

# 2026 Census Test: Site Selection

2030 Census Webinar Series

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July 22, 2024 | 2pm EDT

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LIVE WEBINAR**



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**Census**  
Bureau

# INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKERS



**Stacy Vidal**

*Public Information  
Office,  
U.S. Census Bureau  
(Host & Moderator)*



**Dr. Ron S. Jarmin**

*Deputy Director,  
U.S. Census Bureau*



**Tasha Boone**

*Assistant Director,  
Decennial Census  
Programs,  
U.S. Census Bureau*



**Dann Doyle**

*Deputy Chief of  
Decennial Census  
Management Division,  
U.S. Census Bureau*

# QUESTIONS?



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Press \*1 to ask a question



**Dr. Ron S. Jarmin**  
Deputy Director  
U.S. Census Bureau

# Deputy Director's Remarks

- Every decennial census is informed by research, lessons learned, stakeholder input, with a wide range of expertise from partners.
- Today, we're announcing locations for 2026 Census Test.
- Sites carefully selected:
  - Using set of criteria.
  - Thorough, data-driven process.
- 2020 Census testing focused on new technologies and methods.
- We look forward to working with the selected communities, and we appreciate their cooperation.



**Tasha Boone**  
Assistant Director, Decennial Census  
Programs, U.S. Census Bureau

# Today's Agenda

- Review 2030 Census planning updates previously shared
- Recap 2026 Census Test objectives and scope
- 2026 Census Test sites
  - Data-driven approach to site selection
  - Criteria used to select sites
  - Announce test sites
- Next steps

# What We Hope You Take Away from Today's Webinar

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We used a rigorous, data-driven approach to select the sites where the 2026 Census Test will be conducted.

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We are confident that the sites we chose, when used together, allow us to examine all the enhancements and changes under study in each operational area.

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Our focus is on improving the count of historically undercounted and hard-to-count populations. This priority was an important driver of site selection.

# 2030 Census Planning Updates



[www.census.gov/  
2030census](http://www.census.gov/2030census)



## 2030 Census Webinar Series

The 2030 Census webinar series provides updates and lays the groundwork for key components of preparations for the 2030 Census.

### 2026 Census Test Scope

This video is a recording of the live webinar, "2026 Census Test Scope", which was held on April 30, 2024.

[Watch the Video](#) >



### 2030 Census Federal Register Notice (FRN) Findings

This video is a recording of the live webinar, "2030 Census Federal Register Notice (FRN) Findings," which was held on October 17, 2023.

[Watch the Video](#) >



### 2030 Census Research, Testing, and Timeline

This video is a recording of the live webinar, "2030 Census Research, Testing, and Timeline," which was held on July 27, 2023.

[Watch the Video](#) >



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# 2026 Census Test Overview

 We will test new and enhanced processes and methods we are looking to implement for the 2030 Census.

 We're building on and refining our efforts from the 2020 Census to work toward a complete and accurate count of all segments of the population.

 The test will include: (a) six test sites that, as a group, cover all operational areas in-scope for the test and (b) nationally representative self-response testing that will allow us to study self-response and contact strategy improvements.

 The test scope covers six operational areas: Self-Response; In-Field Enumeration; Group Quarters Enumeration; Communications, Partnerships, and Engagement; Cross Operational Support and Infrastructure; and Near Real Time Response Processing.

 The operational areas being tested include aspects that directly or indirectly help us enumerate historically undercounted and hard-to-count populations.

# Nation-Wide Self-Response Testing Complements Site Testing

This component of the test involves mailing materials to a nationally representative sample of households, inviting them to respond to the test online, by phone or by mail.

This builds upon the Census Bureau's ongoing small-scale testing to improve the online questionnaire and invitation materials sent to households.

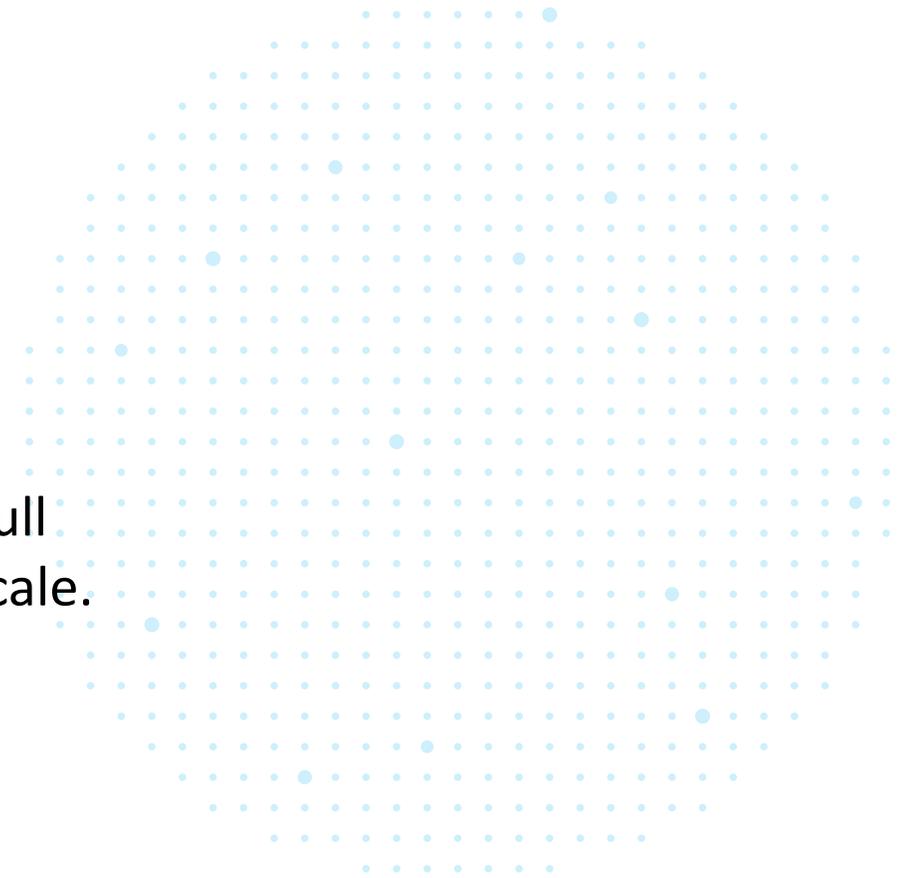
It will also provide insight on self-response rate trends, which will inform 2030 Census planning for field infrastructure, communications, and other operations.



