



NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

2020 Census Talking Points

(for Legislators and Others)

The census is the federal government's largest peacetime activity in the United States.

The Constitution declares that everyone counts!

- The Constitution mandates that a population count happens every 10 years.



It's the law (and your civic duty) to participate.

- Everyone residing in the U.S. gets counted in the census—children, seniors, minorities, immigrants (legal and illegal), tribal communities, homeless, homeowners, renters, students, workers—everyone.



It's easy.

- The people choose: They can respond online, by paper or over the phone.
- The census will be printed in English and Spanish. Telephone assistance and the online census questionnaire will be available in 13 languages. Guides and glossaries will be available in 59 non-English languages and Braille.
- Census day is April 1, 2020, however online responses will start being accepted in March 2020.

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The census equals fair representation.

- Census data is used to redraw district lines (aka redistricting) to determine representation in Congress, state legislatures, counties, school boards and all electoral bodies that use geographically defined membership.
- A state's electoral votes are based on their seats in Congress, which are based on census data.



The census equals money for states, cities and communities.

- Census data will determine how more than \$675 billion in federal funds will be distributed to the states each year of the following decade.
- Federal funds support all types of government services such as infrastructure, health, social welfare and education.



Census data is used by everyone.

- Businesses use census data to decide where to open new facilities and what types of services and products to offer.
- Developers use census data to plan where to build new homes and revitalize neighborhoods.
- Transportation planners use census data to decide on roads and public transit routes.
- Local governments use census data to decide where to build schools, libraries and parks.



Census answers are confidential.

- The Census Bureau is legally bound to handle all data confidentially, and answers are not shared with anyone.
- Confidentiality violation is a federal crime that may include a prison sentence, a fine or both.



Legislators can help “get out the count.”

- Many complete count committees or commissions (CCCs) are created and funded by legislatures.
- Legislators can tell their constituents about the census.
- Engaging with nonprofits, educational institutions, local governments and others will all help!