The Impact of COVID-19 on Birth Rates: Considerations for Planning and Policy

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1, 2022, 2:00 PM – 3:30 PM ET

Purpose	Birth rates in the United States have been gradually declining for over a decade, influenced by social, policy, and economic factors. While the COVID-19 pandemic led to a significant, though brief, drop in birth rates, they are now back to pre-pandemic levels. These smaller cohorts will have future implications for education, the labor market, and the social safety net.
	Join the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine for a webinar on why declining birth rates matter for decision-making at state and local levels. This webinar will provide an overview of the impacts of COVID-19 on birth rates in the United States and suggest policy and planning considerations for decision-makers.
2:00–2:10 pm	**Welcome and Introductions** Anne Pebley, University of California Los Angeles *Chair, Committee on Population, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*
2:10–2:50 pm	**Part 1: Stage Setting** Melissa Kearney, University of Maryland Jenna Nobles, University of Wisconsin – Madison Alfred Sundara, Maryland Department of Planning
2:50–3:25 pm	**Part 2: Moderated Discussion** Melissa Kearney, University of Maryland Jenna Nobles, University of Wisconsin – Madison Alfred Sundara, Maryland Department of Planning
3:25–3:30 pm	**Closing Reflections** Anne Pebley, University of California Los Angeles *Chair, Committee on Population, National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*

PANELIST BIOGRAPHIES

Melissa S. Kearney is the Neil Moskowitz Professor of Economics at the University of Maryland. She is also Director of the Aspen Economic Strategy Group; a Research Associate at the National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER); a non-resident Senior Fellow at Brookings; a scholar affiliate and member of the board of the Notre Dame Wilson-Sheehan Lab for Economic Opportunities (LEO); and a scholar affiliate of the MIT Abdul Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL). She is a senior editor of the Future of Children, an editorial board member of the American Economic Journal: Economic Policy and Journal of Economic Literature, and a former co-editor of the Journal of Human Resources. She serves on the Board of Governors of the Smith Richardson Foundation. Kearney served as Director of the Hamilton Project at Brookings from 2013-2015 and as co-chair of the JPAL State and Local Innovation Initiative from 2015-2018.

Kearney's academic research focuses on domestic policy issues, especially issues related to social policy, poverty, and inequality. Her work has been published in leading academic journals and has been frequently cited in the popular press. She has testified before Congress on the topic of U.S. income inequality. Kearney teaches Public Economics at both the undergraduate and PhD level at the University of Maryland. She holds a BA in Economics from Princeton University and a PhD in Economics from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where she studied on a National Science Foundation graduate student fellowship and a Harry S Truman fellowship.

Jenna Nobles is a professor of sociology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the current director of the Center for Demography and Ecology. She is the assistant director of UWMadison's Health Disparities Research post-doctoral scholars program. Dr. Nobles studies how people make decisions about migration and fertility and the implications of these decisions for population change. Her current projects include the links between residential change and crime, anticipatory migration behavior, demographic responses to the diffusion of health risks, and the reconstruction of hidden population traits. Her research has been funded by the NIH, NSF, William T. Grant Foundation and Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Dr. Nobles has an M.A. and a Ph.D. in sociology from University of California, Los Angeles.

Anne R. Pebley is the Bixby chair and distinguished professor of Population Studies in the Fielding School of Public Health and Department of Sociology at UCLA. She is also a faculty affiliate at the California Center for Population Research. Dr. Pebley's current research focuses on: social disparities in physical functioning by race, ethnicity, and immigration status; evolving urban social environments, especially Los Angeles, and their effects on adult and child welfare; and international migration and the health of Latino populations in North and Central America. She is co-director of the Los Angeles Family and Neighborhood Survey (L.A.FANS), which is a longitudinal study of neighborhoods and families in LA County. Dr. Pebley is past president of the Population Association of America and the Association of Population Centers and has served as a member of the National Academies' Committee on Population (1989-1996), where she is currently the chair. She has a Ph.D. in sociology from Cornell University.

Alfred Sundara is Manager of the Projections and State Data Center at the Maryland Department of Planning. He oversees the development of socioeconomic analyses and the population and school enrollment projections that the Department produces. Alfred coordinates activities of the Maryland State Data Center program with the US Census Bureau. He works with the State Data Center affiliates and organizations to disseminate data to local users and provides training on specific census related topics.

Alfred has over 15 years' experience working as a Planner in Pennsylvania and Maryland. He previously worked for the Harrisburg Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) as a transportation planner, where he oversaw travel demand modeling and air quality analysis for the MPO. He is a certified planner with the American Planning Association and has a Bachelor of Architecture degree from India and a Master of Regional and Community Planning from Kansas State University.