

Spring 2024 National Advisory Committee Meeting

Virtual Meeting

Deputy director's remarks as prepared for delivery

May 2, 2024

WELCOME

- Hello everyone, thank you all for joining us this morning.
- Like Rob mentioned, these meetings are vital to us, and we thank you for your time and contributions. I'm happy to share the following updates with the group.
- As you all know we are an agency of innovation, continuously transforming and advancing to keep up with technology and emerging socioeconomic trends.
- To be successful, we have to reconsider the entire value chain of producing official statistics.
- The Census Bureau's transformation is a diverse set of efforts from the large and visible to the small but impactful that all aim to address challenges like declining survey response rates and leverage opportunities like new nonsurvey data sources to produce accurate, timely, and actionable data products for our data users.

TRANSFORMATION

- We made substantial progress on our transformation efforts last year and I'd like to highlight some of the following:

- **Statistical Product First**

The Census Bureau is changing how it designs and provides statistical data products. By moving to a "Statistical Product First" approach, we can better provide information the public wants and needs to meet its objectives.

Because this approach depends on in-depth, ongoing dialogue with our data users and the public, it is also a step toward increased data equity and access. Instead of limiting ourselves to the statistics our censuses and surveys produce, we're widening our lens and working across programs to develop statistical products informed by what stakeholders need our statistics to support.

The Statistical Product First approach means a total change in workflow. The Census Bureau is reenvisioning its data enterprise to support a workflow model for this new approach.

A key part of that is finding out what purposes and uses people need Census Bureau statistics to support. This then drives the development of the statistical products through an iterative process—a continuous journey.

- **CPS Modernization**

Another example of our transformation efforts is the Current Population Survey (CPS). Along with our partner, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, we are launching a multiyear effort to modernize the CPS to ensure long-term sustainability.

Since coming out of the Great Depression, data collected from CPS households have been used to derive the nation's unemployment rate, among other critical measures that help us gauge how American households are doing economically.

Over the years, the CPS has made modifications to measure the ever-changing population and labor force characteristics of the United States and has implemented the latest in survey methodology practices.

The last major change to the CPS was in the early 1990s when it went from paper data collection to computer-assisted interviewing.

Today, the CPS, like many surveys, is experiencing declining response rates. By adding a new internet self-response mode, we hope to increase or, at the very least, stabilize response rates. A longer-run strategy is to explore other possible data sources to support estimates from the CPS.

2026 CENSUS TEST

- Speaking of the 2030 Census, earlier this week, we held the third webinar to share updates and lay the groundwork for key components of the 2030 Census preparations.
- The webinar provided updates about the scope and enhancements that will be tested in the 2026 Census Test, including new strategies to increase overall response and participation.
- We will pay special attention to the inclusion of hard-to-count and historically undercounted populations. The webinar described how the Census Bureau plans to test features that were not used during the 2020 Census.
- The 2026 Census Test is one of two major field tests the Census Bureau will hold leading up to the 2030 Census.
- Counting every person living in the United States is an incredibly complex undertaking. Throughout the planning process, the Census Bureau uses research, stakeholder input and a wide range of expertise and testing to inform decisions.
- The design of the 2030 Census will mature through 2029, and we will continue to engage stakeholders and provide updates throughout the process.

ECONOMIC DIRECTORATE UPDATES

2022 Economic Census

- As you may know, the First Look data was published ahead of schedule on January 25, 2024, providing a macro view of the U.S. economy.
- High-level numbers show that there were just over 8 million establishments with paid employees in 2022, up from 7.6 million establishments in 2017 and 7.1 million establishments in 2012. These establishments employed 140 million employees, with an annual payroll of \$8.6 trillion.
- Interactive visualizations of the First Look data, originally published January 25, 2024, have recently been added to our website.
- Analytical review is underway for the more detailed Economic Census data releases that will be disseminated on a flow basis through early 2026.
- The next planned stateside release will be the Geographic Area Series, which will be published by March 2025. The Island Areas data will begin to be released this summer, with data for Guam, American Samoa and Northern Mariana Islands being released in early June, and U.S. Virgin Islands in July.

2022 Census of Governments

- Continued to release data for the finance component of the 2022 Census of Governments.
- Finance data include revenue, expenditures, debt, and assets for state and local governments as well as pensions data.
- On October 3, 2023, preliminary data tables were released for school finance data with final data files being released on April 25, 2024. State finance data were released on April 25, 2024.

Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BTOS)

- Under our high-frequency data program, the BTOS provides biweekly data to measure the U.S. business climate and captures key measures of the economy including revenue, employment, hours, as well as business conditions including demand, prices, supply chain issues, inventory status, interest rate impacts, and weather loss impact.
- As of the October 26, 2023 release, the BTOS sample includes all employer businesses (single location and multilocation) in the United States, excluding farms. Previously, for the data period from July 2022 to September 2023, the BTOS data were representative of only single location employer businesses.
- On March 28, 2024, the BTOS release included a new supplement measuring artificial intelligence (AI). The supplemental questions are designed to provide insight into how widespread AI use is by businesses, the specific types of AI that businesses are using, how that use is impacting their employment, and how AI is changing the organization of their business. Businesses were asked about both current and future use of AI. Content from the AI supplement is only available for one cycle. Additionally, in collaboration with the Center for Economic Studies (CES), the working paper “Tracking Firm Use of AI in Real Time: A Snapshot from the Business Trends and Outlook Survey” was also published.

Annual Integrated Economic Survey (AIES)

- This year we released the annual survey data of our business statistics, in their current format, for the Annual Retail Trade Survey, Annual Wholesale Trade Survey, Service Annual Survey, and Annual Capital Expenditures Survey for the final time. These surveys have now transitioned to AIES.
- We officially launched AIES on March 15 to approximately 370,000 businesses. AIES is designed to consolidate and combine content from seven current economic surveys. AIES also incorporated over 90 percent of available enterprise solutions provided by Data Ingest and Collection the Enterprise (DICE) and Enterprise Data Lake to perform mail out, to deliver a production-ready collection instrument, and to handle data storage.
- The 2023 AIES due date was April 30. Follow-up activities continue this month with past due notices mailed/mailed to respondents.
- We are currently reviewing the data coming in and working to deploy new analyst tools and data processing capabilities so that we can thoroughly analyze and edit the data in preparation for data release in the summer of 2025. Staff also continues to work close with DICE to monitor current operations for the survey year 2023 (SY23) survey in the field, while also looking ahead and planning for instrument/content changes and the overall schedule for SY24.

Annual Business Survey (ABS)

- On January 25, 2024, an infographic and preliminary data from the 2023 ABS covering data year 2022 were released.
- The infographic shows the profitability of employer businesses by race of owners.
- The 2023 ABS First Look tables provide preliminary estimates on the financing activities, impact of the coronavirus pandemic on business sales, and reshoring activities of employer businesses in the United States during 2022.

CONCLUSION

- Again, thank you all for joining us today. I look forward to listening to the presentations and your recommendations.