



THE CENSUS PROJECT

Supporting quality measures of
America's economy and places

November 8, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Leahy, Chair DeLauro, Ranking Member Shelby, and Ranking Member Granger,

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) 2022.

Specifically, as you negotiate the final FY 2022 Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill, or an omnibus measure containing the CJS bill, we urge you to provide the Census Bureau with no less than the amount that the House CJS subcommittee recommended, and the U.S. House of Representatives approved: \$1,442,401,000. This amount, which was in the President's request, provides \$309,865,000 for Current Surveys and Programs (\$21,462,000 above the FY 2021 enacted amount) and \$1,132,537,000 for Periodic Censuses and Programs (\$314,296,000 above the FY 2021 enacted level).

Census stakeholders maintain, however, that the Census Bureau needs a more substantial increase. To that end, throughout the FY 2022 deliberations, stakeholders have been urging Congress to provide the Census Bureau with **\$2 billion, a funding level that represents a \$335 million increase over the agency's FY 2021 total funding level of \$1.65 billion.**¹

The Census Bureau is at an important crossroads: still resolving the outcome of the 2020 Census, while simultaneously pursuing groundbreaking technical innovations and preparing for the 2030 Census. In FY 2022, Congress has a unique opportunity to initiate multi-year funding for the Bureau, providing the agency with resources that it needs to not only sustain and strengthen its mission, but also to recover from years of postponed enhancements and pursue numerous necessary operational improvements.

¹ The FY 2021 figure includes a \$1.1 billion direct appropriation and carry-over funding that Congress authorized the Bureau to spend in FY 2021, if necessary, in support of 2020 Census activities.

Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to wreak havoc on the completion of the 2020 Census. Operations necessary to produce and disseminate the Apportionment counts, redistricting data products, and downstream detailed census files have shifted when funding will be required to later in the decennial cycle than is typical. The Bureau has already acknowledged that delays in the release of apportionment and redistricting data are forcing the Bureau to postpone the delivery of subsequent 2020 Census data products, including the Demographic Profile, Demographic & Housing Characteristics File, Congressional District Demographic and Housing Characteristics File, and Population and Housing Tables, into FY 2022.

Besides requiring additional funding to meet its constitutionally mandated decennial census mission, the Census Bureau needs enhanced resources to pursue other initiatives in FY 2022, including:

- **Modernizing the Bureau’s data infrastructure** — The Census Bureau needs to harness currently available Big Data technology and methodology to reduce respondent burden and realign the Bureau's already-existing data from multiple sources into universal "frames." A significant increase in funding for the Census Frames initiative, which was only funded at about \$12.7 million in FY 2021, will allow the Census Bureau to reduce duplication, increase ease and usability of federal statistical data, enhance the quality of Bureau products, facilitate analysis of the U.S. population and economy, and ensure that the federal government can utilize administrative data, responsibly and appropriately, to maximum advantage before burdening survey respondents.
- **Enhancing the American Community Survey (ACS)** — As part of the overall Frames Initiative, the Census Bureau needs the flexibility to combine data sources with the ACS, the ongoing survey that replaced the “long form” of the Census in 2005 which provides consistent, timely and accurate data about the nation’s changing socioeconomic and demographic characteristics, to produce more timely granular data for a significant number of geographies (e.g. rural and remote regions) and sub-populations (e.g., American Indians and Alaska Natives) than achievable from the current ACS 5-year estimates. ACS data are an invaluable resource that data users, state and local governments, planners, and businesses rely on throughout the decade to make key investment and policy decisions as well as to conduct research and evaluate programs. The Bureau also needs to continue to use the ACS “as a testbed for innovative survey and data processing techniques,” as the Senate Appropriations Committee directed in its FY 2022 CJS report. Funding for the ACS has remained relatively stagnant in recent years, including a little over \$226 million in FY 2021. The Bureau needs additional funding (no less than \$45 million to increase the sample size by at least 1 million households) to properly plan and execute an expansion of the ACS, beginning in FY 2022 and to initiate postponed technological and methodological enhancements to the survey.
- **Extending Pulse Surveys** — The Bureau’s “Pulse Surveys” have provided timely data regarding the economic, social, and health effects of COVID-19 on U.S. communities and businesses. The surveys have attracted support from other federal agencies that have requested to add questions and collaborated with the Census Bureau to produce the

surveys. An additional \$10 million, or a doubling of the number provided by the House for the High Frequency Data Program, would help ensure the program’s long-term viability and enable the Bureau to develop other collections and methods for improving the surveys design, including providing, for example, smaller age group breakouts—not just “under 18,” but, potentially, at least 0-5 and 5-18.

