



# 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.<sup>1</sup> 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

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup>

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

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<sup>22</sup> 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](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