

Latino Community Foundation

Director's Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

June 28, 2022

- Good afternoon, everyone. It's an honor to be here in my role as your director of the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Yes, I did say your director. Not just because I'm a fellow Latinx, but because this position serves the public... it serves our nation. And that's how I'm approaching my role as a public servant who happens to be in a leadership position.
- But first let me return to my original statement, that it's an honor to be here with you today.
- The Latino Community Foundation is a cherished and valued partner of the Census Bureau. Look no further than the 2020 Census. LCF's outreach and engagement with younger Latinos in California were incredibly helpful in achieving a complete count in California. So I want to personally thank you for your advocacy.
- As we all know, the pandemic challenged our society and impacted our most vulnerable communities.
- When the pandemic's grip on society was strongest, the Census Bureau still had to deploy a sizeable field force to knock on doors across our nation.
- And we did just that, but we didn't do it alone. Without your support, we could not have achieved the measure of success we attained. We recognize and deeply appreciate that. And we learned from it.
- That's partly why I'm here today. Not just to thank you for helping during an enormously challenging period, but to sustain and strengthen a continuous partnership.
- So, in the spirit of strengthening our partnership, let me tell you a little about how I am leading the Census Bureau.
- First, I think my roots as a statistician, a policy researcher, a fellow stakeholder, and a person of color offer me a unique perspective in leading the Census Bureau.
- I'm a leader who champions diversity, equity, and inclusion. I call these principles DEI. I've lived them over a 40-year career and seen firsthand that innovation and excellence are advanced by embracing DEI principles.
- An important part of our DEI effort includes seeking out and listening to diverse voices. That certainly includes listening to our partners and stakeholders, which of course includes you.
- Now, I believe that we promote excellence by embracing equity, diversity, and inclusion in our workforce, in our policies and practices, as well as in how we engage stakeholders.
- We're committed to producing data that reflects an accurate portrait of America. Census Bureau data are valuable assets that can be used by policymakers and the public to advance equity.
- In 2021, President Biden announced a federal agenda to advance equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

- Because this goal “requires a systemic approach to embedding fairness in decision-making processes,” we need quality data about our people and economy to advance equity.
- And it so happens that the Census Bureau is the leading provider of quality data about the nation’s people and economy.
- In fact, we’re continually striving for excellence. And that can be challenging in our current environment. But even in the face of challenges, I believe that we can find new ways to collect data that are more accurate, relevant, and most of all have utility, as in fit for use.
- Let me talk a little more about how we’re doing that:
- First, we’re committing to data equity. We created an Equity Data Working Group to assemble Census Bureau data that can help explore disparities and inequities in our society. Check out our webpage called Advancing Equity with Data on [census.gov](https://www.census.gov/advancing-equity-with-data).
- Also, we’re working with OMB to revise racial-ethnic reporting standards; and we’re hoping that we can work with OMB on sexual orientation and gender identity.
- Second, we’re incorporating diversity and inclusion in our workplace. Diverse voices are catalysts for innovation, critical thinking, and excellence around issues of who we are as a nation.
- This results in better data quality, data relevance, as well as advancing equity.
- Third, we’re engaging with and actively listening to the full diversity of our stakeholders, including you. The idea is to create continuous partnerships that build trust and communicate the value of Census Bureau data.
- Next, I’d like to mention the issue of transparency and its role in communicating data quality.
- The Census Bureau will continue to be transparent about the quality and reliability of the statistical data we release. As you know, no statistical product is ever perfect; all are subject to various degrees of uncertainty and even error.
- All our products undergo extensive quality checks and reviews to reduce errors. That way, results are fit for their intended uses, such as apportionment and legislative redistricting with 2020 Census data.
- Thus far, we’ve released several 2020 Census quality assessments, and some are ongoing. They include reports on operational metrics, a demographic analysis, and the Post-Enumeration Survey. We’ve also hosted three independent studies by outside expert groups.
- This information facilitates a better understanding of the data quality of our products. And make no mistake – knowing the strengths and limitations of any Census Bureau product actually increases the value of the data, because you know where to be careful with your analysis and how to better interpret results.
- Another aspect of data equity is ensuring that our data are an accurate reflection of the nation.
- We are constantly exploring ways to better measure race and ethnicity as well as sexual orientation and gender identity.
- For example, we’ve conducted research to prepare for including sexual orientation and gender identity in our surveys, should we receive requests to add it.
- Our staff participates in the Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology’s SOGI Working Group, to share knowledge from across the federal statistical system.
- We’re also setting up regular touchpoints with LGBT+ community advocates and external experts. In fact, same-sex relationships have been added to the American Community Survey, Current Population Survey, and the Survey of Income and Program Participation, and were collected on the 2020 Census.
- And in July 2021, SOGI questions were added to the Household Pulse Survey, which has provided valuable data and yielded important lessons learned on collecting these data.

- The Census Bureau has submitted plans to use funding in FY 2023 to conduct research on SOGI questions for the American Community Survey. The research will help improve question wording on SOGI topics, specifically for proxy response, response in self-response modes, and potential translation issues.
- So that concludes my remarks this afternoon. Thank you again for your engagement and invaluable help getting information on the 2020 Census out in California. I look forward to our discussion today.