

Delta Days Conference

Director's remarks as prepared for delivery

March 27, 2023

- 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, 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.
- Delta Sigma Theta Inc. is a cherished and valued partner of the Census Bureau. And your members are a valued part of our workforce, too—we tallied up 28 sorors who are currently doing excellent work at our agency.
- I know the Deltas are a public-spirited group, with members throughout our nation's civil service and elected positions. I appreciate the good work that these members are doing on behalf of the Census Bureau, and hope to see more of you join us in the future.
- But let me return to my original statement, that it's an honor to be here with you today.
- Delta Sigma Theta Inc. is a cherished and valued partner of the Census Bureau. Look no further than the 2020 Census.
- Your engagement in 2020—in hosting a Complete Count Committee, hosting a Census Bureau event, and education and outreach to your membership—was incredibly helpful in achieving a complete count. 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, voices that represent every aspect of our nation. 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.

- 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,” policymakers and the public will need quality data about America’s people and economy to advance equity.
- The Census Bureau is the leading provider of quality data about the nation’s people and economy. 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.
- Our data can assist federal agencies and others in equitably distributing resources and identifying underserved communities.
- We provide a wealth of data by age, disability, race, ethnicity, sex, income, veteran status, and other key demographic variables to help measure equity. These data are often by geography, which provides meaning and context to the statistical data, and can identify rural and underserved communities.
- We also provide economic data that can help businesses in underserved communities identify opportunities for growth. The measures inform policymakers working to advance equity and enable them to propose effective, data-driven solutions.
- 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, timely, relevant, and most of all have utility, as in fit for use.
- Moreover, I believe that we promote excellence by embracing equity, diversity and inclusion in our workforce, policies and practices, as well as in how we engage stakeholders and how we gather and incorporate feedback and advice. Let me talk a little more about that:
 - First, we are committed to data equity. We want to ensure our data is available and easily accessible to all, including underserved communities.
 - Second, we seek to infuse diversity and inclusion in our workplace. Diverse voices and perspectives can be a potent catalyst for increasing data quality, data relevance as well as advancing equity. It promotes innovation, critical thinking, and excellence.
 - Third, we will engage with and actively listen to the full diversity of our stakeholders in the United States, which of course includes you.
- Stakeholder feedback is critical to understanding the needs of our data users and decisionmaking.
- We plan to strengthen existing partnerships and identify new partners. This includes advocacy organizations, folks in philanthropy, state and local jurisdictional officers, community-based organizations, scientific and other professional associations, and so on.
- The idea is to create opportunities for collaboration that build trust to aid in public participation in our research endeavors and apprise communities of the value of Census Bureau data.
- Bolstering our scientific integrity is also essential to our pursuit of excellence. We will continue to be transparent about the quality and reliability of the statistics we publish and the data we release.
- We are working to develop new ways to collect data that are more accurate, timely, relevant, and most of all meet the needs of the public. We continuously engage in improving how we support equity and diversity.
- We are constantly assessing how we can improve our statistical programs to better serve and represent underserved groups.
- We continuously research strategies for improving respondent understanding of questions we ask and the accuracy of the data we produce.

- And as I mentioned, we are conducting ongoing engagement and discussions about our research and findings with stakeholder groups.
- Thank you so much for hosting me at Delta Days. I greatly appreciate the chance to speak to you. I look forward to continuing our partnership in the years to come.
- [Q&A]