

2026 Census Test: Site Selection

2030 Census Webinar Series

July 22, 2024 | 2pm EDT

**COMING UP:
LIVE WEBINAR**



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United States®
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Bureau

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKERS



Stacy Vidal

*Public Information
Office,
U.S. Census Bureau
(Host & Moderator)*



Dr. Ron S. Jarmin

*Deputy Director,
U.S. Census Bureau*



Tasha Boone

*Assistant Director,
Decennial Census
Programs,
U.S. Census Bureau*



Dann Doyle

*Deputy Chief of
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Management Division,
U.S. Census Bureau*

QUESTIONS?



Call 1-888-994-8792

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Press *1 to ask a question



Dr. Ron S. Jarmin
Deputy Director
U.S. Census Bureau

Deputy Director's Remarks

- Every decennial census is informed by research, lessons learned, stakeholder input, with a wide range of expertise from partners.
- Today, we're announcing locations for the 2026 Census Test.
- Sites carefully selected:
 - Using set of criteria.
 - Thorough, data-driven process.
- 2020 Census testing focused on new technologies and methods.
- We look forward to working with the selected communities and we appreciate their cooperation.



Tasha Boone
Assistant Director, Decennial Census
Programs, U.S. Census Bureau

Today's Agenda

- Review 2030 Census planning updates previously shared
- Recap 2026 Census Test objectives and scope
- 2026 Census Test sites
 - Data-driven approach to site selection
 - Criteria used to select sites
 - Announce test sites
- Next steps

What We Hope You Take Away from Today's Webinar

We used a rigorous, data-driven approach to select the sites where the 2026 Census Test will be conducted.

We are confident that the sites we chose, when used together, allow us to examine all the enhancements and changes under study in each operational area.

Our focus is on improving the count of historically undercounted and hard-to-count populations. This priority was an important driver of site selection.

2030 Census Planning Updates



[www.census.gov/
2030census](https://www.census.gov/2030census)

2030 Census Webinar Series

The 2030 Census webinar series provides updates and lays the groundwork for key components of preparations for the 2030 Census.

2026 Census Test Scope

This video is a recording of the live webinar, "2026 Census Test Scope", which was held on April 30, 2024.

[Watch the Video](#) >



2030 Census Federal Register Notice (FRN) Findings

This video is a recording of the live webinar, "2030 Census Federal Register Notice (FRN) Findings," which was held on October 17, 2023.

[Watch the Video](#) >



2030 Census Research, Testing, and Timeline


This video is a recording of the live webinar, "2030 Census Research, Testing, and Timeline," which was held on July 27, 2023.


[Watch the Video](#) >





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2026 Census Test Overview

 We will test new and enhanced processes and methods we are looking to implement for the 2030 Census.

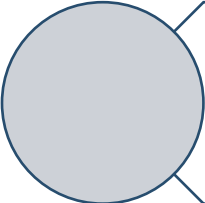
 We're building on and refining our efforts from the 2020 Census to work toward a complete and accurate count of all segments of the population.

 The test will include: (a) six test sites that, as a group, cover all operational areas in-scope for the test and (b) nationally representative self-response testing that will allow us to study self-response and contact strategy improvements.

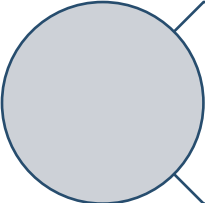
 The test scope covers six operational areas: Self-Response; In-Field Enumeration; Group Quarters Enumeration; Communications, Partnerships, and Engagement; Cross Operational Support and Infrastructure; and Near Real Time Response Processing.

 The operational areas being tested include aspects that directly or indirectly help us enumerate historically undercounted and hard-to-count populations.

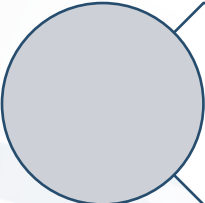
Nation-Wide Self-Response Testing Complements Site Testing



This component of the test involves mailing materials to a nationally representative sample of households, inviting them to respond to the test online, by phone or by mail.



This builds upon the Census Bureau's ongoing small-scale testing to improve the online questionnaire and invitation materials sent to households.



It will also provide insight on self-response rate trends, which will inform 2030 Census planning for field infrastructure, communications, and other operations.

