

# Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates Full Membership Meeting

Director's Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

September 20, 2023

## INTRODUCTION

- Good morning. It's a pleasure to be with you today for this meeting of the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates Program.
- I'm sure I don't have to tell this group that accurate population estimates matter. Population estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau help determine how trillions in federal dollars are distributed each year. States and local governments rely on this funding to provide critical services to residents. Designated state agencies play a key role in our production of population estimates through the FSCPE.
- And as you also know, estimating the population at the subnational geographic level presents many unique challenges. Having access to a network of local demographic experts is helpful because every state is different. FSCPE state members possess specialized local knowledge that makes it less challenging to produce accurate estimates for their states.
- For example, they share vital statistics data and information on group quarters such as college dorms and prisons. The Population Estimates Program at the Census Bureau incorporates this information with its other data inputs to produce current population estimates consistent with the last decennial census counts. The FSCPE state members then support the Population Estimates Program by reviewing and providing feedback on the population and housing unit estimates and methodology. The Census Bureau and state members find this process extremely valuable.
- The FSCPE is also active in several ways that support the decennial census. For example, they are participants in the Local Update of Census Addresses as well as the Count Review program, major initiatives to enhance the accuracy of the decennial census each decade.
- For over 55 years, the partnership between the Census Bureau and the states through the FSCPE has ensured the highest quality estimates thanks to the contribution of the 56 representatives from each state, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the four U.S. Island Areas.
- The FSCPE is an important part of the community-of-the-whole approach that the Census Bureau is taking to accomplish our mission. As we prepare to sign new Memorandums of Agreement, I look forward to finding even more ways for us to work together to create better data for the American public.

## VINTAGE 2022 POPULATION ESTIMATES

- Due in part to your contributions, the Vintage 2022 estimates release cycle is now complete. The June release of the Vintage 2022 series included estimates by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin for the nation, states, and counties; and by age and sex for Puerto Rico commonwealth and

municipios. These July 1, 2022, estimates showed that the nation continues to get older as the median age creeps closer to 40.

- Some of the highlights from this release include:
  - The nation's median age increased by 0.2 years to 38.9 years between 2021 and 2022.
  - Nationally, the Black alone or in combination population reached 50 million.
  - The Hispanic, Asian, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander populations have experienced cumulative growth above 3 percent, with the Hispanic population increasing by over 1.9 million since 2020.
  - Census Bureau demographers came up with a creative solution that not only enabled us to produce the estimates but also introduced new possibilities for further methodological developments.
  - Some of the differences between the blended base and Demographic and Housing Characteristics are considered beneficial innovations to the estimates' methodology. The blended base's use of the national age and sex distribution from the 2020 Demographic Analysis estimates was especially groundbreaking.
  - Males and the Hispanic, American Indian and Alaska Native populations experienced disproportionate increases in deaths during pandemic.
  - There were large increases in deaths across all demographic groups between 2019 and 2020 and smaller increases for most groups from 2020 to 2021. Deaths declined for all groups from 2021 to 2022.
- Work is well underway developing the Vintage 2023 estimates, including states already being called upon to provide their group quarters and vital statistics (births and deaths) data.
- During the fall meeting, FSCPE members will hear more about the level of contribution for this vintage and the importance of participating in these data calls to help make the population estimates the best they can be.

## 2030 CENSUS PLANNING

- Last fall, we eagerly announced that the Census Bureau actively sought your ideas for a better 2030 Census. This outreach represented an important part of our overall commitment to engaging with stakeholders, tribes, partners, and communities. We hope outreach efforts like this help illustrate that we are living our values, which include scientific integrity, inclusivity, and transparency. This represented but one way that the voices of diverse constituencies and communities across our nation can be heard.
- We are pleased to report that we received a tremendous response! Over 8,000 comments were registered from people across the country. The comments focused on advancing our upcoming 2030 Census operational plan, overall. There was also special attention to the enumeration of historically undercounted populations.
- In our Federal Register Notice, we invited you to share feedback on five areas: reaching folks and motivating participation, leveraging technology, identifying new data sources, ways to contact respondents, and support services to facilitate completing the census form. The public fully embraced this opportunity and provided valuable feedback on various aspects of the census, even areas beyond the five we provided.
- Over two-thirds of the comments we received—or about 70 percent—focused on one of three categories: questionnaire content, reaching everyone and motivating participation, and field operational management.