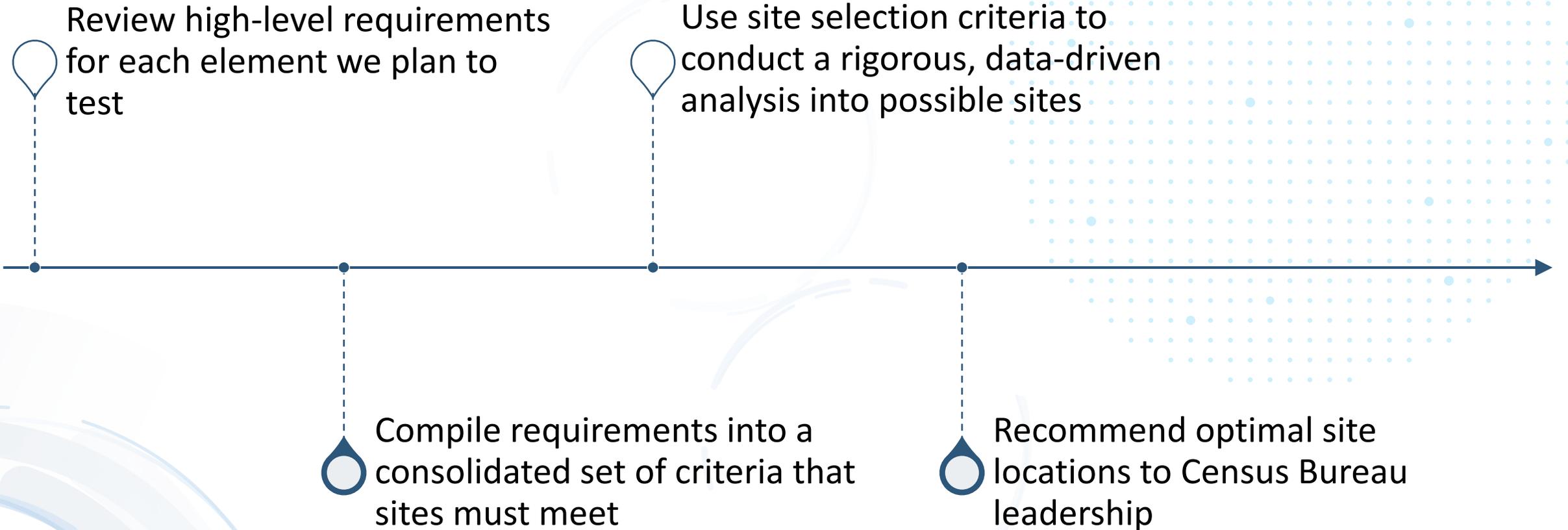
**Dann Doyle**  
Deputy Chief, Decennial Census  
Management Division,  
U.S. Census Bureau

# Why Site Selection Matters

- ✓ Ensure we meet the test's objectives.
- ✓ Provide optimal opportunities to implement the full test scope under real conditions and on a larger scale.
- ✓ Support our focus on improving the count of historically undercounted and hard-to-count populations.



