WHAT’S AT STAKE?

• Equal representation at federal/state/local levels

• Fair and equitable distribution of federal and state resources and private sector investments

• Implementation, monitoring, and enforcement of civil rights laws

• Understanding and addressing social and economic inequalities

• Transparency and accountability in government = greater public confidence in elected leaders
WHAT’S THE PROBLEM?

• Census doesn’t count all population groups equally well

• “Hard to count” groups include:
  • People of color (esp. young men, ages 18–49)
  • Low income households (renters), urban & rural
  • Young children (ages 0–4), esp. Black and Latino
  • Limited English Proficiency and foreign born households
  • Single, female-headed households
  • Young adult mobiles

• Result: disproportionately high undercounts that skew census data and other statistics for next 10 years
  • Non-Hispanic White, higher income households overcounted
In 2.5 years ... 2020 Census operations start
  • 3 of 6 Regional Census Centers already open

In 8 months ... peak ‘dress rehearsal’ operations start in Providence Co., RI
  • Recruitment ongoing; address canvassing this month

By April 1, 2018 ... submit census questions to Congress
  • Major revisions?
    ➢ Combined race and ethnicity question
    ➢ New Middle Eastern/North African (MENA) category
    ➢ New same-sex partner and spouse categories (household relationship question)

Now ... state, local, & tribal governments registering for Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program
  • Review/verify/update address lists: Feb.–May/June 2018
  • Housing unit counts have been posted publicly in advance
GOALS FOR A “NEW” CENSUS: MODERN, CHEAPER, & ACCURATE

1. Promote Internet as primary response option
   • Other response modes: telephone and paper questionnaire

2. Automated, streamlined field operations
   • Half the number of Regional Census Centers (6) & local (“Area”) census offices (~250) compared to 2010
   • Half the number of census takers/field staff compared to 2010 (~300,000)

3. Use previously collected government data & commercial data to update 70% of address list, identify vacant housing units, and count some unresponsive households (replacing door-to-door visits)
POLICY & OPERATIONAL CHALLENGES: A perfect storm?

- Insufficient annual funding (appropriations)
  - Congress: “Cap 2020 Census cost at 2010 Census level”
  - Admin funding request for FY18 (~$1.5b): unrealistically low
  - At risk: census operations specifically designed to reach hard-to-count communities
  - Complex new IT system already over budget

- *Climate of fear*: threatens participation in many communities

- Technology challenges: Cyber-security (real & perceived) and digital divide

- Resignation of Census Director: *leadership vacuum*

- Threat: proposals to add citizenship & legal status questions

- Threat: amendment to make ACS response voluntary
TIME TO ACT!

- Participate in Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program (*register now!*)
- Establish state Complete Count Commissions & local Complete Count Committees (up & running in 2018)
- Allocate state funds for “Get Out the Count” campaigns (outreach & promotion)
- Educate congressional delegation about need for sufficient funding for 2020 Census preparations and implementation
THANK YOU!

Questions?
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Resources:
The Census Project www.thecensusproject.org
The Leadership Conference www.civilrights.org/census/
“Counting for Dollars” (Intro, report & state tables)
http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/census/CountingForDollars-Intro.pdf