

# The Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates Spring Meeting

Director's remarks as prepared for delivery

April 11, 2023

- Good afternoon, everyone. It's so great to meet with you, again.
- This is now our 57th year of engagement between the Census Bureau and the states through the FSCPE.
- Your work helps us develop better quality estimates.
- That benefits us, but more importantly, it benefits your states, and the public.
- I can't overstate how valuable of a stakeholder you are to our Pop Estimates program.
- And the same goes for the decennial census... your help and feedback were both invaluable. We are incredibly grateful the work you do.
- So let me turn to some things I experienced in my first year as director, because they directly relate to FSCPE.
- First, I can't believe it's been over a year since I was sworn in.
- This past year, I've learned how the Bureau quickly adapted its massive decennial census operation to meet the challenges that befell them.
- That included a global pandemic which shut down the nation just before Census Day in 2020.
- The experience motivated the Census Bureau to develop a robust transformation and modernization initiative.
- It redefined how the Bureau collects, processes and disseminates our statistical data products.
- Now, I saw an opportunity to bolster that transformation.
- How? By diversifying our innovation of everything – our systems, operations, policies, and even mathematical solutions.
- This could be accomplished by embracing the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion in our everyday work activities.
- And one way to do that was to solicit feedback from a wide range of internal career staff and external stakeholders, data users and the public.
- And that includes you, the FSCPE.
- I spent this last year laying the groundwork to create continuous, ongoing community engagement in its broadest sense.
- Our staff met with numerous stakeholders and communities.
- We've conducted listening sessions with stakeholders representing both communities and data users.
- I spoke at numerous events across the country, representing a wide array of constituencies.
- I met with tribal leaders from around the country.

- Throughout these engagements, we listened carefully, we strengthened existing ties, and we established new relationships.
- We captured some amazing perspectives.
- We witnessed rural America's struggles and joys through the experiences of farmers and smalltown businesses that were relayed to us.
- We visited inner-city neighborhoods and engaged local community leaders, pastors and local elected officials who expressed concerns about the quality of their local data.
- We heard from American Indian and Alaska Native people on tribal lands and learned about their sacred way of life.
- I met with scholars, researchers and students from universities across the nation.
- Putting all these experiences together, I came to a profound conclusion:
- We cannot achieve their mission alone.
- We need a community-of-the-whole approach to sustain a fully functioning and successful federal statistical agency.
- We need to seek and use feedback from stakeholders and the public.
- And our engagement should be continuous.
- Nurturing an ecosystem of trusted messengers is critical if we hope to engender participation from historically recalcitrant segments of our wonderfully diverse population.
- So, I wanted to share my experience with you this afternoon.
- Ok, now let's turn to a really important program at the Census Bureau - a program whose importance and priority only grows with time.
- I'm talking about our annual Pop Estimates program.
- Pop Estimates help determine how billions of dollars in federal funds are distributed annually.
- And working with a network of local demographic experts like you is incredibly helpful.
- You, the FSCPE members, possess specialized local knowledge that helps us produce population estimates for your states.
- You provide valuable support by reviewing our population and housing unit estimates and methodology.
- So let me now provide some updates I think you'll find interesting.
- First - in large part due to your contributions - the Vintage 2022 estimates release cycle is underway.
- The latest release of Vintage 2022 estimates occurred in March, with another—national estimates by age and sex—scheduled for Thursday of this week. And our continuous improvement efforts are ongoing.
- You'll be briefed on Base Evaluation and Research Team later today, and will hear about other pop estimates research including vital statistics and the modified race file tomorrow.
- Next, let me tell you about our 2030 Census planning.
- We're still developing the census operational design.
- In addition to ongoing assessments, analyses of quality measures, and explorations of new technology, we're actively synthesizing the public input received from our FRN, which you'll be hearing more about this afternoon.
- Lastly, I want to mention our Census Bureau priority areas for 2023.
- They flow from our transformation and modernization initiative.
- We're reengineering our processes, our practices and indeed our thinking on how a federal statistical agency operates in the 21st century.

- We envision a single enterprise, data-centric operation that channels data from many sources into a single data lake using common collection and ingestion platforms.
- With that as context, here are our 2023 priority areas:
  - I'll start with the **modernization of surveys**. Household and economic surveys are increasingly difficult to conduct.
 

We see declining participation rates and rising per unit costs.

We'll be modernizing our surveys by exploring alternative data sources to supplement respondent data with blended data approaches, and we'll leverage tools like AI to ease respondent burden.
  - The next priority area is **administrative records enumeration**. The 2020 Post-Enumeration Survey found that the accuracy of responses using administrative records exceeded that provided by proxy interviews.
 

We need to exploit that.

Research will guide us as to where administrative records are most effective.

Ultimately, admin record use will permit more resources to be allocated for tailored approaches to historically undercounted populations.
  - **External engagement** is also priority area. As I said earlier, we need a community-of-the-whole effort to accomplish our mission.
 

The net must be cast broadly and involve a two-way flow of ideas, suggestions, concerns, and feedback.

We'll continue to strengthen ties with our data users.

We'll develop data tools tailored to different user communities.

And we'll facilitate access to data from our FDRCs as well as the nascent National Statistical Data Service.
  - Besides external engagement, we'll conduct **internal engagement**. A community-of-the-whole approach also includes the Census Bureau's most valuable assets — our career staff.
 

We'll continue our efforts to enhance the work culture of the Census Bureau, using our values and principles of diversity, equity and inclusion to guide our decision making and planning.
  - And finally, there's our **economic statistics modernization** priority area. We seek to leverage emerging data science methods to use our data more fully. We'll focus on using new non-survey data sources for developing retail statistics.
- OK, those are our priority areas for 2023.
- I'll conclude by circling back to my earlier remarks. I noted that we're on a journey of transformation and modernization. But this is something we can't do alone.
- We need your engagement, your support, and your constructive, critical feedback.
- We need your diverse voices to produce the best data that meets your needs.
- We - the Census Bureau - are a work in progress, like all agencies.
- We aspire to perfection, knowing that we won't get there but we can certainly make progress in that direction.
- I hope you can see that through our aspirations, our actions and our engagement, we're progressing towards better data and better public service.
- Thank you.