# Our Data-Driven Approach To Selecting Test Sites



# Overview of Site Selection Criteria



**GEOGRAPHY**



**STAFFING**



**LIVING QUARTERS  
CHARACTERISTICS**



**TECHNICAL  
CHARACTERISTICS**

# Site Selection Criteria

## Geography

- Locations across 2 Census Bureau Regions
- Rural area with:
  - High percentages of historically undercounted populations and
  - Historically lower self-response rates
- Area with a colonia
- Tribal area
- Area with nonmailable addresses

## Living Quarters Characteristics

- Seasonally vacant housing
- Complex households
- High instances of new construction
- Multiunit structures and/or hidden housing units
- Wide range of group quarters types

## Staffing

- Sites where recruiting field staff has been historically challenging
- Sites with different levels of unemployment rates

## Technical Characteristics

- Little to no cell phone or internet service
- Comprehensive and minimal administrative data

# Selection Criteria

## *Geography*



**Geographic dispersion**



**Rural area**

Historically undercounted populations   
Lower census self-response 



**Tribal area**



**Colonia**



**Nonmailable addresses**

# Selection Criteria

## *Living Quarters Characteristics*



### **Complex and Seasonal Housing**

- Seasonal vacancy
- Complex households
- New construction
- Urban area with multiunit structures and/or hidden housing units



### **Group Quarters Facilities**

- Both group quarters and housing units
- College area
- Mixed-use continuing care facility
- Wide range of group quarters types

# Selection Criteria

## *Staffing*



Areas where recruiting field staff has been historically challenging



Areas with different levels of unemployment

# Selection Criteria

## *Technical Characteristics*



### **Technological Connectivity**

- Little to no internet or cell phone service

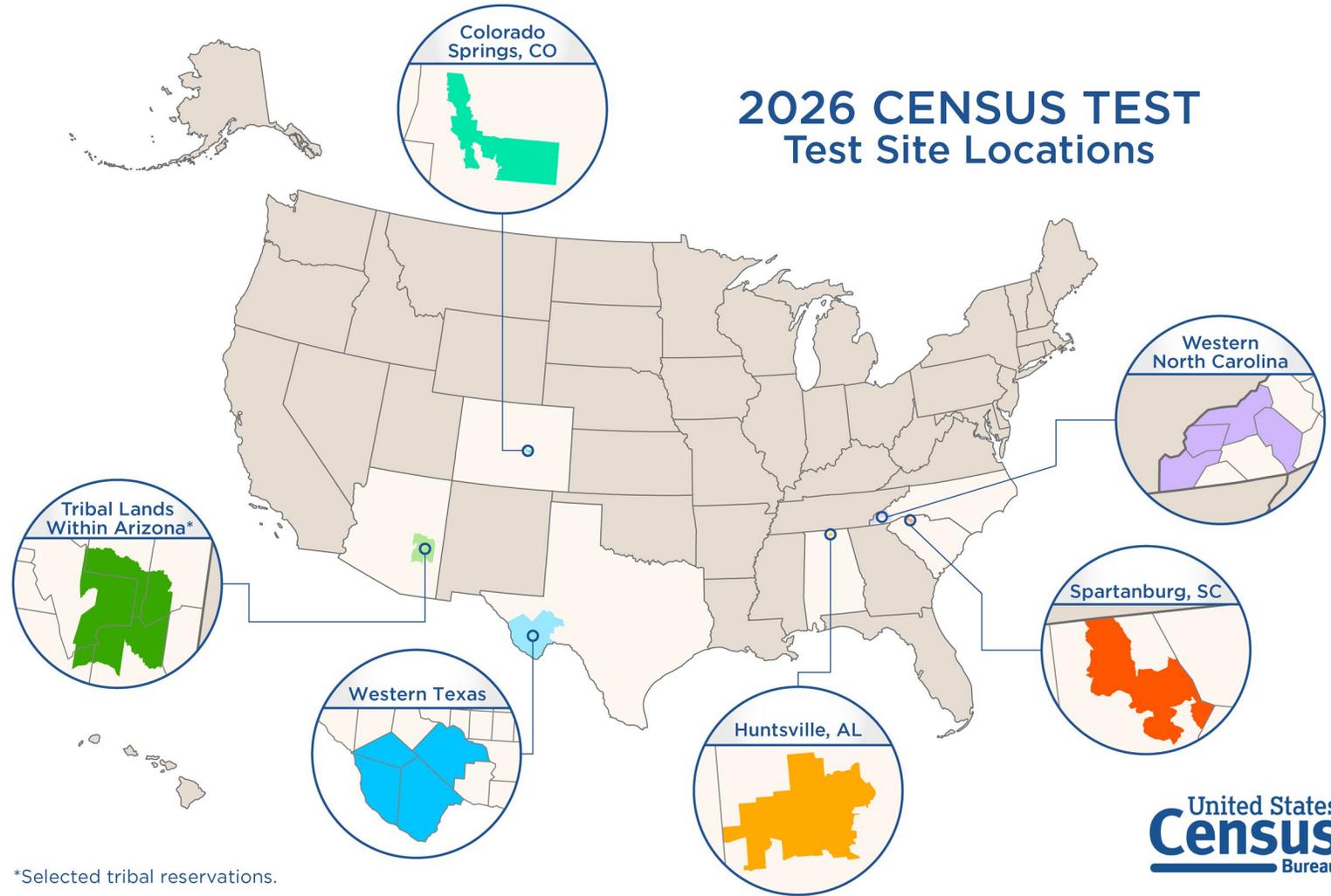


### **Administrative Data**

- Comprehensive administrative data
- Minimal administrative data

# 2026 Census Test Sites

- Western Texas
- Tribal Lands Within Arizona, which includes selected tribal reservations
- Colorado Springs, CO
- Western North Carolina
- Spartanburg, SC
- Huntsville, AL





