

National Advisory Committee 2024 Fall Meeting

Deputy director's remarks as prepared for delivery

November 7, 2024

Welcome

- Good morning, everyone and thank you for joining us today. I'm happy to be meeting again.
- There are a few, short, announcements I'd also like to share. Starting off with an update on our budget . . .

Budget

- We continue our multiyear process of transforming our organization and operations from a survey-centric model to a data-centric model, where we can more readily blend survey data with administrative and alternative digital data sources.
- The Census Bureau's FY 2025 budget request totals just under \$1.58 billion—or \$195 million over the FY24 Enacted budget.
- Currently, we are operating under a Continuing Resolution, based on the FY 2024 Enacted budget of just over \$1.38 billion.
- The FY 2025 Senate Mark proposes to fund the Census Bureau at the full FY 2025 request level.
- However, the House Mark for FY 2025 is just over \$1.35 billion—or \$224 million (14%) below the FY 2025 budget request and \$29 million (2%) below the FY 2024 Enacted budget.
- The FY 2025 request supports the Census Bureau's core operations and invests in new data products, methods, and crosscutting research techniques and enterprise technology.
- Some of the investments in the FY 2025 budget are:
 - The 2030 Census program, which will be transitioning from the Design Selection Phase into the Development and Integration Phase. Acquisition work also continues in FY 2025 for major contracts to support development, integration, infrastructure, and communications as well as preparing for the 2026 Census Test.
 - The 2022 Economic Census data release and planning efforts for the 2027 Economic Census and the Census of Governments.
 - The Business Ecosystem, including:
 - The onboarding of new surveys into CEDSCI and its migration into the cloud.
 - DICE, as it enters its peak year of software development, will migrate 7 surveys into production and will start development of 31 surveys, including operational components of the Decennial Census Program's 2026 Census Test.

- Modernizing the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) and restoring the fielded sample to 53,000 cases to ensure SIPP remains a leading source of comprehensive information on the dynamics of income, employment, household composition, and government program participation.
- Establishes the Puerto Rico Economic Program, including an annual Puerto Rico Economic Survey and a monthly/quarterly economic indicator collection for Puerto Rico, to produce key measures of Puerto Rico that are critical to its future economic prosperity.

Puerto Rico FSRDC

- And speaking of Puerto Rico, last month I had the honor of attending the ribbon cutting ceremony of the first-ever Puerto Rico Federal Statistic Research Data Center. This is the first FSRDC in a U.S. territory.
- At the Census Bureau, we are working diligently to expand data infrastructure in Puerto Rico, and an FSRDC is a fantastic way of doing that.
- With these centers, qualified researchers can access restricted-use microdata from a variety of statistical agencies to address important research questions. Federal and state statistical agencies collaborate with the Census Bureau to provide microdata to approved researchers in the secure FSRDC environment.
- Currently, seven federal partner agencies provide data directly through the FSRDCs. And, many other agencies who sponsor surveys or collect administrative data, collaborate with the FSRDC program by making available the data collected from respondents or program participants.
- Access to FSRDC data will enhance the statistical capacity right on the island. The data will enable local officials, industry leaders, and third-party sector to make more informed, timely data-driven decisions. And, it will also allow local academics to address previously unanswerable research questions.
- As you all know, our goal is to empower decision-makers, businesses, researchers, and the public with timely, accurate, reliable, and meaningful data.
- The Census Bureau currently partners with several organizations in Puerto Rico and we hope to continually add to that list. We understand the importance of good data, and we're excited of the work and collaboration that's to come.
- The FSRDC will officially open later this fall.

Economic Census

- The Census Bureau continually works to improve data processing efficiency, striving to publish data earlier than planned when possible. To this point, the release of the Geographic Area Statistics has been moved up to December 2024, 3 months earlier than the planned March 2025 release.
- This data will provide detailed industry statistics by geographic area for employer businesses in the United States. The Geographic Area Statistics will supersede the First Look Statistics released in January 2024. (Scheduled for release December 5, 2024.)
- The Geographic Area Statistics for this Economic Census will now be a single release—every sector and geography will be available on the same day. In previous years it was released on a flow basis by sector and state over several months.

- Along with the data release, we plan to include an interactive data visualization that will provide data users with a tool to quickly get summary statistics by geography and NAICS. Early in the new year, a series of State Snapshots will be produced that highlight data from both the Economic Census and Census of Governments.
- Data for Puerto Rico is also planned for release on December 5, 2024, and will conclude the 2022 Economic Census data releases for the Island Areas.

Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BTOS)

- Under our high frequency data program, the Business Trends and Outlook Survey (BTOS) provides bi-weekly data to measure the U.S. business climate and captures key measures of:
 - the economy including revenue,
 - employment,
 - hours as well as business conditions including demand,
 - prices,
 - supply chain issues,
 - inventory status,
 - interest rate impacts, and
 - weather loss impact.
- As of November 4, 2024, the BTOS includes an additional set of questions on Work from Home (WFH). WFH became essential during the pandemic and continues to be a significant aspect of many workplaces, current measures highlight substantial gaps in understanding its scope from a business perspective.
- To address this, the BTOS team has developed 11 questions covering the share and frequency of WFH, challenges, management policies, and the overall business impact of WFH.

Annual Integrated Economic Survey (AIES)

- This year we released the annual survey data of our business statistics, in their current format, for:
 - Annual Retail Trade Survey (ARTS),
 - Annual Wholesale Trade Survey (AWTS),
 - Service Annual Survey (SAS), and
 - Annual Capital Expenditures Survey (ACES) for the final time.
- These surveys have now transitioned to the Annual Integrated Economic Survey (AIES).
- We officially launched AIES on March 15 to approximately 370,000 businesses. AIES is designed to consolidate and combine content from seven current economic surveys.
- AIES also incorporated over 90% of available enterprise solutions provided by the Data Ingest and Collection for the Enterprise (DICE) and the Enterprise Data Lake (EDL) to perform mail out, to deliver a production-ready collection instrument, and to handle data storage.
- The 2023 AIES due date was April 30 and the instrument closed out on Oct. 31. As of October 29, the response rate was 63.72%, representing 237,541 companies submitting their data.
- We are currently reviewing the data coming in and working to deploy new analyst tools and data processing capabilities so that we can thoroughly analyze and edit the data in preparation for data release in the summer of 2025.

- Staff also continue to work closely with DICE to monitor current operations for the SY23 survey, while also looking ahead and planning for instrument/content changes and the overall schedule for SY24.
- AIES leaders and team members are working with various areas to prepare for year 2. This includes working with DICE to implement instrument improvements based on year 1 lessons learned and results from:
 - testing,
 - to include a form view for single-unit respondents,
 - continuing to consult with external stakeholders to change/reduce content in an effort to decrease respondent burden,
 - creating a new OMB package to send for review and approval before the end of the year,
 - reviewing the 2023 sample and looking for ways to reduce burden with cutoffs and
 - nonmail activities led to a 20% decline in mailing for the 2024 collection and a reduction of over 10% of content.
- The 2024 AIES is expected to launch in February of 2025.

Conclusion

- We are proud of the work currently being done by our amazing staff and can't wait to see how we'll continue to grow as an agency.
- I look forward to the discussions these next two days and appreciate your support and partnership.
- Thank you.