1.2.4: Integrate data from existing sources, including administrative records, to produce new information products that provide deeper insights into our people and economy by combining data sets that had not previously been linked.

Tactic 1.2.5: Explore enhancing our data products to provide businesses, especially small and minority-owned businesses, with the information they need to compete in a global economy.

Tactic 1.2.6: Produce and disseminate population estimates for governmental units including states, counties and cities on an annual basis.

Implementing Programs:

American Community Survey	Demographic Current Surveys
Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates	Small Area Health Insurance Estimates
Economic Current Surveys	Center for Economic Studies Analyses

Objective 1.3: Provide measures of labor market dynamics to inform decisions that foster economic growth.

Timely, relevant, and accurate measures showing the dynamics of local job markets and identifying the changing structure of the U.S. economy and its effect on jobs are critical for

decision makers and policy makers to determine the health of local economies and track the geographic dimensions of the economy.

Outcome: Consumers of Census labor market-related statistical products express increased satisfaction with relevant products.

Tactic 1.3.1: Release timely and comprehensive data on local labor market dynamics to permit users to track job creation and elimination and other critical measures at the county-level to evaluate the progress of economic recovery.

Implementing Program:

Local Employment Dynamics

Objective 1.4: Produce comprehensive public-use and restricted-use data on business dynamics.

Census Bureau data on business dynamics enables detailed analyses of how innovation and entrepreneurial activity reshape the U.S. economy and create jobs.

Outcome: Decision-makers and businesses are satisfied with Census statistical products related to business dynamics.

We will employ the two tactics below to achieve our desired outcome.

Tactic 1.4.1: Expand and enhance the Local Dynamics program's data integration and measurement methods to provide more insight into innovation and entrepreneurial activity.

Tactic 1.4.2: Identify and implement options for systematically identifying and addressing unmet needs for products and services.

Implementing Programs:

Local Employment Dynamics

Center for Economic Studies

Economic Indicators

Objective 1.5: Produce measures of export activity to inform decisions that enhance economic growth.

Timely, relevant, accurate, and accessible current measures of export activities provided by the Census Bureau, including the number and characteristics of exporters, can help identify export opportunities that U.S. firms can exploit. The Census Bureau supports the National Export Initiative by providing the Trade Promotion Coordination Committee and its component

agencies the statistics they need, including export statistics and measures of the number and characteristics of exporting companies. We also support the Export Control Reform Initiative by ensuring that the interagency automated systems are kept current to continue collecting the U.S. export data needed by the agencies responsible for export control. We will also research opportunities to link domestic manufacturing information with the exporter database to determine the impact of exports on the U.S. manufacturing sector.

Outcome: Consumers of export-related statistical products are satisfied with the value of the information.

Tactic 1.5.1: Provide statistical and technical support to the President’s export initiatives.

Implementing Programs:

Foreign Trade Initiatives	Center of Economic Studies
Exporter Database	Annual Survey of Manufacturing
Manufacturing and Construction Programs	

Objective 1.6: Meet geo-spatial and frame-related requirements of all Census Bureau programs.

The single biggest predictor of high quality censuses and surveys is an accurate frame to locate housing units, Group Quarters, and establishments. The updated Master Address File (MAF) is used after each decennial census to redesign the samples used to support ongoing surveys. The Business Register supports the economic programs and will be modernized after the 2012 Economic Census.

Outcome: Statistical programs’ frame-related quality measures are achieved in a cost efficient way.

Tactic 1.6.1: Implement the Geospatial Services Support Initiative to ensure that continuous updates throughout the decade will allow the Census Bureau to reduce 2020 Census costs by conducting address listing only in targeted areas, because the quality of address in the MAF is sufficient to meet the needs of the census.

Tactic 1.6.2: Use the most cost effective technologies available to update the MAF and assess its quality in order to support current survey frame-related requirements.

Tactic 1.6.3: Maintain and update TIGER in order to make field data collection efforts efficient and to ensure geographically accurate data products.

Tactic 1.6.4: Develop a flexible sample selection program for household surveys that is able to incorporate program changes such as sample expansion or reductions on an annual basis using an updated MAF.

Tactic 1.6.5: Identify and evaluate new sources for improving the quality of the Business Register by implementing the Bureau of Labor Statistics/Census Bureau Data Sharing Initiative. This requires legislation to fully implement.

Tactic 1.6.6: Use the Business Register more efficiently and consistently across appropriate programs, including the development and use of standard reporting units across economic survey programs.