# Tribal Lands Within Arizona

(Fort Apache Reservation, home to the White Mountain Apache Tribe and San Carlos Reservation, home to the San Carlos Apache Tribe)

## Key selection criteria

- ✓ Rural area with
  - ✓ Historically undercounted population
  - ✓ Historically low census self-response
- ✓ Non-mailable addresses
- ✗ ~~Seasonally vacant housing units~~

## Optimal for testing

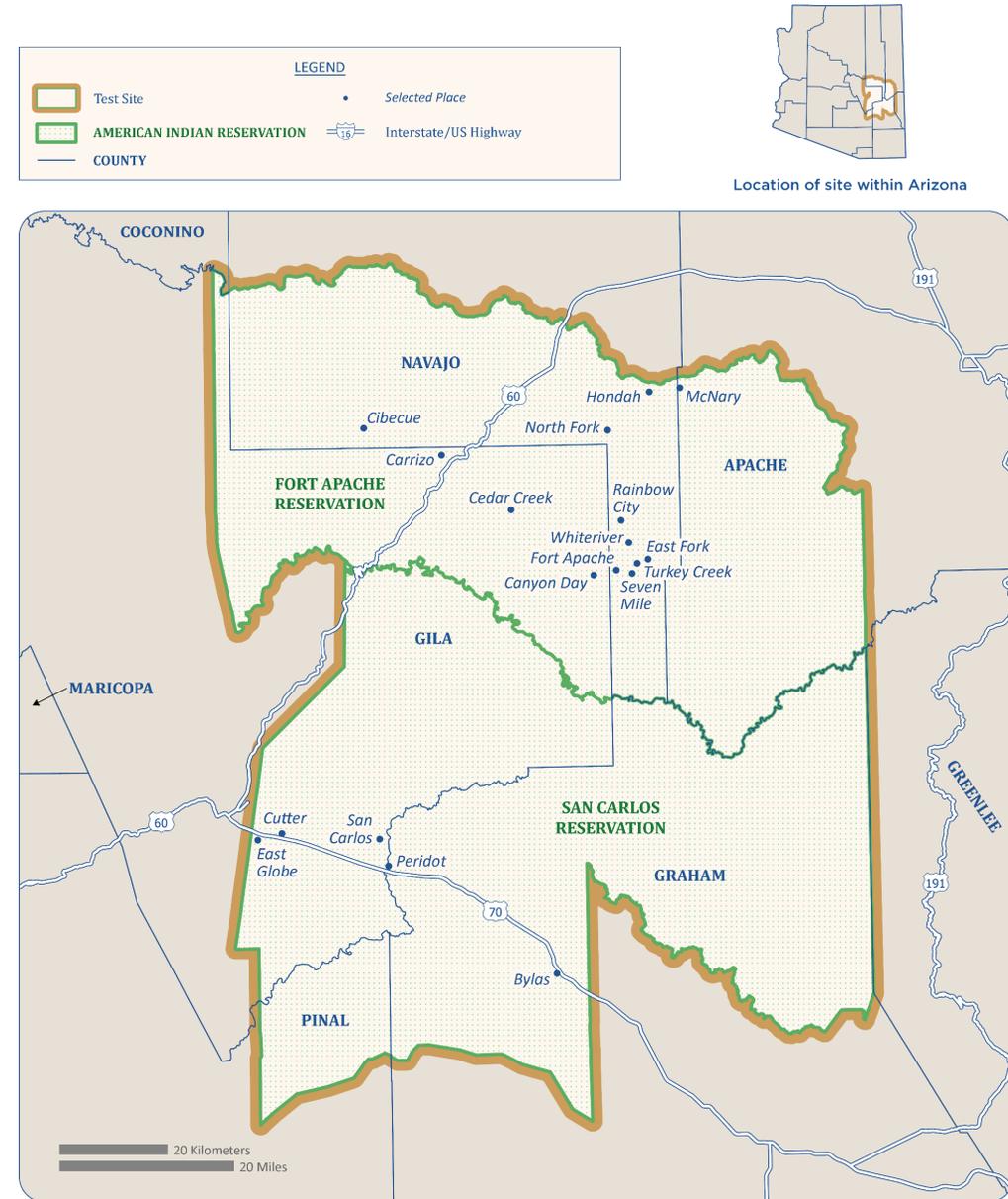
Mobile Questionnaire Assistance

Recruiting and hiring

Shipping materials and equipment directly to field staff's home addresses in remote areas

Newly consolidated In-Field Enumeration procedures in areas with hard-to-count and historically undercounted populations

New partnership procedures developed specifically for tribal outreach and communications



# Colorado Springs, Colorado

(Selected areas of the metro area)

## Key selection criteria

- ✓ Multiunit structures and hidden housing units
- ✓ Complex housing units
- ✓ New construction
- ✓ All group quarters types, including multiple universities, correctional facilities, and military installations.
- ✓ Comprehensive and minimal administrative record data

