



Agency Priority Goal Action Plan

Conduct a Complete and Accurate 2020 Decennial Census

Goal Leader:

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Overview

Goal Statement

The U.S. Census Bureau will conduct a complete and accurate 2020 Decennial Census U.S. population count by executing for optimal self-response with a nationwide target of 60.5% in 2020, delivering apportionment counts to the President by December 31, 2020, and releasing counts for redistricting by April 1, 2021.

Challenge

- Planning for the Decennial Census requires balancing funding constraints and data accuracy against an official schedule fixed by statute. Recruiting and hiring of needed staff in an increasingly competitive environment with reduced levels of unemployment in the labor market were a challenge during much of the peak recruiting period.

Opportunity

- The Census Bureau is implementing four key innovation areas while putting security controls in place to protect the confidentiality of data. The innovations will:
 - Eliminate the need to physically canvass every census block.
 - Enable people to respond via multiple modes (internet, phone, and mail).
 - Improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the 2020 Census by utilizing federal and state information, and information from third parties.
 - Reduce staffing, infrastructure, and brick and mortar footprint through the increased use of technology compared to previous paper methods.

Opportunity

The four innovation areas for the 2020 Census are:

1. Reengineering Address Canvassing

- Adding new addresses to the Census Bureau's address frame using geographic information systems and satellite imagery instead of sending Census Bureau employees to walk and physically check 11 million census blocks.

2. Optimizing Self-Response

- Encouraging the population to respond to the 2020 Census using the internet, reducing the need for more expensive paper data capture.

3. Utilizing Administrative Records and Third-Party Data

- Reduce costs by using data the public has already provided to the government and data available from commercial sources to reduce visits to units that do not self-respond.

4. Reengineering Field Operations

- Using sophisticated operational control systems to deploy Census Bureau employees to nonresponding housing units and to track daily progress.

Department Leadership

DOC 2020 Oversight Committee

Monthly meeting to address major operational and budgetary issues that require Secretarial attention. These include, but are not limited to, changes to the Life Cycle Cost Estimate, developments related to major contracts and IT systems, regular reports on the program budget, interactions with Congress and Oversight, including the Office of Inspector General and the Government Accountability Office, and Program Management Reports on the scope, schedule, and risks for the program.

Chair: DOC Secretary

Members include the following from DOC: Deputy Secretary, Chief Financial Officer, Chief of Staff, Office of Acquisition Management, General Counsel, consultants, Chief Information Officer, Deputy Chief of Staff, Under Secretary for Economic Affairs, Office of Policy and Strategic Planning, and Deputy for Program Management; and from Census: Census Management Team.

DOC 2020 Senior Management

Weekly meeting covering the same areas as the Oversight Committee, but with a closer focus on the day-to-day operations of the program.

Chair: DOC Deputy Secretary

Members include many of the listed on DOC 2020 Oversight Committee and the following from the Census Bureau: Census Bureau Director, Deputy Director, Deputy Chief of Staff, Chief Information Officer, Chief Financial Officer, Associate Director for Decennial Census Programs, Associate Director for Communications, Chief of Procurement, Assistant Director for Decennial Census Programs for Systems and Contracts, Assistant Director for Decennial Census Programs for Operations and Schedule Management, and consultants.

Bureau Leadership

2020 Census Integration Group

The Census Integration Group (CIG) replaces the previous Portfolio Management Governing Board and acts as a key venue for decision-making.

Chair: Associate Director, Decennial Census Programs

- Assistant Directors, Decennial Census Programs
- Decennial Division Chiefs
- Decennial Assistant Division Chiefs
- National Processing Center Representation
- Information Technology Application Development and Services Representation
- Field Division Representation
- Population Division Representation
- Center for Adaptive Design Chief
- Integrated Project Teams Representation
- Communications Directorate Representation
- Research and Methodology Directorate Representation

2020 Census Executive Steering Committee

The 2020 Census Executive Steering Committee (ESC) provides enterprise-level governance of the 2020 Census. The 2020 Census ESC provides decision-making support to the Census Bureau Director and Deputy Director on 2020 Census program policies and initiatives.

Chair: Director, Census Bureau

- Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer
- Chief Financial Officer
- Chief Administrative Officer
- Associate Director, Decennial Census Programs
- Associate Director, Research and Methodology
- Associate Director, Field Operations
- Associate Director, Information Technology and Chief Information Officer
- Associate Director, Economic Programs
- Associate Director, Communications
- Associate Director, Demographic Programs

Bureau Leadership (continued)

COVID-19 Task Force

Formed on February 25, the Bureau's internal COVID-19 Task Force examines policy related issues impacting employee activities including telework, travel, and public events.