Implementing Programs:

Geospatial Services Support Initiative	Sample Redesign
2020 Census	Administrative Records Research
Economic Programs	Demographic Programs
Field Support	
Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)/Census Bureau Data Sharing Initiative	

2.2 Goal 2: Customer Service Excellence

The Census Bureau is valued by data users, trusted by the public, and supported by influential stakeholders.

The Census Bureau regularly interacts with the people who rely on statistical information to help ensure that it is delivering relevant, high quality products to the nation. Communications include many organizations and groups, such as Federal Advisory Committees, expert panels from the National Academy of Sciences, academic researchers, members of Congress, and data user groups. These data users and other stakeholders have different levels of proficiency with statistical information, and the Census Bureau needs to assure that its products are easily accessible, understandable, and available in formats that help people answer their questions. Additionally, the Census Bureau has numerous reimbursable customers, primarily other federal agencies, who pay the Census Bureau to collect information on their behalf. This is a cost effective shared service for the government, rather than each agency developing a separate capability for conducting large-scale scientific surveys. The Census Bureau provides an array of statistical services to its varied stakeholders, which include the following groups and organizations:

- Respondents to surveys and censuses
- Survey sponsors
- Congress
- Federal data users and data providers at other agencies
- Non-federal data users from academia; state, local and tribal governments; and the general public
- Data suppliers in the private and nonprofit sectors
- Oversight entities such as OMB, GAO and the OIG
- Advisors on committees and outside expert consultants
- Advocacy groups
- International statistical organizations
- Census Bureau workforce

Outcome for Customer Service Excellence: Stakeholders receive accurate data that meets their information needs in a timely and easily accessible manner. Congress values the Census Bureau's work and supports its efforts. Respondents understand the importance of participating in statistical data collection and do not feel harassed. Domestic and international statistical organizations and other governmental agencies are able to work collaboratively with the Census Bureau.

We have developed three objectives that will help us achieve our Customer Service outcome. These are:

- **Increased effectiveness of stakeholder engagement.**
- **Increased visibility and utility of Census Bureau products.**
- **Increased responsiveness to reimbursable customers.**

The three objectives are described in more detail below:

Objective 2.1: Increased effectiveness of stakeholder engagement.

The Census Bureau through its Communications Directorate is taking advantage of technology and information growth to expand and strengthen agency branding and stakeholder outreach.

Outcome: Stakeholders understand and support the Census Bureau's mission and products and continue to respond to censuses and surveys.

Tactic 2.1.1: Develop a Customer Relationship Management capability for the Census Bureau.

Tactic 2.1.2: Provide stakeholder management infrastructure and support to major Census Bureau statistical programs.

Implementing Programs:

Directors Office	Communications Directorate
2020 Decennial Census Directorate	Economic Directorate
Demographic Directorate	Field Directorate programs
Research and Methodology Directorate	

Objective 2.2: Increased visibility and utility of Census Bureau products.

The Census Bureau exists to deliver high quality, relevant, and usable demographic and economic products to the nation. The Census Bureau's value to the nation comes from people using its products to make well-informed decisions, and our goal is to help users make good choices about when and how to use products. However, users' knowledge of and comfort with our products varies substantially. Not all users understand, for example, what different types of uncertainty measures rates mean or how these uncertainties might influence interpretation of Census Bureau products and ultimately their policy or economic decisions. The Census Bureau will continue efforts to explore how Big Data can enhance the usefulness of our core statistical products. The Census Bureau will also continue to expand our efforts to educate the public and increase statistical literacy through our Statistics in the Schools programs and participation and support of efforts such as television and radio broadcasting of educational statistical programs.

Outcome: Users of statistical products express greater confidence and sophistication in using them to support decision-making. People can find the information they need easily and quickly. Awareness of the Census Bureau's role in Measuring America is increased.

Tactic 2.2.1: Promote the use of Census Bureau products.

Tactic 2.2.2: Continue efforts to increase statistical literacy.

Tactic 2.2.3: Examine approaches for increasing users' understanding of product quality and implications for their decision-making.

Tactic 2.2.4: Explore and research uses of Big Data.

Implementing Programs:

Directors Office	Communications Programs
Decennial Census	Economic Programs
Center for Economic Studies	Research and Methodology
Demographic Programs	Field Programs
State Data Centers	Census Information Centers

Objective 2.3: Increased responsiveness to reimbursable customers.

