

Census Collaborative Convening Baltimore, MD

Director's remarks as prepared for delivery

August 1, 2024

INTRODUCTION

- Good morning, everyone. It's great to see many of you!
- It's an honor to be here with you again, to talk to you about the next decennial census.
- Can't believe a year has gone by since I was last here . . . time flies. And by the way, I fly too . . . a lot.
- I know you want to talk to me about the 2026 Census Test, and I promise I'll get to that.
- But I want you to know what I've been doing to contribute to our continuous engagement strategy, which I hope you know is a high priority at the U.S. Census Bureau.
- I—and varied staff who accompany me—have been visiting communities throughout the nation.
- I've met with governors, state senators and legislators, mayors and city council members, county commissioners and public health departments, chambers of commerce, with elected officials at the state, county, and city levels.
- With national stakeholders like American Psychological Association, American Statistical Association, National Association for Bilingual Education, Population Association of America, and American Sociological Association on the professional side . . . and others like the League of United Latin American Citizens, National Urban League, National Congress of American Indians, Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services, representatives of the Hmong and the disability communities.
- I've met with local community organizations whose constituencies include the homeless, immigrants, rural residents, tribes, community college and university faculties and students, state demographers and state data centers, libraries . . . I could go on.
- Some come out and ask, "OK, what do you want?" Others are like "I have some things to tell you, so sit down."
- It's been personally rewarding, but more importantly, it's been really important for the Census Bureau staff—especially those who don't often get out into the community—to experience first-hand the power of convening, the goodwill that comes from being forthright about our data, and the fulfillment of seeing how to love our values by being transparent and showing we care about the public and are living our public service mission.
- I'll say more about my experiences in an upcoming blog post; I just wanted to share this snippet with you.
- OK, so let's get to some updates.
- I'll start with the 2020 Census . . . yes, you heard me—2020. The last remaining data products from 2020 will be released later this year.
- Specifically, today the Census Bureau released the 2020 Census Detailed Demographic and Housing Characteristics File B (Detailed DHC-B).

- This product contains household composition and housing tenure characteristics for 1,500 race/ethnicity and tribal groups.
- The same detailed race, ethnicity, and tribal groups featured in the Detailed DHC-A will be available in this release. So please check it out and tell your friends.

2026 CENSUS TEST

- Now let's turn to our preparations for the 2030 decennial census, starting with the 2026 Census Test.
- The 2030 Census will be informed by research, lessons learned, stakeholder and expert input, as well as on-the-ground testing.
- We'll be conducting two major field tests—one in 2026 and one in 2028.
- The 2026 Census Test will involve assessments of new and enhanced processes and methods we're planning to use for 2030.
- Last week we announced the six sites selected for the 2026 Census Test.
- They are:
 - Western Texas.
 - Tribal lands in Arizona.
 - Colorado Springs, Colorado.
 - Western North Carolina.
 - Spartanburg, South Carolina.
 - Huntsville, Alabama.

Test Scope

- Like all good research, these sites were selected to achieve the goals of the 2026 Census Test as measured by specific criteria.
- Both the goals and the site selection criteria appear on our website, or you can just Google "2026 Census Test" for the link.
- We needed the sites to collectively span a range of historically undercounted populations.
- After all, if the quality and accuracy of the census enumeration is to occur, it will be through securing the participation among the populations we've historically struggled to enumerate.
- Now, the 2026 Census Test will help us assess what we think are enhanced processes and methods for enumeration.
- In general, we used the following criteria to prioritize the operational changes and innovations to test:
 - First, the operation must support achieving a complete and accurate count.
 - The operational revisions must demonstrate they're viable in a real-world setting.
 - And the operational testing must align with available budget, systems and other resources.
- For the 2026 Census Test, we'll be exploring improvements in:
 - How we reach out to encourage participation.
 - The ways that people can respond.
 - How data are collected.
 - How we can improve data processing.
- Each of these aspects work together towards achieving a complete and accurate count.

