

2020 Census Federal Agency Toolkit

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D-TK-GV-EN-033

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Introduction

The 2020 Census is a headcount of every person living in the United States and its territories as of April 1.

Responses to the census—which is conducted once every 10 years, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution—help shape your future. The census informs how billions of dollars are allocated each year to local communities for vital services like schools, health care, roads and bridges, and emergency response.

Federal, state, and local government agencies—alongside communities and businesses—use census data to implement their programs and plan new services.

Census statistics also determine the number of seats each state gets in the U.S. House of Representatives.

With more than 2 million employees nationwide, the federal workforce represents a key audience for census engagement efforts, both as people who must be counted and as messengers to their respective communities.

This 2020 Census Federal Agency Toolkit highlights a range of ways you can educate your employees, partners, and stakeholders about the census and motivate them to respond. We've included content and messaging for your internal and external communications efforts, ways for employees to get involved in 2020 Census outreach, and social media content for use on agency accounts as well as by employees themselves.

If you have questions about the resources included in this toolkit, please contact the National Partnership Program at census.partners@census.gov. To speak with U.S. Census Bureau staff in your area, contact your [regional census center](#).

Be a 2020 Census Federal Partner (Two Pages)

The National Partnership Program (NPP) has developed a two-page handout that highlights ways to be a federal partner for the 2020 Census. Find a copy of the handout in the appendix. To request a separate PDF copy, email NPP at census.partners@census.gov.

Be a 2020 Census Federal Partner

The 2020 Census is a count of every person living in the United States that happens once every 10 years. The goal of the census is to count every person once, only once, and in the right place.

Census data helps federal agencies, researchers, businesses, and communities make key decisions and informs funding for programs like Head Start, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, the Federal Pell Grant Program, and Community Development Block Grants. Help us ensure a complete and accurate 2020 Census by becoming a partner.

What Is a Federal Partner?

Partners are trusted voices that help raise awareness that the 2020 Census is easy, safe, and important. Join us in helping to reach everyone, including hard-to-count populations. We will work with you to develop the best partnership plan for you. There are many ways to help!

Help Us Reach the Public

Spread the word: Include information about the 2020 Census in correspondence with constituents, customers, partners, and employees. Use your email lists, newsletters, and mailings to increase awareness of why the census is important. Link to 2020census.gov on your website. Retweet and repost Census Bureau social media content to promote the 2020 Census and related job opportunities.

Add your voice: Write a blog, op-ed, or letter to the editor on why the 2020 Census is important to your agency and those you serve. Mention the 2020 Census in speeches. Tape a public service announcement. Share a tailored message with your lists.

Stress that the 2020 Census is safe, secure, and confidential: Highlight the privacy and confidentiality of the 2020 Census to the populations you serve. Responses to the 2020 Census are safe, secure, and protected by federal law. Census data can only be used for statistical purposes and cannot be used against the public in any way.

Share your data use stories: If your agency uses Census Bureau data to inform or shape your programs, share these stories with us! These data use stories help convey the importance of Census Bureau data to your agency's mission.

Help Us Reach Your Employees

Host an event: Host a 2020 Census informational or Q&A session for your employees. Invite a Census Bureau speaker to your events and add 2020 Census materials to event information.

Communicate to your employees: Hang posters and leave 2020 Census materials in common areas, like the cafeteria. Embed 2020 Census messages into existing outreach campaigns, such as back-to-school, open enrollment, or safety and emergency preparedness.

Focus on children: Connect us with your child care center. The Census Bureau provides free classroom resources through its Statistics in Schools program. Children under the age of 5 were the most undercounted group in the 2010 Census.

Tap into your groups: Reach out to your Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) team and affinity groups to help spread the word.

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The 2020 Census and Confidentiality (Two Pages)

This two-page fact sheet highlights how 2020 Census responses are protected by law. This [PDF](#), available on the [Outreach Materials page](#) at 2020census.gov, can be printed or electronically shared.

The 2020 Census and Confidentiality

Your responses to the 2020 Census are safe, secure, and protected by federal law. Your answers can only be used to produce statistics—they cannot be used against you in any way. By law, all responses to U.S. Census Bureau household and business surveys are kept completely confidential.

Respond to the 2020 Census to shape the future.

Responding to the census helps communities get the funding they need and helps businesses make data-driven decisions that grow the economy. Census data impact our daily lives, informing important decisions about funding for services and infrastructure in your community, including health care, senior centers, jobs, political representation, roads, schools, and businesses. More than \$675 billion in federal funding flows back to states and local communities each year based on census data.



Your census responses are safe and secure.

