November 13, 2022

Ms. Jennifer Reichert  
Chief, Decennial Census Management Division  
U.S. Census Bureau  
4600 Silver Hill Road  
Hillcrest Heights, MD 20746  

Submitted via www.regulations.gov

Re: Soliciting Input or Suggestions on 2030 Census Preliminary Research  
Docket Number USBC-2022-0004

Dear Ms. Reichert:

The National Council of Nonprofits welcomes this opportunity to submit comments in response to the U.S. Census Bureau’s Notice Soliciting Input or Suggestions on 2030 Census Preliminary Research, Docket Number USBC-2022-0004 (220526-0123).

The National Council of Nonprofits is a trusted resource and advocate for America’s charitable nonprofits. Through our network of state associations and 25,000-plus organizational members – the nation’s largest network of charitable nonprofits – we serve as a central coordinator and mobilizer to help nonprofits achieve greater collective impact in local communities across the country. We identify emerging trends, share proven practices, and promote solutions that benefit charitable nonprofits and the individuals and communities they serve.

Nationwide and in every community in America, charitable nonprofits provide vital services and are a key part of the economy, employing more people than the construction, finance, and manufacturing industries. Prior to the pandemic, nonprofits employed more than 12.3 million workers – 10% of America’s private workforce.1 During the health and economic crises caused by COVID-19, tens of millions more Americans than usual turned to charitable organizations for help – and nonprofits delivered. Charitable nonprofits touch the lives of virtually every person in America and can be vital partners of the Census Bureau in planning for and successfully completing the 2030 Census.

1 Nonprofit Impact Matters, National Council of Nonprofits, Fall 2019.
The National Council of Nonprofits recommends the U.S. Census Bureau prioritize partnerships with nonprofits as trusted messengers serving their communities.

Charitable nonprofits can reach communities that no other sector or group is able to reach. Nonprofits provide a unique pathway to connect with certain demographics and populations as a trusted resource to provide information and education concerning civic engagement activities like the Census.

The Census Bureau should research and begin outreach immediately to community nonprofits to build relationships. Partnerships should be formalized with nonprofit leaders at the federal, state, and local levels, including state nonprofit associations, complete count commissions, higher education institutions, minority-led organizations, and Community Action Agencies.

In particular, the Census Bureau should prioritize financial and other investments in local nonprofit groups for Census outreach. We encourage the Bureau to establish a database of national, state, regional, and local partners that is properly maintained and publicized to nonprofits to enable and assist local coordination while minimizing redundancies in organizing efforts. We also recommend that the Bureau streamline communications with nonprofits and public officials to allow for stronger organizing and coordinated efforts.

The National Council of Nonprofits recommends the U.S. Census Bureau adopt better data collection methods.

The National Council of Nonprofits places diversity, equity, and inclusion at the center of its work. For this reason, we recommend that all data collection methods and questions included on the 2030 Census should be improved to properly reflect the race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and sex characteristics of our diverse populace. In preparation for the 2030 Census, the Bureau should continue researching the best way to collect this data and consult with engaged nonprofits and coalitions to determine appropriate language for phrasing any new questions and categories.

The Census Bureau should improve data collection methods to allow for the highest rate of response by making the Census questionnaire easy to understand and answer. The Bureau should improve the user interface and portal to decrease bounce rates and enhance completions. Different language options for non-English users should be made available. A Frequently Asked Questions page with simple answers for troubleshooting should be provided. The call center should have increased capacity to accommodate more callers and minimize wait times.
The National Council of Nonprofits recommends the U.S. Census Bureau provide clear messaging and communications with government and nonprofit partners.

It is essential from the outset of the Census Bureau’s planning for 2030 that it collaborate with nonprofits to develop proper communications, resources, and marketing and advertising strategies for reaching historically undercounted communities. Messaging in multiple languages and on various media platforms for different demographics is needed. The Bureau should invest in research and paid advertising programs to target certain populations at higher risk of being missed.

The Bureau should provide clear communications of key dates, operational plans and processes, community trainings, and marketing objectives. Streamlined communications between the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) operation, counties and municipalities, mayors, states, and associations representing interests of governments would allow for stronger relationships, better messaging, and better coalition building.

The 2030 Census outreach and coordination efforts should also recognize that nonprofits provide services to unique groups such as unsheltered individuals, individuals living in group quarters, and underserved populations. We ask that the Bureau affirmatively recognize that these nonprofits can relay essential information clearly and effectively to those they serve.

In conclusion, we reiterate that charitable nonprofits serve every community in every corner of the country and, thus, should be enlisted as key partners in developing and completing the 2030 Census. The networks of the National Council of Nonprofits stand ready to assist the U.S. Census Bureau to help ensure a successful 2030 Census.

Sincerely,

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