- Naturally, the operational areas either directly or indirectly help us enumerate the people we historically have had challenges enumerating.
- The specific operational areas are:
 - Self-response.
 - In-field enumeration.
 - Group quarters enumeration.
 - Communications, partnerships, and engagement.
 - Cross-operational support and infrastructure.
 - Response processing.
- You can find a lot more information about each of these operational areas and our plans for testing them at <www.census.gov/2030census>.

Communications, Partnerships, and Engagement

- Next, I'll talk about our plans for testing communications, partnerships, and engagement.
- For this operational area, we'll be testing technology to identify key locations where we can hold community events to raise awareness about and participation in the census.
- We'll assess outreach strategies and determine tools that best match the needs of each community in support of promoting response.
- We'll be specifically focusing on hard-to-count and historically undercounted populations.
- We'll convene local community leaders and stakeholders to gain insight on creative solutions and culturally relevant approaches.
- We'll be actively and consistently engaging with the diverse breadth of stakeholders at all community levels to establish and reinforce effective partnerships.
- In each site we'll seek to activate local trusted voices and broaden a trusted network of community partners.
- In fact, we will explore the effective methods to reach non-English-speaking audiences.
- This effort will involve leveraging targeted social media to convey community-specific messaging and promote local engagement.
- We'll also be exploring the implementation of targeted group quarters communications.
- And finally, we'll support an enhanced Mobile Questionnaire Assistance operation, or MQA. MQA was not deployed as originally planned for the 2020 Census due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- We'll be testing technology to predict the best locations for hosting MQA. This effort aims to support respondents' access to and participation in the census test.
- As you can imagine, this operational area requires that we include many diverse voices and perspectives to gain necessary insights about how to effectively engage the community.
- As we get closer to the test and our detailed operational activities are more fully defined, we'll communicate opportunities and activities for engaging with organizations.

Local Update of Census Addresses Program

- I'll now say a few words on our LUCA program.
- As you know, LUCA represents one of the first operations of the 2030 Census. It's through LUCA that governments receive the Census Bureau's address list for their jurisdiction ahead of the census.
- They are then able to provide feedback on missed addresses, addresses that do not exist, or addresses that otherwise need updating.
- The 2030 LUCA Federal Register notice will be published for public comments in early 2026.

- And then in early 2027, the highest elected or appointed official from eligible governments will receive an invitation to participate in LUCA.
- And finally, let me update you on the American Community Survey.

American Community Survey

- The Census Bureau is planning a convening for federal agency disability stakeholders, disability community representatives, data users, researchers, and disability advocates.
- This is in partnership with the Office of Management and Budget, the National Center for Health Statistics, the National Council on Disability, the Leadership Conference Education Fund, and the Consortium for Constituents with Disabilities Health Task Force.
- Yesterday, we announced that the convening will be held on Friday, September 30, 2024, in the DC metro area.
- This convening seeks to meaningfully engage with our disability community stakeholders.
- The dialogue will help provide a government-wide context for improving federal disability data and advancing equity for the disabled community.
- Stay tuned for updates about this meeting.
- We're very much looking forward to meeting, learning from, and further exploring the data needs of the disability community.

CONCLUSION

- So, those are my updates for you.
- We're so excited to have you as partners on our decade-long journey to develop the 2030 Census plan.
- I can't thank you enough for your eagerness to engage and for your support of the census. We look forward to continuous dialogue and to receiving your feedback, your concerns, and your suggestions.
- We very much need you, perhaps more than you can imagine. Hey, we're all in this together. We cannot achieve our mission without you.
- Our efforts and, indeed, our nation are stronger when we work together towards the common goal of a complete and accurate census.
- Your communities deserve their data assets and accompanying benefits that flow from achieving a complete count.
- I appreciate your support and enthusiasm and look forward to your questions.