



THE CENSUS PROJECT

Supporting quality measures of
America's economy and places

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Census Stakeholders Call on Senate to Fund Census Bureau Modernization

Washington, D.C. – The nation’s largest and most diverse Census stakeholder organization today called on the Senate Appropriations Committee to increase Fiscal Year 2022 funding well beyond the President’s requested level, to help the Census Bureau catch up on long neglected research and modernization efforts. Following action by the House Appropriations Committee, which approved the Commerce Justice Science (CJS) appropriations legislation on July 15, 2021, that matches the President’s request and funds \$309,865,000 for Current Surveys and Programs and \$1,132,537,000 for Periodic Censuses and Programs, the census experts pushed hard for greater investments to expand existing surveys and new data products.

“While we’re appreciative the Administration and the House Appropriations Committee provided an increase in funding from FY 2021, when at this point in the decennial census cycle we would ordinarily see a decrease, the Census Project remains committed to a higher level of funding for essential census programs,” said Census Project Co-Director Howard Fienberg.

Among the enhancements [for which the Census Project has been advocating since earlier this year](#) is a request by the Bureau to update their outdated appropriations account structure to better reflect modern census operations. The House bill did not make the requested accounts change, but instead “welcomes continued dialogue with the Department on this effort.” The [Report](#) accompanying the House CJS Appropriations bill had several directives for the Bureau to sustain improvements to cybersecurity, expand stakeholder consultations on disclosure avoidance efforts (such as differential privacy), develop more mobile, multilingual and user-friendly access to data products, enhance the measures of race, ethnicity, and sexual identity, launch new initiatives “..to produce timelier and more relevant economic and demographic statistics,” and improve response rates on the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP). However, the House did not provide additional funding for many of these initiatives.

Census Project Co-Director Mary Jo Hoeksema optimistically pointed to a [letter](#) signed by 33 Senators and led by Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI), and Senator Tina Smith (D-MN), seeking a \$365 billion increase over the President’s request for FY22. “We remain hopeful there is strong support in the Senate to build upon the increase the President has proposed and go bold at this moment to greatly enhance the data the Census Bureau provides to the nation.”

“The Census Bureau faces many challenges and opportunities during this upcoming fiscal year, and Congress has the opportunity to provide robust assistance in the agency’s efforts,” said the letter from the Senators, reflecting a desire to transition the agency into a new era to provide more robust, more granular, and more timely information about the nation’s people, places, and economy.

The Census Bureau conducts over 100 surveys a year providing the nation with trusted data on the nation’s health, housing, economy, and demographic characteristics.

Census Project co-director Howard Fienberg concluded that, “the diverse voices of the Census Project’s stakeholder community will continue to make clear that small investments now can lead to much better information for the country, the economy and every community across America, while potentially saving a lot of federal budget dollars later in the decade.”

The Census Project (<https://thecensusproject.org>) is a broad-based coalition of national, state, and local organizations and companies that support an inclusive and accurate 2020 Census and American Community Survey (ACS) (the modern version of the census “long form”). Its 800+ member organizations and companies, representing the private, public, non-profit, and academic sectors, rely on objective data that the Census Bureau produces to inform evidence-based investment, policy and planning decisions.