U.S. Census Bureau

Priorities for the 117th Congress and 2021-2025 Administration

> The U.S. Census Bureau's mission is to "serve as the nation's leading provider of quality data about its people and economy."
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> The Census Bureau has immediate and long-term needs, including:
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> - Additional time to produce apportionment and redistricting data and data products from the 2020 Census;
> - Support to conduct its mission free of undue political interference;
> - Qualified leaders and advisory committee members and forums for engaging data users to produce and inform census surveys, data products, and programs; and,
> - Robust funding to sustain its broad mission.

Mission, Scope and Data Products

The Census Bureaus is the federal government's largest statistical agency. Through its comprehensive surveys, the Census Bureau collects and disseminates timely information about the nation's changing social, demographic, and economic characteristics. Census data are the foundation or denominator of most other surveys that federal government conducts. Further, census data are used to inform activities fundamental to our democracy, particularly the apportionment of seats in Congress, and to our economy, including the distribution of approximately [$1.5 trillion in federal funding annually to the states.](#)

Census data are not just vital to the federal government. The private sector relies on census data to make critical investment and workforce planning decisions while state and local governments use census data to make decisions regarding service delivery and infrastructure development, including where to build schools, hospitals, and roads. Scientists and educators use census data to conduct research and research training activities, while civil rights advocates use census data to monitor compliance with voting rights statutes. Simply put, census data affect every facet of American society.

The Census Bureau collects and reports its data through a variety of internal surveys and programs, including the [Decennial Census,](#) [Economic Census](#), and [American Community Survey](#), as well as via surveys sponsored by other federal agencies, such as the Current Population Survey and National Health Interview Survey. The Bureau also produces annual population estimates and issues population projections, which are based on future demographic trends, including births, life expectancy, and migration patterns.

In 2020, the Census Bureau conducted its latest decennial census. The process was marred by delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and a series of natural disasters as well as by bruising political battles instigated by actions that the Trump Administration took to add a citizenship question on the 2020 Census, expedite delivery of apportionment data, and exclude undocumented immigrants from the apportionment count. These efforts have collectively undermined the Bureau's operations and reputation, leaving the Biden-Harris Administration with, potentially, unfinished business to ensure data from the 2020 Census are trustworthy, accurate, and accessible.

Census stakeholders have identified several short and long-term steps that the Biden-Harris Administration should take to strengthen the mission of the Census Bureau and to conclude the 2020 Census in an orderly, reliable fashion.

Rescind Executive Orders

- Rescind July 11, 2019 Executive Order on Collecting Information about Citizenship Status in Connection with the Decennial Census.

- Rescind July 21, 2020 Presidential Memorandum on Excluding Illegal Aliens From the Apportionment Base Following the 2020 Census.

Legislation and Appropriations

- Enact one-time postponements of statutory deadlines for delivery of apportionment and redistricting data codified in 13 USC § 141. Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in the Senate and House of Representatives (S. 4571 and H.R. 8250, the 2020 Census Deadline Extensions Act) to extend the deadlines, which the Biden-Harris Administration is urged to support.

- Urge Congress and the Commerce Inspector General to use metrics identified in the independently developed *2020 Census Indicators Report* to determine the quality, accuracy, and coverage of the 2020 Census.

- Support existing advisory committees, including the Census Scientific Advisory Committee, National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations, and ACS Data Users Working Group, to ensure data users and outside experts are involved in ongoing efforts to assess census data quality.

- Support robust funding for the Census Bureau that reflects the agency's needs as it prepares or "ramps up" for the 2030 Census and to support its ongoing surveys and data collection activities.

<u>Nominations and Personnel</u>

- Nominate a new Commerce Secretary who is committed to ensuring the accuracy and reliability of census data, and the integrity and scientific independence of the Census Bureau.

- Ensure next Census Bureau Director has an exemplary background in advancing statistical science, a demonstrated ability in managing large organizations and experience in the collection, analysis, and use of statistical data, as well as a commitment to ensuring the accuracy and reliability of census data.

- Eliminate all new political appointee positions created under the previous Administration at the Census Bureau, including, but not limited to, the positions of Deputy Director for Policy, Senior Advisor to the Deputy Director for Policy, Deputy Director for Data, and counselor to the Bureau's director.

- Pursue efforts to modernize the Census Bureau by enhancing its data collection activities as envisioned in the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act and improving the optimal working relationship between the Bureau of Economic Analysis, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Census Bureau, and the Internal Revenue Service to keep pace with the measurement of a rapidly changing economy.

Supporting Organizations
American Statistical Association
Association of Population Centers
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
Population Association of America