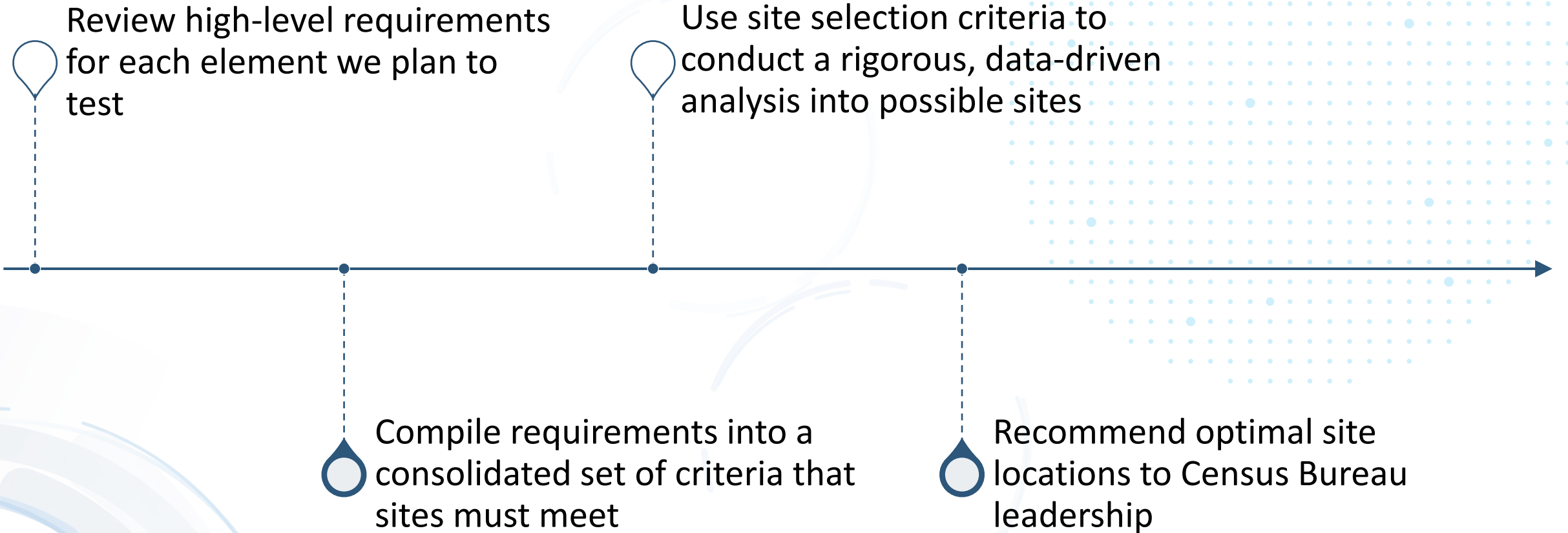


Dann Doyle
Deputy Chief, Decennial Census
Management Division,
U.S. Census Bureau

Why Site Selection Matters

- ✓ Ensure we meet the test's objectives.
- ✓ Provide optimal opportunities to implement the full test scope under real conditions and on a larger scale.
- ✓ Support our focus on improving the count of historically undercounted and hard-to-count populations.

Our Data-Driven Approach To Selecting Test Sites



Overview of Site Selection Criteria



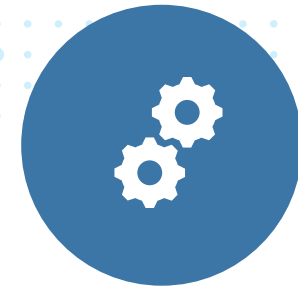
GEOGRAPHY



STAFFING



**LIVING QUARTERS
CHARACTERISTICS**



**TECHNICAL
CHARACTERISTICS**

Site Selection Criteria

Geography

- Locations across 2 Census Bureau Regions
- Rural area with:
 - High percentages of historically undercounted populations and
 - Historically lower self-response rates
- Area with a colonia
- Tribal area
- Area with nonmailable addresses

Living Quarters Characteristics

- Seasonally vacant housing
- Complex households
- High instances of new construction
- Multiunit structures and/or hidden housing units
- Wide range of group quarters types

Staffing

- Sites where recruiting field staff has been historically challenging
- Sites with different levels of unemployment rates

Technical Characteristics

- Little to no cell phone or internet service
- Comprehensive and minimal administrative data

Selection Criteria

Geography



**Geographic
dispersion**





Tribal area



Colonia



Rural area

Historically undercounted populations 
Lower census self-response 



**Nonmailable
addresses**

Selection Criteria

Living Quarters Characteristics



Complex and Seasonal Housing

- Seasonal vacancy
- Complex households
- New construction
- Urban area with multiunit structures and/or hidden housing units



Group Quarters Facilities

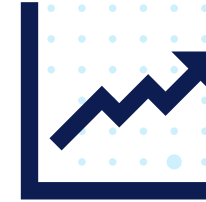
- Both group quarters and housing units
- College area
- Mixed-use continuing care facility
- Wide range of group quarters types

