

Updated September 2, 2025

Overview of FY2026 Budget Request for the Census Bureau

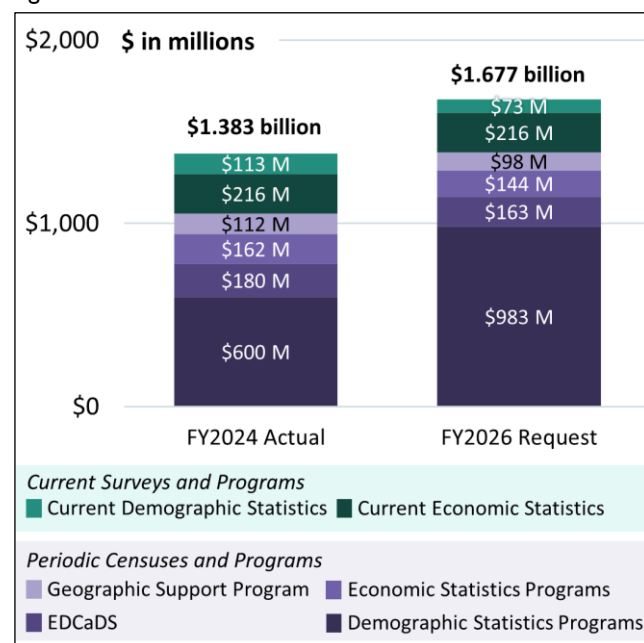
Introduction

As a Department of Commerce agency, the Census Bureau is funded through the Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies (CJS) appropriations bill. This In Focus provides an overview of the U.S. Census Bureau's FY2026 budget request; certain comparisons to previous years' levels; and information about congressional action to date on the Census Bureau's FY2026 budget. Information presented is drawn from the Census Bureau's FY2026 *Congressional Budget Justification* and relevant congressional documents.

The FY2026 request is divided between the bureau's two major accounts: Current Surveys and Programs, and Periodic Censuses and Programs. This product provides comparisons with FY2025 enacted amounts for these two major Census Bureau accounts. The FY2025 full-year continuing resolution (CR) funded these accounts in the same amounts and under the same authorities and conditions as enacted in FY2024. The FY2026 budget document includes detailed figures for actual FY2024 amounts; actual FY2025 amounts are not described in detail. To remain consistent with more detailed budget items, comparisons are made to FY2024 actual amounts.

Figure 1. Census Budget

Figure is interactive in the HTML version of the In Focus



Source: Data from U.S. Census Bureau, FY2026 *Congressional Budget Justification*.

FY2026 Budget Request

The Trump Administration's FY2026 budget request for the Census Bureau is \$1.677 billion, which is a \$294 million increase from the FY2024 enacted level of \$1.383 billion.

Current Surveys and Programs

The Administration requests \$289 million for the Current Surveys and Programs account in FY2026, a decrease of about \$40 million from the FY2024 enacted amount of \$329 million. This account includes Current Economic Statistics and Current Demographic Statistics.

Current Economic Statistics

Current Economic Statistics include business, construction, manufacturing, general economic, foreign trade, and government statistics. According to the FY2026 budget justification, Current Economic Statistics programs "provide timely, accurate, and essential data on the structure and performance of the U.S. economy, supporting the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) estimation, fiscal and monetary policymaking, and private sector decision-making."

The FY2026 request for Current Economic Statistics is \$216 million, the same as the FY2024 amount.

Current Demographic Statistics

Current Demographic Statistics includes the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP); the Current Population Survey (CPS), which is sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) and the Census Bureau; and the Population Estimates Program. The SIPP is an ongoing survey that measures distribution of government assistance programs. The CPS provides estimates of income, poverty, and other indicators. The Population Estimates Program calculates population change over time. The Census Bureau's population estimates are used in a variety of federal programs to determine funding allocations or eligibility.

The FY2026 request for Current Demographic Statistics is \$73 million, which is a \$40 million decrease from the FY2024 amount of \$113 million.

Proposed changes to these programs include testing internet self-response for the CPS and using some nonsurvey data to reduce costs for the SIPP.

Periodic Censuses and Programs

The Administration requests \$1.388 billion for the Periodic Censuses and Programs account in FY2026, a \$334 million increase from the FY2024 amount of \$1.054 billion. This account consists of several programs discussed below.

Decennial Census

The FY2026 request for the decennial census account is \$983 million, a \$383 million increase from the FY2024 amount of \$600 million. Requested FY2026 funding for the decennial census includes support for the 2026 Census Test and preparation for the 2028 Dress Rehearsal, full-scale development of core IT infrastructure, award and management of contracts, and continued data collection and publication for the American Community Survey (ACS). Unlike previous budget documents, the FY2026 budget justification does not specify the respective amounts for the 2030 decennial census and the ACS within the decennial census account.

