

**WEBINAR: Uses of Decennial Census Programs Data in Federal Funds Distribution:
Fiscal Year 2021**

June 14, 2023

3:00 pm ET

Coordinator: Welcome and thank you for standing by. At this time, all participants will be in a listen only mode until the question and answer session of today's conference. At that time, you may press star 1 on your phone to ask a question. I'd like to inform all parties, today's conference is being recorded. If you have any objections, you may disconnect at this time. I would now like to turn the conference over to Maria. Thank you. You may begin.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Good afternoon and thank you for joining us for today's webinar. My name is Maria Olmedo-Malagon and I'm the Chief of the Office of Strategic Alliances at the Census Bureau. Today we released a new report showing how Decennial Census Program's data help guide trillions of dollars in federal funding distribution. This is the first new estimate we have released in nearly six years.

This new figure underscores the importance of the Decennial Census Programs data and how our data serves as a critical source of information to

help guide a variety of organizations to distribute federal funding for hundreds of assistance programs. Before I introduce today's speakers, I want to thank and acknowledge you all of the data users and stakeholders listening to today's webinar who helped amplify our message about how important it is for everyone to respond to the Decennial Census and Census Bureau surveys.

Today we have three speakers who will walk you all through how the Census Bureau arrived at this new estimate and what it means. Speaking today will be Albert Fontenot, who is Executive Senior Advisor for the Decennial Census Programs here at the Census Bureau; Ceci Villa Ross, Special Assistant to the Division Chief in the American Community Survey Office. Ms. Villa Ross will be delivering today's main presentation and is the Census Bureau's expert on how our data inform federal funding.

And Professor Andrew Reamer from the George Washington Institute of Public Policy at George Washington University. Professor Reamer is a nationally recognized authority on the topic of today's webinar and collaborated with us on this new report. Immediately following today's presentation, we'll start taking questions from the audience. If you already have a question and are dialed into the phone line, you can get into the question queue immediately now, by pressing star 1. We'll begin today's presentation with Al Fontenot. Al, welcome.

Al Fontenot: Thank you, Maria. Earlier today we announced that more than \$2.8 trillion in federal funding was distributed in fiscal year 2021 guided by Census Bureau data in whole or in part. Our previous estimate released in 2017 was more than \$675 billion. You'll hear more about how we arrived at the new estimate; our methodology, in just a few minutes. The new figure of \$2.8 trillion represents not only the power of census data, but perhaps more importantly, the power of people's responses to the once a decade count and to our survey.

Quite simply, people power our data. Every person that fills out a questionnaire helps provide a vital part of the picture of their community and ultimately the country. People's responses also help guide where federal funding flows. People's participation improves the quality of the data we collect and the decisions that send money back to their communities for the things we all care about. Knowing the amount of federal money guided by census data underscores the significance of people's response and our work to constantly improve the timeliness and range of data products we provide.

Calculating dollar figures for every federal program that census data touch is a complicated and labor-intensive task. Ceci Villa Ross from the American Community Survey Office, our resident specialist on how census data informs federal funding, collaborated with Professor Andrew Reamer, a nationally recognized expert on this subject. Professor Reamer provided valuable input on the methodology used in this new report from his years of research. We are thankful to Ms. Villa Ross and Professor Reamer for their hard work on this project.

Without further ado, I would like to introduce Professor Reamer to share his thoughts on today's release. Professor Reamer?

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Hello, and thank you. And thanks to Ceci and everyone involved in this very important project. It's a thrill and an honor to work with the Census Bureau on this. As many people listening know and watching, know that in 2019 I came out with a report that identifies 316 federal programs that allocated \$1.5 trillion in fiscal year 2017 to communities around the nation and that in addition the census data were identified as guiding day-to-day investment decisions in economic activity across the US.

The new report expands greatly on that, almost doubles that figure and makes even more clear the substantial importance of census data in evidence-based policymaking and in having a healthy economy. Also, in the report, we link the current efforts to allocate federal funding, \$2.8 trillion, to an idea that James Madison had on the floor of the House in 1790 in designing the very first census in which he said, wouldn't it be a great idea, a really innovative idea, to actually ask people about their own characteristics so that Congress can adapt the public measures the particular circumstances of the community.

And the census, the decennial census and the Census Bureau have been doing just that for 2-1/3 centuries. This new estimate makes quite clear the breadth of the impact that everyone filling out their census form has on our communities and our day-to-day lives. And the report describes the research and the methods that I and Ceci and our colleagues used to come up with this number. Ceci, the floor is yours.

Ceci Villa Ross: Thank you, Andrew. Thank you, Al and Maria. It's great to be here. As an overview, I'll start off by presenting the findings and tables of the top 20 programs as well as the COVID-related programs in fiscal year 2021. After presenting the findings, I will provide the background analysis, scope and methodology, as well as some examples of how programs are using the data and the data sources. These examples provide a glimpse into how programs are using the data for particular federal assistance programs.