The Census Bureau is required by law to protect any personal information we collect and keep it strictly confidential. The Census Bureau can only use your answers to produce statistics. In fact, every Census Bureau employee takes an oath to protect your personal information for life. Your answers cannot be used for law enforcement purposes or to determine your personal eligibility for government benefits.

By law, your responses cannot be used against you.

By law, your census responses cannot be used against you by any government agency or court in any way—not by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), not by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), not by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and not by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The law requires the Census Bureau to keep your information confidential and use your responses only to produce statistics.



The law is clear—no personal information can be shared.

Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about individuals, households, or businesses, even to law enforcement agencies.

The law states that the information collected may only be used for statistical purposes and no other purpose.

To support historical research, Title 44 of the U.S. Code allows the National Archives and Records Administration to release census records only after 72 years.

All Census Bureau staff take a lifetime oath to protect your personal information, and any violation comes with a penalty of up to \$250,000 and/or up to 5 years in prison.

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Key Messages for the 2020 Census

The following questions and answers represent key information to use when speaking about the benefits of the census.

What is the 2020 Census?

The 2020 Census is a count of every person living in the United States as of April 1. The questionnaire from the U.S. Census Bureau asks a few simple questions, like the age, sex, and marital status of the people who live in your home, including newborns and nonrelatives.

Why does the government conduct a census?

A census of the population is required by the U.S. Constitution every 10 years, to determine how many seats your state gets in the U.S. House of Representatives. Responding is required by law and you can respond online, by phone, or by mail.

Why is the 2020 Census important?

Results of the 2020 Census will significantly impact communities over the next 10 years, informing how billions of dollars in public funds are spent each year and shaping political representation in each state. 2020 Census results:

- Inform decisions about how public funds for critical public services flow into your community, including hospitals and clinics, emergency response, roads and highways, and schools and education programs.
- Help lawmakers redraw legislative and school districts in your state.
- Help businesses decide where to locate or expand, which could lead to new jobs.

What are some programs that use Census Bureau statistics to inform funding?

- Medicaid health insurance for people with low incomes, including those with disabilities.
- State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).
- Medicare Part B insurance for all people over age 65.
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for low-income individuals and families, including people with disabilities and eligible seniors.
- Highway planning and construction grants.
- Housing assistance.
- Community and economic development.
- Pell Grants for college tuition.
- Head Start, after school care, and education grants.

Can the Census Bureau share my information?

Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, census responses are confidential and protected by law. The law requires the Census Bureau to use responses only to produce statistics. Personal information will never be shared with immigration or other law enforcement agencies. Individual responses cannot be used to determine personal eligibility for government benefits. The Census Bureau cannot publicly release responses in any way that could identify an individual, a business, organization, or institution.

What does the Census Bureau do?

The Census Bureau is a scientific agency of the federal government that collects information about the people, businesses, and economy of the United States. The Census Bureau provides statistics on how the U.S. population is changing, its ethnic and racial makeup, and trends such as birth rates, income, education levels, and aging. The Census Bureau is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Community Outreach Toolkit

The Community Outreach Toolkit outlines ways partner organizations can break down common barriers to completing the census in their communities. The toolkit is available as a [PDF](#) on the [Outreach Materials page](#) at 2020census.gov, and can be printed or electronically shared with constituent organizations.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH TOOLKIT

A quickstart guide to tailoring
census outreach efforts for the
people you serve



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Materials for Educating Your Audiences

America Counts Stories

The Census Bureau's [America Counts website](#) tells the stories behind the numbers on various topics such as families, housing, employment, business, education, the economy, and emergency preparedness.

You can post these stories directly on your agency's public website or intranet, include them in newsletters, provide them to partners, or share links to the stories on your social media accounts.

We also encourage federal partners to feature their own use of Census Bureau statistics in agency social media posts, broadcast messages, newsletters, and feature stories.

The following stories touch on how census responses help drive federal funding and planning, as well as the steps the Census Bureau is taking to safeguard personal information against cyber threats:

- [Knowing Census Data Benefit Communities May Increase 2020 Response](#)
- [Jumping Into Action When Disaster Strikes](#)
- [Nutrition Assistance Program Lifts 3.4 Million Out of Poverty](#)
- [How Much is Your State Spending On You?](#)
- [How Census Bureau Data Can Help Older Americans Afford Housing](#)
- [Key Player in Disaster Response: The U.S. Census Bureau](#)
- [Big Push to Count Every Newborn and Young Child in 2020 Census](#)
- [Smartphones, Online Responses Among Census Technological Innovations](#)

Census Bureau Data Tools and Resources

Funding for public programs around the country is shaped by census responses and statistics. Your employees and stakeholders can use the following tools to determine how that funding affects both the programs on which they work and the federal funds on which their communities depend:

- [Uses of Census Data in Federal Funds Distribution](#): This working paper includes an estimate of the federal funds distributed each year in whole or in part using Census Bureau population statistics. It outlines how 132 programs used Census Bureau statistics to distribute more than \$675 billion in funds during fiscal year 2015.
- [HIFLD Public Schools](#): This interactive map shows the location of every elementary and secondary public school in the United States and Puerto Rico.