The Census Bureau provides a wide array of reimbursable services, including conducting demographic and economic surveys for other federal agencies. By providing statistical services to other agencies, the Census Bureau helps the federal government economize resources rather than investing in multiple robust and redundant statistical program infrastructures. Furthermore, providing reimbursable services year-round helps the Census Bureau sustain the infrastructure needed for the complex, but infrequent, quinquennial and decennial censuses. Given the funding environment facing all statistical agencies, it is important to work together to ensure that we are able to meet agencies' statistical information and service needs, while running our programs efficiently and effectively.

Outcome:

The Census Bureau increases its responsiveness to the needs of reimbursable customers, as measured by increases over the baseline in responding to customer inquiries about survey, analytical and technical assistance program management (e.g., processes, reporting, cost estimation, and transparency). Reimbursable sponsors continue to view Census Bureau data as a cost effective way to generate critical, high quality information for programs as well as to provide international technical assistance and capacity building. Sponsors are open to trying innovations and supporting research.

Tactic 2.3.1: Refresh the business processes that support reimbursable surveys and reporting and provide timely updates on survey commitments and performance. Continue to improve the Interagency Agreement process.

Tactic 2.3.2: Explore enhancement of the sponsor base for international analytical data products and technical assistance.

Implementing Programs:

Demographic Current Surveys	Economic Current Surveys
Administrative Records Research Program	International Statistical Support Program
Research and Methodology	

2.3 Goal 3: Organizational Excellence

The Census Bureau is an anticipatory, responsive, cost-effective, and adaptable organization that will function through a portfolio management and governance process.

The Census Bureau conducts monthly, quarterly, yearly and periodic censuses and surveys using numerous data collection and statistical methods. Given the operational challenge of executing these various censuses and surveys simultaneously and successfully in an increasingly dynamic environment, we want to strengthen the Census Bureau’s operational capabilities to increase efficiency while being more responsive to new demands and changing conditions.

Outcome for Organizational Excellence: Responsive and efficient Census Bureau statistical programs.

We have developed two objectives that will help us achieve our Organizational Excellence outcome. These are:

- **Improved alignment of program responsibility, authority, and resources within the Census Bureau through implementation of the 10 change principles for Census Bureau operations.**
- **Continued investment in the Improving Operational Efficiency program to promulgate cost effective innovation aimed at addressing the Census Bureau’s biggest challenges.**

These two objectives are described in more detail below.

Objective 3.1: Improved alignment of program responsibility, authority, and resources within the Census Bureau through implementation of the 10 guiding principles for Census Bureau operations.

Better aligning program responsibility, authority and resources will help the Census Bureau best manage resources towards performance priorities.

Outcome: Cost effective investments support Census Bureau priorities. Critical projects are completed on time and within budget.

Tactic 3.1.1: Implement the *Census Bureau Business Plan for Change*

Tactic 3.1.2: Implement Enterprise Portfolio Management and governance at all levels of the organization

Tactic 3.1.3: Implement effective Enterprise Risk Management at all levels of the organization

Tactic 3.1.4: Implement identified improvement to Working Capital Fund management and governance

Tactic 3.1.5: Utilize shared services for IT and other activities when there is a positive benefit cost ratio.

Tactic 3.1.6: Implement major reorganizations being planned and underway in the Economic, Demographic, and Decennial Directorates.

Tactic 3.1.7: Implement data-driven performance improvements that improve results, reduce costs, increase cross-organizational collaboration, and create a dedicated performance improvement operational culture.

Tactic 3.1.8: Increase survey and census efficiency by researching, designing, and building tools and methods that enable the use of empirical data to facilitate intelligent business decisions prior to and during data collection.

Implementing Programs:

Risk Management and Program Evaluation

Enterprise Portfolio Management Implementation Initiative

Communications

Decennial Census

Economic Programs

Demographic Programs

Field Support Programs

IT Mission Enabling Programs

Administrative Mission Enabling Programs

Research and Methodology

Objective 3.2: Continued investment in the Improving Operational Efficiency program to promulgate cost effective innovation aimed at addressing the Census Bureau's biggest challenges.

The Census Bureau implemented the Improving Operational Efficiency program (IOE) in 2010 to engage employees in identifying opportunities to increase efficiency and reduce cost in Census Bureau operations. This has been a highly successful program that we want to channel towards high-impact enterprise priorities.

Outcome: Programs and processes are improved, efficiency is increased, savings are generated, and enterprise priorities are implemented.

Tactic 3.2.1: Increase the strategic benefits of the IOE program by defining the desired focus for submissions.