So we found that at least 353 federal assistance programs use the Census Bureau's data in whole or in part, to distribute federal funds in fiscal year 2021 which is estimated at more than \$2.8 trillion in federal funds. Of these 353 programs the top 20 largest federally funded programs account for about 90% of the total funds distributed. So this slide here shows the top 20 programs from this analysis. Though the funding for certain programs has changed

relative to spending on other programs many of the other programs from the 2015 analysis are still within the top 20 programs in fiscal year 2021.

As you see on this slide those programs that are in bold are new to the analysis for fiscal year 2021. And I think this slide really should resonate with many of us since COVID was something that affected all of us in some way. This table shows the programs specific to COVID which were new in fiscal year '21 and account for over \$700 billion and that is about 25% of the total federal assistance in fiscal year '21.

So a little bit of background on how we got to this estimate. Data from the 2020 Census Barriers Attitudes and Motivators Study showed that funding for public services such as hospitals, schools and roads is a key motivator. The report goes on to state that participants might be persuaded of the importance and purpose of the census if they make the connection between completing a census form and the possibility of increased funding or support for their community, notably in support of critical community institutions, organizations and services.

The report goes on to say that this in turn may boost self-response for the 2020 census. And a simpler way to say all that, illustrating the value of our data to funding or support for a person's community increases the likelihood of participation in a census or survey. So as we were actively preparing for the 2020 census, we released a working paper and found that more than \$675 billion in federal funds were distributed in whole or in part using Census Bureau data in fiscal year 2015.

This figure has been frequently used to illustrate the value of Census Bureau data to the public to encourage timely survey and census responses. It is important to note the Census Bureau does not distribute or determine federal

funding for any program, nor does the Census Bureau determine how the data are used by federal programs or in their funding formulas. So as we have said, we built on this previous work in partnership the work that we've done. And in partnership with Andrew Reamer, we documented an updated estimate of the allocation of federal funds distributed using decennial census programs data.

Federal financial assistance programs use our data to guide funding in one of three ways. Programs use the data to define the characteristics of geographic areas, state and local governments, and populations eligible to receive funds. Another way is programs use the data as variables in formulas used to determine the allocation of funds to eligible recipients. And several competitive financial assistance programs use data derived by the decennial census program to specify criteria by which the sponsoring agency will rank and select award recipients.

And the overall approach is to illustrate at the federal level how the use of Decennial Census Programs data are used in the distribution of funds. By responding to a Census Bureau survey or the census, the data collected may enable federal programs to fund initiatives by using population counts and characteristics to target and distribute funds or to provide a tool for data-driven decision-making in government, communities, and industry, which really builds the confidence in the government and the economy.

It also provides a substantial return on investment to the public when considered against the total funds allocated based on these data. So the scope of federal assistance is defined as being distributed using Census Bureau data. In this analysis the term Census Bureau data is defined to include the Decennial Census Programs data, so that's data produced by the decennial census, the American Community Survey, and geographic programs

supporting the decennial census and the American Community Survey, as well as data produced by programs related to the decennial census programs.

Listed here on the screen are the related programs that use the decennial census programs data to determine sampling frames, to control and weight for estimates, or as an input. So, for example, the Census Bureau's population estimates program produces estimates of the population nationally and for state and county geographies throughout the decade. The population estimates program uses measures of population change, such as birth, death, and net migration, and adds this change to the most recent decennial census data to provide annual time series estimates of population and housing units.

These estimates are then used as population controls for the ACS and other federal surveys. So, our data sources for the funds estimate were USAspending.gov and the System for Award Management, known as SAM.gov. USAspending.gov is the primary source of funds estimates for this analysis. It's maintained by the Department of Treasury and is the official source of US government spending data.

Legislation, such as the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act and the Digital Accountability and Transparency Act require agencies to share information on federal financial assistance awards of more than \$25,000 on a bi-monthly or quarterly basis. I examined spending information for fiscal year 2021 since this was what was the most recently available data when my analysis began. And then information about each program including whether funding is guided by formulas is sourced from SAM.gov.

And SAM.gov is a dissemination mechanism for federal domestic assistance program information and it's maintained by GSA, the General Services Administration. So at times where there was USA spending data were

incomplete for a particular program, I would have gone to SAM.gov for the funds estimates. So how did we get to this estimate? This analysis examined the way funding is allocated for a program and if and how Census Bureau data are used.

At a very basic level in most of these uses, Census Bureau data direct either who can receive the funds, mostly states, but it could be smaller geographies or individual organizations, or how much they receive. The methodology for this analysis was to start by reviewing the catalog of programs from the 2017 report to ensure they still existed and that they were still providing funds. If the program was still active, the funding amount was updated for that program.

