



Funding the Census Bureau: The 2020 Census and American Community Survey (ACS)

- The **FY18** omnibus funding law provided \$2.814 billion for the Census Bureau -- \$1.344 billion more than FY17.
- (2020 Census preparation used most or all of \$1 billion in carryover funding from FY18 during the gov't shutdown)
- **The White House FY19 budget** proposed \$3.8 billion for the Census Bureau, \$3.55 billion of which would go to Periodic Census and Programs (PCP), mostly for the 2020 Census. It also reduced ACS funding by \$10 million (from \$221.4 million in the FY17 law to \$211.4 million in the FY19 budget proposal).
- The **Senate Appropriations Committee** approved \$3.821 billion in the CJS appropriations bill on June 14, 2018.
- The **House** approved a comparable figure in their most recent votes in January 2019.

Decennial Census

- Commerce Secretary Ross' audit expects the 2020 Census to cost at least \$15.6 billion over the decade.
- The FY20 Census Bureau budget likely needs to be at least \$8 billion, mostly to field the decennial headcount.
- We need to count some 334 million people here and overseas by April 1, 2020; this can't be delayed or re-run.
- Due to funding shortfalls, the Bureau had to cancel 2017 tests of special counting procedures for tribal lands and rural/remote areas, in the Dakotas, WA and Puerto Rico. The same happened for the 2018 end-to-end readiness test, supposed to be of 700,000 varied and targeted households in WI, WA and WV, but reduced to only Providence, RI.

The American Community Survey (ACS)

- Funding for the ACS (the rolling survey that replaced the old Census long form, sent to 3.5 million addresses every year) needs to allow maintenance of a valid sample size. The Bureau already had to eliminate the ACS' 3-year estimates; if funding shortfalls sacrifice the 5-year estimates, the ACS can't provide reliable data for nearly half of U.S. counties/towns.
- The government shutdown stopped ACS data collection, which could hurt the quality/usefulness of data for both 2018 and 2019. Furthermore, analysis of 2018 ACS data was put on hold, which could delay release of these data in the fall.
- Flawed ACS data in small rural communities (frequently among the hardest count) hurts those communities' share of federal funding programs. ACS data drives the allocation of more than \$600 billion a year a year in federal assistance.
- The ACS is America's only source for comparable (geographically), consistent (across time), timely (annual), and high-quality demographic/socio-economic data for all communities, down to the neighborhood and census tract levels.

Why full funding matters

- The accuracy of the 2020 Census is threatened by several years of funding shortfalls, delayed IT and cybersecurity upgrades, and reduced field testing (particularly in hard-to-count rural areas, and with Spanish-speaking populations).
- Adequate funding is needed for: more local/state Partnership staff for outreach to the hard-to-count (the Bureau plans to hire 1500, but they likely need at least 2000); hiring enumerators; setting up regional Area offices and questionnaire assistance centers; and an expanded advertising and promotion campaign (for more targeted and assuaging advertising).
- Failure to fund programs now will likely result, soon enough, in massive emergency appropriations. Extra funding is needed to reduce the biggest 2020 Census cost: door-to-door non-response follow-up.

The Insights Association's position: Fully fund the Census Bureau at least at the Senate Appropriations Committee level

- Accurate Census data underpin every statistically representative survey and study in the U.S., including other government surveys. The trickle-down impact of an inaccurate 2020 Census would be severe -- and last the whole decade.
- The FY19 White House request is \$460 million below Secretary Ross' revised cost estimate (\$4.26 billion) and \$933 million short of what the Census Project contends we need (\$4.735 billion).
- Unlike most federal programs, the ACS and decennial Census are Constitutionally-required (Article I, sec. 2, clause 3).
- Those at risk of an undercount include: rural, American Indian and Alaska native communities; immigrant households (legal and illegal); urban minority neighborhoods; young children; and communities hit hard by the opioid crisis.
- We oppose attempts to sacrifice the ACS and the Economic Census to fund the 2020 head count.
- We oppose attempts to reduce 2020 funding, or otherwise impede an accurate and inclusive 2020 Census.