

Ethnic Media Engagement (CA)

Director's remarks as prepared for delivery

August 31, 2023

- Hello, everyone.
- I want to first start by saying how honored I am to be at this wonderful event.
- It's incredibly important for me to meet with media—but in particular, with ethnic media, with all of you.
- You see, it's you who serve as trusted voices in your community.
- It's you who connect to the people whose representation we need in our surveys and censuses.
- You serve these people and communities. And we serve them too, right?
- But we want to serve them much better. We know we need to improve.
- That's why it is our priority to establish a continuous dialogue, a continuous connection with your constituencies, with communities of color.
- Yes, the Census Bureau historically has struggled to reach people of color.
- We are in a constant quest to motivate participation in our censuses and surveys among the historically undercounted populations.
- And it's these populations who are growing over time and increasing the diversity of our nation.
- It's the resulting data that can prove so valuable to communities of color.
- Yet, the people we need to know the most about are those we measure the least accurately. But their time—our time—has come.
- We know we need to adapt to our beautifully diverse nation.
- In fact, to achieve our mission, we're obliged to acculturate.
- Y'know, I have a story to share with you that illustrates what I'm talking about.
- It's so simple and yet had such a meaningful impact on the focus I bring to the Census Bureau as its leader.
- It's a story that comes from the late 1990s when I was doing a boatload of learning as a study section member for a federal grant-making agency.
- As part of that work, I'd receive a newsletter that would talk about recent and ongoing grant research.
- So, one day I was casually perusing the newsletter when I came upon the results of a grant that looked at the impact of a comparative study of Spanish-speaking patients seeking health care at clinics.
- It's the results that drew my attention.
- So, the research found that when Spanish-speaking patients presented at a clinic where some of the health care staff had even a little proficiency in Spanish, then the patient outcomes were more favorable than situations where health care staff did not speak Spanish.
- Honestly, I laughed out loud.
- Do we really need to do research to verify that people who understand instructions perform better than those who don't?

- But then it hit me . . . I still get a little emotional when I recount my epiphany.
- I realized that this was the first time I had ever seen a research project that showed how an industry—in this case the health care industry—was acculturating to an increasingly diverse population.
- Instead of insisting that people seeking health care learn English or face the consequences, the institution was recognizing its obligation to adapt culturally to its customer base.
- And whether fully aware or implicit, the federal grant-making agency was acting on that obligation through this grant.
- That's a big deal, I promise you.
- Now . . . U.S. Census Bureau is an institution. We're the largest federal statistical agency in our nation.
- Just like the health industry of 20 years ago, we recognize that we, too, must acculturate to our increasingly diverse population.
- And that's just what we're doing. How?
- One way is through external engagement. We must be aware of public sentiment and needs.
- Our outreach must be continuous, throughout the decade, rather than just prior to the decennial census.
- Our outreach should include folks like researchers, policymakers, governments, tribal nations, rural communities, and businesses, to name a few.
- It also includes inner-city neighborhoods, colonias, and communities of color. And, yes, this includes media as well.
- And that's why it's so important to actively seek and to value diverse, external perspectives in our work.
- We realize that we cannot complete our mission alone.
- That's also why I am so excited to be here.
- Because our community-of-the-whole approach necessarily includes all of you, and all of the people and communities you serve.
- Another way we are adapting is through more culturally relevant and useful statistical data products.
- Data visualization tools like My Community Explorer, the Community Resilience Estimates, My tribal Area, Census Business Builder, and other products were designed to put the power of data into the hands of the people.
- We also have the upcoming 2020 Detailed Demographic and Housing Characteristic File A.
- It will report on 300 race-ethnicity and 1200 tribal categories, revealing the wonderfully rich diversity of our nation.
- The DHC-A will include more detailed groups than ever before.
- For the first time, you'll see detailed racial-ethnic disaggregation, even among Whites and Blacks—such as German, Lebanese, Nigerian, and Jamaican.
- We'll report on Middle Eastern and Northern African groups, and detailed Asian groups.
- I hope you are as excited about this as we are.
- Yet another way we are adapting to an increasingly diverse population is through our transformation and modernization efforts at the Census Bureau.
- We are creating single-enterprise, technological systems that will leverage data from all sources to create efficiencies and new data products.
- This will allow more resources to focus on the segments of the population that historically have been the most challenging to have participate in our censuses and surveys.

- Moreover, internal cultural change is every bit a part of our transformation.
- Innovation and creativity are bolstered through the inclusion of diverse perspectives—both those that are internal to the Census Bureau as well as external.
- We believe that new levels of excellence will emerge by actively seeking and listening to diverse voices.
- And that's a principal reason we are here with you today.
- We need your voice to be heard if we are to achieve the true spirit of our mission—to provide the public with quality data on our nation's people and economy.
- So that was my message to you.
- Thank you again for having me.
- Thank you again for your engagement and invaluable help getting information on census out your community.
- We are here to help you and the people of your communities.