Eight programs from the 2017 inventory did not have a fiscal year 2021 funding amount. This could be because the program was no longer funded, or it was inactive. Additionally, in partnership with Professor Reamer, the inventory of programs in his *Counting for Dollars 2020, The Role of the Decennial Census in Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds*, his programs were examined for inclusion as well. New this time around, new programs were identified by using machine learning techniques. This involved using Python and open source packages to perform natural language processing.

Then modeling techniques such as logistic regression, random forest, and support vector machine learning were used to determine if there were other possible programs that were using Census Bureau data. Then the potential federal programs that were identified were examined in SAM.gov, Grants.gov, Congressional budget requests, as well as a very robust review of the program authorization to determine if the program uses Census Bureau data in their funds distribution.

As a result, 229 programs were added to the inventory of programs with a funding-related Census Bureau data use. The fiscal year 2021 funding for these programs were updated from USAspending.gov, again, the official source of federal government spending. For some of the programs, the funding amount was not available in USAspending.gov, and other sources. Like I mentioned, SAM.gov, was used, but we also used program Web sites or budget documents to were used to capture this information.

So between the merged methodology from the report that was released in 2017 and Andrew's methodology in the accounting for dollars report, plus inflation or programs passed by Congress over the last few years, as well as the COVID programs, it was natural for us to see an increase in the amount of money allocated by federal programs using data derived from the decennial census program.

As I was reviewing various pieces of legislation or program sites, the information I was looking for in making a determination of a program's use of Census Bureau data for their allocations are seen here on the screen. So for the Medical Assistance Program, which is the largest federally funded program, it states from their authorization, "The Secretary calculates the percentages using formulas in sections 1905(b) and 1101(a)(8), and calculations by the Department of Commerce of average income per person in each state and for the Nation as a whole." So per capita income is derived from a combination of population and characteristics.

The population threshold is used for Federal Transit Formula Grants as seen here, "population of not less than 50,000," and then it further states, "that has been defined and designated in the most recent decennial census."

For a couple of the COVID assistance programs, unemployment statistics were used to determine the allocation to the states and the official unemployment statistics are from the Current Population Survey which uses the Census Bureau's Master Address File for the sampling frame.

And this is updated continuously by the decennial census program's address canvassing and listing operations. In addition to the number of unemployed individuals for the Coronavirus State and Local Recovery, the methodology for the counties and other levels of government, the act requires the funds to be allocated based on the population share of the total population using the latest available population data from the Census Bureau.

So in summary, more than \$2.8 trillion in federal funding was distributed in fiscal year 2021 by programs using data in whole or in part by Decennial Census Programs.

This accounted for 353 federal assistance programs and the top 20 largest federally funded programs account for about 90% of total funding distributed. As Al mentioned earlier, the new figure of \$2.8 trillion represents not only the power of our data but perhaps most importantly the power of people's responses to our censuses and surveys.

Before I hand it back over to Maria, I would be remiss if I did not thank Marisa Hotchkiss, the author of the report released in 2017, for her endless guidance, patience and knowledge that she shared with me as I embarked on this project; to Dave Raglin, Chase Sawyer, Andres Mojica and Greg Mills, for the work they did on machine learning; Andrew Reamer for his collaboration and partnership and the leadership of the Census Bureau, Donna Daily, Deb Stempowski, Al Fontenot, Ron Jarmin and Director Santos.

On a very personal note, I never expected to have such a passion for a project. For me, the data came alive. This research is one component of how our data are used. There are countless uses of the data by others who are making data-driven decisions or for writing a proposal for a grant. My mom uses our data in writing proposals for the University of Texas at El Paso, for funding various programs benefiting Hispanics in STEM, and my brother who relies on our data for program evaluation.

By responding to a Census Bureau survey or census, this better prepares our state or our community with the data needed to ensure they are provided the right amount of money to provide assistance. A response is the first stitch that is interlaced across the federal government and various assistance listings. These assistance listings are vast but there seems to be an underlying commonality. The assistance listings benefit all facets of our lives and to the individual families that need it the most.

A prime example is the COVID-19 pandemic. It was never predicted but our data were the first line of defense in order to get funding to states to begin recovery and relief. Thank you for listening, and I will now pass it back to Maria. Maria?

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Thank you, Ceci. I have to join Ceci on those words. First of all, I want to thank Al, Andrew, for their participation. I have to thank Ceci for such a wonderful presentation. She has been someone that I have looked up to during my career. We're around the same age, but I'm a little bit more junior in the federal government than Ceci, and I have a lot of admiration and consider her one of my mentors. So Ceci, thank you so much for this presentation. This has been amazing.

I know how important this is working with national partners and stakeholders every day. I see how organizations all around the United States use this data and what a difference this research is going to make for so many. Also, as a resident of an inner city and with kids attending inner city schools, I see also census data alive every single day just like the example that you gave with your mom. And what you did with this research and what Dr. Reamer did with his in the past, is making changes for communities all around the country.

