

## ACS PROGRAM REVIEW WEBINAR MODERATOR REMARKS

### **First Slide – American Community Survey (ACS) Program Review Webinar March 6, 2012**

*Good afternoon, I'm Sally Obenski, special assistant to the Director of the Census Bureau and the American Community Survey Program Review Team Lead.*

*I'd like to welcome participants listening in on the phones today and following this webinar on their computer.*

*Today we're here to share information about the Program Review. You should all have received by email some background information about this effort, including a feedback form, should you chose to provide written input. We are looking forward to hearing your thoughts in the coming months about how to improve the ACS. We want to ensure that the ACS is fulfilling its mission and meeting your needs.*

*Our speaker today is Jim Treat, who is the ACS Office Division Chief, but the Program Manager for the ACS.*

*Without further delay, I'll turn it over to Jim.*

### **Second Slide – Today's Objectives**

#### **For the ACS :**

- **Provide an overview of the ACS Program Review**
- **Describe scope of the Program Review components for engagement**

#### **For the Stakeholders:**

- **Learn more about the ACS Program Review**
- **Learn on areas for providing input**

*Good Afternoon*

*The objective for today's webinar is focused on information sharing and identifying the areas where we are asking for your input.*

*I want to provide you with some information on the ACS program review so you can learn about what we are doing and how you can participate.*

### **Third Slide - The American Community Survey**

- **The U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides population and housing characteristics updated every year.**
- **The statistics produced by the ACS are available as 1-, 3-, and 5-year estimates for the nation, states, counties, cities, and communities, and are used for planning of programs, products, goods, and services.**

*In December 2010, the ACS released its first-ever 5-year data products, an important milestone for the program.*

*For those who may be new to the survey, let me provide a quick overview of the ACS.*

*As the largest survey in the United States, the ACS is the only source of small-area statistics on a wide range of important housing, social and economic characteristics for all communities in the country. It offers members of Congress, planners, decision-makers at all levels of government, and the public more timely insight into the impact of transformational events during the decade.*

*The ACS is an ongoing survey that went into full implementation in 2005 for housing units, with Group Quarters added in 2006. It collects information on demographic, social, economic and housing characteristics.*

*Estimates are produced for many geographic levels, from the national level to very small areas, such as census tracts and census block groups.*

*The ACS has three main products. The 1-year data product, first produced in 2006, is for geographic areas with a population of 65,000 and greater. The 3-year data product, first produced in 2008, is for geographic areas with a population of 20,000 and greater. Finally, the 5-year data product, first produced in 2010, is for all areas – this is the small area data product.*

#### **Fourth Slide – ACS Program Review Milestones**

**The ACS is collecting input from stakeholders on ACS program components as part of an overall Program Review to ensure continued effectiveness.**

- **The Census Bureau’s Director commissioned a team to plan and implement the ACS Program Review assessment.**
- **ACS Program Review Team formed and initiated a plan.**
- **Conducted outreach to Census leadership for input to ACS program components.**
- **Strategy formed for external stakeholders to provide input to ACS Program Review.**
- **Outreach to external stakeholders for input to ACS Program Review components.**
- **Plan to analyze and share external stakeholder feedback.**
- **Share the final recommendations and actions on ACS Program Review.**

*In December 2010, the ACS delivered the first 5-year data, marking a major milestone for the program in delivering on a promise to provide data for small areas.*

*In April 2011, the Census Bureau’s Director initiated the ACS Program Review to do an assessment of the program. The desired result is to continue our effectiveness in meeting the challenge of an ever-changing population’s needs.*

*The timing goal is to complete the major part of the review activities by December of 2012. However, that does not mean that all the work will be completed by December of this year.*

*A team was commissioned and formed to plan and implement the review.*

*The team solicited input from Census Bureau leadership on assessment areas and developed a strategy for obtaining input from external stakeholders*

*We are going to analyze stakeholder feedback and share those results with you. In addition, we have commissioned the National Academy of Sciences to assist in the program review. Your feedback will be provided to them as input into their efforts.*

*Finally, we plan to share the recommendations and actions on the program review with stakeholders.*

#### **Fifth Slide – ACS Program Review Components**

**Communications and Stakeholder Management - Engagement and outreach strategies with stakeholders**

**Data Products - Data Products**

**Methodology - Improvements on the current ACS survey design and methods, as well as potential alternatives to improve the quality of the ACS data**

**Research and Evaluation - Scope and priorities**

*There are eight components to the ACS Program Review. For the four components listed in the table, we are soliciting your feedback on these topics. I will provide more detail on these areas in the next slides*

*There are four other components, not included on the slide, for which we are doing an internal review. These are internal ACS processes focused on organization and management.*

