

# 2020 Census Toolkit for Education Leaders

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## Introduction

Dear Education Leaders,

We are called together for a project that takes place every 10 years and unites America. The 2020 decennial census counts every person who lives in our country. It is an opportunity to make literally everyone count. I count, you count, we all count.

An accurate census count of our vibrant and diverse communities brings critical funding and resources to our schools and communities. Census data affect how many new teachers are hired, where to build new schools, where to direct funding for free and reduced lunch and afterschool programs, and so much more.

This toolkit is designed to explain what's at stake and how you can help. As always, educators play a vital role in making sure everyone is counted. After all, we can reach children and families in every community in America.

# The 2020 Census: What and Why

## What is the Census?

The census is the constitutionally-required count of every person living in the United States. A census has been taken every ten years since 1790.

## Why the Census Matters

Census population counts are used to apportion seats in the United States House of Representatives, as well as state legislatures, county boards and often school boards. Being counted in the census is essential to political power in America.

The census is also used to distribute money. The federal government uses census population counts to allocate over \$1.5 trillion in funding, including funds for schools, hospitals, and roads in every community. The census helps determine how much money your school receives to reduce class size, support educators, help students with special needs, and offer free and reduced-price meals. Businesses rely on the census to inform where they might build a factory or open an office building or a grocery store.

Sample Population-based federal funding programs <sup>1</sup>	\$ Billions
Title I Grants for Low-Income Districts	\$15.5
Special Education Grants	\$12.0
School Breakfast and Lunch Programs	\$8.7
Head Start	\$9.4
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program	\$67.8
State Children's Health Insurance Program	\$16.0
Section 8 Housing Assistance	\$10.7

Everyone counts in the census. There are no exceptions for age, height, race, citizenship status, or ZIP code. If people live in the country, drive on roads, drink water, or go to school – then they need to be counted. Everyone counts.

## Why people are missed

The U.S. misses millions of people in every census. In 2010, one out of every ten children under five was missed. That's over two million kids!

Populations that are hard to count include:

- Recent immigrants or English language learners
- People with less money or less stable housing, ranging from transient renters to homeless
- People in alternative, temporary or overcrowded housing
- Gated communities or apartment buildings with locked exterior doors
- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Mixed households, where children live with grandparents or aunts and uncles
- College students and young mobile adults

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<sup>1</sup> George Washington University Institute for Public Policy, *Counting for Dollars*, 2020, <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/counting-dollars-2020-role-decenrial-census-geographic-distribution-federal-funds>. Additional information at the same site show state impacts and funding losses for every person missed in every state.

- Single parent headed households
- Pre-K children (age 0-5) even in households that count everyone else accurately.

That last item is crucial for educators – young children of all ages must be accounted for when people complete their census form. We need to make sure parents count their infant in the hospital or the toddler in daycare. Missing them in the 2020 census means diminished funding until the 2030 census, most of their childhood!

## The 2020 Census: When, Who and How

### When does the Census Happen?

In March 2020 the U.S. Census Bureau will mail postcards to every household, inviting them to participate online or by phone. People will receive multiple reminders by mail. By April, households who haven't yet responded will receive a paper form to fill out and return by mail. In May, the U.S. Census Bureau will send people (called "enumerators") to knock on doors of households who still haven't responded. Official Census enumerators wear census badges with their photos on them.

Because many households may not feel comfortable opening the door to enumerators, we want to encourage everybody to complete their census early – and ideally by April 30<sup>th</sup>.

### Census Timeline

- March 2020: Mailings go to households; the web portal opens.
- April 2020: Multiple reminders to households; paper forms mailed
- May-July 2020: Census "enumerators" knock on homes of people who haven't yet responded.
- July 31, 2020: Last day to be counted. The web portal closes and the knocks stop.

### Who to Count

People should count everyone who stays in their home, whatever their age or relationship, even if they are not staying permanently. Count grandparents or grandchildren, or nieces, nephews or friends. Be sure to count infants, babies and toddlers. If they are missed now, they will remain uncounted for most of their childhoods.

### How is the Census Taken?

The 2020 Census will be online for the first time at [www.2020Census.gov](http://www.2020Census.gov). The survey can also be completed by toll-free telephone, mail, or in person. The survey is available in English and 12 other languages. Census guides are available in 60 languages.