So thank you to the three of you for such a wonderful panel. So now I would like - I think we are ready for questions. And I would like to ask the operator, can you please give the instructions on how people can submit questions again?

Coordinator: Yes, thank you. We will now begin the question and answer session. If you'd like to ask a question, please press star 1, unmute your phone and record your name clearly. Your name is required to introduce your question. If you need to withdraw your question, press star 2. Again, to ask a question, please press star 1. It'll take a few moments for the questions to come through. Please standby. And our first question is from Hansi Lo Wang from NPR. Go ahead. Your line is open.

Hansi Lo Wang: Thank you. Given how much of a motivator this estimate is for census participation amongst the public based on the Census Bureau's research, why has it taken almost six years for the Census Bureau to update its estimates of how much federal funding is guided in part by decennial data programs?

Ceci Villa Ross: So thank you Hansi for the question. So I don't - the last report was before the 2020 Census. The report before that the Census Bureau issued, was before the 2010 Census. So I think the cadence has typically been prior to a census to have as you saw in the CBAMS data that it was a motivator. So this time

around we decided, you know, it's probably changed so let's see where the figure is and that's where we are today. So we did the research and released the number today.

Hansi Lo Wang: If I could use my follow up question, just a different line of questioning here. Given that the COVID-related relief funding makes up about a quarter of this latest estimate, what is the Bureau's plan for updating this estimate going forward, so we have a more accurate sense of how much federal funding is guided by census decennial data? Is this a yearly cadence or is this going to be the only update before the 2030?

Ceci Villa Ross: Yes. Thank you, Hansi. We do plan on updating this more frequently. We just have not decided internally on the cadence of the releases. But we are looking into doing this more frequently.

Hansi Lo Wang: Thank you.

Ceci Villa Ross: Sure.

Coordinator: The next question is from Mike Schneider from Associated Press. Go ahead. Your line is open.

Mike Schneider: Hi. Thanks for having this. I have a question about adjustments for the population estimates. So I'm not sure who the best person is to answer that, so I'll let you fight over the question. But, as you know, the blended base was devised as a way to overcome some of the undercounts in the 2020 Census, and to help with possible shortfalls in federal funding that communities who were overcounted might face.

And so I was just wondering if you could talk about whether the Bureau regards it as a success and whether it has fulfilled the goal of making these communities that were undercounted, get the federal funding to actually reflect their numbers. And then as an addendum, I was wondering if you could provide an update on the work of BERT, the base evaluation and research team, and how their work may influence future population estimates.

Ceci Villa Ross: Oh sorry, I'm on mute, and I was using an old school way of writing down what you were asking. I don't - I'm not familiar with BERT, so I can't answer your question on that. I would have to look into it. Maybe Andrew is aware of BERT. As far as the pop estimates, that is not my expertise, and I would feel more comfortable if someone from the pop estimates program were to provide an answer to you on that one. I don't know if anyone else from the Census Bureau has anything to add to that.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: I don't think we have anything to add. However, I know that we have a series of webinars that we will be announcing for the next couple of weeks, and I can go over the list right now if you would like. We are having a webinar on pop estimates (**Correction – no webinar is planned for the week of 6/19/23 regarding the Population Estimates Program*), a release on pop estimates next week. We are also having this survey of income and program participation later this month, and also a release on the household survey.

So probably those are products that will be more related to the question. And at the time, we have everything announced on our Web site. And I know that if we don't have a specific webinar for them, and right now I'm not familiar if we will, but if we don't, I know that our subject matter experts are always open for specific questions and interactions. Thank you. Next question?

Coordinator: Our next question is from Allison Plyer from the Data Center New Orleans. Go ahead. Your line is open.

Allison Plyer: Hi. Thanks. So, well thanks to the Census Bureau and Ceci Villa Ross and Andrew Reamer, for really pioneering this important work. We appreciate it. You know it strikes me that with \$2.8 trillion at stake in one year that's like 1/8 of GDP, and it just underlines, you know, the need for the accuracy and fairness in the census data. So, and then of course as we were just talking about, in the years that don't end in zero the annual population estimates are a major driver of annual federal funding distribution.

And the Census Director has asked for just \$6 million to improve the population estimates, make some of the adjustments that we were just hearing about, and that \$6 million is like a rounding error, right, in census budget land. And the whole \$2 billion our colleagues say census needs to improve the American Community Survey and prepare for the accurate 2030 Census is a small investment too to ensure all this federal funding is distributed accurately and fairly the way Congress intends.

So I'm wondering on that note, you know, if you all can provide this analysis for each state, because I think that that will help folks really relate more, whether they're folks locally or even folks in Congress to better understand the importance of the census data for their state.