The country's infrastructure also depends on census responses, which determine where billions of dollars in federal funds are spent on new construction and improvements. The [2017 Infrastructure Report Card](#), produced by the American Society of Civil Engineers, assigns each state a letter grade based on the physical condition of its roads, bridges, and other infrastructure, and highlights areas for improvement.

PSA Scripts

Public service announcements (PSAs) are an excellent tool to raise awareness about the importance of the 2020 Census. The PSA scripts below answer the question “What is the Census?” and highlight the importance of the census.

A [PSA toolkit](#), which enables partners and stakeholders to access produced PSAs or create their own using pre-approved messages and talking points, is available on 2020census.gov.

We encourage you to record these PSAs as hold messages for agency phone lines or as videos, which can be shared with your employees, posted on social media, or displayed on screens throughout your buildings.

60-Second PSA – What is the Census?

What is the census? As mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the census is a once a decade count of everyone living in the country. When we know how many people live in your community, organizations and businesses are better equipped to evaluate the services and programs needed, such as clinics, schools, and roads. It also determines how seats in Congress are distributed among the 50 states. The 2020 Census is happening now. There is still time to respond online, by phone, or by mail. The census asks a few simple questions about you and everyone who was living with you on April 1. Federal law keeps those responses safe and secure.

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15-Second PSA – What is the Census?

What is the census? The 2020 Census is a count of everyone living in the United States on April 1. As mandated in our Constitution, it takes place only once every 10 years. There is still time to respond online, by phone, or by mail.

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15-Second PSA – Why do we have a Census?

Why do we have a census? An accurate count of the population determines how many seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives and informs decisions on funding for critical public services in your community.

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Social Media Content

2020 Census Social Media Resources

Please tag the U.S. Census Bureau and use the official 2020 Census hashtag in all agency posts related to the census. We prefer that you include links to Census Bureau properties, but we understand that there may be instances in which you do not want to drive your audience off your agency's social media.

U.S. Census Bureau Official Social Media Accounts

- Facebook – @uscensusbureau
www.facebook.com/uscensusbureau/
- Instagram – @uscensusbureau
www.instagram.com/uscensusbureau/
- Twitter – @uscensusbureau
<https://twitter.com/uscensusbureau/>
- Hashtag - #2020Census

Key URLs – English language

- 2020 Census homepage
<https://2020census.gov/en>
- What Is the 2020 Census?
<https://2020census.gov/en/what-is-2020-census.html>
- Who to Count on Your Census
<https://2020census.gov/en/who-to-count.html>
- Impact in My Community
<https://2020census.gov/en/community-impact.html>
- How the Census Bureau Protects Your Data
<https://2020census.gov/en/data-protection.html>

Key URLs – Spanish language

- 2020 Census homepage
<https://2020census.gov/es>
- ¿Qué es el Censo del 2020?
<https://2020census.gov/es/what-is-2020-census.html>

- A quién contar en su censo
<https://2020census.gov/es/who-to-count.html>
- El impacto en mi comunidad
<https://2020census.gov/es/community-impact.html>
- Cómo protege su información la Oficina del Censo
<https://2020census.gov/es/data-protection.html>

Social Media Content for Partners

Messaging and graphics tailored to specific platforms for partner social media channels are available on the [Outreach Materials page](#) of 2020census.gov, including:

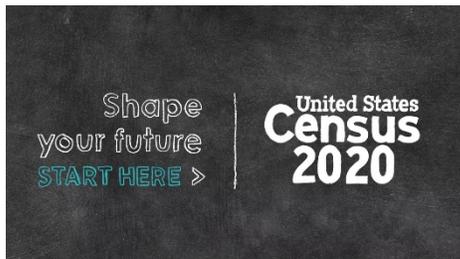
- [Partnership Social Media Guide](#)
- [Sample Messages](#)
- [Graphic 1](#)
- [Graphic 2](#)
- [Graphic 3](#)
- [Graphic 4](#)
- [Graphic 5](#)
- [Graphic 6](#)
- [Graphic 7](#)

Check our [Outreach Materials page](#) periodically for additional resources.

2020 Census Videos

The Census Bureau has produced videos to explain what the census is and how responses will shape the future of the country. Federal agency partners are encouraged to share this content on their digital channels and on screens throughout their buildings as appropriate.