Selection Criteria

Staffing



Areas where recruiting
field staff has been
historically challenging



Areas with different levels
of unemployment

Selection Criteria

Technical Characteristics



Technological Connectivity

- Little to no internet or cell phone service

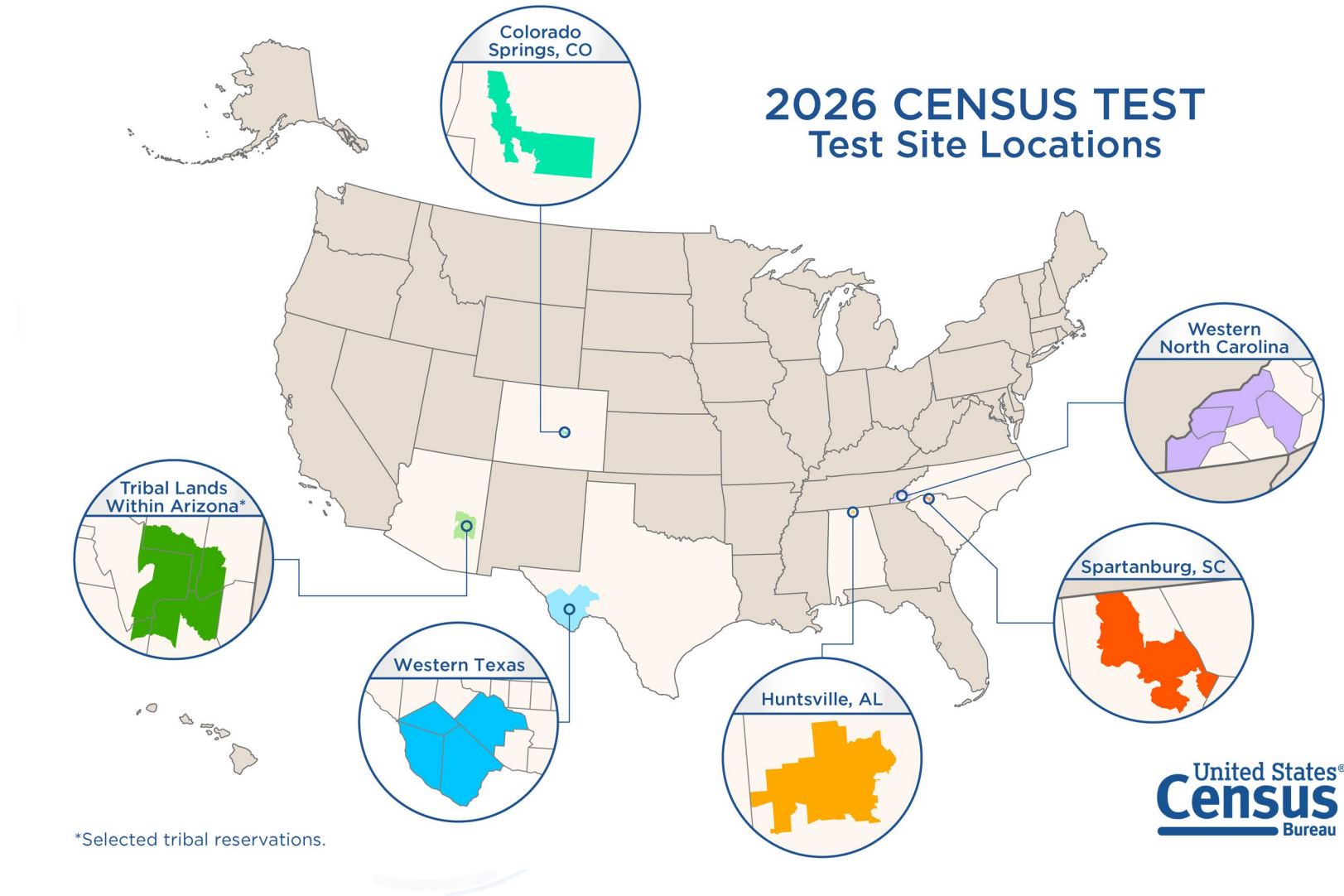


Administrative Data

- Comprehensive administrative data
- Minimal administrative data

2026 Census Test Sites

- Western Texas
- Tribal Lands Within Arizona, which includes selected tribal reservations
- Colorado Springs, CO
- Western North Carolina
- Spartanburg, SC
- Huntsville, AL



Western Texas

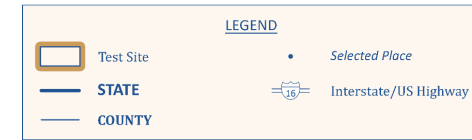
(Brewster County, Jeff Davis County, Pecos County, and Presidio County)

Key selection criteria

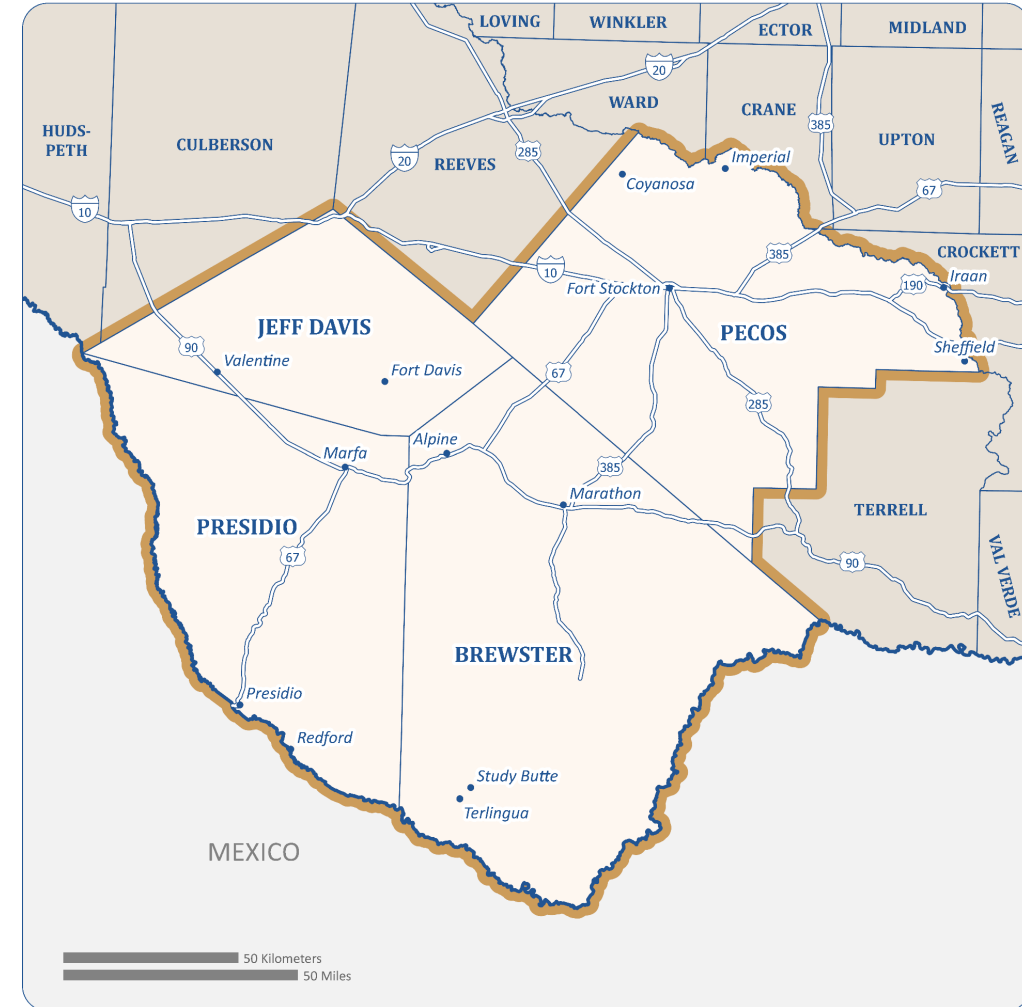
- ✓ Little to no internet or cell phone service
- ✓ Non-mailable addresses
- ✓ Seasonally vacant households
- ✓ Colonia
- ✓ Rural area with
 - ✓ High rates of historically undercounted populations
 - ✓ Historically low census self-response

