

United States Census Bureau

Data to Help Our Schools, Students, and Families Thrive

The [Census Bureau](#) produces data about the nation's changing socioeconomic and demographic characteristics. Located within the U.S. Department of Commerce, the Census Bureau is responsible for conducting the constitutionally-mandated decennial census—the nation's largest peacetime mobilization. The agency also collects and disseminates essential data from more than 100 annual surveys, most notably the American Community Survey (ACS), which measures annual changes in the U.S. population and economy.

Census data serve numerous political, policy, and scientific purposes. In addition to determining apportionment in the U.S. House of Representatives and legislative redistricting at the state and local levels of government, census data are used to allocate over \$800 billion in federal resources annually (*Distribution of Funding From 55 Large Census-guided Programs by State (May 2019)*). Further, the private, public, and academic sectors rely on census data to make consequential planning and investment decisions affecting all facets of American life, including industry, workforce, transportation, education, health, housing, and human services. Census data are the denominator for a wide range of other surveys conducted by federal, state, and local government agencies, scientists, and corporations.

Key Census Bureau Products

- Decennial Census
- American Community Survey
- Current Population Survey
- Census of Governments
- Economic Census
- American Housing Survey
- Survey of Income and Program Participation
- Survey of Business Owners
- Annual Survey of Manufactures

Challenges Facing U.S. Census Bureau

Funding--The cyclical nature of the decennial census lifecycle budget presents unique challenges for ensuring that the Bureau receives the funding it needs at critical points in the decade. Over 60 percent of the lifecycle costs of the decennial census budget are spent in its final two years (years ending in 9 and 0). As a result, policymakers struggle to deliver the billions of dollars that are necessary during critical planning and execution phases of the decennial.

Public Support--The other surveys that the Census Bureau conducts, most notably the American Community Survey (ACS), are often overshadowed by the decennial census. Sustaining public support for these surveys, and protecting their unique mandatory nature, is a high priority for data users and other census stakeholders who rely on these data to understand and measure economic, demographic, and social change at the most granular geographic level. Census Bureau surveys, especially the ACS, are often criticized for being too intrusive and burdensome. The Census Bureau, with help from census stakeholders, must educate the public regularly about the value of these surveys and the extensive uses of their data.

Invest in data to
secure a better future.



#InvestInData #DataInfrastructure #CountOnStats

Improving the lives of
Americans through data.

