

# Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation Community Conversation

Director's remarks as prepared for delivery

May 11, 2023

- Good afternoon, everyone. And a happy Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month!
- 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. 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.
- But first let me return to my original statement, that it's an honor to be here with you today.
- As we all know, the pandemic challenged our society and impacted our most vulnerable communities. When the pandemic's grip on society was strongest, the Census Bureau still had to deploy a sizable field force to knock on doors across our nation.
- Despite unprecedented challenges, our career staff came together and completed the job we set out to do—count the resident population of the United States in 2020. I'm incredibly proud of their accomplishments.
- But we didn't do it alone. We needed the public's help, and the help of our complete count committees, state and local governments, and national and local partners and stakeholders. We adapted our communication and outreach strategies when the pandemic made original plans unworkable.
- Without your support, we could not have achieved the measure of success we attained. We recognize and deeply appreciate that.

## PARTNER ENGAGEMENT

- Let me tell you a little about how the Census Bureau is reaching out to our partners and the public.
- 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 reflect an accurate portrait of America. Census Bureau data are a valuable asset 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.

- 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 are available and easily accessible to all, including underserved communities. We created an Equity Data Working Group to assemble various datasets generated by the 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 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.

## **ECONOMIC CENSUS**

- And that's one reason I'm here today—to continue and strengthen continuous partnership groups in the AANHPI community...one that features true mutual benefit.
- I've talked about the data that can help you understand your community's changing makeup and needs.
- As a valued partner, we seek two-way communication to help understand and fulfill your data needs. After all, relevant data are key components of data quality. But data quality are also directly related to participation in our censuses and surveys.
- So we are hoping that you can encourage participation in the business community.
- Specifically, please help us promote the 2022 Economic Census among Asian American-owned businesses and chambers of commerce.
- The main mailing for the economic census began in January 2023. We are still collecting data from businesses who received a questionnaire.
- As trusted voices in your communities, one of the best things you can do is to spread the word to business owners that the economic census is here. Please let them know that their response is important to understanding our nation's economy as well as their local community, and their business and industry.
- Participation ensures that your businesses have quality, timely data about their industry.

## **DHC RELEASE**

- I also want to mention two upcoming data releases that may be of interest to you.
- The Census Bureau is to release the Demographic and Housing Characteristics File (DHC) and Demographic Profile on May 25. These 2020 Census data products provide demographic and housing characteristics of local communities. More demographic and housing characteristics will be included in the Detailed Demographic and Housing Characteristics File A (DHC-A).

- And in September, we will release the Detailed DHC-A. This dataset will provide the population counts and sex and age statistics for approximately 370 detailed racial and ethnic groups and 1,200 American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages.
- Disaggregated data are critical in understanding differences within a community. The decennial and census data are used in combination with information about housing, voting, language, employment, and education to help governments and communities enforce antidiscrimination laws, regulations, and policies.

## **OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET (OMB) RACE AND ETHNICITY STANDARDS**

- Lastly, I want to mention something that's of interest to all of us—that is, the federal collection of race and ethnicity data.
- As you know, every federal agency—including the Census Bureau—collects race and ethnicity data following standards set by OMB.
- Last summer, OMB announced that it was beginning a formal review of its Statistical Policy Directive 15, which lays out standards for maintaining, collecting, and presenting federal data on race and ethnicity. This review process has a simple goal: to ensure that the standards better reflect the beautiful diversity of the American people.
- On January 26, the OMB Office of the Chief Statistician released an initial set of recommended revisions to the statistical standards for collecting and reporting race and ethnicity data.
- These proposals were developed by an Interagency Technical Working Group made up of federal government career staff representing more than 20 agencies, including the Census Bureau.
- The proposal covers:
  - Collecting race and ethnicity together using a single question.
  - Adding a response category for Middle Eastern and North African, separate and distinct from the “White” category.
  - Updating the terminology, definitions, and question wording in the standards (SPD 15).
- These recommendations are preliminary, and they don't represent the positions of OMB or the agencies participating on the Working Group. The Working Group is committed to a full, transparent revision process and remains on track to reach the goal of completing these important revisions by the summer of 2024.
- The Census Bureau will continue to support OMB throughout this critical endeavor by co-chairing the Working Group and providing extensive subject matter expertise.
- I encourage you to visit <https://spd15revision.gov> for updates on this process, FAQs, and more information about the status of OMB's work on the race and ethnicity standards.

## **CONCLUSION**

- Thank you again for having me. That concludes my remarks this morning. Thank you again for your engagement, and invaluable help getting information on the 2020 Census and 2022 Economic Census in your community.
- We at the Census Bureau stand ready to help you access our wealth of data in any way we can.