Optimal for testing

- Mobile Questionnaire Assistance in remote areas
- Shipping materials and equipment directly to field staff's home addresses in remote areas
- Enumeration on mobile devices in areas with limited internet and phone connection,
- Automated procedures for recruiting and hiring in low connectivity areas
- Newly consolidated In-Field Enumeration procedures
- Public outreach strategy and translated survey instruments with Spanish speakers



Location of site within Texas



Tribal Lands Within Arizona

(Fort Apache Reservation, home to the White Mountain Apache Tribe and San Carlos Reservation, home to the San Carlos Apache Tribe)

Key selection criteria

- ✓ Rural area with
 - ✓ Historically undercounted population
 - ✓ Historically low census self-response
- ✓ Non-mailable addresses
- ✓ Seasonally vacant housing units

Optimal for testing

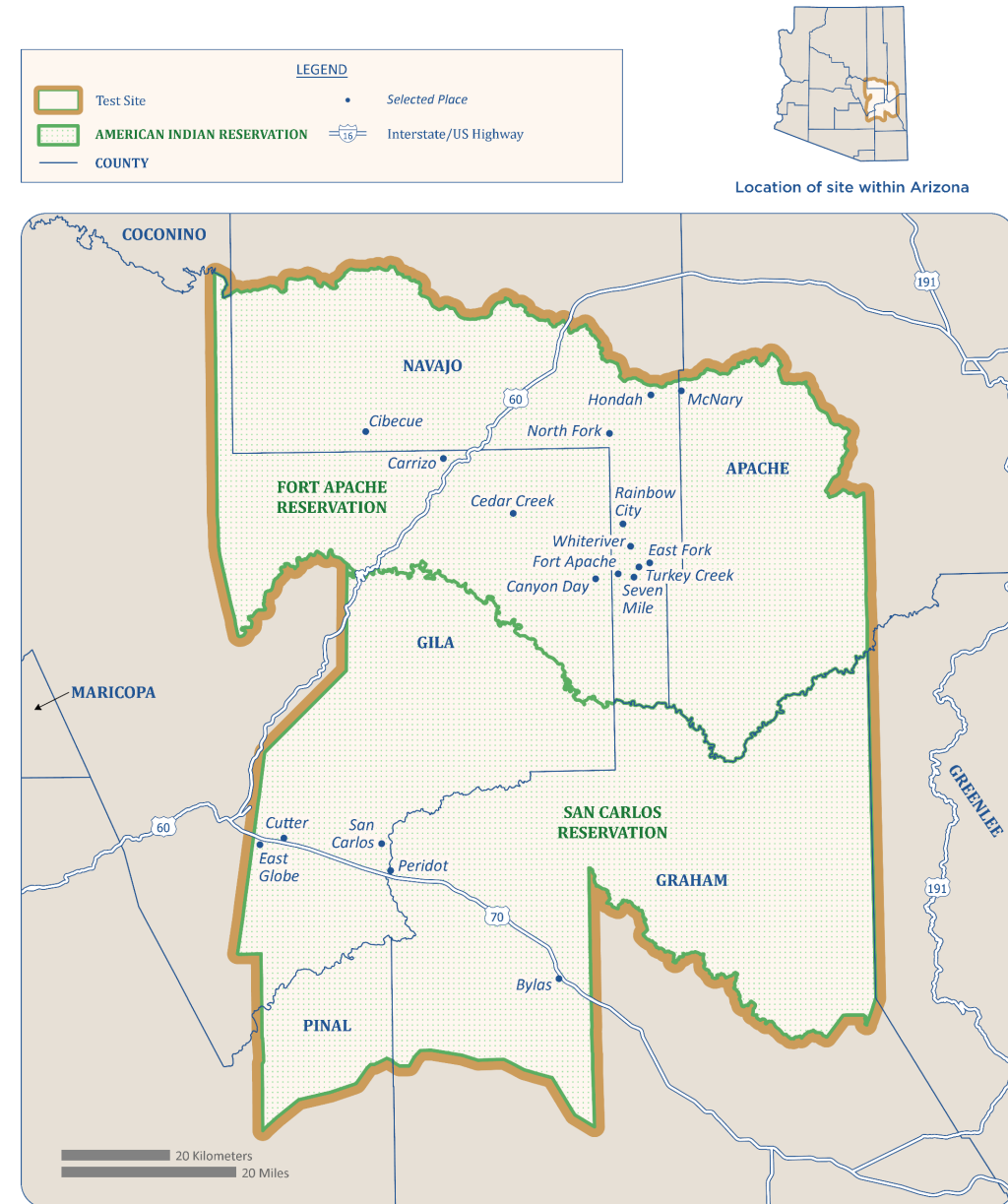
Mobile Questionnaire Assistance

Recruiting and hiring

Shipping materials and equipment directly to field staff's home addresses in remote areas

