

# Kentucky Youth Advocates Community Conversation

Director's remarks as prepared for delivery

September 13, 2023

- 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. 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.
- 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 sizeable field force to knock on doors across our nation.
- And we did just that, but we didn't do it alone. Without the support of our partners, we could not have achieved the measure of success we attained. We recognize and deeply appreciate that. And we learned from it.
- That's partly why I'm here today. Not just to thank you for helping during an enormously challenging period, but to sustain and strengthen a continuous partnership.
- So, in the spirit of strengthening our partnership, 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 partner, 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'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 efforts includes seeking out and listening to diverse voices. That certainly includes listening to our partners, which of course includes you.
- Now, I believe that we promote excellence by embracing equity, diversity, and inclusion in our workforce, in our policies and practices, as well as in how we engage partners.
- 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.
- 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," we need quality data about our people and economy to advance equity.
- And it so happens that the Census Bureau is the leading provider of quality data about the nation's people and economy.
- 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, relevant and most of all have utility, as in fit for use.

- 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 partner groups. That's one of the reasons I'm so pleased to be here today—to find out more about your needs and how we can work together to meet them.
- Now, before I end, I want to mention an upcoming data release that may be of interest to you.
- In September, we'll release more demographic and housing characteristics in the Detailed Demographic and Housing Characteristics File A (DHC-A). This data will contain data for disaggregated race and ethnic groups and AIAN tribes and villages.
- The Detailed DHC-A will include data for more detailed groups than ever before because of improvements made to the questionnaire design and coding processes. These improvements enabled us to collect more detailed race and ethnicity data for detailed White and Black or African American groups—such as German, Lebanese, Nigerian, and Jamaican—for the first time through dedicated write-in areas.
- This release will provide population counts and sex and age statistics for approximately 370 detailed race and ethnic groups, and approximately 1,200 AIAN 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.
- These data releases illustrate our commitment to developing statistics that more accurately reflect our ever-changing nation. They serve and benefit everyone, including the communities you serve.
- Thank you again for having me. Your participation and cooperation in our censuses and surveys are really important in helping us to maintain the excellent data quality that we provide. We at the Census Bureau stand ready to help you access our wealth of data in any way we can.
- Thank you again for your engagement. I look forward to our discussion today.