# Message From the Director

# Vision, Mission, Values, and Guiding Principles

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The U.S. Census Bureau is fortunate among federal agencies to draw the source of its mission directly from the words of the U.S. Constitution. Article I, Section II of the Constitution mandates that a census be taken every 10 years so that “representatives and direct Taxes shall be apportioned among the several States which may be included within this Union, according to their respective numbers....” These words give life and fulfill the essential promise of the Constitution: “we the people....”

The mission of the Census Bureau to serve as the nation’s leading source of quality data about the nation’s people and economy is a fundamental contribution to our nation’s knowledge and the ability of the thousands of governments, businesses, and communities to make important decisions and steer the course of the future. The U.S. Census Bureau does much more than conduct the counts to determine the number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives for each state. We inform decision-making across the private, academic, and public sectors and enable economic growth. As the world becomes increasingly complex, we are uniquely positioned to help lead statistical innovation to meet the nation’s twenty-first century challenges. We are building on our history of leveraging the latest technologies and developing new practices to gather, protect, analyze, and disseminate more valuable data, more efficiently.

Through the Census Bureau’s more than 100 surveys, censuses, and other statistical programs, we continually collect, process, analyze, and distribute data as information products to a diversity of stakeholders. Today more than ever, people, businesses, and institutions need the type of quality data we provide. The amount of data and number of data sources available are rapidly expanding—as are users’ analytical capabilities and expectations. Given our history and current capabilities, we are ready to help lead the next big wave of statistical innovation and deliver the most value to our nation’s modern data users.

We owe it to ourselves and to our nation to continue making significant contributions to our society. This is why we are committing to four forward-thinking goals in this strategic plan, specifically, Data Innovation, Exceptional Customer Experience, Organizational Excellence, and Talent Management. Each of these goals is critical to moving forward, and each of us play a role in helping the Census Bureau fulfill its mission while learning to harness new technology and ways of working, collaborating, and innovating to explore new statistical frontiers.

Our pioneering innovation is evident as we roll out the fully electronic 2017 Economic Census, as well as the redesigned 2020 Census, based on four key innovation areas: (1) Address Canvassing, (2) Internet Self-Response, (3) Administrative Records, and (4) Realigned Field Operations. It is also evident across the Census Bureau in the innovative use of administrative records, Big Data, updated survey content, and user-centered design. These allow us to build new statistical products to inform a public that wants high quality data more than ever.

We must build on these efforts to meet the familiar challenges facing the Census Bureau and the rest of the federal statistical system. These include declining survey response rates, the proliferation of alternative unofficial statistical products, the tension between data quality and confidentiality protections, and a challenging fiscal environment. Our success also critically depends on continued and improved collaboration with our many and varied stakeholders and partners. I’m confident that we are on the path to creating the Census Bureau of the twenty-first century and excited to be taking it with you.

Thank you,

Dr. Ron Jarmin,
Performing the Non-Exclusive Functions and Duties of the Director of the U.S. Census Bureau
Vision, Mission, Values, and Guiding Principles

U.S. Census Bureau Vision
To be the trusted source for timely and relevant statistical information, and the leader in data-driven innovation.

U.S. Census Bureau Mission
To serve as the nation’s leading provider of quality data about its people and economy.

U.S. Census Bureau Values and Guiding Principles

- Move Forward as Innovation Pioneers
- Be Transparent and Accountable to Our Stakeholders
- Operate With Integrity
- Respect Our Workforce, Respondents, and Customers
Summary of Strategic Goals

**Goal 1: Data Innovation**
Implement cutting-edge statistical methods, sources, and products to anticipate a changing environment.

**Goal 2: Exceptional Customer Experience**
Provide an exceptional end-to-end customer experience to our stakeholders, respondents, data users, and the public.

**Goal 3: Organizational Excellence**
Operate as a strategic, integrated, efficient organization, built on sound management practices and scientific principles.

**Goal 4: Talent Management**
Foster a diverse workforce to meet current and emerging needs.
The U.S. Census Bureau operates under Title 13 of the United States Code. We honor privacy, protect confidentiality, share our expertise globally, and conduct our work openly.

