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For More Information Contact:  
Phil Sparks: (202) 326-8700 or [psparks@ccmc.org](mailto:psparks@ccmc.org)  
Terri Ann Lowenthal: (202) 258-2425 or [TerriAnn2K@aol.com](mailto:TerriAnn2K@aol.com)

### **Congress Urged to Continue Census 2020 Funding If Continuing Resolution is Considered by Policymakers**

WASHINGTON - With the probability that the Fiscal Year 2015 federal budget battle in Congress will extend beyond the October 1 deadline and a Continuing Resolution (CR) will be necessary to keep the government running, the Census Project sent [a letter today](#) urging congressional leaders to include a so-called "anomaly" in next years' budget that would provide for continuing funding of Census 2020 planning.

The Census Bureau's ability to complete 2020 Census research and testing of cost-saving innovations and design updates, including content review for the American Community Survey, and to begin systems and operational development, on schedule, will be at high risk without a "ramp up" in funding at the start of FY 2015.

The Census Bureau already has scaled back or postponed key planning activities for the 2020 Census due, in large part, to previous budget cuts and funding delays. In FY 2015, the bureau will conduct four major field tests designed to evaluate, in census-like environments, promising but complex innovations to improve enumeration efficiency and streamline field operations. Specifically, the tests will assess:

- feasibility of replacing universal pre-census address canvassing with targeted verification of the Master Address File;
- using automation, real-time data, and administrative records to manage and streamline costly door-to-door follow-up with unresponsive households;
- new strategies to boost self-response, especially on the Internet, as well as methods for preregistration and processing electronic responses that lack unique identifiers;
- revised questions on race and ethnicity;

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401 Ninth Street NW, Suite 450, Washington, DC 20004  
202.326.8700

[www.TheCensusProject.org](http://www.TheCensusProject.org)

- language assistance for non-English speakers; and
- improving estimates of mail, online and telephone response, to better control overall costs.

“These new initiatives will modernize the census process and reduce costs substantially, but they require thorough testing and evaluation before the Census Bureau can select an optimal design for a cost-effective and accurate census. The bureau must make that decision and begin development of IT and operational infrastructure by the end of FY 2015,” said [the Census Project letter](#). “A lack of adequate resources and the uncertainty of final funding levels may well force the Census Bureau to delay, scale back, or even cancel critical field tests, putting at risk the full range of design innovations that will save the taxpayer billions of dollars over the census lifecycle.”

The letter to Congress is referring to the FY 2015 Commerce, Justice, and Science Appropriations bill.

“We urge you to include funding for the Census Bureau in a Continuing Resolution at the level approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee (which itself reflects a five percent cut from the President’s budget request and a seven percent cut in 2020 Census funding). Failure to grant an exception from flat-line funding will jeopardize the Census Bureau’s ability to plan a cost-effective, modern, and accurate 2020 Census,” the Census Project letter concluded.

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