Periodic Economic Statistics

The FY2026 request for the Periodic Economic Statistics Program, which contains the Economic Census and the Census of Governments, is \$144 million, an \$18 million decrease from the FY2024 level of \$162 million. Specific funding for these two surveys is not broken down in the FY2026 budget request.

The Economic Census, conducted every five years, collects statistics on businesses in the United States to help understand the U.S. economy. Requested FY2026 activities for the Economic Census include the continued review of 2022 Economic Census data releases.

The Census of Governments, conducted every five years, collects statistics on state and local governments across the United States. Requested FY2026 activities for the Census of Governments include the expanded use of administrative records and other data collection methods in preparation for the 2027 Census of Governments.

Geographic Support Program

The purpose of the Census Bureau's Geographic Support Program (GSP) is to support and maintain the geospatial infrastructure required to conduct survey data collection, processing, tabulation, and dissemination across covered regions. The Census Bureau considers the GSP to be foundational for all of its social and economic data products. Congressional district wall maps are produced by the GSP. The Census Bureau aims to utilize the GSP to minimize 2030 Census in-field enumeration costs.

The FY2026 request for the GSP is \$98 million, a \$14 million decrease from the FY2024 level of \$112 million.

Enterprise Data Collection and Dissemination Systems (EDCaDS)

The EDCaDS generally supports the data collection, processing, and dissemination systems that are associated with Census Bureau programs.

The FY2026 request's stated goal for the EDCaDS is "to provide large cyclical systems that must be scaled for peak operations for the Decennial Census, the Economic Census, and the Census of Governments."

The FY2026 request for the EDCaDS is \$163 million, a \$17 million decrease from the FY2024 level of \$180 million.

Agency Reorganization

The *Technical Supplement to the 2026 Budget: Appendix* for the Department of Commerce includes the statement:

The President's Budget proposes to reorganize the Bureau of Labor Statistics, Bureau of Economic Analysis, and the Census Bureau at the Department of Commerce.

While the Census Bureau and the Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) are within the Department of Commerce, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) is not. BLS has historically been a part of the Department of Labor.

Congressional Action

On June 4 and June 5, 2025, respectively, the Senate and House Committees on Appropriations' CJS Subcommittees held budget hearings on the FY2026 request for the Department of Commerce, during which Secretary Lutnick testified and responded to questions from Members.

With respect to the Census Bureau, members of the House subcommittee asked questions regarding the Census Bureau losing staff through retirement and deferred resignations, the 2026 census field test, any potential changes to questions about race and ethnicity, the Secretary's decision to terminate the Census Bureau's advisory committees, and the issue of counting noncitizens in the decennial census.

The House Appropriations Committee CJS subcommittee marked up the House's version of the FY2026 CJS appropriations bill on July 15, 2025. The bill, as approved by the subcommittee, would provide \$1.677 billion in total for the Census Bureau: \$288.5 million for Current Surveys and Programs and \$1.388 billion for Periodic Censuses and Programs. The bill approved by the subcommittee would exclude "aliens who are unlawfully present in the United States" from apportionment determinations. It would also prevent enforcement of mandatory response requirements for certain Census Bureau surveys and limit the bureau's ability to inquire more than twice to solicit survey responses. The bill advanced from the subcommittee by a 9-6 vote.

The Senate Appropriations Committee marked up the Senate's version of the FY2026 CJS appropriations bill on July 17, 2025. The bill, as reported, would provide \$1.520 billion in total for the Census Bureau: \$328.5 million for Current Surveys and Programs and \$1.192 billion for Periodic Census and Programs. Furthermore, the committee report accompanying the bill directs the Census Bureau to provide information regarding the removal of Census and BEA data sets; the termination of Census Bureau advisory committees; ACS modernization efforts; 2030 decennial census operation plans; and the effects of field office closures. Additionally, the report directs the Census Bureau to continue outreach to public libraries as partners for Census surveys and to prioritize carrying out the 2026 Census Test. The bill advanced from the full committee by a 19-10 vote.

Taylor R. Knoedl, Analyst in American National Government

Disclaimer

This document was prepared by the Congressional Research Service (CRS). CRS serves as nonpartisan shared staff to congressional committees and Members of Congress. It operates solely at the behest of and under the direction of Congress. Information in a CRS Report should not be relied upon for purposes other than public understanding of information that has been provided by CRS to Members of Congress in connection with CRS's institutional role. CRS Reports, as a work of the United States Government, are not subject to copyright protection in the United States. Any CRS Report may be reproduced and distributed in its entirety without permission from CRS. However, as a CRS Report may include copyrighted images or material from a third party, you may need to obtain the permission of the copyright holder if you wish to copy or otherwise use copyrighted material.