



April 9, 2020

Dr. Steven Dillingham
Director
Census Bureau

Dear Director Dillingham,

As Congress considers the next legislative COVID-19 relief package, we are writing as the leaders of The Census Project (www.thecensusproject.org) -- a coalition of over 800 national, state, and local organizations that support funding the decennial census -- to ask if the Census Bureau needs additional funding in FY 2020 or enactment of emergency authorities to complete your mission to conduct a fair and accurate 2020 Census in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

We appreciate that you need to adapt 2020 Census operational plans to suit this extraordinary situation. We further expect that just the delay of field operations and related activities will presumably cost more money than the Census Bureau had originally planned to spend, especially if they are extended for several months. While we're optimistic for a better-than-expected self-response, and recognize that various decennial operations appeared to be coming in below cost estimates prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, non-response follow-up, Update Leave, and some of the group quarters enumeration may prove to require more resources than originally planned thanks to public health and safety concerns.

If you are considering a supplemental funding request for the national headcount, we strongly urge you to convey that need to Congressional appropriators immediately.

Along with that message to Congress, we also encourage you to provide details on the status of 2020 Census contingency funds. There was more than a billion dollars in unspent funds carried over from the prior fiscal year, and the President's budget presumed a further carryover into FY 2021 of unspent FY 2020 funds, so the Bureau may need to explain how much remains and what new needs have arisen that will require further expenditure.

The Census Project stands looks forward to continuing to work with you and the Census Bureau to complete a full and accurate 2020 Census.

Sincerely,

Howard Fienberg
Co-Director
The Census Project

Mary Jo Hoeksema
Co-Director
The Census Project

Cc: House and Senate Appropriations Chairs, and Rankers