

THE CENSUS PROJECT

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Warning of a 2020 Census Repeat, Census Experts Release \$2.1 Billion Plan to Shore Up Delayed Investments for 2030 National Head Count

Washington, D.C. – With Census Day 2030 just four years away today, a coalition of data users, local planners, academics, business leaders and census experts warned of delayed planning, testing and investment that are doomed to repeat [the shortcomings of](#) the 2020 national headcount. The Census Project released [a detailed plan of investment](#) for \$2.1 billion for the U.S. Census Bureau in Fiscal Year 2027 in hopes of avoiding a second consecutive decennial that failed to improve upon its predecessor.

“The Census Project’s new analysis of approved funding for the decennial and American Community Survey (ACS), now coming on the heels of a radical change to the 2026 Test, has the planning dashboard flashing red all over for 2030,” Census Project co-director Mary Jo Mitchell said.

The Senate [warned Appropriators](#) just last year that “...[a]s learned in the run up to the 2020 Census, short-changing funding for testing at this point in the planning process introduces greater risk to a successful outcome.”

“When the Administration’s requests for 2020 Census planning in Fiscal Years 2012-2017 were not met, the Census Bureau had to cancel every test in a rural area and on American Indian reservations, including two of three dress rehearsal sites in 2018,” reminded Census Project co-director Howard Fienberg. Mitchell agreed, and said “...we are hitting our heads against the same wall of underinvestment and lack of preparation.”

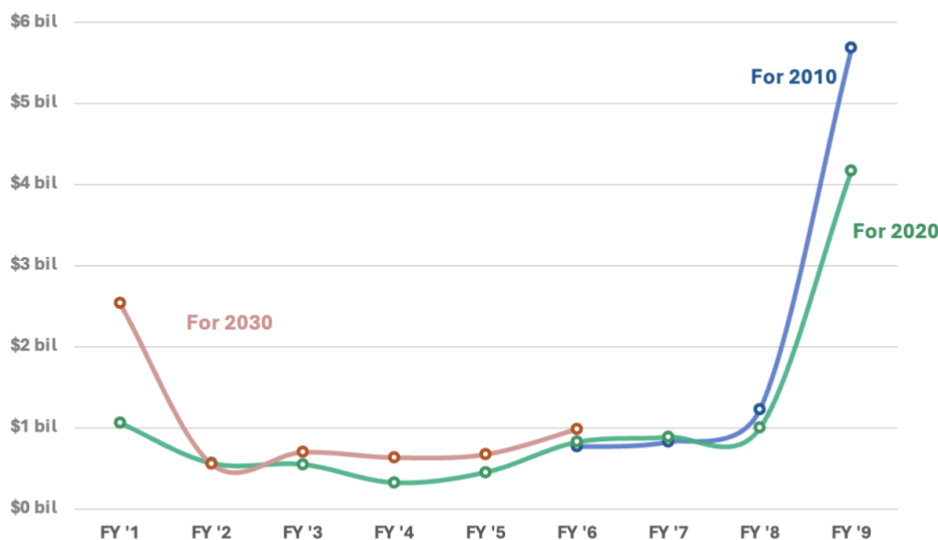
This year’s report is the most comprehensive and detailed funding plan compiled by stakeholders, and comes out in advance of the President’s Budget, setting the narrative table for the coming debate in Congress. It has specific language on preparations needed for 2030, including assessing the 2026 test, improvements to the Master Address File and the Local Update of Census Addresses, as well as an improved communications and outreach plan to promote public cooperation. The Census Project’s recommendation also addresses other census stakeholder

priorities, such as the revised Population Estimates program, and the availability of new data for the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP).

The experts' comprehensive report stressed, as demonstrated in the below graph of decennial and ACS funding: "...historical trends affirm that increased funding in year 7 of the decennial census' decade-long planning trajectory is essential for the U.S. Census Bureau to conduct necessary preparations for designing and implementing an inclusive, accurate, and cost-effective decennial census."

Decennial & ACS Funding Ramp Up Comparison

Inflation-adjusted funding level for each year in advance of the 2010, 2020 and 2030 Decennial



2030 Is Currently On Similar Underinvestment Path as 2020

Source: Final Enacted Amounts as Reported in U.S. Department of Commerce of U.S. Census Bureau Budget Documents. All years include ACS, which is a part of the Decennial, replacing the decennial long-form. <https://www.commerce.gov/about/budget-and-performance/past-budgets-performance-reports>

A range of fact sheets on these and other Census topics can be found on The Census Project website here: <https://thecensusproject.org/fact-sheets/>.

The Census Project (<https://thecensusproject.org>) is a broad-based coalition of national, state, and local organizations and companies that support an inclusive and accurate 2030 Census and American Community Survey (ACS) (the modern version of the census "long form"). Its 900+ member organizations and companies, representing the private, public, non-profit, and academic sectors, rely on objective data that the Census Bureau produces to inform evidence-based investment, policy, and planning decisions.