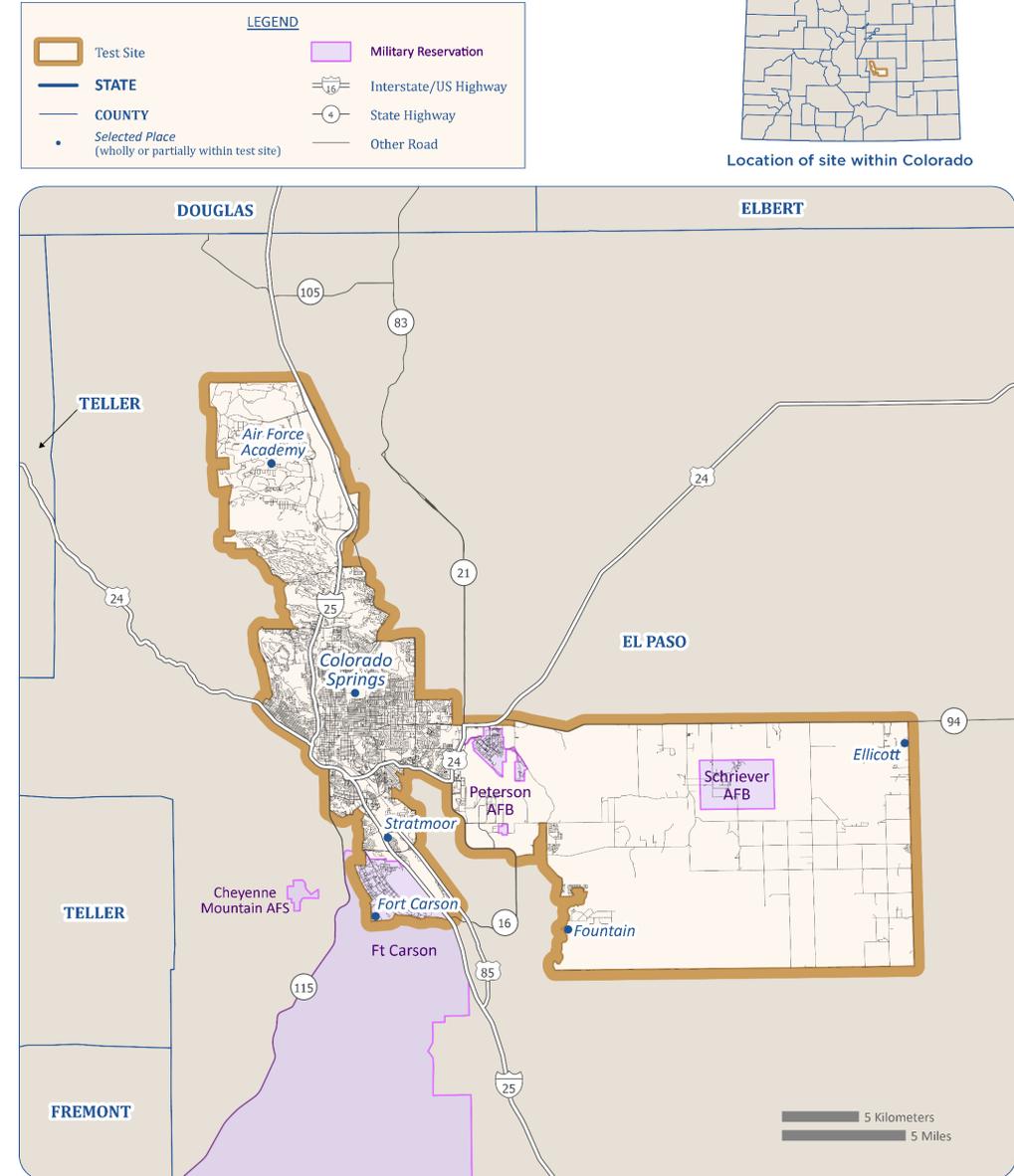
## Optimal for testing

Automated group quarters procedures with correctional facilities, large universities, military installations and other group quarters types

New In-Field Enumeration procedures for complex housing units, multi-unit structures, and/or hidden housing units

Procedures for conducting early In-Field Enumeration in areas surrounding universities

Contact strategies with housing units in areas with comprehensive and minimal administrative record data



# Western North Carolina

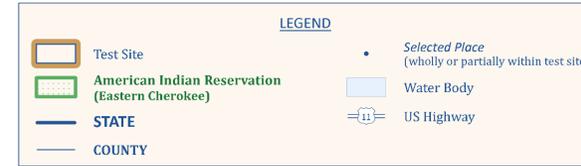
(Qualla Boundary, home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and Cherokee County, Graham County, Jackson County, and Swain County)

