



THE CENSUS PROJECT

Supporting quality measures of
America's economy and places

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Nearly 80 National, State, and Local Organizations Support \$2 Billion in Funding for FY 2024 for the U.S. Census Bureau

Washington, D.C. – Stressing the need for greater investment in America’s critical data infrastructure and planning for the 2030 decennial Census, almost 80 national, state, and local organizations wrote [a letter](#) to congressional Appropriators in support of providing the U.S. Census Bureau with \$2 billion in Fiscal Year 2024. A broad array of organizations representing the private, public, non-profit, and academic sectors, signed the letter, including the ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers), US Conference of Mayors, American Pediatric Society, Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, National Association of REALTORS, and American Psychological Association.

The broad array of census experts wrote in their letter that, “... stakeholders recognize the Biden Administration for proposing a slight increase in funding for the Census Bureau in the President’s Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 budget. The Administration’s request supports a number of important initiatives, but it does not include sufficient additional funding to fully support other priorities identified by the census stakeholder community, including:

- Enhancing the American Community Survey (ACS);
- Strengthening the Population Estimates and Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates
- Investing early and fully in 2030 Census preparations; and
- Accelerating initiatives to make Census data timelier and more accessible and to reduce survey respondent burden....”

Additional funding above the Administration’s request, is necessary for the agency to not only realize the full potential of several initiatives in the President’s budget, but also to support other priorities identified by census stakeholders—especially 2030 Census preparations and the ACS, which comprise the largest components of the Census Bureau’s Decennial Census account.

Signs of support for the higher funding level were evidenced last month when coalitions of 45 Members of the [U.S. House](#) and 23 in the [U.S. Senate](#), sent letters to their respective Appropriations committees in support of the increased funding. The letters reflected bipartisan and bicameral support that investing in Bureau surveys and the 2030 decennial planning now will allow for sustaining essential capabilities and schedules and reduce the risk of requiring unplanned, additional funding in the peak planning years later in the decade.

“The U.S. Census Bureau powers the nation’s data infrastructure, which serves public, private and for-profit activities essential to our nation and democracy. After the challenges that confronted the 2020 decennial, increased funding for the agency will ensure the United States is prepared for the 2030 Census planning cycle, which is nearly now 1/3 completed,” said Mary Jo Hoeksema, Co-Director of the Census Project.

“Additional funding will also support the annual American Community Survey (ACS), which has long needed investment to improve the timeliness and quality of data important to decisionmakers in the private and public sector,” said Howard Fienberg, Co-Director of the Census Project.

In recent years, local communities, entrepreneurs, urban planners, major corporations, and thousands of others that depend on annual data from the Census Bureau’s ACS were stunned when both major annual data releases were delayed or replaced with experimental data due to quality issues. Years of underinvestment (and the pandemic) have degraded ACS data, precluded necessary increases in the survey’s sample size and shortchanged the Bureau’s ability to address steadily declining response rates, revise content, and make other methodological and operational improvements to ensure the integrity of ACS estimates.

The Census Project is about to release an update to a comprehensive [report](#) they released last year outlining recommendations for how to enhance the survey’s content and operations. The report urges an infusion of \$100 to \$300 million to protect the ACS from further data quality deficiencies, enhance non-response follow up operations, increase the survey’s sample size, reduce respondent burden, and develop new data products, as well as considering adding new questions and survey content that are needed to ensure the ACS is accurately capturing data about the nation’s increasingly complex population and households. Strengthening the ACS is also essential given its role as a test bed for the next decennial Census.

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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 2030 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.