



THE CENSUS PROJECT

Supporting quality measures of
America's economy and places

April 28, 2022

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, Chair
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran, Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Matt Cartwright, Chairman
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Shaheen, Chairman Cartwright, Ranking Member Moran, and Ranking Member Aderholt,

On behalf of The Census Project (www.thecensusproject.org), a broad-based coalition of business, civic, human services, state and local government, and academic groups committed to supporting the U.S. Census Bureau's mission to produce full, fair, complete, and accurate data, including data from the 2020 Census and American Community Survey (ACS), we are writing to express support for providing the agency with robust funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.

Specifically, we urge Congress to provide \$2 billion in funding for the Census Bureau, which represents a \$495 million increase over the President's budget request (\$1.505 billion) and \$646 million over the agency's FY 2022 enacted level (\$1.354 million).

The Census Bureau—the nation's largest statistical agency—is at an important crossroads. The agency is still resolving the outcome of the 2020 Census, while simultaneously pursuing groundbreaking technical innovations and preparing for the 2030 Census. In FY 2023, Congress has a unique opportunity to initiate multi-year funding for the Bureau, providing the agency with resources that it needs not only to sustain and strengthen its mission, but also to recover from years of postponed enhancements and pursue numerous necessary operational improvements to consolidate and integrate legacy surveys and systems into a new, more nimble data collection and dissemination model, to enhance the American Community Survey (ACS), and to implement initiatives outlined in the Administration's FY 2023 budget submission and others proposed by census stakeholders, including:

2020 Census—The President's Budget proposed \$160 million for 2020 Census programs (an \$85 million decrease) in FY 2023, as the Bureau compiles the last of the decennial data products and finishes evaluations/assessments. These activities were mostly delayed because of the pandemic disruption of the headcount. Much of the resources necessary will be provided by carryover funding, but funding is still required to support the remaining major IT contract (the Technical Integrator) through the conclusion of all 2020 Census activities and “finalize lessons learned” on the IT systems side.

2030 Census—The President's Budget proposed \$252 million for the 2030 Census in FY 2023 (a \$249 million increase from only \$3 million in FY 2022). This is nearly twice the increase requested a decade ago for the 2020 Census in the comparable cyclical year (FY 2013) (\$64.8 million), as the Bureau intends to continue research and testing to design the next decennial headcount, including work to develop and maintain the completeness of the address list (so that less of the country must be updated in the field), the use of administrative records as a source of data for enumeration, and bringing efficiencies to field operations to reduce non-response follow up.

Early decade investments in the decennial census will allow the Bureau to sustain critical capabilities and, as a result reduce the risk of additional funding needs in the peak years later in the decade.

The Economic Census—The Administration proposed \$170 million for the Economic Census in FY 2023 (a \$27.1 million increase from FY 2022). The Bureau will be conducting most of the data collection activities in FY 2023, including nonresponse follow up, as well as data processing. This every-five-years survey of U.S. businesses seeks to reach about four million businesses of all sizes, “covering most industries and all geographic areas” and providing comprehensive, detailed information on the structure of the U.S. non-farm economy.

Partnership Programs—The Administration’s proposed \$2.7 million in FY 2023 for the Enterprise Partnership Program, which would spin off the traditionally transient decennial headcount’s partnership program into a much smaller, but permanent, ongoing, engagement with non-federal partners to assist and support other Census Bureau programs. It would also ensure that the partnership program for the 2030 Census will require less ramp-up time and cost. For FY 2023 specifically, the Census Bureau plans to collaborate with partners to promote response for the Economic Census and increase response rates for the Census of Governments. The program could also conduct ongoing outreach in support of the ACS and maintain relationships with 2020 Census stakeholders to further the Bureau’s goals and better understand partner needs.

Innovations to Existing Surveys and Programs—The President’s FY 2023 budget proposes several initiatives that would improve existing surveys and programs important to census stakeholders, including: \$4.5 million to develop and test a self-response web-based instrument for the Current Population Survey (CPS), which is the primary source of information regarding national unemployment rate and provides other data regarding employment, unemployment, and people not in the labor force; an additional \$3.7 million to support the Community Resilience Estimates (CRE) program, which began during the pandemic to provide more granular population data; and, an additional \$66.6 million to support “critical updates to data collection methods for surveys that produce vital statistical data on the U.S. population and economy.”

