Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics
Government of Puerto Rico

Calle Quisqueya #57, 2do piso
San Juan, PR 00917
P.O. Box 195484
San Juan, PR 00919-5484
Teléfono: (787) 819-0730

December 28, 2021

Dr. Jennifer Kim
U.S. Census Bureau
Assistant Division Chief for Content,
Translation, Puerto Rico and Island Areas Operations
4600 Silver Hill Road
Washington, DC 20233

Dear Dr. Kim,

Greetings from the Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics (PRIS). As the entity in Puerto Rico that oversees the coordination of the statistics produced by local government agencies, we continuously seek that statistical information be complete, reliable and of swift and universal access. PRIS is also the entity that officially represents the government of Puerto Rico for statistical purposes before federal agencies. Therefore, we frequently collaborate in multiple U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) projects, efforts and operations in order to contribute to furthering USCB's mission and Puerto Rico's inclusion in U.S. statistics. PRIS strives on a daily basis to provide the best statistical products possible to guide scientific, evidence-based decision making by local government. For this purpose, we wish to explore with the USCB two topics regarding the content of the questionnaire for the 2030 Decennial Census for Puerto Rico.

The Puerto Rican legislature is seeking to enhance government services offered to the island's deaf population. PRIS has shared with the legislature the data available from the Puerto Rico Community Survey related to hearing difficulty. The 2019-ACS one year data indicate that the population with hearing difficulty in Puerto Rico is 140,271 (+/- 5,871). However, the legislature wishes to know with even more accuracy the size of the deaf population and its distribution around Puerto Rico. Specifically, we would like to know if it is possible to include in the planning phase for the 2030 Decennial Census the question "Is this person deaf or does he/she have serious difficulty hearing?" in the Puerto Rico questionnaire.

Relating to the second topic, the modifications of the content in the Race and Hispanic origin questions in the 2020 Decennial Census improved data collection in all U.S. jurisdictions, including Puerto Rico. The results showed greater diversity amongst the resident population. We do understand that the categories for these questions are those approved by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the 1997 Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity. However, we have identified an opportunity to improve the content of the Race question of the questionnaire for Puerto Rico.

As you probably know, the cultural context in Puerto Rico regarding racial self-identification is different from the continental United States. A suggestion we would like to provide that does

not involve a change in the racial categories is to explicitly insert terms in the example/help text in the parenthesis of the Black or Afro-American (*Negra o afroamericana*) category that people in Puerto Rico are more familiar with in regards to their African origins. Specifically, instead of using the terms (*afroamericana, jamaiquino, haitiano…)* we recommend using the terms afro-descendant or afro-caribbean (*afrodescendiente,* or *afrocaribeño*).

We would appreciate very much a chance to discuss these topics with your office staff. We can coordinate a virtual meeting for this purpose whenever you are available. Also, we can be reached by email: orville.disdier@estadisticas.pr, alberto.velazquez@estadisticas.pr; or by mail at: P.O. Box 195484, San Juan, PR 00919-5484.

Respectfully,

Dr. Orville M. Disdier Flores   Alberto L. Velázquez Estrada
Executive Director   Senior Statistics Projects Manager
Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics   Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics

CC: Dan Doyle, Interim Branch Chief, Puerto Rico and Island Areas Enumeration Branch
           Daniel A. Reyes, Survey Statistician, Puerto Rico and Island Areas Enumeration Branch, Decennial Census Management Division
           Merarys Ríos-Vargas, Chief, Ethnicity and Ancestry Branch, Population Division
           Jeff Behler, Director, New York Regional Office, U.S. Census Bureau
           Javier Hernández, President, Board of Directors, Puerto Rico Institute of Statistics