



THE CENSUS PROJECT

Supporting quality measures of
America's economy and places

September 8, 2022

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen, Chair
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Moran, Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Matt Cartwright, Chairman
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt, Ranking Member
Commerce, Justice, Science Subcommittee
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Shaheen, Chairman Cartwright, Ranking Member Moran, and Ranking Member Aderholt,

On behalf of The Census Project (<https://thecensusproject.org/>), a broad-based coalition of organizations from the private, public, non-profit, and academic sectors that support the U.S. Census Bureau's mission to produce full, fair, complete, and accurate data, including data from the decennial census and American Community Survey (ACS), we are writing to express strong support for funding the U.S. Census Bureau in Fiscal Year (FY) 2023.

We want to ensure that the Census Bureau receives the highest possible level of funding in the final Commerce, Justice, Science (CJS) Appropriations bill. Specifically, **we urge that the final FY 2023 CJS appropriations bill provide the Census Bureau with at least \$1.505 billion—an amount approved by the House Appropriations Committee.** This funding (which includes \$336,176,000 for Current Surveys and Programs and \$1,169,294,000 for Periodic Census and Programs) represents a modest \$151.5 million increase from the FY 2022 enacted level, as the President proposed in his request. The draft Senate CJS bill recommends \$20 million less than the House funding level, a reduction we believe will prevent the Bureau from pursuing important cost-saving methodologies for future statistics in a timely way.

The Census Bureau—the nation's largest statistical agency—is at an important crossroads. The agency is still resolving the outcome of the 2020 Census, while simultaneously pursuing groundbreaking innovations and preparing for the 2030 Census. As FY 2023 begins, Congress has a unique opportunity to initiate multi-year funding for the Bureau, providing the agency with resources that it needs not only to sustain and strengthen its mission, but also to recover from years of postponed enhancements and pursue numerous necessary operational improvements to consolidate and integrate legacy surveys and systems into a new, more nimble data collection and dissemination model. In particular, early decade

investments in the decennial census will allow the Bureau to sustain critical capabilities and, as a result, reduce the risk of additional funding needs in the peak years later in the decade.

The amount approved by the House Appropriations Committee would enable the Census Bureau to address these ambitious priorities as well as others outlined in the Administration's request. These proposals include completing the data collection phase of the 2022 Economic Census, expanding partnership programs to improve census stakeholder engagement, and pursuing a variety of necessary innovations to modernize several existing programs and surveys, such as the Current Population Survey and High Frequency Data Program.

In the event ongoing discussions lead to an increase in the CJS subcommittee's allocation, we urge negotiators to provide the Census Bureau with additional funds beyond the \$1.5 billion approved by the House Appropriations Committee. Stakeholders have identified several priorities that the Census Bureau could pursue, including:

- **ACS**--While the President's budget requested an additional \$10 million to improve how the ACS measures sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), census stakeholders and data users in the public, private, and non-profit sectors believe the ACS needs an immediate infusion of substantial funding to pursue other long overdue enhancements to the survey, such as increasing the survey's sample size, improving its non-response follow up operations, addressing steadily declining response rates, revising and streamlining content, and making other methodological and operational improvements. An [independent report](#) issued in 2022 by The Census Project urged an infusion of \$100 to \$300 million to protect the ACS from further data quality deficiencies and act on a long list of improvements to ensure the survey is accurately capturing data about the nation's increasingly complex population and households.
- **Population Estimates**--The significant operational disruption in the 2020 Census heightened concerns about differential undercounts of racial and ethnic populations, rural areas, and young children. The annual series of Population Estimates is a major opportunity to help mitigate the consequences of an inaccurate count, which is the basis for all subsequent annual estimates for the next decade. Census stakeholders have called for an additional \$10 million to support expanded opportunities for cities, counties, towns, tribal governments, and other localities to help ensure the accuracy of their annual estimates. Half of the additional resources (\$5 million) could restore the Population Estimates Branch to its 2003 funding and staffing levels and ensure that new data sources are part of the program's transformation. The remaining \$5 million could allow each state in the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates to have a dedicated full-time staff member who could assist all localities -- especially smaller ones -- within each respective state to participate in an expanded improvement program, without creating an unfunded mandate on local communities that need to remedy 2020 errors.

Thank you for considering the many challenges and opportunities facing the U.S. Census Bureau. We appreciate your consideration of our request and urge you to provide the Census Bureau with at least \$1.505 billion in the final FY 2023 CJS appropriations bill.

