SUBJECT: Implementation of 2020 Census Data for Rural Development Programs

TO: State Directors
Agency Administrators
National Office Assistant and Deputy Administrators
All Rural Development Employees

FROM: Xochitl Torres-Small /s/ Xochitl Torres-Small
Under Secretary

ATTENTION: RUS, RHS, RBCS National Office Program Staff, Community Programs Directors, Business Programs Directors, State Engineers, State Architects and Administrators

PURPOSE

This Administrative Notice (AN) provides guidance to staff in the Rural Development (RD) National Office and State Offices regarding the implementation of the 2020 Census data for the use in the administration of direct loan, loan guarantee and grant programs across RD. The intended outcome is to instruct and inform staff on the transition to new data sources to allow for an orderly and consistent implementation across RD programs and to facilitate outreach that will provide current and potential applicants sufficient notice.

COMPARISON WITH PREVIOUS AN:

This guidance supersedes RD AN No. 4886 (1940-L and RUS Staff Instructions 1780-2 and 1780-5) dated February 4, 2022 and any previous guidance on implementation of population or income data from the census.

EXPIRATION DATE: September 30, 2023

FILING INSTRUCTIONS: Preceding RD Instruction 1940-L and RUS Staff Instructions 1780-2, 1780-5)

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IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES:

In 2020, the United States Census Bureau conducted its decennial census and an updated American Community Survey 5-year (ACS) for 2016-2020. Decennial Census and ACS data on population and income are currently used by RD program areas for a variety of purposes, including: eligibility determinations, prioritization, and allocations. Census has not fully released the 2020 decennial data needed for RD program areas to implement the transition from 2010 to 2020 data.

Implementation requires the use of two Census data sets: 2020 decennial data for the population data and 5-year ACS (2016-2020) income and poverty data to calculate State Non-metro Median Household Income (SNMHI). Data from both sets are used in allocation formulas.

Census has not released all the data elements needed by programs to fully update eligibility and formula allocations. As such, Rural Development will transition to the update Decennial Census and SNMHI using 5-year ACS (2016-2020) starting October 1, 2023.

Population Data

All RD programs will continue using 2010 Decennial Census population data until Census provides a full release of the 2020 decennial data. Further guidance will be provided when adoption of 2020 decennial can commence. Until that time, and unless specifically directed otherwise, programs are instructed to use the population data from the 2010 Decennial Census for program purposes. The data can be found at Census Data Hub.

Income and Poverty Data

The Agency has determined that the 5-year ACS estimate is the most appropriate data set for RD program to use for income and poverty data as it encompasses data from across the country and is updated within a shorter time period than the income data previously obtained from the decennial census and collected every 10 years. Median Household Income (MHI) must be based on the data set developed for RD by ACS for the period 2006-2010.

State Non-metro Median Household Income

Programs are instructed to use the SNMHI by state from 2006- 2010 5-year ACS for program purposes. The data can be found at Census Data Hub.

OUTREACH TO CURRENT AND POTENTIAL APPLICANTS:

State and National Office personnel should communicate to current potential applicants, as well as other stakeholders, on the continued use of 2010 Census and its potential impact on eligibility for RD program assistance.
**SUMMARY:**

All RD programs will continue using 2010 Decennial Census population data and SNMHI using 5-year ACS (2006-2010). The transition to the new decennial data and updated 5-year ACS (2016-2020) is planned for FY 2024, October 1, 2023. Additional guidance will be provided closer to FY 2024.

State Offices having questions on the use of 2020 Census data should contact the applicable program personnel in the National Office as listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Contact</th>
<th>Phone No.</th>
<th>Email Address</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RBCS</td>
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Sent by Electronic Mail on _________ at __________ by the RD Innovation Center.
The State Director should advise other personnel as appropriate.