## Key selection criteria

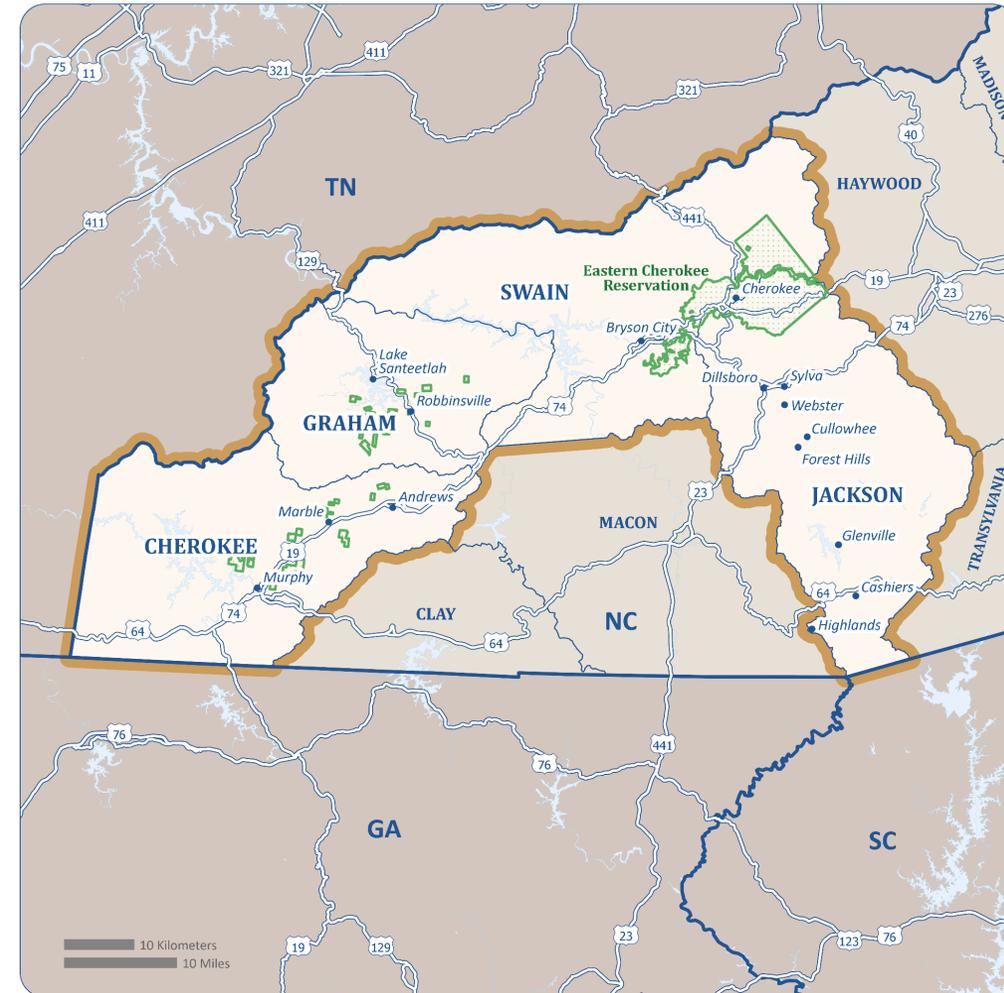
- ✓ Rural area with
  - ✓ High rate of historically undercounted populations
  - ✓ Historically low census self-response
- ✓ Nonmailable addresses
- ✓ Seasonally vacant housing units
- ✓ Multiunit structures and hidden housing units
- ✓ Little to no internet or cell phone service
- ✓ Tribal area
- ✓ Group quarters facilities like large, continuing care facilities
- ✓ Complex housing units

## Optimal for testing

- New enumeration contact strategies for seasonally vacant housing units
- New partnership procedures in tribal areas and areas with high rates of historically undercount populations
- Automated recruiting, hiring and training in areas with little to no internet and cell phone service
- Newly consolidated In-Field Enumeration procedures



