



The Census Project

May 14, 2020

The Honorable Jerry Moran
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Jose Serrano
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science,
and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert B. Aderholt
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Science, and Related Agencies
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Moran, Chairman Serrano, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Ranking Member Aderholt:

As you consider fiscal year (FY) 2021 appropriations, we write to respectfully request your support for \$1.681 billion for the Census Bureau, with \$1.392 billion for the Periodic Censuses and Programs account and \$288.4 million for the Current Surveys and Programs account. Further, as Congress considers supplemental funding measures related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we ask you to consider providing the Census Bureau with additional funding and the ability to tap contingency funds in FY 2021.

As you know, the 2020 Census is underway with almost half of all American households having responded to date. A successful decennial census is paramount. Its data will inform congressional apportionment and the distribution of over \$1 trillion of federal funding for healthcare, education, roads, housing, and other vital services.¹ Further, over the next decade, the private sector will rely on 2020 Census data to make critical planning and investment decisions, while state and local government officials will use the data to meet the needs of their communities.

In FY 2021, the Census Bureau will need adequate resources to complete the 2020 Census process, including closing field offices, conducting the post-enumeration survey, and delivering

¹ New Report Says \$1.5 Trillion in Federal Funding to States and Localities Annually Depends Upon Good Census Count. Nov. 18, 2019. <https://censusproject.files.wordpress.com/2019/11/counting-for-dollars-press-release-11.18.2019.pdf>

statistical products. An orderly conclusion of any decennial census is challenging. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the challenge, forcing the Bureau to temporarily suspend field operations and to push the Non-Response Follow Up phase into the fall. Because of these schedule disruptions, the Administration asked Congress for statutory relief to push back its delivery of appointment counts to April 30, 2021, and redistricting data to the states to July 31, 2021.

We understand that the additional cost of all adjustments to the 2020 Census operational timeline, as well as direct COVID-related costs (such as PPE for field staff, extra technology to support more enumerators, COVID-sensitive advertising, etc.), could total as much as \$1.5 billion. The Census Bureau intends to cover these additional costs by accessing its contingency fund. Census stakeholders are concerned that tapping the contingency fund will deplete the fund, leaving the Bureau unable to adequately address other emergencies that may jeopardize the 2020 Census, including natural disasters, IT failures, and, unfortunately, further waves of COVID-19.

The Census Bureau's FY 2021 request does not account for the use of its FY 2020 contingency funds. We ask that the Committee provide flexibility to increase the Census Bureau's discretionary appropriations in light of unplanned expenditures and to replenish the contingency fund to support the Bureau's efforts to successfully complete the 2020 Census. It should be noted that census stakeholders have already identified several "enhancements," such as targeted advertising and outreach materials in additional languages and increased and expanded Census Questionnaire Assistance capacity, that are needed to address the severe disruption the COVID-19 crisis has caused for successful conduct of the 2020 Census.

To properly conclude the 2020 Census and execute its other mandatory functions in FY 2021, such as the American Community Survey (ACS), data confidentiality tools and software development, and the redesign and relocation of three Census Bureau offices, we believe the Bureau needs no less than \$1.681 billion in FY 2021. This amount is \$9 million more than the Administration requested and would restore a proposed cut to the Survey of Income and Program Participation—a "crucial" dataset, according to the Bureau's budget justification, valued by policymakers and analysts alike to estimate future costs and coverage of government programs and the economic well-being of Americans.²

We thank you for your continued support of the Census Bureau and the 2020 Census, especially during these difficult, unpredictable times.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association
Advocates for Children of New Jersey
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Anthropological Association
American Library Association
American Pediatric Society

²² Page CEN-36. Census Bureau FY 2021 Congressional Budget Justification.
https://www.commerce.gov/sites/default/files/2020-02/fy2021_census_congressional_budget_justification.pdf

American Planning Association
American Sociological Association
American Statistical Association
Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
Asian American Federation
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public Data Users (APDU)
ASTHO
Borough of State College
California Native Vote Project
Census Count Committee (CCC) of the Palm Beach County League of Women Voters
City of Hopkins, Minnesota
Coalition on Human Needs
Colorado Civic Engagement Roundtable
Common Cause
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
Dakota County, MN
Equality California
Feeding America
First AME Church Seattle
Georgia Coalition for the People's Agenda
Government Information Watch
Housing Action Illinois
Housing California
Insights Association
JS Research
KIDS COUNT in Delaware
MACS 2020 - Minnesotans for the American Community Survey & 2020 Census
Maine Children's Alliance
Mecklenburg Latinx CCC
Mi Familia Vota Education Fund
Multicultural Council of America
NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Project
NACDD
NALEO Educational Fund
National Association for Business Economics
National Association of Home Builders
National Association of REALTORS®
National Association of Towns and Townships
National Community Development Association
National League of Cities

National WIC Association
NEO Philanthropy
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New York Immigration Coalition
Nielsen
Northwest Harvest
Partnership for America's Children
Pediatric Policy Council
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children
PFLAG National
Population Association of America
Public Justice Center
ReadyNation
Research Advisory Services, Inc.
Rhode Island KIDS COUNT
SAGE Publishing
San Diego Grantmakers
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Shen Research Organization
Shepherding the Next Generation
Silver State Equality-Nevada
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for Research in Child Development
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC)
Southeast Michigan Census Council
Southern Echo Inc.
The Census Counts Campaign
The Children's Partnership
The Florida Civic Engagement Table (FLCET)
The Gerontological Society of America
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
The United States Conference of Mayors
UNITED SIKHS
Urban and Regional Information Systems Association
Virginia Civic Engagement Table
Voices for Utah Children
WKF Fund