The Census Bureau specializes in the collection, analysis, and dissemination of data, as well as many additional functions. See our Web site at www.census.gov for more information on the multitude of data-related work performed at the Census Bureau. A few examples of our work are:

**Data Collection**—We conduct three primary censuses: the decennial census every 10 years, the economic census every 5 years, and the Census of Governments every 5 years. Additionally, we conduct over 100 different surveys on a monthly, quarterly, or yearly basis.

**Data Analysis**—We analyze the data we collect, including editing, imputation, and estimation, as appropriate. We also review the data for disclosure concerns to make sure we are always maintaining confidentiality.

**Data Dissemination**—We provide data to our stakeholders in a multitude of ways. Our current data tools and apps are located at https://census.gov/data/data-tools.html. We are working toward providing one-stop access to multiple tools and data at https://data.census.gov (in preview mode). Finally, developers can go to www.census.gov/developers/ for access to datasets via an Application Programming Interface (or API).

**Highlighted Additional Functions**

**Research**—We engage in a range of scientific and statistical activities. We actively research survey and questionnaire design, as well as different modes of data collection, processing, and dissemination.

**Geography**—We maintain a nationwide geographic database that includes boundary information for legal, statistical, and administrative areas. Additionally, we track physical features such as streets and rivers for geographic area delineation. We also maintain the master address file to support censuses and surveys in partnership with the U.S. Postal Service and other data providers.

**International Statistics**—We produce international demographic data, estimates, projections, and reports. We also provide technical advisory services for foreign governments.
Goals, Objectives, Outcomes, and Strategies
Goal 1—Data Innovation

Implement cutting-edge statistical methods, sources, and products to anticipate a changing environment.
The Census Bureau’s periodic surveys and censuses meet constitutional and legislative mandates. More than 30 million U.S. business enterprises; 325 million Americans; and 90,000 plus tribal, state, and local governments rely on our data to make informed decisions. These data provide the economic and social benchmarks for key indices that measure our economic health, such as the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Ongoing household surveys provide current information on a wide variety of topics such as income, poverty, health insurance coverage, housing, and other characteristics of our society. Population estimates and information from the American Community Survey are used annually for allocating over $675 billion in federal funding to states and localities.

Ongoing economic data collections help entrepreneurs and businesses identify market opportunities and inform decision-makers and policymakers across sectors and at all levels of government. Economic data are essential to the preparation of key measures of economic activity, including GDP estimates and benchmark input-output accounts, produced by the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA), as well as other widely disseminated information released regularly by the Census Bureau and other federal statistical agencies.

Through the Census Bureau’s surveys, censuses, and other statistical programs, we continually collect, process, analyze, and distribute data as information products to a wide array of stakeholders. The products must be timely and at an appropriate level of quality and detail to inform sound decision-making by data consumers, whether businesses, citizens, or policymakers.

The Census Bureau will continue to explore use of new business processes, methodologies, and technologies, aiming for faster, better collections and processing to output quality data with a greater speed and velocity. These methodologies and technologies show promise in improving and enhancing the measures of our economy and population without imposing additional respondent burden. To expedite and streamline data processing, we will commit to generalized solutions, as well as innovative tools and data sources.

**Objective 1.1**

Innovate business processes for producing high-quality statistical benchmarks, measures, and geographic information.

The Census Bureau needs to take advantage of new survey lifecycle models using alternative data sources and methods. To effectively take advantage of new sources and methods, we need new business processes so that we can produce quality data at a rate faster than ever before. Innovative processes will be considered which lead to more efficient operations.

**Outcomes for Objective 1.1:**

1. Census Bureau data products meet or exceed targets for quality, cost, and delivery schedule.

2. Data product consumers recognize Census Bureau statistical and geographic products as providing valuable, accurate, consistent, useful, and timely data.

3. Business processes are expanded to think beyond the traditional survey lifecycle toward a broader information lifecycle model using both survey data and administrative records.
Objective 1.2
Use new data sources and collection techniques to reduce respondent burden and increase sample representation, while maintaining confidentiality and privacy.