[2020 Census: What Is the Census](#)



[Shape Your Future: The 2020 Census](#)



Appendix:
Be a 2020 Census Federal Partner (Two-Page Handout)
Encouraging Response to the 2020 Census During COVID-19

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Help Us Recruit Other Partners

Stakeholder engagement office: Connect the Census Bureau with your stakeholder engagement office. Plan a special message asking your private sector and not-for-profit partners to directly partner with us for the 2020 Census.

Activate regional offices: We have recruited hundreds of thousands of local partners, especially in areas that are hard-to-count. Connecting us with your regional offices will help us with critical local outreach.

The Census Bureau has 2020 Census resources and outreach materials to help you get started. Visit 2020census.gov/partners to sign up as a census partner and download handouts, posters, drop-in articles, social media content, toolkits, and other resources.

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Encouraging Response to the 2020 Census During COVID-19

Ideas to Encourage Response Amid Social Distancing

COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE SHIFTING FROM FACE-TO-FACE EVENTS TO THE FOLLOWING IDEAS TO ENCOURAGE RESPONSE TO THE 2020 CENSUS.

Prioritize Low-Responding Areas

Analyze neighborhood response rates at the tract level.

- View the 2020 Census Response Rate map at <https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>.
- Focus on-the-ground efforts specifically in areas with low response.

Be Visible at Open Locations

Have 2020 Census materials posted at grocery stores, COVID-19 testing sites, unemployment offices and food pantries.

- Outreach materials are available at <https://2020census.gov/en/partners/outreach-materials.html>.

Challenge Others

Challenge another community or neighborhood to a friendly Response Rate Challenge.

- A toolkit of challenge ideas is available at <https://2020census.gov/en/news-events/press-releases/response-rate-challenge.html>.
- Create lawn signs to promote the competition and invite local media to cover the challenge.

Include a Blurb

- Work with partners to include 2020 Census blurbs on utility bills, store receipts, etc.
- Provide customized drop-in articles for community-based organizations to include in their newsletters and mass e-mails.
- Use 2020 Census “Respond Now!” language on telephone hold messages.

Go Digital

- Host a 2020 Census Webinar or virtual town hall with community members.
- Host a 2020 Census live social media chat or local DJ party on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or Google Hangouts.
- Display 2020 Census banners or links on city Websites (mayor’s office, electrical companies, etc.). 2020 Census Web badges and banners are available at <https://2020census.gov/en/partners/outreach-materials/badges.html>.
- Start a “thunderclap,” or social media roadblock, where multiple partners in your area use the #2020Census hashtag and a “Respond now!” message on the same social media site at a particular date and time.

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- Post a blog or video message on internal or external channels to encourage people to respond to the census.
- Engage local influencers to create a public service announcement (PSA) and/or promote response to the #2020Census through social and local media (e-mail, local/regional TV and radio, and newsletters). A PSA toolkit is available at <<https://2020census.gov/en/partners/psa-toolkit.html>>.
- Share content on social media from <https://2020census.gov/en/partners/outreach-materials.html?tagfilter_list_copy=Type%7C2020census:type/social-media>.

Hold a Parade

Invite community leaders, local celebrities, sports figures and fire trucks to drive through low-responding neighborhoods in an informal parade.

- Grab attention with loud music, honking horns, and megaphones to urge the neighborhood to respond.
- Consider inviting a church marching band or school drumline to join—while social distancing—in the parade.

Call Households

- Some faith-based organizations are enlisting volunteers to call every member of their local congregation to ask if they have completed the census and, if not, they encourage response.
- Some cities are repurposing summer youth employee programs to help with calling residents.

Drop Off Flyers

Consider dropping off a flyer at every door in low-responding neighborhoods.

- Have the flyer explain why the census is important to that specific neighborhood.
- Consider including a picture and quote from a respected local leader to increase the flyer's relevance to the neighborhood.
- Encourage every householder to respond online, by phone, or by mail so a census taker does not have to visit later this summer.

Write Op-Eds, Letters to the Editor

Write letters to the editor or op eds to encourage response.

Additional 2020 Census Resources

Toolkit for State and Local Officials—

<<https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-09/toolkit-state-local-officials.pdf>>

Spread the Word—<<https://2020census.gov/en/how-to-help.html>>

What is the Census video—

<www.youtube.com/watch?v=Eq-FMB4epw&feature=youtu.be>

Q&A for Stakeholders—

<<https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-10/partners-self-response.pdf>>

COVID-19 Press Kit—

<<https://2020census.gov/en/news-events/press-kits/covid-19.html>>

COVID-19 Data Hub—

<<https://covid19.census.gov/>>

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