

# Race/Ethnicity Coding Improvement Tribal Consultation

Director's remarks as prepared for delivery

December 11, 2024

## OPENING REMARKS

- Special greetings to the tribal leaders and all who are joining us today.
- I'll open my remarks by saying that we at the U.S. Census Bureau are public servants.
- We serve you.
- We—as public servants—collect *your* data about *your* people for *your* governance and decision-making.
- In fact, when it comes to tribes and the people of Indian Country, we must go further.
- We acknowledge tribal nation sovereignty, and we interact with tribes on a nation-to-nation basis.
- Our work together is of the highest priority.
- We're grateful that you've joined us today so that we may better serve you.
- We respectfully seek your feedback on tribal identity.
- Specifically, we seek your perspectives on how detailed race and ethnicity should be coded in the American Community Survey and in the 2030 Census.
- Now, our previous census in 2020 captured detailed data on roughly 1,200 American Indian and Alaska Native tribes and villages, reflecting the breadth and distinctiveness of native communities.
- As we plan for future censuses and surveys, we need to refresh these coding lists by using your input.
- In service to you, we provide tribes and the people of Indian Country with your statistical data products.
- These products represent powerful tools to inform decision-making, identify tribal needs, and set priorities.
- Accurate, detailed data are critical for addressing your needs.
- The data you use must align with the principles of indigenous self-determination and sovereignty.
- Statistical data about your people allow you to understand who they are, their situations, their accomplishments, and their challenges.
- <pause>
- We're preparing for the 2030 decennial census early.
- That includes holding these consultations on detailed race and ethnicity coding.
- In fact, we're planning on conducting a 2026 Census Test in six parts of the country.
- The test areas include three sites on tribal lands.
- Test results will inform proposed changes and innovations to improve the census in 2030.
- We recognize the need to focus on enumerating hard-to-count and historically undercounted populations.

- That includes American Indian and Alaska Native people living on reservations.
- In addition to today's topic of race/ethnicity coding, we're actively engaged in several initiatives to help tribes.
- These include:
  - Our Tribal Relations Program, which adds several census staff who are also tribal members; they work to strengthen our relationships with tribes.
  - There's also our tribal consultations, like today's event.
  - We have Statistical Products First, a program that focuses on tribes' needs and then creates products to address those needs.
  - Then there is a recent historic Memorandum of Agreement with the Osage Nation, the first tribal data sharing agreement to benefit that tribe.
- Now, tribal consultations are a critical way to receive your input.
- We look to your wisdom, to your suggestions, and concerns.
- Today is your opportunity to provide us with feedback on our race and ethnicity coding.
- So, thank you again for participating, and I'll now turn the time back to Dee.

## CLOSING REMARKS

- Well, thank you so much for joining us today, and for your engagement and thoughtful insights into the Race/Ethnicity Coding Improvement Project.
- We've heard a lot of wise comments and suggestions, and we'll be closely considering your words.
- Consultations like this are so valuable to the Census Bureau and our mission to provide you with the high-quality data that you need and deserve.
- We need to hear your voices. Your feedback will lead to better, more inclusive data.
- We look forward to future consultations with you in the years leading up to the 2030 Census.
- Through our collaboration, we'll be able to better meet your needs by producing more timely, useful statistics on the people of Indian Country.
- We look forward to a continued partnership with you. Thank you again.