Implementing Program:

Office of Risk Management and Program Evaluation

2.4 Goal 4: Workforce Excellence

The Census Bureau's workforce is diverse and highly motivated with the right skills in the right jobs to carry out the mission.

The Census Bureau depends on the hard work and expertise of highly dedicated personnel who are willing to go to extraordinary lengths to make programs successful. We must continue to ensure that our workforce has the competencies and commitment that align with the production and research work required to achieve our mission. Individuals are expected to find ways to get involved and come forward with ideas to identify and facilitate improved ways to accomplish our work. Everyone needs to be willing to take manageable risks and challenge traditional ways of thinking about and doing our work.

Our managers need to encourage our staff, provide opportunities for professional development, be more tolerant of failure to reach goals or bring innovative products to fruition, and encourage and reward innovation and creative thinking.

Outcome for Workforce Excellence: The Census Bureau's workforce diversity and proficiency level distributions for required competencies and skills meet organizational targets. Organizational culture encourages innovation and risk-taking.

The three objectives summarized below will help us achieve our Workforce Excellence goal.

- **Achieve a diverse and satisfied professional workforce.**
- **Implement a strategic workforce planning capability.**
- **Use modern knowledge management practices to retain knowledge for the stability and betterment of the mission.**

These objectives are described in more detail below.

Objective 4.1: Achieve a diverse and satisfied professional workforce.

We must ensure that talented employees are recruited and retained and have a broad understanding of the work of the Census Bureau. We will broaden the diversity of our workforce even further so that different points of view, different professional experiences, and different knowledge, skills, and abilities can be brought to bear on solving the increasingly complex statistical problems facing the Census Bureau. We will provide multiple opportunities for professional development to our employees, including helping supervisors and managers successfully lead change. We will provide the tools necessary to succeed, such as SharePoint, Microsoft Project Server, operational paradata, and other data management and communications support.

Outcomes: Employee understanding of Census Bureau programs and change initiatives is increased over the baseline. Employee satisfaction is increased as measured by comparing the 2012 to the 2013 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey. Employee diversity is increased over the baseline.

Tactic 4.1.1: Establish and build a corporate perspective throughout the workforce beginning with employee hiring and orientation and continuing through career phases.

Tactic 4.1.2: Continue the staff rotation program and expand it to provide opportunities for permanent staff reassignment.

Tactic 4.1.3: Support and enhance diversity and inclusion programs, such as the Affinity Program, to ensure the optimal mix of experiences, knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to meet the challenges of 21st Century statistics.

Tactic 4.1.4: Continue to support the Labor Management, Diversity, and EEO Councils and work cooperatively as management and union.

Tactic 4.1.5: Empower employees and increase their productivity using secure remote access capabilities, knowledge management/sharing tools, communications and collaboration tools, and personal productivity tools.

Implementing Programs:

Labor Management Council

EEO Council

EEO Office

Diversity and Inclusion Office

Diversity Council

Corporate Hiring

Staff Rotation

Affinity Program

HR Recruiting and Training

JPSM

Internal and External Training

Objective 4.2: Implement a strategic workforce planning capability.

Our expertise in repeatable processes for assessing the current and required capabilities to continue to meet the Census Bureau’s mission over time must continue to grow. Attracting and retaining employees in sufficient numbers who are proficient in our mission-critical competencies as well as employees who can support emerging competencies is critical to our future success. A strategic workforce planning capability will: (1) help the Census Bureau identify and address workforce gaps through effective recruitment, training, and skills acquisition practices; (2) ensure that skills are developed to meet future needs; and (3) ensure that the workforce is aligned with Census Bureau mission needs, enhancing organizational flexibility.

Outcome: Target workforce distributions are achieved for both core and emerging competencies.

Tactic 4.2.1: Implement strategic workforce management and succession planning capabilities within the Census Bureau.

Implementing Programs:

Human Resources

All Programs

Objective 4.3: Use modern knowledge management practices to retain knowledge for the stability and betterment of the mission.

Aspects of Census Bureau programs and operations currently rely on specialized expertise held by individuals. This expertise is highly valued and respected and will continue to be needed. The fact that this knowledge resides in specific individuals, however, limits our flexibility to expand and adapt to new demands; increases mission risk due to possible staff turnover (e.g.,

retirements); and limits the opportunities for those individuals to seek different kinds of assignments.

Outcomes: Single points of failure for high priority program areas are eliminated. Knowledge in high priority program areas is managed institutionally.

Tactic 4.3.1: Identify program area priorities and initiate knowledge management processes.