- Here are some examples of the feedback we received:
  - Partner with programs that serve historically undercounted populations, school districts, adult literacy, and adult basic education programs.
  - Partner with schools and children’s TV shows to reach households with young children.
  - Provide QR codes or an app to let people access the questionnaire or learn more about the census.
  - Hire people from historically undercounted communities to conduct the census.
  - Give funding to tribes and let them count their populations.
  - Provide live agents to help respondents through chat applications and self-response stations.
  - Use municipal data (like utility data, public school records, and local social services data).
- So, what’s next? Now that we’ve assembled the comments into topical areas, we are assessing, evaluating, and synthesizing them. Your feedback is being shared with Census Bureau experts for their processing and analysis. We’re also seeking feedback assessments from our esteemed federal advisory committees, specifically the Census Scientific Advisory Committee and the National Advisory Committee.
- Our advisory committees will help us prioritize the suggestions we received. That will allow us to better integrate them into our 2030 Census research agenda as well as our 2030 operational design. Of course, we’ll continue to analyze this feedback through this summer and finalize the extent of their use in our research. And this fall, we’ll release a report on how we are moving forward.
- But that’s not all. In August, we announced the establishment of a new Federal Advisory Committee to focus on the 2030 Census—and we want to make sure everyone is aware of the opportunity to submit nominations.
- As you know, our main goal for the 2030 Census—and for every decennial census—is a complete and accurate count of the nation’s population. Here, again, we need a community-of-the-whole approach that involves support from the wonderfully diverse people of our nation.
- We need to hear from people across our nation about how to reach historically undercounted populations, how to effectively communicate with different communities in culturally relevant ways, how to collect information in an easy and efficient manner, and how communities use our data to meet their needs, to plan, and to improve. An advisory committee focused solely on the 2030 Census will help us do that.
- So, how will it work? The 2030 Census Advisory Committee will be distinct from our other committees, which provide feedback on the many programs and initiatives across our agency, not just the decennial census. The three advisory committees have different areas of focus: science; people and communities; and the 2030 Census.
- The 2030 Census Advisory Committee will focus solely on operations designed to successfully conduct the 2030 Census. It will advise the Census Bureau on 2030 Census questionnaire content, enumeration strategies, outreach, communications, and data analysis, including work that will impact the count and how historically undercounted groups are included in the decennial’s work.
- The Census Bureau will make sure that each committee’s work is focused and that we use everyone’s time efficiently and avoid duplicated efforts. Census Scientific Advisory Committee and National Advisory Committee will continue to inform fundamental aspects of the Census Bureau’s work that impacts 2030 Census planning. Any overlap will be because the 2030 Census is an aspect of something the other committees are examining. The Census Bureau has a team dedicated to supporting all committees, and this coordination will be a foundation of that team’s work.

- Please submit a nomination if your organization has expertise in these areas and would be a good fit for the 2030 Census Advisory Committee. We also invite multiple organizations to create a coalition and submit a single nomination as a group. We are accepting nominations until September 30, 2023.
- I want to again thank everyone who has already shared their recommendations for the 2030 Census through our Federal Register Notice and through our advisory committees. Your feedback is very important to us. This committee is just one of the many ways that we will be reaching out to and engaging our partners, data users, and the public over the coming years.

## **STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- I've mentioned the community-of-the-whole approach that the Census Bureau is taking to accomplish our mission. We realized from our 2020 Census experience that we cannot achieve our mission without external input and collaboration from you—our stakeholders, partners, and the public.
- But that is true not just of the decennial census, but of all our censuses, surveys, and programs. Toward that end, we continue to make a concerted effort to engage stakeholders, partners, and local communities across America.
- Throughout 2022 and 2023, my staff and I have been meeting with advocacy and community-based organizations, chambers of commerce, government officials, tribal leaders, businesses, academics, and more along the way. Our conversations with these groups were wide-ranging and very fruitful, and we look forward to engaging with even more stakeholders soon.
- Two-way conversations with stakeholders and the public are critical to understanding the needs of our data users and to our decision-making. I appreciate these groups inviting us to speak to them and offering us their time and feedback. I hope that our meetings with them demonstrate the Census Bureau's ongoing commitment to transparency, data utility, and scientific integrity.

## **CONCLUSION**

- Thank you so much for being here today and for all of your efforts on behalf of the Census Bureau. I look forward to finding new ways for the Census Bureau and FSCPE to use our partnership to benefit each other and, more importantly, create better data for the American public.