Newly consolidated In-Field Enumeration procedures in areas with hard-to-count and historically undercounted populations

New partnership procedures developed specifically for tribal outreach and communications



Colorado Springs, Colorado

(Selected areas of the metro area)

Key selection criteria

- ✓ Multiunit structures and hidden housing units
- ✓ Complex housing units
- ✓ New construction
- ✓ All group quarters types, including multiple universities, correctional facilities, and military installations.
- ✓ Comprehensive and minimal administrative record data

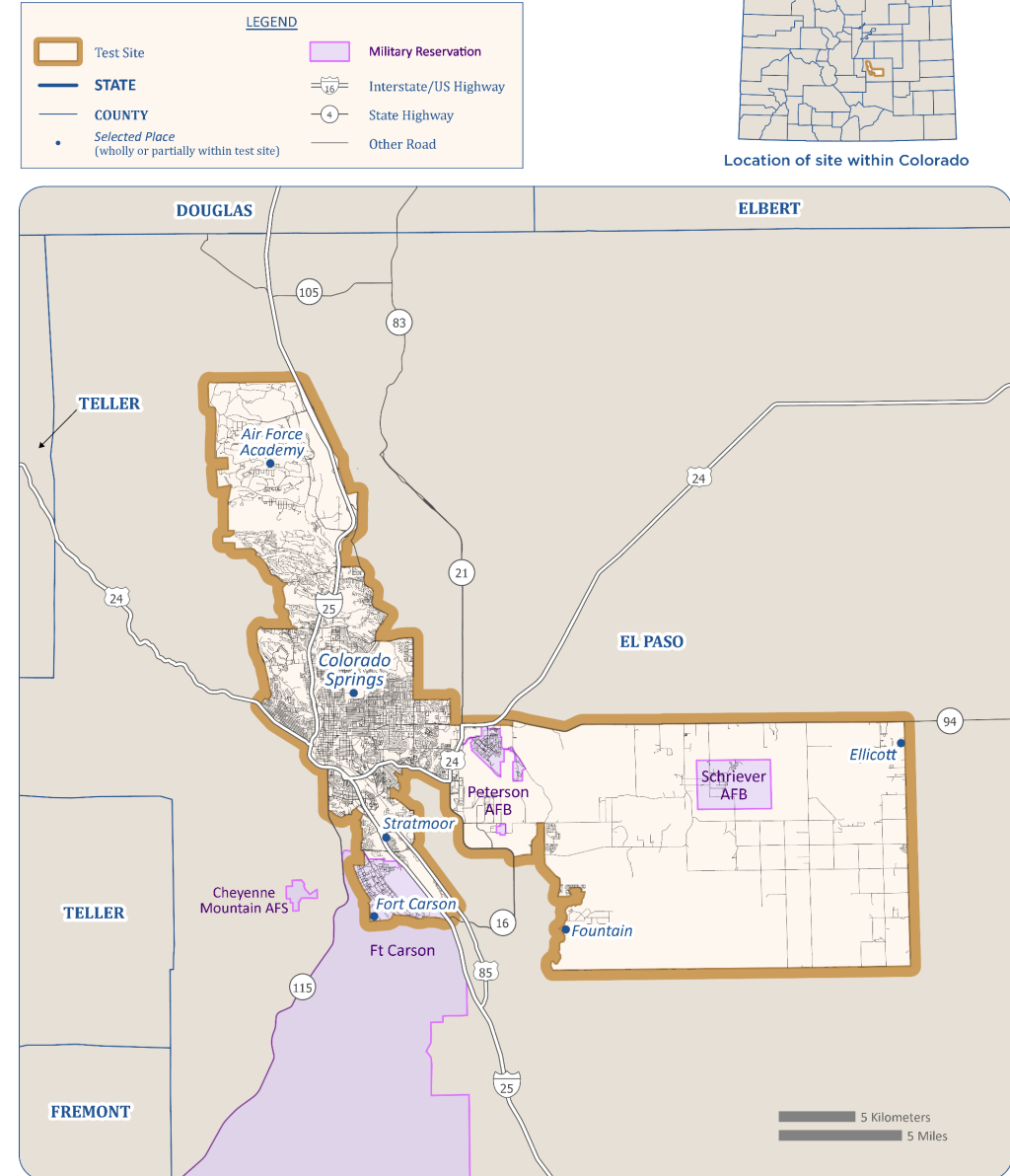
Optimal for testing

Automated group quarters procedures with correctional facilities, large universities, military installations and other group quarters types

New In-Field Enumeration procedures for complex housing units, multi-unit structures, and/or hidden housing units

Procedures for conducting early In-Field Enumeration in areas surrounding universities