Ceci Villa Ross: Yes. Thank you for your comments. And we have done a little bit of research into the data at a state level. We just have not made plans further on that analysis. But it's definitely something that we're looking into.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Next question.

Coordinator: Our next question is from Jewelry Keodara from the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center. Go ahead. Your line is open. Jewelry? Jewelry, your line might be muted. Can you unmute your phone line? Our next question is from Ethan Ableman from the Federal Funds Information for States. Go ahead. Your line is open.

Ethan Ableman: Hi there. Can you hear me? Great.

Ceci Villa Ross: Yes, we can.

Ethan Ableman: Thank you so much, Ceci and everyone, for updating this report. Thank you very much. (Unintelligible) and we love stuff like this. Just a quick question - sort of a technical question, but I noticed that you guys have several of these programs. This is being influenced by census data that sort of are assistance to individuals. Specifically, I'm thinking about SNAP and Pell Grants. And it was not immediately obvious to me how you were connecting that to census data. So I was wondering if you could elaborate on that. Thank you.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Ceci, do you want to handle that or do you want me to?

Ceci Villa Ross: You can go ahead, Andrew. I was trying to pull up the report at the same time.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Okay. Thanks for your question. One difference between the report I did a few years ago and the current report is that this report includes programs that rely on the Consumer Price Index, which is even national, the nationwide Consumer Price Index. And so programs that adjust the poverty thresholds nationwide irrespective of where you live are included here. And the development of the Consumer Price Index can be traced back to the decennial census, from the decennial to pop estimates to the Consumer Expenditure Survey to the Consumer Price Index.

So that's why SNAP and Pell are in there. Actually, school lunch is in there as well. In addition, it actually turns out that for SNAP there is a geography - specific use of census data in that if a community has more than, I think, 10% of employment that SNAP recipients get an extra 13 weeks. So that is just for communities that qualify. Does that answer your question?

Ethan Ableman: Yes. That's really helpful. Thanks so much.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: So I want to remind everyone on the line that if you're interested in making any questions, star 1 will bring you to our operator. I also want to remind everyone that you can find the press kit on our Web site, Census.gov. To find the press kit look for the news tab at the top on the Census homepage, and you will find the press kit there with all the materials that were presented today. Operator, I understand that we have another person on queue.

Coordinator: Yes. Our next question is from Angeline Echeverria from NC Counts. Go ahead. Your line is open.

Angeline Echeverria: Hi. Can you all hear me?

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Yes.

Angeline Echeverria: Okay. My question is related to the way in which incarcerated people are counted in the census. I know that for the most part the Census Bureau counts them at the site of their incarceration rather than in their home communities. And so I'm wondering what, if any, impact that has on the accuracy of these federal funding allocations. I've heard from different sources that it does have an impact or that it doesn't have an impact, and I would just like to hear from you all what, if any, impact you think it might have. Thank you.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Ceci, I can handle that if you'd like. I appreciate the question. Keep in mind that for certain programs like Medicaid, the lowest level of geography is the state. And so it doesn't really matter where someone lives in the state. As a result, wherever a person is counted when they're incarcerated does not affect a receipt state's of reimbursement from the federal government. The second factor is that for most programs, and actually Medicaid is the exception, but for most programs it's based on the count of people who qualify for that program.

So for instance, Title I grants to K-12 school systems is based on each community's share of poor children nationwide. And so again, wherever a person in jail is counted, that person is not a poor child, so it's not going to affect that count. It really would only affect the allocation of funds for programs at a sub-state level in which the person incarcerated is somehow counted in the distribution of funds for the targets for that program. I'm not sure - you would probably know better than I would what comes to mind. But there are many programs which it does not affect.

Angeline Echeverria: Okay. Thank you.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Yes.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Thank you. I know that we are getting more people on the queue, so as we wait I would like to know those major releases that I mentioned earlier - tomorrow the Census Bureau will release selected population tables and American Indian and Alaskan Native tables based on the 2017 to 2021 American Community Survey 5-year estimates. These tables are released approximately every five years and provide an in-depth look at populations beyond those covered in the one and 5-year ACS products.

Next week the Census Bureau will release vintage 2022 population estimates by age, sex, race and Hispanic origin and later this month the Census Bureau will release data from the 2022 Survey of Income and Program Participation. The survey collects data and measures changes in characteristics like economic wellbeing, family dynamics, education, assets, health insurance, child care and food security. And we are set to release data from phase 3.9 of the Experimental Household Pulse Survey.

So look out for all those releases in the next coming days and weeks and also if you have questions not related to the ones that about this presentation today, the media can contact our public information office at PIO@Census.gov, PIO@Census.gov. Also, our partners and stakeholders always have, as you know, you have your contacts, your POCs or even myself at the Office of Strategic Alliances, so we welcome questions over there too. At this time, Operator, if you have any additional questions on the queue?

Coordinator: Yes. Our next question is from William O'Hare from Count All Kids. Go ahead. Your line is open.