## The 2020 Census: Safe, Important, Necessary

The census is safe. Census information is used for statistical purposes only. Federal law prohibits using Census information for law enforcement, immigration enforcement, or any personal reason. Census employees who disclose confidential information can be punished by 5 years in prison and \$250,000 in fines.

Even so, it is important to respect people's fears. Community members may have concerns about completing the census online or answering the door for enumerators due to fears linked to

immigration or law enforcement authorities. As trusted voices in the community, educators can help make clear that the U.S. Census Bureau is tasked with completing the most accurate count possible of every individual in our nation. Data are aggregated and anonymized. Individual data are never released.

### Following are some safety tips from the U.S. Census Bureau:

- Enumerators will carry ID badges with their photograph, a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. Community members can ask to see this ID and enumerators will always show them.
- No enumerator will ever ask for a credit card, bank account or social security number. Anyone who does is a fraud.
- If you or others have questions about an enumerator's identify or suspect fraudulent activity, call 800-923-8282 to speak with the local Census Bureau representative.
- You can also find additional privacy and security information [here](#) and [here](#).

Our communities are stronger if we all work together. We need to fill out the census for our families, our children and our communities.

## What the NEA is Doing

The National Education Association is committed to providing our affiliates and individual educators with materials to support a complete and accurate 2020 census in their schools and communities. NEA's **"We Count"** campaign includes vibrant posters designed by artist Marka27, stickers, a flyer in multiple languages to send home, and a toolkit with graphics, videos, downloads, and links to the U.S. Census Bureau's Statistics in Schools lesson plans.

More detail and material for download is available at [www.nea.org/census](http://www.nea.org/census).

## What Affiliates Can Do

Most important is to work with members to help students, families and communities understand the importance of completing the census. Look to see who in your community is already involved, and reach out to them to see how your affiliate and educators can help.

Partners may include:

- **Complete Count Committees.** Most states and many cities have created [Census Complete Count Committees](#), partnerships of local stakeholders who use local knowledge, influence and resources to promote a complete and accurate count. Coordinate with your local complete count committees to plan informational events, distribute outreach materials, reach out to the harder-to-count members of your community and advocate for the most accurate count possible in your region. Suggest that the Census Bureau bring *Mobile Assistance Centers* -- vans with online kiosks -- to school events that draw crowds.
- **Local coalitions and community groups.** The [Census Counts](#) coalition and [State Voices](#) tables are in many communities. Ask how you can work together on community forums,

leafleting, and the kind of outreach often associated with getting out the vote. The end of this document includes a list of some of diverse external partners that have resources, materials and programs you can leverage for outreach to African American, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Latino and Native American members of your schools and communities.

- **Local libraries.** The American Library Association has been busy with its members to promote the Census. There might be an opportunity to work together with libraries in your neighborhoods.
- **School administration.** Likely the school is already working to promote the census, and coordination can only help.

Other actions may include:

- **Promote Statistics in the Schools Week March 2-6.** The Census Bureau's [Statistics in the Schools](#) program offers classroom resources to demystify the Census and show how Census information is used. It has unique lesson plans, worksheets and ideas designed for grades K-12 in multiple subject areas. Educators can click on their grade or subject area, and download teacher and student versions of lesson plans for ideas. Although March 2-6 is National Statistics in Schools week, these resources can be used in the classroom anytime.
- **Promote National Census Week on March 23 and Census Day on April 1.** Host census awareness events, collaborate with partners on outreach efforts and amplify your outreach work on social media including @NEAToday and #WeCount in your social media posts.
- **Integrate 2020 Census talk in all of your union events now through July 31.** Use and share our NEA "We Count" campaign posters, flyers and resources in your affiliate's conferences, meetings, webinars, calls, board meetings and union functions.
- **Fight misinformation, disinformation and scams.** The U.S. Census Bureau will not email or text people. It will not ask for payment, credit cards or social security numbers. Under no circumstances will census information be used to locate immigrants or people with criminal records. Official Census enumerators wear Census badges with their photos, a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. Tell people what to expect and educate them on what to avoid. See the earlier safety section of this toolkit for more details and safety resources.
- **Advertise Census jobs.** The Census Bureau will hire over 400,000 people as enumerators to complete the count in the spring and summer of 2020. These are good full-time and part-time federal jobs that pay between \$15 and \$25 per hour, depending on level and locality. This can be extra work for educators or students over 18 years old. The hiring of local enumerators is critical in diverse and hard-to-count communities, where local and diverse people from the community will have better success reaching out in their own communities. Details are at [www.2020census.gov/jobs](http://www.2020census.gov/jobs).