Contact strategies with housing units in areas with comprehensive and minimal administrative record data



Western North Carolina

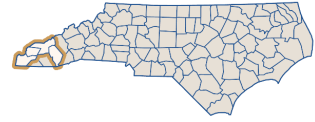
(Qualla Boundary, home to the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, and Cherokee County, Graham County, Jackson County, and Swain County)

Key selection criteria

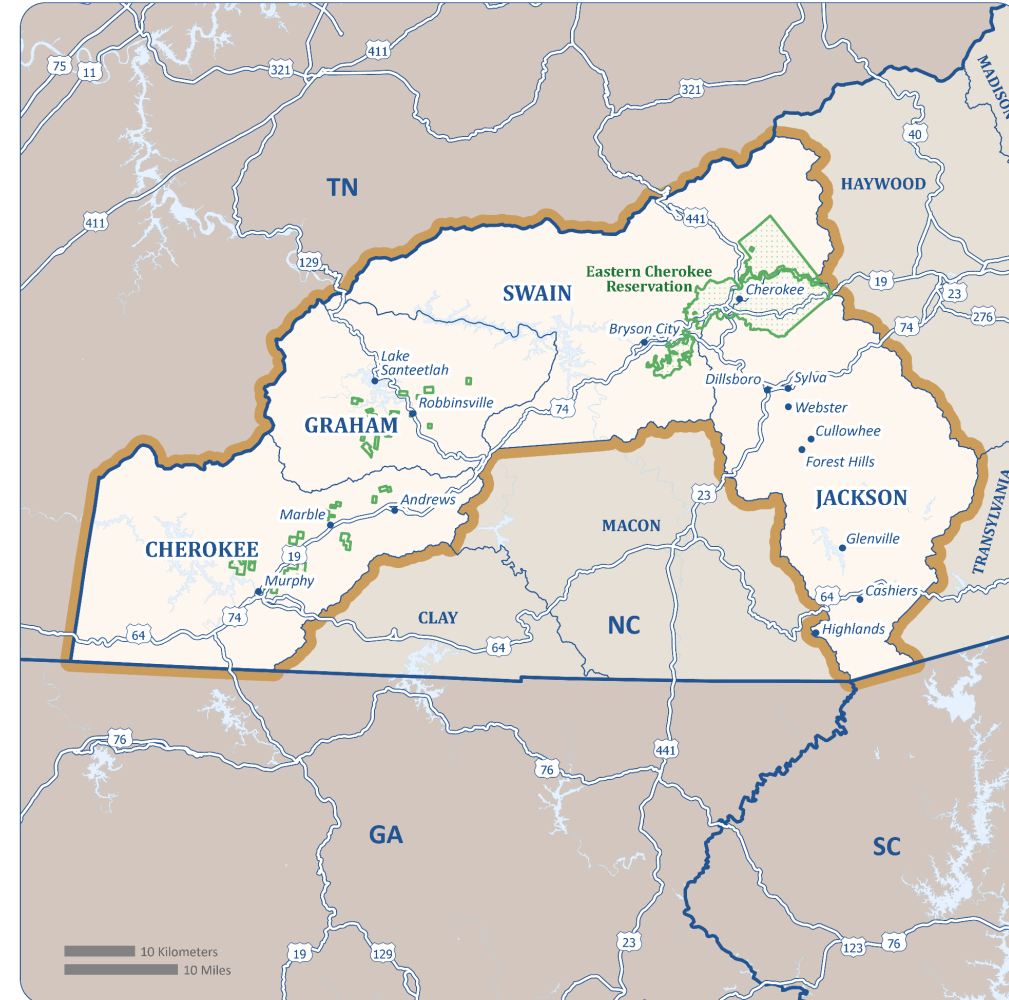
- ✓ Rural area with
 - ✓ High rate of historically undercounted populations
 - ✓ Historically low census self-response
- ✓ Nonmailable addresses
- ✓ Seasonally vacant housing units
- ✓ Multiunit structures and hidden housing units
- ✓ Little to no internet or cell phone service
- ✓ Tribal area
- ✓ Group quarters facilities like large, continuing care facilities
- ✓ Complex housing units

Optimal for testing

- New enumeration contact strategies for seasonally vacant housing units
- New partnership procedures in tribal areas and areas with high rates of historically undercount populations
- Automated recruiting, hiring and training in areas with little to no internet and cell phone service
- Newly consolidated In-Field Enumeration procedures



