

Tribal Consultation

Director's Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

October 18, 2022

- Good afternoon, everyone. I am Robert Santos, Director of the U.S. Census Bureau. I'd like to give my sincere thanks to all the tribal leaders and their representatives for taking time to join us today.
- I want to especially thank Kim Reitmeir, President of the ANSCA Regional Association along with Cook Inlet Region, Incorporated (CIRI), President and CEO, Sophie Minich for hosting our Alaska tribal consultation meeting. (*ANSCA refers to the Alaska Native Settlement Claims Act of 1971. Sophie is also the Chair of the ANSCA Regional Association [ARA].*)
- I also appreciate Kim's time in giving our census staff a 101 presentation on Alaska.
- We want you to know that these sessions are very important to us at the Census Bureau.
- We recognize that we need to listen more and to listen continually.
- So, please understand that this session marks a beginning not an end. There'll be more tribal consultations to come.
- Our work with you is of the highest importance, and we seek to strengthen our nation-to-nation relationships with all tribes.
- I arrived in Alaska on Saturday and had a wonderful visit with the Sitka Tribal Council yesterday to hear their concerns from the 2020 census and our American Community Survey.
- I welcome invitations to any Alaska Native village or a one-on-one conversation with Alaska Tribal leaders and their tribal councils. I want you to know that we are here to help and listen to your issues and concerns.
- We're committed to providing the quality data you need, data that your communities rely on.
- Today we seek your ideas and feedback about how we are developing the 2020 Demographic and Housing Characteristics products, which we call the DHC for short.
- Now, as you know, we have an obligation to protect the privacy of your tribes' members and the confidentiality of their data.
- As we continue to refine these data products, we're carefully considering how to provide the richness of information that you need for your governance, while staying compliant with our confidentiality obligations.
- But we need your feedback to do this right.
- That is why in this session we describe the DHC product and how we preserve the privacy of tribal members using an approach we call disclosure avoidance.
- Now, to get a better idea of how our privacy measures affect your 2020 census data, we have generated a prototype—an illustrative set of data—that shows you how our current version of disclosure avoidance affects the DHC data.
- And we do this using the previous 2010 census so that you can compare with the actual 2010 data we released a decade ago.

- So, we will go through with you the 2010 census demonstration product that illustrates what the 2020 data will look like.
- And why are we going through all this trouble?
- Because it's really important to get your reactions to it . . . to hear your feedback now as well as later, after you've had some time to do a deeper review.
- With your feedback we can then go back and revise our approach in a way that better addresses any problems you find and so that the data better meet your needs.
- You see, we need to balance the protection of people's privacy against the richness of detail of counts at the lower levels of geography.
- We know that tribes need and can benefit from more accurate data at lower levels of geography such as census tracts, block groups, and blocks.
- And achieving this delicate balance has proven to be quite a challenge, not just for tribes, but for all communities in the United States.
- And that is why we are generating these prototype data based on 2010 data.
- And why we are with you today.
- We need to get your feedback to generate the most useful data for tribes.
- We deeply value your participation as an American Indian and or Alaska Native data partner and your feedback on ACS data uses.
- Before I end, I would also like to note that we are in the early stages of planning for the 2030 Census and your input is critical. I want to encourage you to provide feedback now, through a Federal Register Notice that posted on August 17, 2022.
- Your input will help inform our decisions for the next census, including our research, testing, and design. With ideas from the tribes and other communities across America, we are aiming to better reach and count historically undercounted people, overcome challenges and encourage everyone to respond to the 2030 Census.
- It is very important to receive your input early in the decade and to hear from as many people and communities as possible. As we get closer to 2030, we'll be much more limited in what we can change. Once we have an operational design—in 2024—we will dedicate our efforts to building and procuring the infrastructure to support, test, and refine it. Now is the best and most impactful time to hear from you.
- We're confident that by working together, we can make progress in a way that meets your needs and helps the Census Bureau produce useful statistics about the American Indian and Alaska Native population. We look forward to a continued partnership with you and our tribal partners.
- I am now going to turn in over to our staff and let them give you an overview of the Detailed DHC and the 2030 FRN.