#### **Sixth Slide – Communications and Stakeholder Management Review – Are we communicating effectively?**

- **Briefed new members of Congress**
- **Identified stakeholders**
- **Prototype an overall ACS program communications approach using program review template**
- **Develop Communications and Stakeholder Management Plan for ongoing program**
- **Establishing an ACS data users group**
- **Interchange with Census Advisory Committees**
- **Obtain input from other stakeholders**

*Our main question for the communications and stakeholder management review is: are we communicating effectively? So, our objective is to develop, implement and maintain ongoing communications with stakeholders.*

*To meet that objective we:*

*Briefed new members of Congress on the benefits of the ACS*

*Identified our stakeholder base and obtained contact information for them*

*Developed a communication strategy for the program review which is being used as a prototype for the ongoing communication effort with stakeholders beyond the program review*

*To that point, we are developing a Communications and Stakeholder Management Plan*

*Working on establishing an ACS data users group to create a forum for data users to discuss their experiences on using ACS data*

*Working with the Census Advisory Committees and other stakeholders on how to improve communications*

#### **Seventh Slide – Data Products Review - Are our data products meeting your needs?**

- **Participated in a Population Reference Bureau workshop**
- **Held a workshop with federal data users**
- **Interviewing federal data users**
- **Interchanges with Census Advisory Committees**
- **Planning a workshop with non-federal data users**
- **National Academy of Sciences Panel review**

*Our main question for the data products review is: are our data products meeting your needs? So, our objective is to assess current ACS data products in meeting stakeholders' needs*

*To meet that objective we:*

*Participated in a workshop held by the Population Reference Bureau for ACS data users in June of 2011. In addition, in the summer of 2011 we held a workshop with federal data users for them to discuss among themselves their uses of ACS data. We are conducting interviews of federal data users on an ongoing basis to understand and document their uses of ACS data. We are working with the Census Advisory Committees and other stakeholders on how to improve data products. Planning a workshop, with support by the National Academy of Sciences, with non-federal ACS data users to be held later this year. Finally, the National Academy of Sciences is leading a review of the data products*

#### **Eight Slide – Methodological Review – Are we using the best survey methods?**

- **Established Design Baseline**
- **Engaged the National Academy of Sciences**
- **Interchanges with Census Advisory Committees**
- **Obtain input from other stakeholders**

*Our main question for the methodological review is: are we using the best survey methods? So, our objective is to assess current ACS survey design and methods to look for areas to improve the survey*

*To meet that objective:*

*First thing we did was to document the ACS design baseline. We also engaged the National Academy of Sciences by establishing a panel to conduct a review of our methods and make recommendations on areas of improvement. This work started in the Fall of 2011 and will continue to February of 2014. Note that this work goes 14 months beyond the Program Review period on December of this year. NAS will share their results with us on a flow basis throughout the process. We are working with the Census Advisory Committees and other stakeholders on how to improve survey methods. Specifically, we presented to the Census Advisory Committees our research related to the use of the Internet as a data collection mode and solicited their input on how we might proceed in production.*

#### **Ninth Slide – Research and Evaluation Review – Do we have the right research agenda?**

- **Inventory research and evaluation projects**

- **Align with strategic plan**
- **Interchanges with Census Advisory Committees**
- **Obtain input from other stakeholders**

*Our main question for the research and evaluation review is: do we have the right research agenda? Therefore, our objective is to assess ACS research and evaluation efforts*

*To meet that objective:*

*First thing, we examined the current inventory of research and evaluation projects*

*We determined how these projects aligned with the strategic goals of the ACS*

*We are working with the Census Advisory Committees and other stakeholders on how to improve our research agenda. Specifically, we solicited the Census Advisory Committees on future research we should conduct around the use of the Internet along with responsive design.*

#### **Tenth Slide – In Summary**

- **Your feedback of the ACS Program**
- **We will share what we learn:**  
[http://www.census.gov/acs/www/about\\_the\\_survey/acs\\_program\\_review/](http://www.census.gov/acs/www/about_the_survey/acs_program_review/)
- **Developing an effective communication strategy beyond the Program Review for building on this process after the Program Review is officially complete**
- **Contact Us: [ACS.Program.Review@census.gov](mailto:ACS.Program.Review@census.gov)**

*In summary, I discussed some short term and long-term goals related to your involvement in the ACS program review.*

*We have two short-term goals. First, we would value your feedback on the four ACS program review areas. They are:*

1. *Communications and Stakeholder Management*
2. *Data Products*
3. *Methods*
4. *Areas for future research*

*Second, we want to share what we learn. The web address on the slide is the hub of information and updates about the ACS Program Review. The online feedback form is also available on this site.*

*Our long-term goal is to develop a communication strategy with stakeholders beyond the program review. If you have any questions after today you can contact us at [ACS.Program.Review@census.gov](mailto:ACS.Program.Review@census.gov)*