Dr. William O'Hare: Thank you. First of all, I appreciate the information and the work and the report that was released today by the Census Bureau. I know it took a lot of effort, but I really appreciate it. I particularly want to say thank you to Andrew Reamer, who has been working in this area for more than a decade, and almost single-handedly kept this issue on the forefront for stakeholders and advocates working with the Census Bureau over the last decade. And so I really appreciate all the work that's gone into this.

My question is about what kind of further analysis there might be from the data set that you now have in hand. In particular, I'm interested in knowing

what Census Bureau data sources are used for what programs. I have a suspicion, for lack of a better word, that the population estimates program may be the single most important driver of this data. And if that's true or even close to true, the blended base has enormous importance in terms of the difference it makes between the blended base and the decennial census.

So my question really is, will the Bureau or will someone else like Andrew be looking at this data to try and tease out which data sources are used for which programs? Thank you.

Ceci Villa Ross: Andrew, I don't know if you want to take that. I mean from my perspective, we don't tell agencies which program to use. Correct? So sometimes in a legislation it can be vague, but it could be as far as like, you know, the use of the most recent population from the most recent census, or I don't know, Andrew, do you want to jump in on this one?

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Yes, I can a bit. So Bill, probably not a very satisfactory answer - clearly I cannot speak to what the Census Bureau's plans are in terms of creating a matrix of the 353 programs and all the different data sets that Ceci had bulleted in that slide. But I can say that almost every program relies on population estimates and the American Community Survey. So if you took out everything that did not rely on either of those, you wouldn't take out very much. And the reason is, because there are very few programs that actually rely directly on the decennial census.

You're not going to allocate money in 2027 based on 2020 numbers. If it's based on population counts, you use the annual population estimates. There are a handful of exceptions and they're all teeny. In addition, the USDA will use decennial numbers for very small communities that are not covered in the POP estimates. And then secondly, the American Community Survey, which

is the characteristics of the population in terms of income and poverty, in particular in race, well, it's certainly race, but only race and ethnicity and age are collected in the decennial.

And the ACS is designed to determine the distribution of characteristics, in other words, the percentages. But as I said earlier, most programs are based on a community share of the target population. So the ACS will tell you what percentage of kids in Baltimore are poor, but then you've got to multiply that by the pop estimates numbers to get the number of poor kids. So the programs that rely on the ACS are also very much relying on pop estimates.

And then going the other way, the ACS is used for a portion of pop estimates identifying the number of people who come to this country from another country in the past year. So Bill, you're welcome to follow up. And also, I want to say that I probably would not be doing this if it wasn't for Bill, because in 2009 when I came up with the bright idea of doing Counting for Dollars 2010, Bill found me the money from the foundation to make that first go at it happen. So Bill, thank you for your service too.

Ceci Villa Ross: And Bill, I also want to take the opportunity to remind you that there is a webinar next week on the Population Estimates Program. So I do encourage you to attend that webinar. (**Correction – no webinar is planned for the week of 6/19/23 regarding the Population Estimates Program*)

Dr. William O'Hare: Thank you. I will be there.

Ceci Villa Ross: Great.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Thank you, Bill. Operator, next.

Coordinator: Our next question is from Rosalind Gold from NALEO Educational Fund. Go ahead. Your line is open.

Rosalind Gold: Great. Well, thank you so much. First of all, thank you so much to everybody at the Bureau who worked on this and has provided us such valuable information. And Andrew, thank you so very much for your commitment and dedication to this analysis. I have two questions. One is, will this information be available for lower levels of geography? For example, if we wanted to find out how much money is allocated to a state guided by census data and which programs for each state or particular state.

Secondly, has the Bureau sort of built an internal infrastructure to update this on a regular basis? This is very powerful information for talking to the community about the value of participating in the decennial census and having updated data when census 2030 gets closer would be very valuable as well. Thank you so much.

Ceci Villa Ross: Sure. Thank you for the question. For the methods in updating the report, we do have - we're using machine learning techniques; we have a base inventory of programs; we use SAM.gov for the inventory of programs where they do have, in their annual publication programs that come on every fiscal year and are taken off fiscal year, so it may be easier to look at the inventory of programs to add or take out programs. We are assessing our ability to analyze at a state level, and evaluating the resource requirement to issue the report more frequently. But we are exploring the state level - the data for the states.

Rosalind Gold: Thank you.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Ceci, if I can follow up?

Ceci Villa Ross: Sure.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Hi, Rosalind. Thanks for your question. If you think - for those of you familiar with the 2010 work that I did, that actually was down at the county and the metro level. Because at that time the Census Bureau had what was called the Consolidated Federal Funds Report, the CFFR, which took all federal spending, not just financial assistance programs but actually federal salaries for instance, and allocated them by county. That got replaced by USA Spending. And USA Spending, 15 years ago, the aspiration was to be able to do that.