Implementing Programs:

HR Division Knowledge Management Initiative IT Directorate
All Programs

Appendix A: Methodology and Consultation

Methodology

The following approach was used in developing *The Strategic Plan*:

- Conducted an environmental scan using the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) approach (See Appendix B);
- Conducted working session with Director, Deputy Director, and Operating Committee to validate the preliminary SWOT analysis;
- Drafted Strategic Framework outlining goals, objectives, and tactics and aligned goals with Department of Commerce's Balanced Scorecard;
- Validated Strategic Framework with Executive Staff;
- Drafted Strategic Plan to populate the framework;
- Conducted working sessions with Executive Staff to review and adjust plan;
- Conducted concurrent reviews of plan with related strategic documents (*The Business Plan for Change* and *The Future of Census Bureau Operations*);
- Calibrated related documents; and,
- Baseline *The Strategic Plan*.

Consultation during the Strategic Planning Process

The Strategic Plan will be finalized through consultation with Operating Committee.

Consultation with the internal stakeholders will include:

- Numerous discussions with Census Bureau leadership; specifically members of the Operating Committee will validate objectives and tactics applying to their directorates; and,
- Extensive validation points; whereby, after each conversation with leadership, staff revise the emerging strategic planning framework and provide the update to leadership to confirm the changes made based on the discussions; and,

After the plan is approved internally, Census Bureau leadership will hold discussions with departmental leadership and outside stakeholders.

Appendix B: Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) Analysis

Strengths

1. Efforts to establish Census Bureau practices are under way
 - a. Introducing governance practices through the Operating Committee (OPCOMM)
 - b. Introducing Census Bureau investment management practices under the Office of Risk Management and Program Evaluation (ORMPE)
 - c. Clarifying Census Bureau business strategy
 - d. Launching a Human Capital Management assessment process to plan for the future
2. Efforts to standardize business processes and rationalize organization are under way
 - a. Realigned Field; and piloting a functional realignment through DEMO, as well as planning major realignments of Decennial and Economic Directorates
 - b. Developing a common framework for defining mission and mission enabling functions
 - c. Adaptive Design initiative seeks to transform Census Bureau operations through enhanced and integrated use of technology
3. Efforts are under way to better understand and manage costs
 - a. Preparing to pilot activity based costing practices which, once implemented, will help the Census Bureau understand the costs of different kinds of work across the enterprise and identify and address cost drivers and variables
 - b. Adaptive Design initiative seeks to enable the Census Bureau to optimize cost, quality, and schedule in survey and census decision-making
 - c. Service Oriented IT architecture is consolidating and standardizing systems and services in order to stabilize infrastructure, reduce costs, and improve agility
4. Census Bureau mission and the reputation of its statistics makes it a trusted entity and an appealing place for highly qualified statisticians to work
5. Census Bureau censuses and surveys provide high quality, and nationally critical information

Weaknesses

1. Census Bureau business practices may not always optimize decisions and investments, thus not fully preparing the Census Bureau for the future
 - a. Governance practices not fully documented
 - b. Investment management practices vary across directorates and programs
 - c. Uneven understanding of long-term Human Capital Management (HCM) needs
2. Legacy HCM practices are may not fully meet future Census Bureau needs
 - a. Challenges retaining highly qualified recruits in some directorates
 - b. Limited cross-training practices
 - c. Limited options to redeploy personnel based on changing needs
3. Non-standardized business processes make the Census Bureau more complex and challenging to support and manage and less nimble in response to changing external conditions and demands
 - a. Stove-piped, hierarchical organization
 - b. Uneven use of technology to streamline business processes
 - c. Process non-standardization creates more opportunities for errors to be introduced into data and products
 - d. Current processes are limited in ability to recognize and then quickly integrate changes to surveys to reflect the rapidly changing environment
 - e. Decentralized customer service and technical assistance practices may not fully meet customers' needs
4. Lack of understanding of cost at task/activity level limits understanding of actual costs needed to make cost-informed decisions
 - a. Inconsistent agency cost and time tracking practices
 - b. Limited current ability to minimize the major cost driver—field data collection activities
5. Lack of Census Bureau-wide standardized data creates challenges for comparing and integrating domain data across different surveys and censuses, impedes streamlining the survey line and producing new data products
6. Past challenges implementing new technologies to enhance operations and reduce costs

7. Lack of common IT solutions and systems engineering processes and standards
8. Limited robust communications to increase public awareness about the breadth and importance of non-decennial census products and services