Chair: Chief Administrative Officer, Census Bureau

Goal Structure & Strategies

The 2020 Census is ramping up in FY2020 for peak operations and ramping down in FY2021 with dissemination.

The following are internal targets*:

- Maximize self-response data collection through three different modes: internet, phone, and mail
- Conduct Nonresponse Followup (NRFU)
- Release apportionment counts to the President of the United States
- Release PL 94-171 data to the states for redistricting
- Release census data products for use by the public

*In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Census Bureau has adjusted the schedule for some 2020 Census operations including NRFU and the release of data products from the original planned dates.

Goal Structure & Strategies (continued)

External factors that can impact the achievement of the internal annual targets

1. Public perception of ability to safeguard response data

IF a substantial segment of the public is not convinced that the Census Bureau can safeguard their response data against data breaches and unauthorized use, THEN response rates may be lower than projected, leading to an increase in cases for follow-up and cost increases.

Mitigation strategies include the following:

- Develop and implement a strategy to build and maintain the public's confidence in the Census Bureau's ability to keep their data safe.
- Follow the IT security-related mitigation strategies of 2020 Census Risk Cybersecurity Incidents.
- Continually monitor the public's confidence in data security in order to gauge their probable acceptance of the Census Bureau's methods for enumeration.

2. Cybersecurity incidents

IF a cybersecurity incident occurs to the systems supporting the 2020 Census, THEN additional technological efforts may be required to repair or replace the systems affected in order to maintain secure services and data.

Mitigation strategies include the following:

- Monitor system development efforts to ensure the proper Census Bureau IT security guidelines are followed during the system development phase.
- Research other Census Bureau programs, other government agencies, other countries, and the private sector to understand how they effectively mitigate cybersecurity incidents.
- Audit systems and check logs to help in detecting and tracing an outside infiltration.
- Perform threat and vulnerability analysis through testing and during production.
- Prepare for rapid response to address any detected cybersecurity incidents.
- Leverage data stewardship and information safeguarding policies and procedures of Census Bureau programs, other government agencies, other countries, and the private sector to understand how to mitigate cybersecurity incidents.

Goal Structure & Strategies (continued)

External factors that can impact the achievement of the internal annual targets (continued)

3. Natural disaster

IF a natural disaster occurs at or around the time of the 2020 Census, THEN it will be difficult to conduct NRFU in the impacted geographic areas due to the problems gaining access to the populations living in those areas.

Mitigation strategies include the following:

The current coronavirus (COVID-19) worldwide crisis means this risk has been realized. However, the probability remains that other natural disasters may also occur during the 2020 NRFU operation. COVID-19 related field delays now push NRFU enumeration into the middle of hurricane season (June 1 until November 30).

Outcome:

The state of Louisiana and our field staff completed NRFU operations achieving a total response rate over 99.0% even with the devastating effects of hurricanes Laura and Delta.

Summary of Progress – FY 20 Q4

As of September 30, 2020:

- The completion rate as of September 30, 2020 is 98.9 percent. This includes 66.6 percent completion through self-response and 32.3 completion percent through nonresponse followup and administrative record enumerations. The Census Bureau will continue to collect responses via internet, telephone, and nonresponse followup through October 15, 2020 and will process all paper questionnaires postmarked by October 15 and received by the Census Bureau no later than October 22, 2020.
- The deadlines for Self-Response and NRFU related operations, including Internet Self Response, Update Leave, Group Quarters Enumeration, Service Based Enumeration, Enumeration of people experiencing homelessness (Targeted Non-Sheltered Outdoor Locations), Enumeration at Transitory Locations, Census Questionnaire Assistance, receipt of mail returns, Mobile Questionnaire Assistance, and advertising were adjusted as part of the 2020 Census COVID-19 replan.

Challenges included:

- In light of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Census Bureau is adjusting 2020 Census operations in order to:
 - Protect the health and safety of the American public and Census Bureau employees,
 - Implement guidance from federal, state, and local authorities regarding COVID-19, and
 - Ensure a complete and accurate count of all communities.

Summary of Progress – FY 20 Q4 (continued)

Under the adjusted 2020 Census operational plan, information was provided daily to the Census Bureau from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), as well as state and local authorities; it was used to guide Census Bureau decisions on timing for when field activities would resume. As a result, selected field operations resumed on a phased schedule on a geographic basis. In-person activities, including enumeration, office work, and processing activities, incorporated the most current guidance from authorities to ensure the health and safety of staff and the public. (for more information see <https://2020census.gov/en/news-events/operational-adjustments-covid-19.html>).