- **Launching the Economic Census** — The Economic Census of 2022 is rapidly approaching and may be even more vital than normal as the nation seeks to understand and recover from the current economic crisis. The Census Bureau is being asked to expand and enhance annual data on business formation and the number and size of business, especially those in underserved communities. In addition, the Bureau seeks to modernize its processes to lessen respondent burden, improve accuracy, and speed the delivery of important economic data – a transformation that requires added resources. The Census Bureau could use an additional \$15 million to ensure the success of the 2022 Economic Census. Specifically, this money would be used to build partnerships with the respondent community (\$5 million), similar to the outreach model used during the 2020 Census, and (\$10 million) to fund enhancements to administrative and third-party data to improve response, including purchasing public data.

These are a just few examples of important functions and innovations that the Census Bureau could be pursuing in FY 2022 with enhanced resources. Thank you for considering the many challenges and opportunities facing the Census Bureau. We appreciate your consideration of our [request](#) and urge you to provide the Census Bureau with no less than \$1.442 billion in the final FY 2022 CJS bill and to consider, once again, our request to provide the agency with \$2 billion in FY 2022.

Sincerely,

National

- Academic Pediatric Association
- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Anthropological Association
- American Educational Research Association
- American Pediatric Society
- American Sociological Association
- American Statistical Association
- Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
- Asian Americans Advancing Justice – AAJC
- Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
- Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
- Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
- Association of Population Centers
- Association of Public Data Users
- Census Legacies

Coalition on Human Needs
Common Cause
Community Economic Development Resource Center, Inc.
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council for Community and Economic Research
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics (COPAFS)
Decision Demographics, LLC
Fair Count
First Focus Campaign for Children
Free Government Information (FGI)
Government Information Watch
Insights Association
Institute for Wise Philanthropy
Japanese American Citizens League
Midwest Political Science Association
NALEO Educational Fund
National Association of Business Economics (NABE)
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities
National Association of Counties (NACo)
National Association of REALTORS®
National Association of Towns and Townships
National Coalition for Literacy
National Community Development Association
National WIC Association
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Nielsen
Partnership for America's Children
Pediatric Policy Council
Population Association of America
Prison Policy Initiative
ReadyNation
Research Allies for Lifelong Learning
SAGE Publishing
Society for Pediatric Research
The Gerontological Society of America
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
Urban and Regional Information Systems Association
Wallace H. Coulter Foundation
ZERO TO THREE

State-Level

American Children's Campaign	FL
Bill Maddocks Consulting LLC	NH
California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs	CA
Colorado Civic Engagement Roundtable	CO
Connecticut Voices for Children	CT
Crescent City Media Group	LA
Disability Rights California	CA
Hawaii Children's Action Network Speaks!	HI
Housing Action Illinois	IL
Kentucky Youth Advocates	KY
MACS - Minnesotans for the American Community Survey	MN
Minnesota Council on Foundations	MN
One Arizona	AZ
Our Children Oregon	OR
Pennsylvania Partnerships for Children	PA
Southern Echo Inc.	MS
The Bingham Program	ME

Local/City/Regional

Asian Law Alliance	San Jose	CA
Community Foundation of Central Missouri	Columbia	MO
Greater Houston Partnership	Houston	TX
Housing Consortium of Everett & Snohomish County	Everett	WA
Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce	Minneapolis	MN
Montgomery Citizens United for Prosperity (MCUP)	Duck Hill	MS
Richmond Community Foundation	Richmond	CA
RLS Demographics, Inc.	Rensselaerville	NY
Silicon Valley Community Foundation	Mountain View	CA
Sisters of Providence	Holyoke	MA
United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region	Poughkeepsie	NY
United Way of Westchester and Putnam	White Plains	NY

cc: The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
The Honorable Jerry Moran
The Honorable Matt Cartwright
The Honorable Robert Aderholt