Opportunities

1. The Census Bureau produces a breadth of data and data products of interest to the public and specific stakeholder groups
 - a. Diverse array of consumers of Census Bureau data products
 - b. Strong respect for and confidence in Census Bureau data products by those aware of them and who have used them
2. Enhanced communication efforts by Directorates through the Communications Directorate creates opportunities to build awareness and support for Census Bureau work
3. Expanded stakeholder engagement efforts by the Directorates creates opportunities to better understand and then meet data users' needs
4. Advancements in technology present opportunities to reduce operating costs
5. Administration interest in federal statistical programs may present opportunity to clarify Census Bureau role in the statistical system and relationship to other agencies

Threats

1. Growing challenges measuring the U.S.
 - a. Demographic changes
 - b. Privacy concerns and distrust of government use of data
 - c. Rapidly changing economy
 - d. Growth of multiple uses of Big Data outside the Federal statistical system
2. Breadth of mission program portfolio creates essentially boundless demands on the Census Bureau
 - a. Health, housing, demographics, business, economic development, and many other topics
 - b. Associated breadth of stakeholders have high expectations and demands for the Census Bureau
 - c. Growing nation-wide hunger for data

3. Lack of widespread public and Congressional awareness of breadth & depth of Census Bureau's work limits active support for mission
4. Uneven understanding of the composition of data users and their specific needs limits ability to deliver data in the manner that best supports their needs
5. Lack of policy guidance on how to prioritize stakeholders' infinite data needs creates greater strain in an environment of finite resources
6. Congressional scrutiny of survey mandates and burden creates pressures on the work
7. Growing expectations for government efficiency and technology use create new pressures on Census Bureau business practices
8. Growing fiscal pressures
 - a. May constrain choices and programs
 - b. Create pressure for change and greater efficiency
9. Reimbursable customers may not be able to afford Census Bureau's growing data collection costs
10. Use of large transaction-based data sets by the private sector that attempt to measure some of the same indicators that the government provides but in real time.

Appendix C: Alignment among Goals

The U.S. Census Bureau Strategic Plan aligns with *The Economics and Statistics Administration Strategic Plan*, and *The Department of Commerce Strategic Plan*. The alignment of the Census Bureau strategic goals to the strategic plans is illustrated below.