The U.S. Census Bureau extended the window for field data collection and self-response to October 15, 2020 and is working hard to process the data in order to deliver complete and accurate state population counts as close as possible to the Dec. 31, 2020, statutory deadline.

Key Milestones

Conduct a complete and accurate 2020 Census of the U.S. population and housing

Complete the In-Field Address Canvassing data collection

The Census Bureau needs the address and physical location of each living quarter in the United States to conduct the census. During Address Canvassing, the Census Bureau verifies that its master address list and maps are accurate so the tabulation for all housing units, group quarters, and transitory locations is correct. A complete and accurate address list is the cornerstone of a successful census.

The Census Bureau has determined that while there will be a full canvassing of the nation, a full In-Field Address Canvassing of the nation is no longer necessary.

During In-Field Address Canvassing, field staff compare what they see on the ground to the existing census address list and either verify or correct the address and location information, adding addresses to the list as necessary.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Comments
Complete In-Field Address Canvassing data collection	FY 2020 Q1	Met	N/A	

Key Milestones

Conduct a complete and accurate 2020 Census of the U.S. population and housing (continued)

Deploy systems for FY 2020 operations

Systems Engineering and Integration (SEI) is an IT operation that manages the delivery of a System of Systems that meets the 2020 Census Program business and capability requirements. The SEI Operation provides oversight and structure around the deployment of systems as well as operations and maintenance processes.

Milestone Summary

Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date*	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Comments
Approve Operational Readiness Review (ORR) for Forms Printing and Distribution.	FY 2020 Q1	Met	N/A	
Approve ORR for Self-Response. Approve ORR for Group Quarters Enumeration/Service-Based Enumeration(SBE)/Enumeration at Transitory Locations (ETL). Approve ORR for Update Enumerate/Update Leave. Approve ORR for Remote Alaska. Approve ORR for NRFU. (D10.0)	FY 2020 Q2	Met	N/A	
Approve ORR for Response File Creation. (D12.2)	FY 2020 Q4	Met	N/A	

* Q3 & Q4 schedule delays occurred due to the operational adjustments made for COVID-19.

Key Milestones

Conduct self-response data collection

Maximize self-response data collection through three modes: internet, phone, and mail

Self-response reduces the need to conduct expensive in-person follow-up for the enumeration. It is anticipated that online self-response will be the primary mode of data collection.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date*	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Comments
Start: Conduct training for Census Questionnaire Assistance (CQA) Call Center staff (CSRs and supervisors)	FY 2020 Q1	Met	N/A	
Complete: Training for CQA Call Center staff (CSRs and supervisors) Start: CQA Inbound Operation Start: Self-response mailings Start: Internet Self-Response (ISR) data collection Start: Paper data capture	FY 2020 Q2	Met	N/A	

* Q3 & Q4 schedule occurred due to the operational adjustments made for COVID-19.

Key Milestones

Conduct self-response data collection (continued)

Maximize self-response data collection through three modes: internet, phone, and mail (continued)

Self-response reduces the need to conduct expensive in-person follow-up for the enumeration. It is anticipated that online self-response will be the primary mode of data collection.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date*	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Comments
Start: CQA Outbound Operation Complete: Self-response mailings	FY 2020 Q3	Met in Q4	The end of all self-response mailings was September 15.	Start: CQA Outbound Operation was completed Q3. Self-response mailings completed in Q4 due to the operational adjustments made for COVID-19.
Complete: CQA Outbound Operation Complete: CQA Inbound Operation Complete: ISR data collection Complete: Paper data capture Complete: Group Quarters Data Collection	FY 2020 Q4	Not Met	N/A	As a result of court orders, data collection operations will continue through October 15, 2020. The schedule for this activity was adjusted as part of the 2020 Census COVID-19 replan. While the 2020 Census is late relative to the original schedule, the 2020 Census is on track for the revised timeline consistent with the requested date changes.

* Q3 & Q4 schedule occurred due to the operational adjustments made for COVID-19.

Key Milestones

Conduct self-response data collection (continued)

Launch the integrated communications campaign

The integrated communications campaign involves communication and contact strategies that encourage the use of the internet as the primary response mode through a sequence of invitations and postcard mailings. In addition, Census Bureau enumerators will leave materials to encourage self-response.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date*	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Comments
Deliver final version of Media Plan 2.0	FY 2020 Q1	Met	N/A	
Deploy 2020 Census.gov release 3	FY 2020 Q2	Met	N/A	
Deliver Broadcast and Audio Tour Report	FY 2020 Q3	Not Met	Estimated completion date revised.	The schedule for this activity was adjusted as part of the 2020 Census COVID-19 replan. While the 2020 Census is late relative to the original schedule, the 2020 Census is on track for the revised timeline. The activity started 4/25/19 and originally planned to finish 5/29/20. The task was estimated to be completed on 10/30/20.
Post Buy Analyses Report and Presentation of Media Buys	FY 2020 Q4	Not Met	N/A	The activity is scheduled to start 12/8/20 and finish 12/14/20.