## What Educators Can Do

Each and every individual educator is at the heart of this all-hands-on-deck moment. Educators are trusted messengers. In many hard-to-count communities, the child in school may be their family's

primary connection to English language or government services. Many young children who might accidentally be left uncounted in the family's census form have older siblings in school who can remind adults about the importance of completing the census early and accounting for everybody in the household. We encourage you to learn about the census, find ways to elevate census outreach in your school and community, and simply talk to children and families about what to expect. If we don't help, some of our children or their families might be missed in this important count.

- Team up with your fellow union members, school colleagues and administration to raise census awareness with the families of students and the community.
- Order or download one of NEA's "We Count" posters and hang it in your classroom, office, or other visible place. Visit [nea.org/censusposter](http://nea.org/censusposter) for more information.
- Talk to children and families about what to expect.
- Distribute "I count" stickers to kids. Encourage them wear them and discuss them at home.
- Send our NEA census flyer home with your students. We have them in four languages -- English, Spanish, Arabic and Mandarin -- and we will happily work with people who need them in more languages.\*
- Teach about the importance of the census. The U.S. Census Bureau's Statistics in Schools program provides many ideas for lessons and activities for different subject areas and grade levels. Visit <https://www.census.gov/schools>.
- Repeat the mantra: The census is safe, important, and necessary. Complete it early – and by April 30!

\*Check your school or district's policies about distributing materials, and get permissions as needed.

## Sample Social Media

Here are some sample messages for you to post online. Please [click here to access downloadable graphics and more sample messages](#).

### Important Hashtags:

#WeCount, #2020Census

Tag: @NEAToday on Twitter and Instagram.

### Important Links:

- [Nea.org/Census](http://Nea.org/Census)
- [NEA.org/CensusPoster](http://NEA.org/CensusPoster)
- [2020Census.gov](http://2020Census.gov)
- [CensusCounts.org](http://CensusCounts.org)

## Sample Messages

- An accurate census count of our vibrant and diverse communities brings critical funding and resources our schools and communities deserve. [Nea.org/Census](http://Nea.org/Census) #WeCount @NEAToday

The census only happens once every 10 years. Filling out the census is safe and easy. Do it today at [2020Census.gov](http://2020Census.gov) #WeCount @NEAToday

Educators! Help raise awareness of the #2020Census in your school and community.  
<http://bit.ly/censusposter> #WeCount.

## Sample Emails

### Sample Email #1: What Educators Can Do

SUBJECT: Join NEA in Encouraging Census Participation by April 30<sup>th</sup>

First Name,

Every 10 years, the federal government aims to provide a complete count of every person residing in the United States through the census. This count makes visible the strength of our communities – which includes EVERY student, parent, and family in our country.

Census numbers also help determine the formulas for critical funding for our public schools, community programs, and the infrastructure that help our communities thrive.

**Please visit [www.nea.org/Census](http://www.nea.org/Census) to find out how you can help raise awareness of the 2020 census in your classroom, school, and community.**

I hope you will join me in making sure your students' families participate in the census and celebrate the importance of community.

Let's make sure everyone counts. Be sure to share your census outreach work on social media including @NEAToday, [insert your state's social media handle], #WeCount and #2020Census in your social media posts.

For our students,

Signature

### Sample Email #2: Poster

SUBJECT: Have you ordered your free NEA Census poster for your classroom yet?

First Name,

The census is going on right now, and we need your help as a trusted community leader to get the word out.

**Order a free “We Count” poster from NEA and get connected to tons of resources to raise visibility about the 2020 census in your school and community.**

As educators, we have a special role to play to make sure everyone is counted in our communities.