And for those of us involved in this kind of work, it's not there yet, so we cannot go below the state level with any accuracy, where I would say. The CFA bar was terminated because USA Spending.gov came about.

Rosalind Gold: Thank you.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Thank you. Operator, do we have any other questions on queue?

Coordinator: Yes. Our last question is from Robert from the University of New Mexico. Go ahead. Your line is open.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Thank you.

(Robert): Good afternoon. Thank you, everybody. I really appreciate the presentation and all the research that went into this. I especially want to thank Andrew and just note how impactful the counting for dollars research was in the lead up to the 2020 Census. As many of you know, state and local governments made huge investments in outreach and complete count committees. And I think a large part of that was due to the counting for dollars research.

They can see very clearly the impact that it would have on state and local government coffers and return on investment in showing the complete count in their constituencies. So I really appreciate you working with us. My question relates to the increase that we're seeing. So, you know, the \$675 billion up to \$2.8 trillion. And if you look at the programs that were added, the biggest impact is from Medicare and a scale of this part. So I was hoping, Andrew, you could explain how it is that decennial census data is used in the distribution of Medicare dollars.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Thank you for your comment. And I missed the last four words of your question. Can you repeat that please?

Robert: Just explaining how the decennial census data is used in the distribution of Medicare dollars.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Medicare dollars? Okay. So not Medicaid but Medicare.

Robert: Correct.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Yes. In Medicare as you might know, and you can see from the charts in the report, it's actually four separate programs, A, B, C, and D. And A is hospitalization; B is physician's offices; C is the private version of A and B; Medicare Advantage; and D is prescription drugs. So C and D rely on census geographic data regarding population density to determine what services are required by the providers of Medicare Advantage and prescription drug coverage.

So for instance, if you're a prescription drug program in a very sparsely populated community it's going to have less demanding requirements than if

you're in Brooklyn. And similarly for Medicare Advantage in terms of the CMS uses census data to in a sense regulate the delivery of services to recipients of Part C and D. And Part A and B it's a different use of census data. The reimbursement that goes to hospitals and to physician's offices is a function of the cost of providing healthcare in their communities.

And so the census data are used to actually draw the geographic classifications, metropolitan areas and a bit on the prices side as well. But it's largely you need to know who is living where to be able to draw the metro areas. And those classifications which are done by OMB with guidance from census are then used to determine reimbursement for Part A and Part B, but it all is based on people filling out the Census form.

Robert: Thank you.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Thank you. I think that was our last question. Oh, I think we have more questions. I'm getting - is that correct, operator?

Coordinator: We have two more questions. Would you like to take those?

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Of course. Thank you so much.

Coordinator: All right. Our next question is from Jae June from Georgetown Center (on Poverty and Inequality). Go ahead. Your line is open.

Jae June Lee: Hi. Just a quick question. You mentioned the use of national machine learning. I'm just curious, would you consider releasing the training data that you used? It would be of interest, I think. And maybe for folks who want to look at maybe applying as to say, looking at the distribution of funds and states, or maybe the uses of policy or legal uses of census data might have

interesting applications. So I'd be very interested to see if you could share that training data too.

Ceci Villa Ross: So, when I talked about machine learning I relied on the experts to do that. I would have to look into seeing if we could do that, or if they could at least explain how they did it. I encourage you to reach out to the Public Information Office so that we can get you the correct answer if we're even able to provide those techniques.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: And Jae June, if I can follow up, thanks for your question. To the extent machine learning was used, it identified candidates for Ceci and I to look at and eyeball. This was all a one-by-one-by-one. We looked at every - as I did for 2020 Counting for Dollars, look at every program. Because every program is different. Every program is dreamed up by somebody other than the Census Bureau. And we had to figure out what data are being used, because sometimes it's quite specific.

It will say - Congress will say ACS data shall be used for the following purpose. Other times it just says population data. And you've got to figure out what data is being used, and then to trace it back to the decennial. So Ceci and I had lots of fun and bonded over what do you think about this program; what do you think about that program?

Ceci Villa Ross: Yes. We call them Easter eggs, because sometimes it was really, really easy. And then there were other times where it was a trail of crumbs, right? So it's like it would take us to one authorization, and you think that you're going to have the answer there; and it would take you to another authorization. So a lot of the work, the machine learning aspect Andrew's right; it just pulls out programs. And then from there I had to go in and look and see, do these programs - are they pulling out the right terms?

Because you could say census, but you have to remember there's also a census of agriculture. So at times the machine learning would pull in census of agriculture. So it wasn't a program for inclusion. So it just helped narrow down some of it from it's a needle in a haystack with all of the various programs that are out there, and understanding their authorizations, and how they're distributing the funds, and if they're using our data.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Thank you, Ceci. And also it's, they're different haystacks.