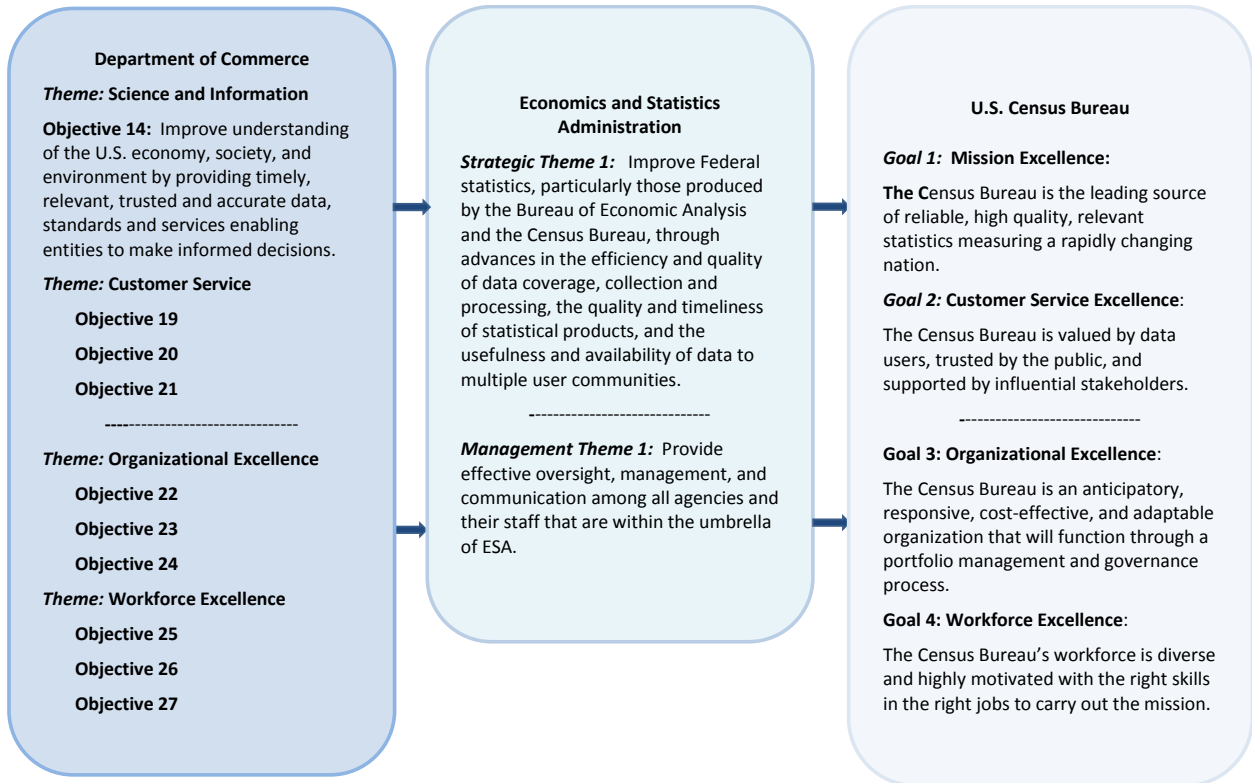


Figure 1: Alignment among Goals

Appendix D: U.S. Census Bureau’s Business, Contributions, and Specific Program Assumptions

U.S. Census Bureau’s Business and Contributions

The Congressional Act of March 6, 1902, established a Census Bureau and gave it the responsibility to conduct various surveys and censuses in addition to the decennial census that had been conducted by temporary federal offices since 1790. Title 13, United States Code, establishes laws pertaining to the U.S. Census Bureau’s statistical programs and ensures confidentiality of data. The Census Bureau serves as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. We honor privacy, protect confidentiality, share our expertise globally, and conduct our work openly. We are guided on this mission by scientific objectivity, our strong and capable workforce, our devotion to research-based innovation, and our abiding commitment to our customers. More than just numbers, this information shapes important policy and operational decisions that help improve the nation’s social and economic conditions.

The production of high quality, relevant statistical information rests on principles that the Census Bureau holds dear. Openness to user and respondent concerns, independence and neutrality, strong statistical standards, and protection of confidentiality form the foundation for the Census Bureau’s work. These principles reflect the Office of Management and Budget guidelines for the quality, objectivity, utility, and integrity of information disseminated by federal agencies.

Census Bureau activities involve survey and census design and methodology, geographic infrastructure update, and data collection, processing, and dissemination. Research and data analysis further strengthen and support statistical program processes throughout programs’ lifecycles. As the fact finder for the Nation, the Census Bureau:

- Conducts a decennial census every 10 years to apportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, as directed by the U.S. Constitution. Decennial census counts also are required for drawing congressional and state legislative district boundaries, for allocating Federal and state funds under various grants-in-aid, in formulating public policy at all levels, and in private sector planning and decision making.
- Provides the President, no later than December 31 of any decennial year (year ending in 0), data for apportioning seats for the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Provides, by April 1 of the year following the decennial census (year ending in 1) data for congressional redistricting.
- Conducts an economic census and census of governments every five years (years ending in 2 and 7). The economic census profiles the U.S. economy from the national to the local level, providing official measures of output for industries and geographical areas. The census of governments is the primary source of facts about the structure and function of the public sector of the U.S. economy.

- Conducts other surveys; collects and analyzes statistical data relating to the social and economic activities and characteristics of the population of the United States and other prescribed areas; and publishes and disseminates these statistics to the Congress, the Executive Branch, business, state and local governments, and the public.
- Provides to data users, free of charge, billions of statistics of vital importance to companies and individuals in making decisions on trillions of dollars of private economic investment.
- Disseminates data products that serve as benchmarks for most commercial databases for marketing, real estate and transportation planning, and corporate labor force projections.
- Conducts special statistical studies on domestic and foreign trade, business services, industry, transportation, construction, population and housing, and on Federal, state, and local governments and, based thereon, custom tabulations, and issue papers.
- Conducts statistical and related research and development activities directed toward continuous improvement of the accuracy, cost effectiveness, timeliness, and relevance of censuses and surveys.
- Develops and maintains a statistical directory of establishments engaged in economic activity in the United States for internal statistical purposes, ensuring that confidentiality of data is preserved.
- Develops and maintains a Master Address File (MAF) used to draw samples, mail questionnaires, and make other improvements to data collection for the decennial census and other census surveys.

As seen above, the Census Bureau supports a wide array of stakeholders, producing products and services vital to informing data users and decision-makers nationwide. However, there are specific programs that, because of their size, scope, and impact, should be highlighted by delineating program assumptions.