Location of site within North Carolina



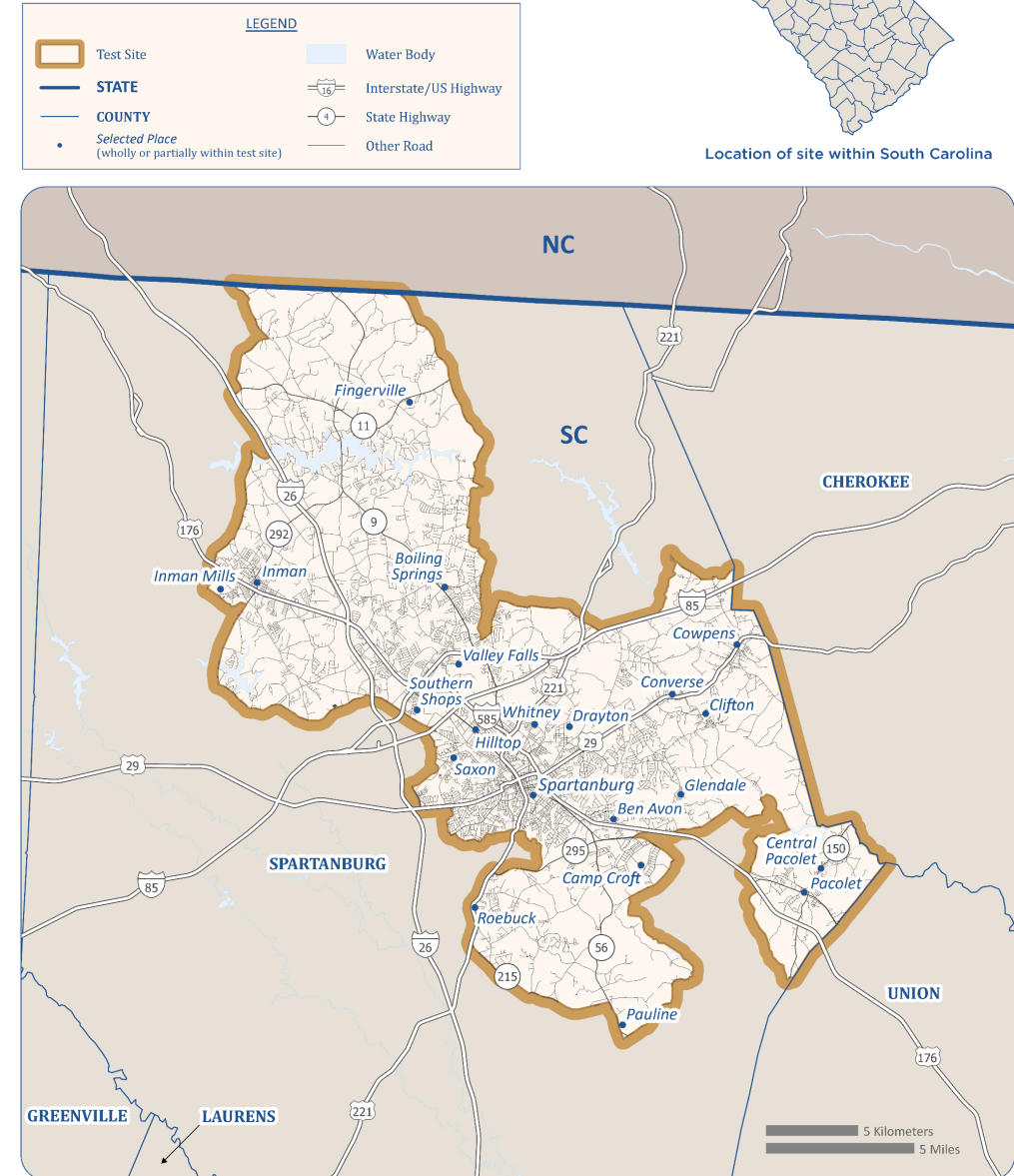
Spartanburg, South Carolina

Key selection criteria

- ✓ University area with student housing
- ✓ Mix-use units including group quarters facilities and housing units
- ✓ Wide range of group quarters facilities including workers dormitories, nursing and skilled nursing facilities, and a correctional facility
- ✓ Complex housing units
- ✓ Multiunit structures and hidden housing units

Optimal for testing

- New automated group quarters procedures at a university
- New group quarters and housing unit enumeration procedures
- Procedures for conducting early In-Field Enumeration in areas surrounding universities
- New In-Field Enumeration procedures in complex housing units



Huntsville, Alabama

Key selection criteria

- ✓ Low unemployment
- ✓ University area with student housing
- ✓ Wide range of group quarters types
- ✓ Complex housing units
- ✓ Multiunit structures or hidden housing units