* Q3 & Q4 schedule occurred due to the operational adjustments made for COVID-19.

Key Milestones

Conduct a complete and accurate 2020 Decennial Census U.S. population count
(continued)

Conduct Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) data collection

Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) Operation determines or resolves housing unit status for addresses included in the NRFU workload such as those addresses that have not self-responded. The operation also enumerates housing units that are determined to have a housing status of occupied.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date*	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Comments
Complete: Finalize NRFU enumerator training materials	FY 2020 Q1	Met	N/A	
Start: Conduct census field supervisor (CFS) training for Early NRFU	FY 2020 Q2	Met	N/A	
Complete: Conduct census field supervisor (CFS) training for Early NRFU Start: Conduct NRFU	FY 2020 Q3	Met in Q4	Conduct NRFU Field Data Collection started 08/09/20.	Census field supervisor (CFS) training for Early NRFU was completed in Q3. Conduct NRFU Field Data Collection started in Q4 due to the operational adjustments made for COVID-19. While the 2020 Census is late relative to the original schedule, the 2020 Census is on track for the revised timeline.
Complete: Conduct NRFU	FY 2020 Q4	Not Met	N/A	Under the final schedule after the Supreme Court ruling, NRFU was scheduled to complete on 10/15/2020 and did complete on that date.

* Q3 & Q4 schedule occurred due to the operational adjustments made for COVID-19.

Key Milestones

Release data products on schedule

Deliver apportionment counts to the President of the United States

Deliver apportionment counts to the President by December 31, 2020.

Milestone Summary

Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date*	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Comments
Complete: Deliver Apportionment Counts to President The Director of the Census Bureau delivers to the Secretary of Commerce, who then delivers to the President by December 31, 2020	FY 2021 Q1			

Key Milestones

Release data products on schedule (continued)

Release PL 94-171 data to the states for redistricting

Public Law 94-171, enacted by Congress in December 1975, requires the Census Bureau to provide the states with the small area census data necessary for legislative redistricting. The law also requires that the Census Bureau deliver these data no later than one year from Census Day.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date*	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Comments
Complete: Perform Privacy Protection and create the Microdata Detail File (MDF)	FY 2021 Q2			
Complete: Deliver P.L. 94-171 Geographic Products to States "Successfully deliver all geographic support products (shapefiles, maps, equivalency files, block-to-block relationship files) to all states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico by February 1, 2021."	FY 2021 Q2			
Complete: Confirm Receipt of P.L. 94-171 Data Products from States "Successfully deliver and confirm receipt of the official P.L. 94-171 Redistricting Data Summary Files in each state, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico by both the majority and minority parties currently holding office in the legislature as well as by any established redistricting commissions."	FY 2021 Q2			

*Potential schedule delays are expected due to the operational adjustments made for Covid-19

Key Milestones

Release data products on schedule (continued)

Release census data products for use by the public

Tabulate and disseminate selected 2020 Census data products for the 50 states, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the four U.S. Island Areas. These data are used by policymakers, researchers, academia, businesses, government and nongovernmental organizations, journalists, and the general public to learn more about their communities.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestone	Milestone Due Date*	Milestone Status	Change from last quarter	Comments
Produce and Release Demographic and Housing Characteristics (DHC)	FY 2021 Q4			
Produce and Release Demographic Profiles	FY 2021 Q4			
Produce and Release Population and Housing Counts - Island Area Census	FY 2021 Q4			

* Q4 schedule delays are expected due to the operational adjustments made for COVID-19.

Data Accuracy and Reliability

The 2020 Census program tracks milestone data with the 2020 Census Integrated Master Schedule. Publication dates are validated against dates of posting on the 2020 Census website. The Census Bureau Office of Information Security (OIS) reviews the cybersecurity reporting for compliance with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Risk Framework, and Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) requirements. Plans of Action and Milestones for the Authorization to Operate are reported to the Department of Commerce Chief Information Officer. Where necessary, observation of documents or related materials will verify data recorded in the Integrated Master Schedule.

All evaluation results and program reports are thoroughly reviewed and approved by the Associate Director for Decennial Census Programs and reported up through the governance structure described earlier. The evaluation results are indexed and fact-checked to ensure accuracy.

