

National Advisory Committee Fall Meeting

Director's Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

October 27, 2022

Introduction

- Good morning, and thank you for joining our National Advisory Committee meeting. On behalf of everyone at the U.S. Census Bureau, thank you for your participation in this National Advisory Committee meeting, and thank you for your service.
- Advisory committees are an integral part of our processes at the Census Bureau, and I appreciate your help in finding solutions to our challenges. I thank you for sharing your time and expertise with us today.

Committee Changes

- I want to take a moment to recognize and acknowledge a transition in our NAC leadership.
 - Cherokee Bradley is our new incoming chair.
 - Carol Hafford will be our incoming vice-chair.
 - Cherokee and Carol, thank you for taking on leadership roles!
- We also have a few departing members that I'd like to recognize and thank for their contributions during their tenure on the NAC. They are:
 - Taeku Lee (pronounced Tay-koo).
 - Inderdeep Chatrath.
 - Jim Tucker.
- We'd like to thank Jim Tucker for his leadership as outgoing chair of the NAC, and thanks to Taeku and Inderdeep for their dedicated service.
- Also, it is with great sadness that I acknowledge the passing of one of our NAC members, Luc El-Art Severe. For those who had not heard, Luc passed away last fall. Although I never had the honor of meeting him, I know his career focused on helping people. At the time of his death, he was a vice president with United Way of New York City, overseeing Small Business and Workforce Development. He joined our NAC in the fall of 2019.
- We grieve his passing and cherish his collegueship, his contributions, and his commitment to community. We thank him for having served the Census Bureau and our country, and we wish his family peace and comfort.

ACS Program Update:

- We produced the 2021 ACS 1-year data on schedule with releases of data in September, PUMS and supplemental data releases earlier this month, and we are on schedule for the 5-year releases in December and January for the ACS data and PUMS, respectively.
- Also, on the research side of things, we're continuing to evaluate ACS privacy protections and strengthen them as needed.
- Our research continues on a synthesized microdata product and ultimately, science will lead us to the best solution. Moreover, the process will feature stakeholder and data-user engagement,

peer review of research results, and a period to review beta products. This includes funding collaboration opportunities with external researchers on the issue of formal privacy for sample surveys more generally, but also including the ACS.

- We will keep you and the public updated on a regular basis.

FY 2023 Budget

- The FY 2023 budget, totals just over \$1.5 billion for the Census Bureau, approximately \$151 million over FY 2022. Investments in the FY 2023 budget continue the release of data products, final evaluations, and assessments for the 2020 Census and research and testing centered around the 2030 Census design. They also advance the administration's priorities in areas of equity, evidence, and climate change.
- This will position the Census Bureau to transform its operations to a twenty-first century, data-centric model via our transformation and modernization initiative.

2030 Federal Register Notice

- I want to take this opportunity to remind everyone about the Federal Register Notice that the Census Bureau published in August asking for public feedback on the design and planning for the 2030 Census.
- This is the first time that we have formally invited public input into the planning and design stage of a census.
- I've been taking the opportunity to meet with communities in the areas I'm traveling to, in order to hear from them and get feedback on what worked well in the 2020 Census, and get a better sense of what they'd like to see for the 2030 Census.
- These community conversations are a part of our commitment to stakeholder engagement and transparency, and I appreciate these communities' willingness to meet with me.
- The deadline to respond is November 15, 2022.

Tribal Meetings and Consultations

- We're in the midst of outreach efforts to our tribal partners.
- The Census Bureau tribal team and I just returned from Alaska.
- While we were there, I got to meet with Sitka tribal leaders at their headquarters to hear their concerns on the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey.
- We also had several meetings around the Alaska Federation of Natives conference in Anchorage.
- We held a tribal consultation meeting on the Detailed Demographic and Housing Characteristics File, and talked about the 2030 Federal Register Notice. They were pleased to hear of how early we were beginning that effort.
- Next week I'll have another tribal consultation during the National Congress of American Indians conference in Sacramento, California.
- I want to thank Jim Tucker for facilitating our tribal consultation at that meeting, as well as a 2-day ACS workshop and Census Bureau-related breakout session.

Review and Revision of OMB's Federal Race and Ethnicity Statistical Standards

- Lastly, I want to remind everyone of another opportunity for input and engagement that's happening now.
- The U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) maintains governmentwide standards for federal race and ethnicity data. The Census Bureau, and every other federal agency, uses these standards that ensure our ability to compare information and data.

- In June, the Chief Statistician of the United States, Dr. Karin Orvis, identified updating the standards as a top priority and announced that her office would begin the process of revising the standards.
- The statistical standards are being reviewed and revised by an Interagency Technical Working Group, along with critical feedback and input from nongovernmental stakeholders and the public.
- The working group is soliciting public input on its initial proposal for revisions to the statistical standards through a Federal Register Notice.
 - The working group is holding virtual, bimonthly listening sessions to hear directly from members of the public. These listening sessions began in September 2022.
 - If you have questions about the revision process, want to be notified when the Federal Register Notice is published, or would like to schedule a listening session, I encourage you to e-mail OMB to <Statistical_Directives@omb.eop.gov>.
- The Chief Statistician will consider the working group's recommendations and public input and deliver her recommendations to OMB leadership.
- OMB has the goal of completing the revision no later than the summer of 2024.

Conclusion

- Thanks again, and I look forward to today's discussion.

FYI: Per PPSI, there may be follow-up questions regarding:

- An update on pilot programs, such as the PCGQR, continue and are there similar programs to address differential counts being considered/tested.
- How differential privacy is important with the public experience, moving forward, implications on the 2030 Census.
 - As the Census Bureau's work on applying differential privacy to the decennial census data products winds down, there is a lot of angst about the propriety of the Census Bureau applying differential privacy to other Census Bureau surveys. Several points have been raised by NAC members and other stakeholders about the possible use of DP, including:
 1. The research and analysis on which the Census Bureau is relying in considering application of DP to sampled surveys, for which the Census Bureau's concerns about reverse-engineering released data to identify specific household responses do not appear to apply (stated another way, it seems highly unlikely that a specific household response could be identified for the 2.7 percent annual sample in the ACS, except in isolated instances for areas in which there is a particularly sparse population).
 2. The Census Bureau's consideration and analysis of how the privacy concerns with the decennial survey data differ from data collected from sampled surveys.
 3. What analysis, if any, the Census Bureau has done to reverse-engineer other datasets, such as the ACS, to see if specific households can be identified.
 4. The Census Bureau's consideration that application of DP to ACS data will render that sampled data unusable, particularly for more sparsely populated communities and areas.
 5. The Census Bureau's consideration of existing methods to protect privacy other than DP such as suppression.
 6. A status update on the Census Bureau's announced plans to apply DP to ACS possibly as early as 2025.
 7. Opportunities for public notice, comment, tribal consultations, and stakeholder feedback on other surveys being considered for DP (especially the ACS) before a final decision is made on application of DP to those surveys.