Location of site within North Carolina



# Spartanburg, South Carolina

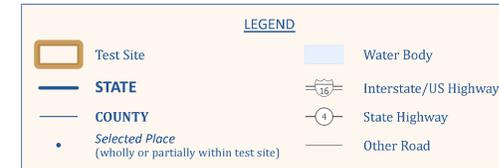


## Key selection criteria

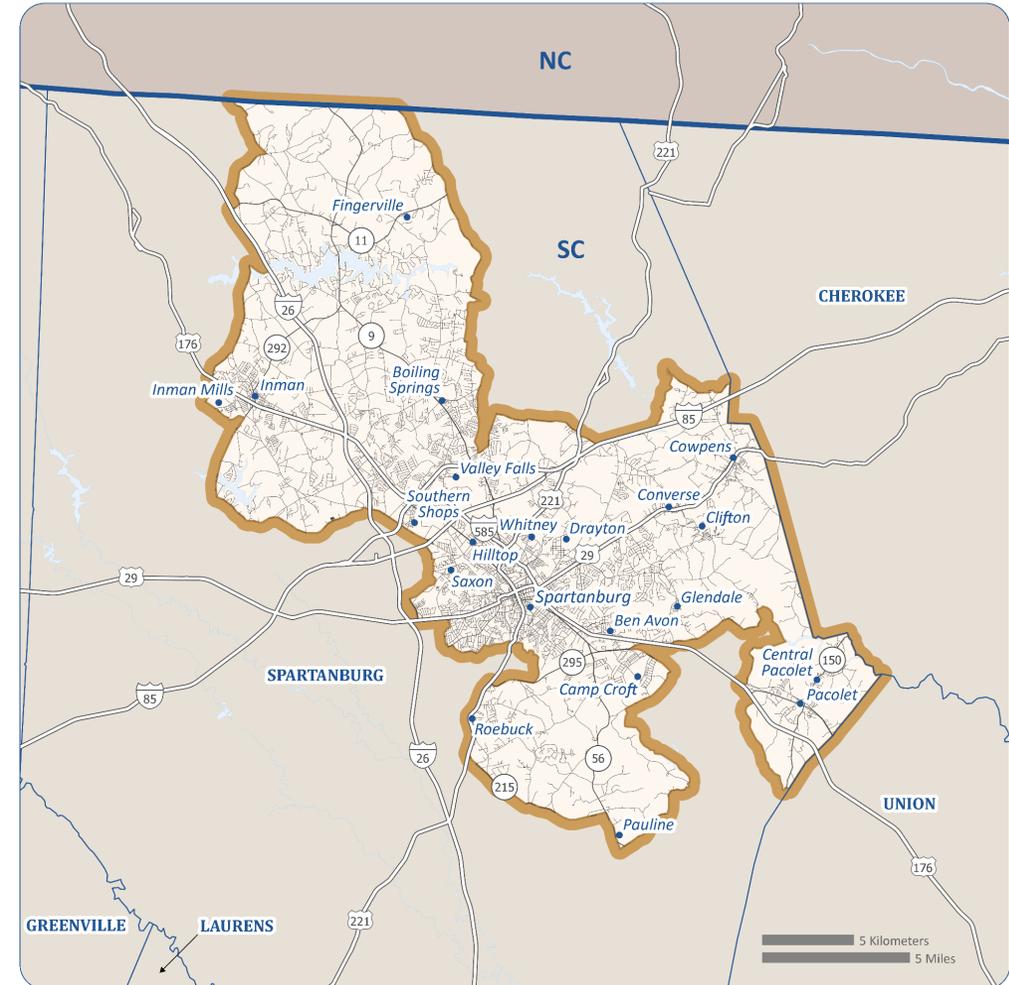
- ✓ University area with student housing
- ✓ Mix-use units including group quarters facilities and housing units
- ✓ Wide range of group quarters facilities including workers dormitories, nursing and skilled nursing facilities, and a correctional facility
- ✓ Complex housing units
- ✓ Multiunit structures and hidden housing units

## Optimal for testing

- New automated group quarters procedures at a university
- New group quarters and housing unit enumeration procedures
- Procedures for conducting early In-Field Enumeration in areas surrounding universities
- New In-Field Enumeration procedures in complex housing units



Location of site within South Carolina



# Huntsville, Alabama

## Key selection criteria

- ✓ Low unemployment
- ✓ University area with student housing
- ✓ Wide range of group quarters types
- ✓ Complex housing units
- ✓ Multiunit structures or hidden housing units

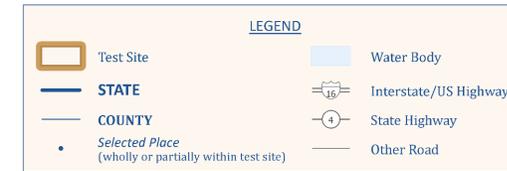
## Optimal for testing

New automated group quarters procedures with a wide range of group quarters types

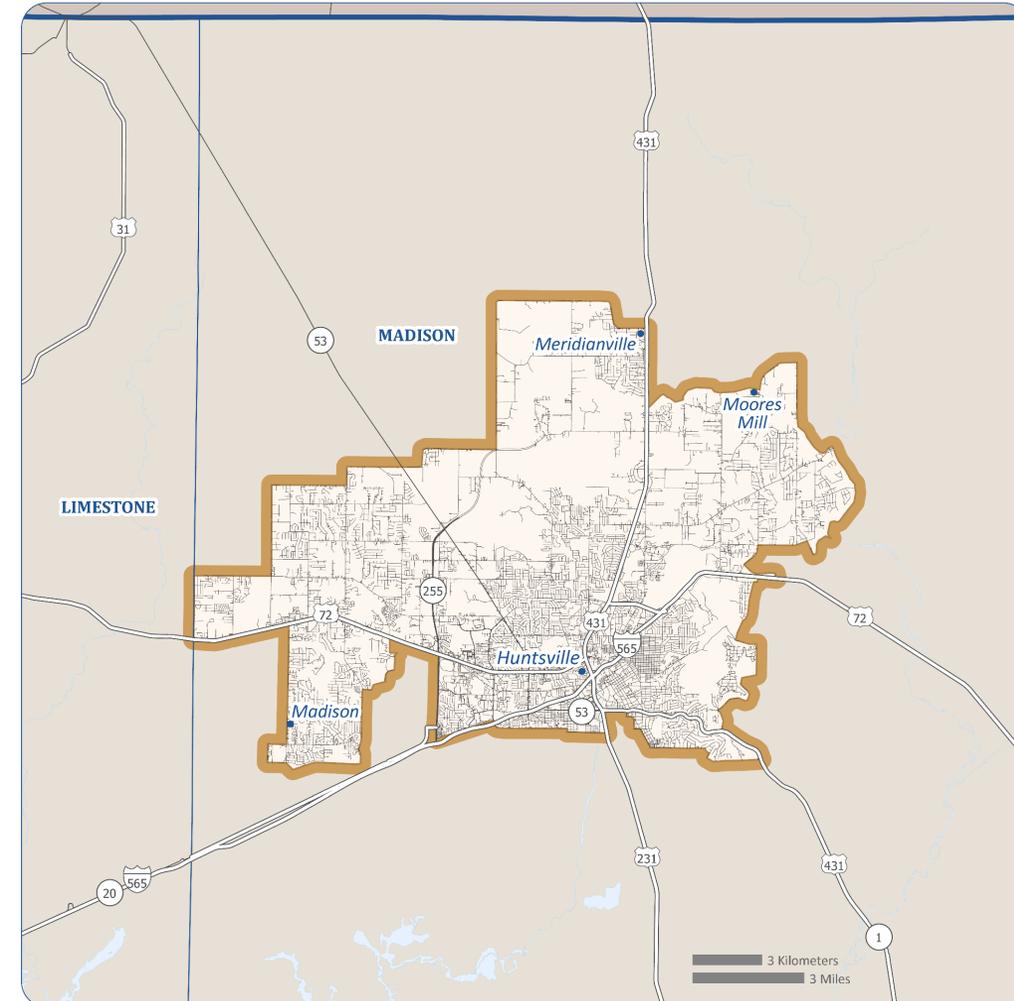
Procedures for conducting early In-Field Enumeration in areas surrounding universities

