



2020 CENSUS PROGRAM MEMORANDUM SERIES: 2018.08

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MEMORANDUM FOR: The Record

From: Albert E. Fontenot, Jr. **(signed March 29, 2018)**
Associate Director, Decennial Census Programs

Subject: Submission of Questions Planned for the 2020 Census and American
Community Survey

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Overview

In accordance with Section 141(f)(2) of Title 13, United States Code (U.S.C.), the U.S. Census Bureau provides to Congress the questions planned for the Decennial Census Program two years in advance of the decennial census. The 2020 Decennial Census Program, composed of the 2020 Census and the American Community Survey (ACS), will provide an official count and a portrait of communities across the Nation. Pursuant to Title 13, U.S.C., Section 191, the 2020 Census will include the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and the Island Areas (American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands).

Background

In 2005, the ACS replaced the decennial census long form; however, it remains part of the Decennial Census Program and is included in the *Questions Planned for the 2020 Census and American Community Survey* which describes the questions, outlines the data they will produce, and details how the data will benefit communities and federal agencies.

In the 20th century, most addresses received a short form, while a portion of addresses received a more detailed long form. The Census 2000 short form collected basic demographic and housing information (such as age, race, sex, relationship to householder, and tenure) for apportionment and redistricting. The long form, sent to approximately 1 in 6 households, collected social, housing, and economic information including educational attainment, disability status, employment status, citizenship, income, and housing costs. Federal agencies use the information to determine how to allocate funding to states and communities. Communities, businesses and all levels of government use the information to provide a variety of transportation, education and medical services.

Since 2005, in order to provide communities, businesses, and the public with the detailed social, housing, and economic information more frequently, the long form data have been collected monthly (and released annually) through the ACS. In Puerto Rico, this survey is called the Puerto Rico Community Survey. This innovation enabled the 2010 Census to be a short-form-only census. Decoupling the collection of short and long form data allowed the Census Bureau to focus decennial census efforts on the constitutional requirements to produce a count of the resident population, while employing technology in both collections to improve efficiencies, improve accuracy, and reduce costs. The result has been the dissemination of more current and detailed information than has ever been available.

Many stakeholders share an interest in the 2020 Census and ACS content, including federal agencies (both statistical and non-statistical), state and local governments, those who will respond to the 2020 Census and ACS, academia, businesses, nonprofit organizations, media, data users, and oversight groups.

The 2020 Census Memorandum Series

The 2020 Census Memorandum Series documents significant decisions, actions, and accomplishments of the 2020 Census Program for the purpose of informing stakeholders, coordinating interdivisional efforts, and documenting important historical changes.

A memorandum generally will be added to this series for any decision or documentation that meets the following criteria:

1. A major program level decision that will affect the overall design or have significant effect on 2020 Census operations or systems.
2. A major policy decision or change that will affect the overall design or significantly impact 2020 Census operations or systems.
3. A report that documents the research and testing for 2020 Census operations or systems.

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