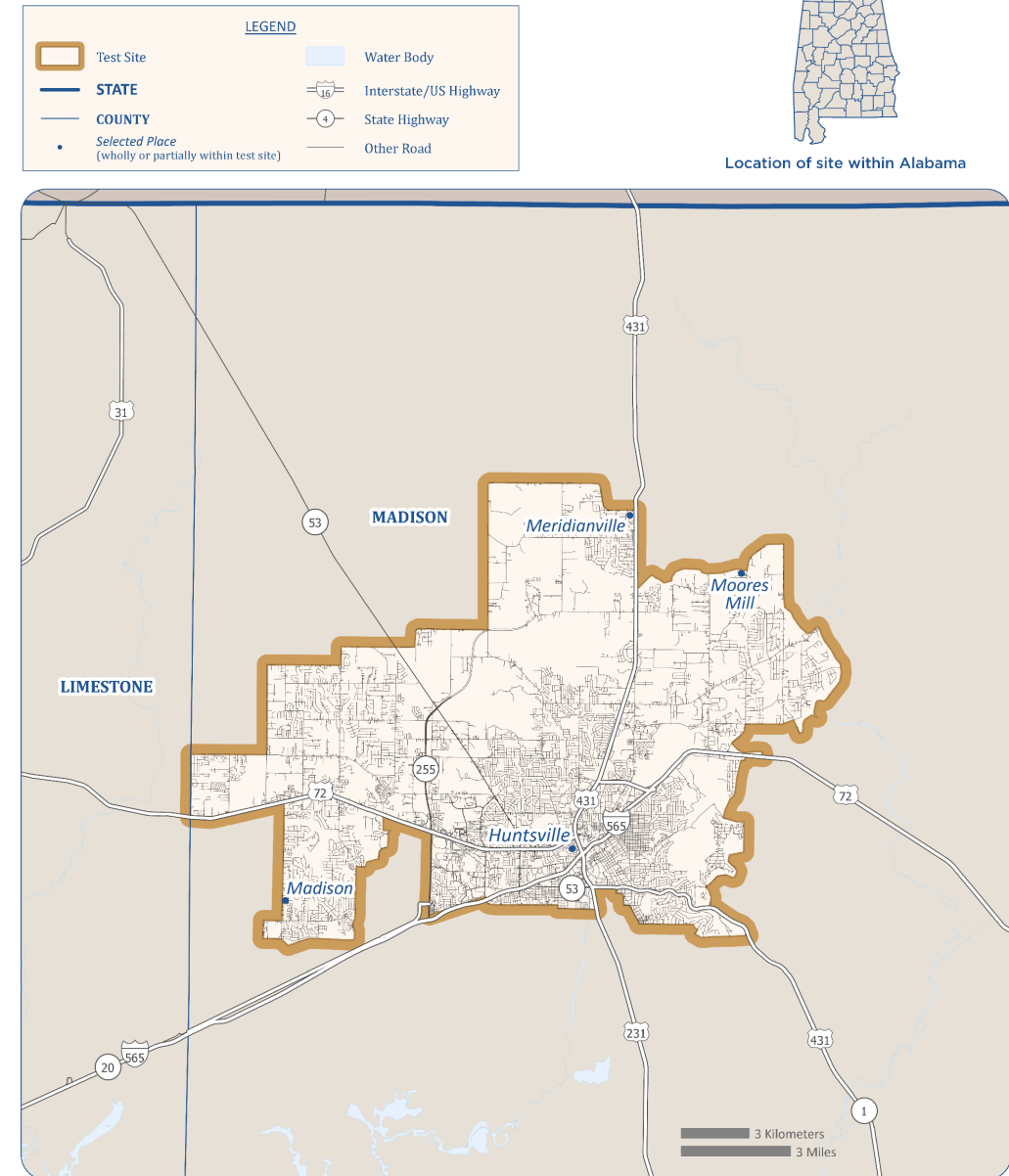
Optimal for testing

New automated group quarters procedures with a wide range of group quarters types

Procedures for conducting early In-Field Enumeration in areas surrounding universities

New In-Field Enumeration procedures for complex housing units, multi-unit structures, and/or hidden housing units

Contact strategies with housing units in areas with strong administrative record data



Summary of Sites Selected

TEST SITE CRITERIA

		DENVER REGION			ATLANTA REGION		
		Western Texas	Tribal Lands Within Arizona*	Colorado Springs, CO	Western North Carolina	Spartanburg, SC	Huntsville, AL
GEOGRAPHY							
✓	Rural area with historically undercounted populations and lower self-response rates	X	X		X		
✓	Area with a colonia	X					
✓	Tribal area		X		X		
✓	Area with nonmailable addresses	X	X		X		
LIVING QUARTERS							
✓	Seasonally vacant housing	X	X		X		
✓	Complex housing units			X	X	X	X
✓	High instances of new construction			X			
✓	Multiunit structures and/or hidden housing units			X	X	X	X
✓	Wide range of group quarters types			X	X	X	X
STAFFING							
✓	Recruiting field staff has been historically challenging						X
✓	Low unemployment						X
TECHNICAL							
✓	Little to no cell phone or internet service	X			X		
✓	Comprehensive and minimal administrative record data			X			

* Selected tribal reservations.

Note: This table summarizes how testing requirements are distributed across the six test sites. These locations provide optimal opportunities for us to implement all of the changes and enhancements we have planned for the test.

Next Steps

2026 Census Test Design

- Throughout 2024 and 2025 - Finalize the design of the test
- Late 2025 - Plan to release the detailed test plan

Milestone Activities

- Summer 2025: Outreach begins raising awareness in the test sites about the importance of participating.
- Fall 2025: Recruiting begins for temporary census jobs in the test sites.
- Spring 2026: Public begins responding to the 2026 Census Test.
- Census Day, April 1, 2026: Participants are asked to respond based on where they live as of this date.
- Summer 2026: 2026 Census Test concludes.



Thank you



PIO@CENSUS.GOV



PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE (PIO)

301-763-3030

Q/A Panelists



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QUESTIONS?



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Press *1 to ask a question

2030 Census Updates

Release Resources

- 2026 Press Kit.
- Slide deck.
- Recording of today's webinar.
- www.census.gov/2030census
- www.census.gov/2026test

Previous Webinars

- [2030 Census Research, Testing, and Timeline](#)
- [2030 Census Federal Register Notice \(FRN\) Findings](#)
- [2026 Census Test Scope](#)

Upcoming Releases

July 23

- Prerelease webinar about 2020 Census Detailed Demographic and Housing Characteristics File B (Detailed DHC-B).
- Embargo access begins July 30.
- Released publicly August 1.

July 25

- New data from the Small Area Health Insurance Estimates (SAHIE) Program.

July 26

- 2030 Census Advisory Committee Summer Virtual Meeting.
- This will be the first meeting of the 2030 Census Advisory Committee.

For Further Information

Media:

Public Information Office

pio@census.gov

301-763-3030/877-861-2010 (U.S. and Canada only)

General Public:

Census.gov ➡ www.census.gov/2030census

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