

## U.S. Census Bureau at a Glance

**Mission:** The U.S. Census Bureau serves as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. The Census Bureau honors privacy, protects confidentiality, shares our expertise globally and conducts our work openly. The Census Bureau is guided on this mission by its strong and capable workforce, its readiness to innovate and its abiding commitment to its customers.

**History:** While the first census was taken in 1790 and every 10 years thereafter, the Census Bureau traces its roots to 1840, when the Census Act authorized establishing a centralized Census Office during each enumeration. In 1902, the Census Office became a permanent organization within the Department of Interior. In 1903, the office was renamed the Bureau of the Census and moved to the new Department of Commerce and Labor.

**Programs and Activities:** The Census Bureau is the largest statistical agency of the federal government. Its work has expanded commensurate with the nation's population and economy, keeping pace with the demand for current facts and figures. Activities involve survey and questionnaire design, geographic infrastructure updates, data collection, processing and dissemination. The Census Bureau's many programs include censuses, surveys, estimates and projections. These are invaluable planning tools for citizens, businesses and government officials. Federal law protects the confidentiality of all the information the Census Bureau collects.

### **Censuses**

- Decennial Census – The U.S. Constitution requires the Census Bureau to conduct a once-a-decade count of the population in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Island Areas. The federal government uses decennial census results to apportion the seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Census data are also used to draw congressional and state legislative districts and distribute more than \$3 trillion of [in] federal funds each decade.
- Economic Census – The economic census measures the nation's economy every five years, providing vital statistics for virtually every industry and geographic area in the country.
- Census of Governments – This census, taken every five years, provides comprehensive data about the nearly 90,000 state and local governments in the nation.

### **Surveys**

- American Community Survey – Part of the decennial census, this ongoing survey is sent to a sample of the population each month to update what the population looks like and how it lives. The survey also helps communities determine where to locate services and allocate resources.
- Demographic – These surveys measure income, poverty, education, health insurance coverage, housing quality, crime victimization, computer usage and scores of other subjects. The information they yield is vital to understanding the people of the United States and how they live.
- Economic – Annual, quarterly, and monthly surveys cover selected sectors of the nation's economy. They supplement the quinquennial economic census, providing crucial information about the dynamic economy. These surveys yield over 400 annual economic reports,

including the all-important principal economic indicators such as the balance of international trade, retail sales, and housing starts.

- **Other** – On a reimbursable basis for other agencies, the Census Bureau conducts many additional demographic and economic surveys vital to understanding the people of the United States and the current state of the economy. Examples of other surveys conducted by the Census Bureau include the Current Population Survey, National Health Interview Survey, National Survey of College Graduates and the National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation.

### ***Population Estimates and Projections***

- **Estimates** – The Census Bureau publishes total resident population estimates and demographic components of change, such as births, deaths and migration each year. These data can be viewed by characteristics, such as age, sex and race for the nation, states and counties.
- **Projections** – Population size and characteristics such as age, sex, race and Hispanic origin are estimated by the Census Bureau. These projections are predicated on future demographic trends, including births, life expectancy and migration patterns.

### ***Geography***

- The Census Bureau disseminates statistical data collected and tabulated in the programs and activities described above for geographic areas to make the data more familiar and user friendly for the public to understand.
- The Census Bureau maintains a nationwide database that includes boundary information about legal, statistical and administrative areas, in addition to physical features such as streets and rivers needed for reference and geographic area delineation.
- The Census Bureau updates a national address file to support censuses and surveys.

### ***International Activities***

- The Census Bureau produces international demographic data and prepares estimates and projections, special international analyses and interpretive reports and monographs.
- The Census Bureau provides technical advisory services for foreign governments.

**Headquarters:** Suitland, Md.

**Regional Offices:** Atlanta; Boston; Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago; Dallas; Denver; Detroit; Kansas City, Kan.; Los Angeles; New York; Philadelphia; and Seattle. For more information on the Census Bureau's 12 regional offices, please visit [www.census.gov/field/www/](http://www.census.gov/field/www/).

**Workforce:** Today, the Census Bureau has more than 4,300 employees at its headquarters, more than 2,500 employees at its National Processing Center in Jeffersonville, Indiana, and about 8,500 employees working in 12 regional offices nationwide. To complete the 2010 Census, the Census Bureau will hire about 1.4 million temporary workers nationwide.

**Budget:** The president's budget request (as amended) for the Census Bureau in fiscal year 2009 is \$3.1 billion.

U S C E N S U S B U R E A U

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