Specific Program Assumptions

The following section identifies specific assumptions about the Census Bureau major programs that will continue to affect the execution of the Strategic Plan and the Business Plan for Change:

2020 Census

- The Congress will approve the 2020 Census design in time for systematic operational development and testing;
- The 2020 Census cost per household will be less than the 2010 Census; and,
- The Department of Treasury, the Social Security Administration, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and other critical administrative records suppliers will approve

the use of their respective records in support of the 2020 Census infrastructure and to inform decennial census responses during non-response follow-up.

Economic Census and Census of Governments

- The Census Bureau will continue to conduct the Economic Census and the Census of Governments; and,
- The 2017 Censuses will reengineer and modify processing and reduce and flatten the cyclical budgets over the lifecycles.

American Community Survey (ACS)

- The ACS will continue to be the primary source of socio-economic information for small geographic areas;
- The existing ACS sample will be retained, but continued challenges to mandatory reporting authority demand proactive research identifying options to preserve reliability under various response scenarios;
- Criteria for determining changes to ACS content, uses as a sampling frame for other surveys, and policies governing ACS supplements will be identified and documented; and,
- ACS uses by federal agencies and associated statutory and legal citations are documented.

Appendix E: Stakeholders

The Census Bureau has a breadth of stakeholders who have an interest or stake in the mission, but from varying perspectives. The various stakeholders can be grouped more generally as follows:

- **Oversight Bodies:** those who monitor major Census Bureau programs' execution to ensure it fulfills its mission consistent with authorization and appropriation include:
 - Congress and the Government Accountability Office (GAO);
 - Office of Management and Budget (OMB);
 - Department of Commerce (DOC) and its Office of Inspector General (OIG); and,
 - Economics and Statistics Administration (ESA).
- **Federal Data Users:** the federal users that consume or sponsor Census Bureau programs' products include:
 - The Congress;
 - The Department of Commerce and other federal departments and agencies, such as the Departments of Education, Transportation, and Justice, and the Bureau of Labor Statistics; and,
 - Federal Policy Makers, such as officials at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE) at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).
- **Non-federal Data Users:** the non-federal users encompass a diverse range of entities, including:
 - Business/commercial interests and large and small businesses that need to understand demographic and economic changes that influence business opportunities;
 - Non-profit organizations that need to understand demographic and economic changes that may influence demand for the services they provide;
 - Regional, state, and local government agencies that need to plan to deliver services in changing demographic and economic conditions;
 - Academic researchers who use Census Bureau products to understand changes in the country;
 - Think tanks and foundations that want to understand demographic and economic changes; and,
 - The general public.
- **Reimbursable Customers:** the entities that pay us to collect their data required to produce their data products. Examples include the Department of Justice, the Department of Education, and the Bureau of Economic Statistics.

- **Data Suppliers:** the federal and non-federal entities that supply the Census Bureau with data for use in Census Bureau programs. Examples include the Department of Treasury's Internal Revenue Service, the Social Security Administration, the Department of Agriculture, the Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services, State Employment Records, and Credit Bureau records.
- **Respondents:** the data providers critical to the success of the mission comprised of the household members, businesses, and government units present in America's communities. All households, businesses, and governments of the United States are potential respondents to the Census Bureau's surveys and censuses.
- **Advisors:** those who provide expertise to the Census Bureau about how best to fulfill its mission, by providing methodological expertise, insights about how to reach different business types, and other input. These groups include the National Academy of Sciences, Academic Researchers, including members of the National Science Foundation-Census Bureau Research Network, and several Census Bureau Advisory Committees.
- **Advocacy Groups:** those who represent specific special interests or subpopulations. Examples include the Industry Associations, the Association of Public Data Users, the Population Reference Board, and the Electronic Privacy Information Center.
- **Census Bureau Workforce:** the employees who research, plan, and operationalize the Census Bureau's statistical programs and the contractors who provide specialized support.

Appendix F: Glossary

This section provides definitions for acronyms used throughout the Strategic Plan.

Term	Definition
ACS	American Community Survey
ASPE	Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation
CAPI	Computer-assisted Personal Interviewing
CATI	Computer-assisted Telephone Interviewing
DIR	Director's Office
DOC	Department of Commerce
ESA	Economics and Statistics Administration
GAO	Government Accountability Office
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HCM	Human Capital Management
IT	Information Technology
NAICS	North American Industrial Classification System
NAPCS	North American Product Classification System
OIG	Office of Inspector General
OMB	Office of Management and Budget
OPCOMM	Operating Committee
ORMPE	Office of Risk Management and Program Evaluation
USC	United States Code