The American Community Survey—While the President’s budget requests an additional \$10 million to improve how the ACS measures the sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) population, census stakeholders and data users in the public, private, non-profit sectors believe the ACS needs an immediate infusion of substantial funding to pursue other long overdue enhancements to the survey. These enhancements include increasing the survey’s sample size, improving its non-response follow up operations, addressing steadily declining response rates, revising content, and making other methodological and operational improvements. An [independent report](#) issued in 2022 by The Census Project urges an infusion of \$100 to \$300 million to protect the ACS from further data quality deficiencies and take up a long list of activities to ensure the survey is accurately capturing data about the nation’s increasingly complex population and households.

Population Estimates—The significant operational disruption in the 2020 Census heightened concerns about differential undercounts of racial and ethnic population subgroups, rural areas, and young children. The annual series of Population Estimates is a major opportunity to help mitigate the consequences of an inaccurate count, which is the basis for all subsequent annual estimates for the next decade. Census stakeholders are calling for an additional \$10 million to support expanded opportunities for cities, counties, towns, tribal governments, and other localities to help ensure the accuracy of their annual estimates. Half of the additional resources (\$5 million) could restore the Population Estimates Branch to its 2003 funding and staffing levels and ensure that new data sources are part of the program’s transformation. The remaining \$5 million could allow each state in the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates to have a dedicated full-time staff member who could assist all localities — especially smaller ones — within each respective state to participate in an expanded improvement program, without creating an unfunded mandate on local communities who need to remedy 2020 errors. This long overdue increase in Population Estimates Program funding represents a minimal investment to ensure that trillions of taxpayer dollars over the decade are spent wisely and fairly.

Thank you for considering the many challenges and opportunities facing the U.S. Census Bureau. We appreciate your consideration of our [request](#) and urge you to provide the Census Bureau with \$2 billion in FY 2023.

Sincerely,

National

- African American Health Alliance
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Anthropological Association
- American Educational Research Association
- American Sociological Association
- American Statistical Association
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
- Association of Population Centers
- Association of Public Data Users (APDU)
- CensusChannel LLC
- Claritas
- Coalition on Human Needs
- Consortium of Social Science Associations
- Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
- CWS
- Fair Count
- Government Information Watch
- Hispanic Federation
- Human Rights Campaign
- Insights Association
- Japanese American Citizens League
- Latino Commission on AIDS

NALEO Educational Fund
 National Association for Business Economics
 National Association of Counties
 National Association of REALTORS®
 National Community Development Association
 National Congress of American Indians
 National Urban League
 Nielsen
 Partnership for America's Children
 PFLAG National
 Population Association of America
 Prison Policy Initiative
 Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
 Southern Poverty Law Center
 The Gerontological Society of America
 The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
 Urban and Regional Information Systems Association
 U.S. Conference of Mayors

State-Level

Equality California	CA
Lila LGBTQ Inc.	NC
MACS - Minnesotans for the American Community Survey	MN
Maryland Philanthropy Network	MD
Michigan League for Public Policy	MI
NC Counts Coalition	NC
North Carolina Asian Americans Together	NC
Public Justice Center	MD
Raleigh Alumnae Chapter Delta Sigma Theta Sorority	NC
Silver State Equality	NV
Southern Echo Inc.	MS
The Bingham Program	ME
The Help Center NC	NC
Wake County Southern Christian Leadership Conference	NC

Local/City/Regional

Advocacy House Services, Inc	Greensboro	NC
CityGate Dream Center	Burlington	NC
Community Foundation for Northern Virginia	Oakton	VA
Community Foundation of Central Missouri	Columbia	MO
Cool Spring Missionary Baptist Church	Gaston	NC
Duplin Christian Outreach Ministries	Wallace	NC
Fayetteville Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc	Fayetteville	NC
Fuerza Y Union Multiple (FUM)	Henderson	NC
Future Endeavors Life Program	Fayetteville	NC

HandsOn Northwest North Carolina	Winston-Salem	NC
Henry County Board of Commissioners	McDonough	GA
Jones County Community Hope, Inc.	Trenton	NC
Lionel Lee Jr. Center for Wellness	Charlotte	NC
MS Communities United for Prosperity (MCUP)	Duck Hill	MS
Mujerxs Organizando Oportunidades Notables	Raleigh	NC
Nariah's Way Foundation	Biscoe	NC
Northern California Grantmakers	San Francisco	CA
Project 70Forward	Charlotte	NC
Project Cover	Salisbury	NC
Scotland Youth Development	Laurinburg	NC
Shackle Free Community Outreach Agency, Inc.	Warsaw	NC
The Wright's Center, Inc.	Rocky Mount	NC
thegroupTheory, Inc.	Fayetteville	NC
Triangle Native American Society	Raleigh	NC
United Way of Westchester and Putnam	White Plains	NY