

U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute Latino Leaders Recognition Luncheon

Director's remarks as prepared for delivery

February 18, 2023

Introduction

- Good afternoon, everyone. It's an honor to be here in my role as your director of the U.S. Census Bureau.
- Yes, I did say your director. Not just because I'm a fellow Latinx, but because this position serves the public . . . it serves our nation. And that's how I'm approaching my role as a public servant who happens to be in a leadership position.

Vision for the Census Bureau

- Let me tell you a little about how I am leading the Census Bureau. First, I think my roots as a statistician, a policy researcher, a fellow stakeholder, and a person of color offer me a unique perspective in leading the Census Bureau.
- I'm a leader who champions diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility. I call these principles DEIA. I've lived them over a 40-year career and seen firsthand that innovation and excellence are advanced by embracing DEIA principles.
- An important part of our DEIA effort includes seeking out and listening to diverse voices, voices that represent every aspect of our nation. That certainly includes listening to our partners and stakeholders, which of course includes you.
- Now, I believe that we promote excellence by embracing equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in our workforce, in our policies and practices, as well as in how we engage stakeholders.
- In 2021, President Biden announced a federal agenda to advance equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.
- Because this goal "requires a systemic approach to embedding fairness in decision-making processes," policymakers and the public will need quality data about America's people and economy to advance equity.
- The Census Bureau is the leading provider of quality data about the nation's people and economy. We're committed to producing data that reflects an accurate portrait of America.
- Census Bureau data are valuable assets that can be used by policymakers and the public to advance equity.
- Our data can assist federal agencies and others in equitably distributing resources and identifying underserved communities.
- We provide a wealth of data by age, disability, race, ethnicity, sex, income, veteran status, and other key demographic variables to help measure equity.

- These data are often by geography, which provides meaning and context to the statistical data, and can identify rural and underserved communities.
- We also provide economic data that can help businesses in underserved communities identify opportunities for growth. The measures inform policymakers working to advance equity and enable them to propose effective, data-driven solutions.
- We're continually striving for excellence. And that can be challenging in our current environment. But even in the face of challenges, I believe that we can find new ways to collect data that are more accurate, timely, relevant and most of all have utility, as in fit for use.
- Moreover, I believe that we promote excellence by embracing equity, diversity, and inclusion in our workforce, policies, and practices, as well as in how we engage stakeholders and how we gather and incorporate feedback and advice. Let me talk a little more about that:
 - First, we are committed to data equity. We want to ensure our data is available and easily accessible to all, including underserved communities. We created an Equity Data Working Group to assemble various data sets generated by Census Bureau that can help identify and explore disparities and inequities in our society.
 - Second, we seek to infuse diversity and inclusion in our workplace. Diverse voices and perspectives can be a potent catalyst for increasing data quality, data relevance as well as advancing equity. It promotes innovation, critical thinking and excellence.
 - Third, we will engage with and actively listen to the full diversity of our stakeholders in the United States, which of course includes you. Stakeholder feedback is critical to understanding the needs of our data users and decision-making.
- We plan to strengthen existing partnerships and identify new partners. This includes advocacy organizations, folks in philanthropy, state and local jurisdictional officers, community-based organizations, scientific and other professional associations, and so on.
- The idea is to create opportunities for collaboration that build trust to aid in public participation in our research endeavors and apprise communities of the value of Census Bureau data.
- We are working to develop new ways to collect data that are more accurate, timely, relevant and most of all meet the needs of the public. We continuously engage in improving how we support equity and diversity.
- We are constantly assessing how we can improve our statistical programs to better serve and represent underserved groups. We continuously research strategies for improving respondent understanding of questions we ask and the accuracy of the data we produce.
- And as I mentioned, we are conducting ongoing engagement and discussions about our research and findings with stakeholder groups.
- That is part of the reason I am here today, to continue and indeed strengthen a sustaining, continuous partnership of mutual benefit. We ask for your assistance with these censuses and surveys so that we use your feedback to improve our data products, which in turn can benefit you.
- We are always open to two-way communication to help understand and fulfil your data needs. But the quality of that data is directly related to the quality of response to our censuses and surveys, and encouraging response is an area I hope we can continue to collaborate on.

Conclusion

- Thank you to the U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute for having me. We at the Census Bureau stand ready to help you access our wealth of data in any way we can.