The Census Bureau is committed to continually improving data collection and data products, while exploring ways to reduce respondent burden. Some of the methods include: using alternate data sources for survey supplementation; moving toward 100 percent Internet response, where possible; and enhancing data products based on emerging customer needs. The Census Bureau is also committed to disclosure-protection, and will develop and implement modernized disclosure-protection policies, procedures, and systems to support rigorous privacy protections for data providers, while also ensuring timely, efficient, and high-quality dissemination of our most important data products.

Outcomes for Objective 1.2:
1. Products are created using new data sources, with no additional respondent burden.
2. Respondents report a decrease in burden from responding to Census Bureau data requests.
3. Data collections via surveys or censuses improve digital response rates annually.
4. Data providers willingly provide data to the Census Bureau, and indicate trust that the Census Bureau will protect their data from disclosure.

Objective 1.3
Use innovative tools and methods to increase accessibility, efficiency, and effectiveness of Census Bureau data throughout the organization.

The Census Bureau has a multitude of data housed in different locations, with multiple data collections asking similar questions. To minimize redundancy, and to allow for reuse of existing data, we are moving toward an enterprise data management platform.

Outcomes for Objective 1.3:
1. Data are consolidated and easily located within the Census Bureau.
2. Data are collected once from respondents and used for multiple data products.
3. Business processes for surveys and/or products include a step to review existing data available before any new data collection.

Objective 1.4
Learn from the international statistical and geographic communities and share our expertise globally.

The Census Bureau will collaborate with the international statistical and geographic communities to share our expertise and enhance our programs with shared best practices and innovations. We will also incorporate lessons learned and best practices gained from collaboration with other national statistical offices and international organizations to align Census Bureau programs with the most current international methodological and technological innovations.

Outcome for Objective 1.4:
Census Bureau programs, processes, and products are shared with and benefit from methodological and technical advances of the global statistical and geographic communities.
Goal 2—Exceptional Customer Experience

Provide an exceptional end-to-end customer experience to our stakeholders, respondents, data users, and the public.
The Census Bureau regularly interacts with people who rely on statistical information. Therefore, delivering relevant, high-quality products to the nation, and providing an array of statistical services to various stakeholders—ranging from private, public, and civil society sectors to Congress—is critical to our success. Respondents to censuses and surveys are in many ways our most important customers, and many of them become our best advocates as they learn how Census Bureau data are used. The Census Bureau’s respondent advocates were created specifically to convey that message and address respondents’ concerns. Other communications include many organizations and groups, such as federal advisory committees, expert panels from the National Academy of Sciences, academic researchers, members of Congress, state data centers, census information centers, and data user groups on a global basis. These data users and other stakeholders have different levels of experience with statistical information. Therefore, it is imperative that the Census Bureau makes its products easily accessible, understandable, and available in formats that help people answer their questions.

Census Bureau data are extremely important for our nation’s people, businesses, and economy. Data products disseminated by the Census Bureau are empowering businesses and communities to make evidence-based decisions. Combining our data with data such as the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration’s (NOAA) satellite and weather data are helping individual Americans, businesses, and communities prepare for and respond to natural and man-made disasters. The Census Business Builder tool offers small business owners selected Census Bureau and other statistics to guide their research for opening or expanding their business. OnTheMap for Emergency Management provides free public Web applications, allowing emergency preparedness/disaster recovery analysts easy access to economic and demographic summaries in near real time.

Additionally, the Census Bureau has numerous reimbursable customers, primarily other federal agencies, who pay the Census Bureau to collect information on their behalf. This is a cost-effective shared service for the government, rather than each agency developing a separate capability for conducting large-scale scientific surveys.

**Objective 2.1**
**Increase effectiveness of stakeholder engagement.**

The Census Bureau is taking advantage of technology and information growth to expand and strengthen agency branding and stakeholder outreach.

**Outcome for Objective 2.1**
Stakeholders understand and support the Census Bureau’s mission and products, and continue to respond to censuses and surveys or support our efforts to boost response.

