

# Census Scientific Advisory Committee (CSAC) Fall 2024 Meeting

Deputy director's remarks as prepared for delivery

September 19, 2024

## WELCOME

- Good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us today.
- There are a few announcements I'd also like to share. As many of you know, attempting to count every person living in the United States is a major task.
- The planning and execution of every decennial census is informed by research, lessons-learned, and stakeholder input, with a wide range of expertise from partners like yourselves and Census Bureau professionals. And of course, extensive testing.
- Each decennial census is different, and they take over a decade of planning and preparation, and the 2026 Census Test is an important part of that preparation.
- For the 2020 Census, much of our testing was focused on proving new technologies and methods—like deploying iPhones rather than paper questionnaires for field data collection. The success of those new technologies and methods gives us the opportunity to focus on procedures and approaches that focus on ensuring we accurately enumerate hard-to-count households and historically undercounted populations.

## 2026 CENSUS TEST

- In July, we announced the six sites for the 2026 Census Test. Those locations include:
  - Colorado Springs, CO (selected areas within the metro area).
  - Huntsville, AL (selected areas within the metro area).
  - Tribal Lands Within Arizona (Fort Apache Reservation, home to the White Mountain Apache Tribe, and San Carlos Reservation, home to the San Carlos Apache Tribe).
  - Spartanburg, SC (selected areas within the metro area).
  - Western North Carolina (Cherokee, Graham, Jackson, and Swain counties, and Qualla Boundary, home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians).
  - Western Texas (Brewster, Jeff Davis, Pecos, and Presidio counties).
- We carefully selected these sites using a set of criteria determined by rigorous analysis and research. We are confident each of these sites will help us better accomplish our goal to count every person living in the United States, especially those living in hard-to-count areas.
- We look forward to working with the selected communities, and we appreciate their cooperation. By acting as a proving ground for the testing of our strategies, systems, and operations, they're performing a valuable service for our whole nation.

## OMB'S RACE AND ETHNICITY STANDARDS

- Other major news we've had in the last few months are the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) updated race and ethnicity standards.

- On March 28, 2024, the OMB published the results of its review of Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 (SPD 15) and issued updated standards for maintaining, collecting, and presenting race/ethnicity data across federal agencies.
- Among the biggest updates: directives to use a combined race/ethnicity question, the addition of a new “Middle Eastern and North African” minimum reporting category, and a requirement to collect detailed race/ethnicity responses.
- The updates to SPD 15 were informed by robust empirical research; extensive engagement with experts, scholars, organization leaders, and communities across the country; and the successful and meaningful collaboration among federal agency leaders and experts on the Interagency Technical Working Group on Race and Ethnicity Standards.
- We are confident that the updated standards will improve data on race/ethnicity across U.S. Census Bureau programs, and that these new data will better represent the U.S. population’s rich racial/ethnic diversity and detailed identities.
- You’ll hear more from Nicholas Jones next.

## PUERTO RICO FSRDC

- A few weeks ago, I had the honor of attending the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the first-ever Puerto Rico Federal Statistic Research Data Center. This is the first FSRDC in a U.S. territory.
- At the Census Bureau, we are working diligently to expand data infrastructure in Puerto Rico, and an FSRDC is a fantastic way of doing that.
- With these centers, qualified researchers can access restricted-use microdata from a variety of statistical agencies to address important research questions. Federal and state statistical agencies collaborate with the Census Bureau to provide microdata to approved researchers in the secure FSRDC environment.
- Currently, seven federal partner agencies provide data directly through the FSRDCs. And, many other agencies who sponsor surveys or collect administrative data collaborate with the FSRDC program by making available the data collected from respondents or program participants.
- Access to FSRDC data will enhance the statistical capacity of the island. The data will enable local officials, industry leaders, and third sector to make more informed, timely data-driven decisions. And, it will also allow local academics to address previously unanswerable research questions.
- As you all know, our goal is to empower decision-makers, businesses, researchers, and the public with timely, accurate, reliable, and meaningful data.
- The Census Bureau currently partners with several organizations in Puerto Rico and we hope to continually add to that list. We understand the importance of good data, and we’re excited of the work and collaboration that’s to come.
- The FSRDC will officially open this fall.

## BUDGET

- Our enacted FY24 appropriation is \$102.5 million less than what we received in FY23.
- Given the challenging fiscal environment, we sincerely appreciate congressional consideration of our funding request.
- With this year’s funding and the carryover from FY23, we’ll allocate resources to our highest priority requirements.
- We continue our multiyear process of transforming our organization and operations from a survey-centric model to a data-centric model, where we can more readily blend survey data with administrative and alternative digital data sources.
- This approach, and opportunities to expand secure access to administrative data sources—like the National Directory of New Hires, among others—will benefit all Census Bureau programs and provide more timely and relevant data products to stakeholders and the American public.
- Our FY 2025 budget request, which the president released on March 11, totals just over \$1.58 billion for the Census Bureau—or \$195 million over the FY24 Enacted budget.

- The FY 2025 request supports the Census Bureau's core operations and invests in new data products, methods, and crosscutting research techniques and enterprise technology.
- Some of the investments in the FY 2025 budget are:
  - The 2030 Census program, which will be transitioning from the Design Selection Phase into the Development and Integration Phase.
  - The 2022 Economic Census data release and planning efforts for the 2027 Economic Census and the Census of Governments.

## CONCLUSION

- I look forward to the discussions these next 2 days and appreciate your support and partnership.
- Thank you.