



The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President-Elect
1401 Constitution Ave NW
Washington, DC 20230

December 13, 2020

RE: Recommendations for the Census Bureau in your new Administration

Dear President-Elect Biden,

The Insights Association (IA), the leading nonprofit association representing the marketing research and data analytics industry, congratulates you on your electoral victory and looks forward to working with you the next four years. During this key transition period, IA urges you to focus on challenges facing the Census Bureau so that your new Administration may hit the ground running.

IA's members include both marketing research and data analytics companies and organizations, as well as the research and analytics professionals and departments inside of non-research companies and organizations. They are the world's leading producers of intelligence, analytics and insights defining the needs, attitudes and behaviors of consumers, organizations, employees, students and citizens. With that essential understanding, leaders can make intelligent decisions and deploy strategies and tactics to build trust, inspire innovation, realize the full potential of individuals and teams, and successfully create and promote products, services and ideas.

Data from the once-a-decade census of the American population, and the rolling American Community Survey (ACS) (formerly known as the Census long form), don't just underpin American democracy (through apportionment and redistricting) and guide Federal spending (the geographic distribution of more than \$1.5 trillion a year), they form the backbone of data-driven decision making in the private sector. This data helps U.S. businesses promote economic development, identify and serve customers, and create jobs.¹

For the insights industry, no U.S. research study can produce statistically representative samples of the U.S. population, or segments thereof, without the most accurate census data. Even the most accurate and essential Federal government surveys are built on this data.

IA urges you to take the following five steps:

¹ For much more extensive detail about the importance of census data to American private business, see IA's testimony at a Joint Economic Committee hearing on May 22, 2019. <https://www.insightsassociation.org/article/determining-fate-american-business-next-decade-insights-association-testifies-congress>

1. Extend the 2020 Census data reporting deadlines

To give the Census Bureau more time to complete the essential data processing, review and analysis stage of the 2020 Census, delayed and shortened by COVID-19, IA recommends that your Administration approve a one-time postponement of statutory deadlines for delivery of apportionment and redistricting data (13 USC § 141). You and your Administration should also urgently support bipartisan legislation (S. 4571 and H.R. 8250, the 2020 Census Deadline Extension Act) to extend those deadlines in statute.

2. Utilize independent metrics to evaluate 2020 Census data

Your Administration should direct the Commerce Department Inspector General to use metrics identified in the independently-developed 2020 Census Indicators Report² to determine the quality, accuracy, and coverage of the 2020 Census.

3. Release a Fiscal Year 2022 budget that strengthens the core missions of the Census Bureau

The new Biden Administration needs to provide robust investment for the Census Bureau in FY22 to thoroughly evaluate and learn from the 2020 Census experience, expand the ACS sample size to improve its coverage and accuracy, and begin the research and development to ramp up the 2030 Census (a decade-long process).

4. Expand business community involvement in census planning and activities

While IA supports the existing advisory committees at the Census Bureau, like the Census Scientific Advisory Committee, the National Advisory Committee on Racial, Ethnic, and Other Populations, and the ACS Data Users Working Group, the Census Bureau needs greater involvement from the U.S. business community from which it can learn and improve. IA recommends the establishment of a new Census Business Advisory Committee, with members appointed by the Census Bureau Director, to provide expertise and input from the business community to address Census Bureau program needs and objectives. The business community's concerns, priorities, and expertise may differ greatly from that of the scientific and activist communities, and while most businesses rely upon census data, a relative few are direct data users.

5. Nominate the best personnel to head the Commerce Department and the Census Bureau

IA urges you to nominate a qualified Secretary of Commerce who is committed to ensuring the accuracy, reliability and availability of census data and the integrity and scientific independence of the Census Bureau.

Further, when it comes time to nominate a new Census Bureau Director (the current Director's term expires at the end of 2021), we urge the Biden Administration to not only follow the Presidential Appointment Efficiency and Streamlining Act of 2011, which requires a new director to "have a demonstrated ability in managing large organizations and experience in the collection, analysis, and use of statistical data," but to consider candidates who additionally have a keen understanding of and experience in logistics, technology and planning. As demonstrated in the COVID-19 crisis, every decennial census headcount faces its own challenges, but some can force the Bureau to completely

² "2020 Census Quality Indicators: A Report from the American Statistical Association." October 2020. <https://www.amstat.org/asa/files/pdfs/POL-2020CensusQualityIndicators.pdf>

rewrite its mobilization playbook. We expect advancements in and planning for technology and administrative data to play an even bigger role in the 2030 Census.

The Insights Association looks forward to talking with you and your staff about census priorities and providing further information.

Sincerely,



Howard Fienberg
VP Advocacy
Insights Association