**Objective 2.2**
**Increase visibility and utility of Census Bureau products and services.**

The Census Bureau exists to deliver high-quality, relevant, and usable demographic and economic products to the nation. The Census Bureau’s value to the nation comes from people using its products to make well-informed decisions, and our goal is to help users make good choices about when and how to use products. However, users’ experience with our products varies substantially. Not all users know, for example, how to interpret different types of uncertainty measures, or how uncertainties might influence interpretation of Census Bureau products and ultimately their policy or economic decisions. The Census Bureau will continue efforts to explore how alternative data sources can enhance the usefulness of our core statistical products.
The Census Bureau will also continue to expand our efforts to educate the public and increase statistical literacy through our Statistics in Schools and partnership programs, as well as support efforts such as television and radio broadcasting of educational statistical programs.

**Outcomes for Objective 2.2:**
1. Improve the public's ability to search, visualize, and interface with statistical and geographic information.
2. Users of statistical and geographic products express greater confidence and sophistication in using them to support decision-making.

**Objective 2.3**
**Increase collaboration with reimbursable customers.**

The Census Bureau provides a wide array of reimbursable services, including conducting demographic and economic surveys for other federal agencies. By providing statistical services to other agencies, the Census Bureau helps the federal government economize resources rather than investing in multiple robust and redundant statistical program infrastructures. Furthermore, providing reimbursable services year-round helps the Census Bureau sustain the infrastructure needed for the complex, but infrequent, quinquennial and decennial censuses. It is important to work together to ensure that we are able to meet agencies’ statistical information and service needs, while running our programs efficiently and effectively.

**Outcomes for Objective 2.3:**
1. The Census Bureau increases its responsiveness to the needs of reimbursable customers, as measured by increases over the baseline in responding to customer inquiries about survey, analytical, and technical assistance program management (e.g., processes, reporting, cost estimation, and transparency).

**Objective 2.4**
**Improve respondent experience while protecting respondent data.**

Respondents to censuses and surveys are in many ways our most important customers, and the Census Bureau is committed to finding ways to continually improve and enhance our respondents’ experiences. One critical component to maintaining and improving the respondent experience is protecting respondent data. Without data protection, response rates and data quality would decline.

**Outcomes for Objective 2.4:**
1. Respondents provide data to the Census Bureau, and trust that the Census Bureau will protect their data from disclosure.
2. Respondents understand the importance of participating in statistical and geographic data collection and do not feel unreasonably burdened.
Objective 2.5
Develop and implement concrete improvements in technical and administrative procedures for efficient and secure access to and use of multiple data sources, in line with recommendations from the Commission on Evidence-based Policymaking (CEP).

As the Census Bureau has increased its use of multiple data sources (including traditional surveys, as well as administrative and commercial records), it has become very important to expand our capabilities in a range of technical and administrative areas. These areas include methodological and technological work to ensure the timely and efficient use of data in ways that ensure production and dissemination of statistical information that is of the highest quality and that protect respondent confidentiality; and provide clear communication with a range of stakeholders about confidentiality protection and cost-effectiveness.

Outcome for Objective 2.5:
The Census Bureau enhances both the technical and administrative features of its work with access to and use of multiple data sources, including surveys, administrative records, and other third-party data sources. This enhancement includes rigorous development and use of methodology and technology for record linkage, quality assessment and enhancement, data management, and modern disclosure-limitation and security procedures; efficient and timely management of related administrative processes; and strong multiway communication with applicable stakeholders.
Goal 3—Organizational Excellence

Operate as a strategic, integrated, efficient organization, built on sound management practices and scientific principles.
The Census Bureau collects data on a regular basis for many recurring surveys and censuses, which are used to produce hundreds of data products describing the nation’s demographic and economic landscape. The Census Bureau has been undergoing business transformations for both its mission and mission-enabling support functions. Recurring transformation themes include generalizing solutions, consolidating similar systems and functions, leveraging all available data, and moving toward enterprise services. Achieving the reform/transformation objectives requires a move from a traditional program-based organizational structure to a more functionally-based one. Additionally, becoming a functionally-based organization requires strengthening the Census Bureau’s strategic and program management capabilities, based on best practices circulated by organizations such as the Government Accountability Office and the National Association of Public Administrators. These best practices include ensuring that strong internal controls are integrated into all of our business support functions.