Additional Information

Contributing Programs

Organizations:

- The Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Department of Interior, Department of Justice, Department of Homeland Security, Department of State, United States Postal Service, Internal Revenue Service, Office of Personnel Management, Social Security Administration, and the Selective Service System provide key administrative records.
- The National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency provides current, high-resolution imagery at no cost for Interactive Review during In-Office Address Canvassing.
- The National Academy of Sciences; Census Scientific Advisory Committee; and the National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations contribute to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of Decennial Census Programs.
- Tribal, state, and local governments participate in our geographic partnership programs to ensure the accuracy of the MAF/TIGER System - the foundation of the decennial census.

Additional Information

Contributing Programs (continued)

Program Activities:

- Demographic Programs Directorate: Provides relevant and accurate information on the size, distribution, and characteristics of the nation's population and housing. Also oversees the planning, collection, processing, and distribution of population and housing data obtained from the 2020 Census.
- Research and Methodology Directorate: Performs research into innovative methods and products, and establishes and refines methodologies in support of collaborative research and methodologies supporting the 2020 Census. Assures that the Census Bureau can effectively disseminate the maximum amount of high-quality data about the nation's people, while fully meeting the Census Bureau's legal and ethical obligation to protect the confidentiality of respondents and the information they provide.
- Field Directorate: Primary area responsible for coordinating and implementing 2020 Census data collection activities. Manages the recruiting, hiring, training, and production activities of the 300,000+ field staff needed to implement the 2020 Census. Manages field operations out of six regional census centers and 248 area census offices. At the National Processing Center, handles the logistics for materials supporting the 2020 Census field operations and manages the paper data capture of all paper returns in two data capture centers.
- Communications Directorate: Provides extensive communications support to the 2020 Census products and documentation, the public, and stakeholders.

Additional Information

Contributing Programs (continued)

Regulations:

- Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution mandates that a census be conducted and used to reapportion representatives in Congress among the states every 10 years.
- The Census Bureau is bound by Title 13 of the United States Code. These laws provide authority for our agency work, and strong protections for the information collected from individuals and businesses.
- The Census Bureau is authorized to acquire or purchase records from states and third party entities under Title 13 United States Code (U.S.C.), Section 6. The Privacy Act of 1974 explicitly permits federal agencies to disclose personally identifiable information to the Census Bureau if for statistical uses under Title 13, United States Code. Additionally, the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act (CIPSEA) and other federal confidentially statutes permit agencies to share data with the Census Bureau under strict, secure conditions. State laws often mirror these federal statutes.
- The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) proposes and implements regulations concerning the use of IRS administrative records.

Additional Information

Contributing Programs (continued)

Policies:

- The Data Stewardship Executive Policy Committee (DSEP) serves as the Census Bureau's focal point for policy issues related to respondent privacy, security, data confidentiality, data management, record linkage, and administrative data. The DSEP membership includes the Deputy Director and all Associate Directors.
- The Census Bureau 2020 Policy Group advises on 2020 Census activities that are impacted by policy.

Other Federal Activities:

- The Office of Management and Budget provides race and ethnicity guidance and reviews the progress of the 2020 Census.

Additional Information

Stakeholder / Congressional Consultations

Effective communications with external and internal stakeholders, such as the National Academy of Sciences, Department of Commerce Office of Inspector General, and the Government Accountability Office are important. The Census Bureau conducts semiannual meetings with the Census Scientific Advisory Committee and the National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations. The Census Scientific Advisory Committee (CSAC) addresses emerging census challenges, including adaptive design, cyberinfrastructure, demographic, economic and statistical research, technical and operational priorities. The National Advisory Committee (NAC) considers topics such as hard to reach populations, race and ethnicity, language, aging populations, American Indian and Alaska Native tribal considerations, new immigrant populations, populations affected by natural disasters, highly mobile and migrant populations, complex households, rural populations, and population segments with limited access to technology. The committee also advises on data privacy and confidentiality, among other issues.

The Census Bureau meets quarterly with representatives from congressional appropriation committees in order to brief them on the progress of the 2020 Census. Census staff meet upon request with representatives of oversight committees. Feedback from congressional stakeholders is considered in the design of the 2020 Census and operational planning.

We work with partners in addition to internal and external stakeholders. Partners educate people about the importance of the census, motivate them to return their questionnaires, and encourage cooperation with enumerators. Census has maintained many of the 2010 Census relationships for 2020. In order to optimize self-response, the Census Bureau builds relationships with state, local, and tribal governments; nongovernmental organizations at the national and local levels; national companies; and schools. The objectives are to:

- Increase self-response.
- Use trusted voices to make census messages relevant at the local level.
- Increase awareness among the general public.
- Increase partnership engagement at the local level through new or improved programs.