



AMERICAN STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION  
Promoting the Practice and Profession of Statistics®

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October 13, 2020

J. Christopher Mihm

Managing Director, Strategic Issues

Nick Marinos

Director, Information Technology and Cybersecurity

US Government Accountability Office

441 G Street NW

Washington, DC 20548

Dear Director Mihm and Director Marinos,

I write to share the enclosed [2020 Census Quality Indicators](#), the recommendations of which the American Statistical Association Board of Directors has endorsed. We would be happy to meet with you and/or your staff to discuss why we believe these indicators are crucial.

Given the unprecedented challenges to the 2020 decennial census and the importance of the census to our democracy, governance, and everyday lives, we believe it is imperative for lawmakers and the American public to be informed at every remaining step of what can be determined about the quality of the 2020 decennial census. We are urging the administration to have these indicators applied to the 2020 decennial census data as soon as possible—commencing in the post-data collection phase when the census apportionment and redistricting files are being produced—and the results made public.

Such transparency and measures of quality are, of course, the traditional hallmarks of the US Census Bureau. These indicators are an extension of this tradition in multiple ways, including the public release of the quality measures at the census-tract level, the addition of indicators to make use of data available this decade because of the continued automation of the decennial census, and the public sharing of indicators starting the post-data collection phase.

The indicators were prepared by a task force of census experts I co-chaired with former US Chief Statistician of the United States Nancy Potok. The task force comprises another former chief

statistician, a former Census Bureau chief scientist, a former Census Bureau chief demographer, a former member of the Census Scientific Advisory Committee, three former Census Bureau directors, and others.

We look forward to engagement with you and your staff on these indicators to ensure transparent assessment and dissemination of the many aspects of decennial census quality to the American public.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert Santos". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" and last name "Santos" clearly distinguishable.

Robert Santos  
2021 ASA President