Objective 3.1
Optimize delivery of products and services.

In order to optimize delivery of products and services and continuously fulfill the mission of the Census Bureau, we will transform how we plan and budget, govern, and deliver/support our products and services. Through effective planning, streamlined governance, and a focus on efficient processes, we will be able to rapidly deliver the highest value products and services. We will accomplish this through measuring and adjusting plans as we learn, allowing for a more efficient delivery of next-generation technology, products, and services that consistently meets customer expectations.

Outcome for Objective 3.1:
Customer satisfaction increases from the baseline for product and service costs, quality, and timeliness as measured by a customer satisfaction survey.

Objective 3.2
Mature, expand, and enforce enterprise-level strategic and program management processes and tools to guide data-driven decision-making.

Over the past 10 years, Census Bureau senior management has established program management-related offices to guide the implementation of mission-critical capabilities—including portfolio management, performance management, risk management, program and project management, and formalized cost estimation. Excellent work and assistance are being provided by staff, including strategic planning, employee time-on-task reporting in Project Server through either the Survey Lifecycle/Mission Enabling Support framework or through a project Work Breakdown Structure, and expanding cost estimation practices.

However, we can further mature capabilities by: (1) increasing their integration, (2) formalizing knowledge management and transfer, and (3) executing capabilities consistently at the enterprise-level. Execution of these capabilities is facilitated through more formal program evaluations and consistent approaches to program management—a clear and embraced governance process—and continuous improvement governance feedback loops.
Outcomes for Objective 3.2:
1. Processes are defined, documented, repeatable, integrated, and managed.
2. Processes are scalable and customizable.
3. Processes help not only the enterprise but also the directorates and programs meet their strategic and operational goals and objectives, as measured by a roll up of program evaluations from the directorates to the enterprise.

Objective 3.3
Empower and engage employees for a more nimble and effective organization.

Outcomes for Objective 3.3:
1. Employee awareness and preparedness for implementing and sustaining change is increased over baseline.
2. Employee awareness of decision-making and governance processes is increased.
3. Employees are cross-trained throughout the Census Bureau to increase awareness and capacity for change.

Objective 3.4
Mature our ability to manage risk and ensure that internal controls are built into every process and system, and are proven effective.

Attention to managing enterprise risk and applying internal controls ensures that the Census Bureau performs effectively and efficiently within the law, regulation, and policy. A strong foundation of integrated risk management and internal controls ensures that data are accurate, privacy is protected, and credibility is enhanced.

Outcomes for Objective 3.4:
1. Findings within management control reviews reduced over time.
2. Strategic and operational risks are managed within acceptable tolerances.

Formal change management must be planned and implemented to facilitate the engagement, understanding, and adoption of change across the Census Bureau.

In order to do this more effectively, the Census Bureau will follow a more standard portfolio management process for translating strategic initiatives into projects and activities. Additional guidance, technical assistance, and internal consulting will be provided to new initiative owners, and plans will be formalized based on existing capabilities and key contacts.
Goal 4—Talent Management

Foster a diverse workforce to meet current and emerging needs.
The Census Bureau’s success is a result of hard work and expertise by a highly dedicated workforce. Building upon that foundation for future success requires the development and management of systems and processes to facilitate continuity, prepare for future mission needs, and ensure retention of critical knowledge. In order to clearly define, recruit, and retain the right positions and skills, we must identify which capabilities, competencies, and skills are in-house, outsourced, or have recently emerged and are required to support transformational initiatives. Management will set a climate that encourages staff to try out and assess the value of new ideas and take advantage of professional development opportunities, while rewarding innovation and creativity. Additionally, we will look into maturing management systems for enterprise-wide use, such as C-Sharps, used to support human resources management of short-term and part-time employees for the decennial census.