Sincerely,

cc The Honorable Patrick Leahy
The Honorable Richard Shelby
The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
The Honorable Kay Granger

National

Academic Pediatric Association
African American Health Alliance
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Anthropological Association
American Educational Research Association
American Pediatric Society
American Psychological Association
American Sociological Association
Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)
Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC
Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Population Centers
Association of Public Data Users (APDU)
Bangladesh Medical Association of North America
Claritas
Coalition on Human Needs
Common Cause
Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools and Programs for the Deaf
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council of Professional Associations on Federal Statistics
Fair Count
First Focus Campaign for Children
Free Government Information (FGI)
Insights Association
International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC)
League of Women Voters of the United States
Movement Advancement Project
NALEO Educational Fund
National Association for Business Economics
National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)
National Association of REALTORS®
National Association of Towns and Townships
National Coalition for Literacy
National Community Development Association
National League of Cities
National Multifamily Housing Council
Network Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
Nielsen
Partnership for America's Children

Pediatric Policy Council
 Population Association of America
 Prison Policy Initiative
 SHK Global Health
 SocialExplorer, Inc.
 Society for Pediatric Research
 The Gerontological Society of America
 The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights
 U.S. Conference of Mayors
 Urban and Regional Information Systems Association
 ZERO TO THREE

State-Level

A Better Chance A Better Community (ABC2)	NC
ABISA	MI
Advocacy House Services Inc.	NC
American Children's Campaign	FL
Association of Mexicans in North Carolina, Inc. (AMEXCAN)	NC
Bayard Rustin LGBTQ APRI	NC
Colorado Civic Engagement Roundtable	CO
DANA, Delaware Alliance for Nonprofit Advancement	DE
Equality California	CA
Every Texan	TX
Future Endeavors Life Program	NC
Housing Action Illinois	IL
Indivisible Hawaii	HI
MACS - Minnesotans for the American Community Survey	MN
Minnesota Council on Foundations	MN
NC Counts Coalition	NC
North Carolina Asian Americans Together (NCAAT)	NC
Northwest Harvest	WA
Oklahoma Institute for Child Advocacy	OK
Our Children Oregon	OR
Public Justice Center	MD
The Bingham Program	ME
U2U/Little Rock CDC	NC
VOICES for Alabama's Children	AL
Voters Not Politicians	MI

Local/City/Regional

Acción Hispana - Que Pasa	Winston Salem	NC
Allston Brighton Health Collaborative	Boston	MA
AltaMed Health Services	Los Angeles	CA
Bounty & Soul	Black Mountain	NC
Center for Community & Family Development	Onancock	VA
Centro Unido Latino Americano	Marion	NC
CityGate Dream Center	Burlington	NC
Cool Spring Missionary Baptist Church	Gaston	NC

Cumberland Healthnet	Fayetteville	NC
Detroit Urban League	Detroit	MI
Duplin Christian Outreach Ministries	Wallace	NC
Enlace	Charlotte	NC
Fayetteville Alumnae chapter, Delta sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.	Fayetteville	NC
Fuerza y unión Múltiple	Henderson	NC
Gang Free Inc.	Henderson	NC
HandsOn Northwest North Carolina	Winston Salem	NC
Jones County Community Hope, Inc.	Trenton	NC
Lila LGBTQ Inc.	Durham, Wake and Orange	NC
Lionel Lee Jr. Center for Wellness	Charlotte	NC
MACC Development	Detroit	MI
Nariah's Way Foundation	Biscoe	NC
NC FIELD, Inc.	Kinston	NC
Project Cover Inc	Salisbury	NC
Ruth Mott Foundation	Flint	MI
Scotland Youth Development	Laurinburg	NC
Southwestern Michigan Urban League	Battle Creek	MI
TFBU Foundation	Oak City	NC
The Data Center of Southeast Louisiana	New Orleans	LA
The Help Center NC	Kerr-Tar Region	NC
The International Institute of Metropolitan Detroit, Inc.	Detroit	MI
The PROACTIVE Project, Inc.	Grand Rapids	MI
The Wright's Center/BCVEC	Rocky Mount	NC
Triangle Empowerment Center, Inc.	Durham, Raleigh, Chapel Hill	NC
True Ridge	Hendersonville	NC
Unidxs WNC	Sylva	NC
West Central Initiative	Fergus Falls	MN