New In-Field Enumeration procedures for complex housing units, multi-unit structures, and/or hidden housing units

Contact strategies with housing units in areas with strong administrative record data



Location of site within Alabama



# Summary of Sites Selected

## TEST SITE CRITERIA

	DENVER REGION			ATLANTA REGION		
	Western Texas	Tribal Lands Within Arizona*	Colorado Springs, CO	Western North Carolina	Spartanburg, SC	Huntsville, AL
<b>GEOGRAPHY</b>						
✓ Rural area with historically undercounted populations and lower self-response rates	X	X		X		
✓ Area with a colonia	X					
✓ Tribal area		X		X		
✓ Area with nonmailable addresses	X	X		X		
<b>LIVING QUARTERS</b>						
✓ Seasonally vacant housing	X			X		
✓ Complex housing units			X	X	X	X
✓ High instances of new construction			X			
✓ Multiunit structures and/or hidden housing units			X	X	X	X
✓ Wide range of group quarters types			X	X	X	X
<b>STAFFING</b>						
✓ Recruiting field staff has been historically challenging						X
✓ Low unemployment						X
<b>TECHNICAL</b>						
✓ Little to no cell phone or internet service	X			X		
✓ Comprehensive and minimal administrative record data			X			

\* Selected tribal reservations.

Note: This table summarizes how testing requirements are distributed across the six test sites. These locations provide optimal opportunities for us to implement all of the changes and enhancements we have planned for the test. Updated November 13, 2024, to reflect the level of seasonally vacant housing in Tribal Lands Within Arizona does not meet the criteria.

# Next Steps

## 2026 Census Test Design

- Throughout 2024 and 2025 - Finalize the design of the test
- Late 2025 - Plan to release the detailed test plan

## Milestone Activities

- Summer 2025: Outreach begins raising awareness in the test sites about the importance of participating.
- Fall 2025: Recruiting begins for temporary census jobs in the test sites.
- Spring 2026: Public begins responding to the 2026 Census Test.
- Census Day, April 1, 2026: Participants are asked to respond based on where they live as of this date.
- Summer 2026: 2026 Census Test concludes.



# Thank you

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 [PIO@CENSUS.GOV](mailto:PIO@CENSUS.GOV)

 PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE (PIO)  
301-763-3030

# Q/A Panelists



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*Public Information  
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(Host & Moderator)*



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*Associate Director for  
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U.S. Census Bureau*



**Tasha Boone**

*Assistant Director,  
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**Jennifer Reichert**

*Chief of Decennial  
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**Dann Doyle**

*Deputy Chief of  
Decennial Census  
Management Division,  
U.S. Census Bureau*

# QUESTIONS?



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Press \*1 to ask a question

# 2030 Census Updates

## Release Resources

- 2026 Press Kit.
- Slide deck.
- Recording of today's webinar.
- [www.census.gov/2030census](http://www.census.gov/2030census)
- [www.census.gov/2026test](http://www.census.gov/2026test)

## Previous Webinars

- [2030 Census Research, Testing, and Timeline](#)
- [2030 Census Federal Register Notice \(FRN\) Findings](#)
- [2026 Census Test Scope](#)

# Upcoming Releases

## July 23

- Prerelease webinar about 2020 Census Detailed Demographic and Housing Characteristics File B (Detailed DHC-B).
- Embargo access begins July 30.
- Released publicly August 1.

## July 25

- New data from the Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) Program.

## July 26

- 2030 Census Advisory Committee Summer Virtual Meeting.
- This will be the first meeting of the 2030 Census Advisory Committee.

# For Further Information

## Media:

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### **Public Information Office**

pio@census.gov

301-763-3030/877-861-2010 (U.S. and Canada only)

## General Public:

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**Census.gov** ➤ [www.census.gov/2030census](http://www.census.gov/2030census)

### **Customer Service Center**

1-800-923-8282 or

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## Press Kit:

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