Objective 4.1
Increase employee professional growth and development, satisfaction, engagement, innovative thoughts, as well as diversity and inclusion.

The Census Bureau will develop a customer-centric, inclusive, and high-performing workforce by investing in and engaging employees to improve the delivery of services. Employees will have a broad understanding of the work of the Census Bureau. We will establish an inclusive and high-performing culture that leverages the difference of a diverse workforce to better serve our customers. Finally, we will afford employees the opportunity to increase their knowledge, skills, and abilities to meet both current and emerging needs.

Outcomes for Objective 4.1:
1. Use employee satisfaction and engagement surveys, and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and diversity inclusion-related workforce analysis data to increase response rate by 4 percent from baseline measures based on the Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey (FEVS) and the Organizational Climate Survey (OCS).
2. Develop action plans to address areas of opportunities within the next 5 years.

Objective 4.2
 Appropriately size, recruit, and train the workforce.

Rapidly changing data sources and industry external pressures are impacting how the Census Bureau completes its work, requiring workforce transformation to provide faster, better, and more accurate information. We must prepare for the changing work and skills needed by identifying the competencies required for success throughout various stages of transformation. Concurrently, we must effectively manage the massive decennial census expansion and contraction of staff, requiring detailed agency-wide position management, while needing to recruit hundreds of thousands of field staff to meet enumeration retention goals. Consequently, a complex human capital management plan must be developed to execute data-driven recruiting, hiring, attrition, and retirement analysis, and upskilling, including the development and execution of a field resource management system.

Outcome for Objective 4.2:
Actual recruitment, retention, and upskilling assessment data shows an increase to meet established workforce transition targets.
**Objective 4.3**

Expand strategic workforce planning capabilities to support workforce transition from traditional survey data collection to in-depth integration of survey data with alternative sources and methods.

The Census Bureau has been building a strategic workforce planning capability since 2010. The initial focus was to establish an effective and repeatable process to assess the current workforce to identify competency gaps so corrective actions can be taken. Once these approaches were honed, the Census Bureau began focusing on how to predict how business transformation will impact the workforce so that an informed transition can occur. Accordingly, the first predictive model was built based on how traditional survey workflows would change if alternative data sources and methods were applied and what the impact would be on full-time equivalents (FTEs) and occupational competencies. More work needs to be done to ensure that managers have sufficient information to inform Human Capital Management strategies.

**Outcome for Objective 4.3:**
Strategic workforce planning predictive functions provide accurate information to managers on FTE numbers, occupations, and competencies.
Contact Us

There are many reasons you may want to contact the Census Bureau. Please see our list of contacts to help decide which is best for you.

**Call Center:** 301-763-INFO (4636) or 800-923-8282, or ask.census.gov.

**TDD:** TTY users can dial 1-800-877-8339 to use the Federal Relay Service.

**News Media:** 301-763-3030 or pio@census.gov.

**Get E-mail Updates**
Subscribe now to receive Census Bureau updates, news, and data.

**Mailing Addresses:**
- **U.S. Postal Service (USPS)**
  U.S. Census Bureau
  4600 Silver Hill Road
  Washington, DC 20233

- **FedEx, DHL, UPS, couriers, and suppliers** (private carriers)
  U.S. Census Bureau
  4600 Silver Hill Road
  Suitland, MD 20746

**Maps to the Census Bureau and of the Suitland Federal Center**
Maps and directions to the Census Bureau—Suitland Federal Center in Suitland, MD.

**Find Staff**
Search for phone numbers and e-mail addresses of Census Bureau employees.

**Question and Answer Center**
Search through our frequently asked questions and send us your questions.

**Regional Contacts**
Regional contact information for the Census Bureau.

**Technical Contacts**
Technical contact information for the Census Bureau.

**Subject/Topic Contacts**
Subject/topic contact information for the Census Bureau.

**Respondent Advocate**
For respondent concerns, please contact the Census Bureau’s respondent advocate at respondent-advocate@census.gov.

**Social Media:**
Connect with the Census Bureau using social media.
Follow Us @ uscensusbureau

**Other Contacts**
Other contact information for the Census Bureau.