Ceci Villa Ross: That is true.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: So in some instances Congress puts the source of the data and the use of the data, in legislation. In other instances, Congress leaves it to the department to put it in regulation. And there's lots of - particularly USDA, all their uses of census data are in the Code of Federal Regulations, and so we had to go into that. And in a lot of instances it's - in either law or in regulation, it's up to the agency on a year-by-year basis, to tell grant applicants what the criteria are.

So when Ceci shows the third bullet of the uses about selection criteria, USDA will say you get five extra points if you're a small community; you're below 5,000 people. But that's their choice. They don't have to do that by law or by regulation. And that can change from year to year. So we had to figure all that out.

Jae June Lee: Thank you.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Any other questions?

Coordinator: And our next question is from Charles Mann from SC Counts. Go ahead.
Your line is open.

Charles Mann: Thank you very much. In South Carolina I'm a local census advocate. And what we try to do is to get people to make sure that they are counted. And one of the things that we are trying to do is to get local representatives, elected representatives and nonprofits to understand the importance. One of the things that we are looking at is what does each person represent, each person counted, represent in federal dollars back to a community. Is it as simple as dividing the population by the \$2.8 trillion?

I know there are probably a lot of factors, but if we can get people to understand that this count also represents federal allocation in dollars, maybe we can reduce the undercount.

Ceci Villa Ross: So it is nearly impossible to put a dollar amount for each response. Andrew and I spoke about this yesterday and I think that Andrew, if you want to give your...

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Sure.

Ceci Villa Ross: ...answer - your explanation, it opened up my eyes as well because I think it's a good question, but the answer just brings a lot of clarity as to why you can't put a figure on that.

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Yes, thank you, Ceci. And thanks for your question. We were anticipating this. I was like, where is that? How come nobody asked that question? So thank you for being - for making sure we could respond to it. There are several reasons. One is, if you think about the slides that Ceci showed about the uses of census data to allocate funding, the first is eligibility, which is a

yes/no question. I mentioned SNAP, that if your community is over 10% unemployment you get some extra money for SNAP.

But if someone's undercounted maybe instead of 12% you're 11%, but it doesn't change your categorization. If New York City had a 50% undercount, it would still be a major metropolitan area. And Medicare Part A would be determined for New York City accordingly. So there are lots of instances where it's a yes/no question. And missing ten people or missing 1,000 people is not going to move the needle.

A separate instance, and I mentioned this in the answer to the question about prisons, is that not everybody counts for every program. It's very very rare for everyone in this webinar to count for a particular program. Medicaid is actually the biggest exception. And highways - highway funding doesn't care if you are poor, rich, five or 85. But using my example from the prison question, in South Carolina, Title I grants to K-12 school systems is based on the number of poor children in South Carolina.

If in your community that South Carolina Counts is talking to, no adult filled out the census form, the community would not lose any - by the way, that's not true because they have to fill out the form for their kids. But the point is that if you miss adults, it's not going to affect the allocation of funds to kids. And the reverse is true for senior citizens. Many programs are based on a state's or community share of senior citizens.

And we're at the end of time. I will add one more thing which did not - actually hasn't come up yet. This is a zero-sum game. If a community loses money, it does not go back to the Treasury. It goes to the other states. So every state, every community, has some interest in other places getting undercounted because they get more money. And as people might know, most

major states had a Get Out the Count effort in 2020 with the exception of Texas, which meant that to the extent that Texas was undercounted and the Post-Enumeration Survey suggested that the estimate was, that money went to other states.

And, you know, California got - for every buck that Texas missed, California got 12 cents. That's how it works.

Charles Mann: So may I have a follow up? So it is estimated that in South Carolina and particularly just to pick it as a state where I am, that we were probably undercounted by 50,000 people. So is it a fair assumption to say that if all of those people were counted, South Carolina would get a greater allocation of federal funds because it crosses the spectrum of the elderly, the young and all that, the black and the browns? Is it fair enough to say that if we truly had an accurate count that we potentially would have gotten more federal fund allocated to...

Dr. Andrew Reamer: Yes. Yes. And to put it another way, if your aim is to starve your state of funds and let other states have your taxpayer dollars, don't fill out the census.

Charles Mann: Okay, thank you.

Ceci Villa Ross: Maria, I think it's back to you now.

Maria Olmedo-Malagon: Thank you. Yes. I think we are done with questions at this point. As a final note, again, if you have any additional questions after today's webinar, please contact the Public Information Office at PIO at [Census.gov](https://www.census.gov), or call us at (301) 763-3030. I would like to thank again today's presenters, Professor Andrew Reamer, Ceci Villa Ross, and Al Fontenot. I am Maria

Olmedo-Malagon. Thank you for joining us for today's virtual event. Have a great rest of your day. Bye.

Coordinator: That concludes today's conference. Thank you for participating. You may disconnect at this time.

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