So much is at stake. The census happens only once every 10 years and census data helps determine how many new teachers get hired, where to build new schools, where to send funding for free and reduced lunch and after school programs, and more.

**Sign up to get a special edition “We Count” poster for your classroom, office, school, or campus and to learn about what else you can do to encourage families in your community to fill out the census.**

Remember to share photos of your poster in action and your census outreach work including @NEAToday, [insert your state's social media handle], #WeCount and #2020Census in your social media posts!

Thanks,

(Signature)

## Sample Press Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
[Date]

**CONTACT: [Name]  
[Contact Info]**

### **[State Affiliate] kicks off “We Count” campaign to promote participation in 2020 census**

[City] – January XX, 2020 – [State Affiliate] today launched the “We Count” campaign, kicking off a major effort to promote participation in the 2020 census through the activation of [State Affiliate]’s members engaging their communities on the importance of the once-in-a-decade process mandated by the U.S. Constitution.

“[State] educators know how important the 2020 census is for their communities and their schools. Not only does the census makes visible the strength of our communities by counting every student, parent, and family in our country, but an accurate census is critical to ensure our [State]’s public schools and communities get the resources they need. It determines our state’s political influence – as the census will be used to divide the 435 seats in the House of Representatives among states – and to redraw legislative and school board districts. That is why educators in [State] will be engaging their communities on the importance of the census, reminding everyone that participation in the census is safe, important, and necessary,” said [State President].

Specifically, as part of the “We Count” campaign, [State Affiliate], along with the National Education Association:

- Has launched a webpage dedicated to providing educators with resources to help ensure their communities are counted. It can be found at [NEA.org/census](http://NEA.org/census).
- Will run targeted digital ads encouraging participation in the census.
- Is distributing toolkits to NEA members, which include census-themed posters for classrooms, offices, schools, and campuses, along with other materials to educate students, families and communities on the importance of the 2020 census.

- Will continue working with community partners to promote participation and ensure a complete and accurate count.
- Has encouraged members to continue the decades-long partnership between the U.S. Census Bureau and educators by participating in the Statistics in Schools.

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## External Partner Groups for Outreach

Organizations below are among some examples of the many diverse community partners leading community-specific 2020 census outreach work in African American, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI), Latino, and Native American communities. The [Census Counts](#) coalition also offers central coordination for such activism.

Many of these groups have census outreach campaigns and resources that can benefit your classroom, state/local union activities and community. Some of the resources you can find include:

- Promotional census materials and outreach guides,
- Census ambassador programs recruiting people to host census awareness events targeting diverse and traditionally undercounted communities,
- Sharable social media graphics for use on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram,
- Maps and research on the impact of the census on diverse undercounted communities,
- Outreach events that you may be able to partner with.

AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS					
Organization	Web Link	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Special Census Social Media Hashtag
National Urban League	<a href="https://nul.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/2020Census_FINAL_Review_Oct2019.pdf">https://nul.org/sites/default/files/2019-10/2020Census_FINAL_Review_Oct2019.pdf</a>	<a href="#">@NatUrbanLeague</a>	<a href="#">@naturbaneague</a>	<a href="#">@NatUrbanLeague</a>	#MakeBlackCount
NAACP	<a href="https://www.naacp.org/campaigns/2020-census">https://www.naacp.org/campaigns/2020-census</a>	<a href="#">@naACP</a>	<a href="#">@naACP</a>	<a href="#">@NAACP</a>	#MakeBlackCount
The National Coalition on Black Civic Participation	<a href="https://www.ncbcp.org">https://www.ncbcp.org</a>	<a href="#">@NCBCP</a>	<a href="#">@blackyoungvoters</a>	<a href="#">@NCBCP</a>	
National Action Network	<a href="https://nationalactionnetwork.net">https://nationalactionnetwork.net</a>	<a href="#">@nationalactionnetwork</a>	<a href="#">@nationalactionnetwork</a>	<a href="#">@NationalAction</a>	#MakeBlackCount

ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS					
Organization	Web Link	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Special Census Social Media Hashtag
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center	<a href="https://seaascount2020.squarespace.com">https://seaascount2020.squarespace.com</a>	<a href="#">@searac</a>		<a href="#">@SEARAC</a>	#CountUsIn

Asian Americans Advancing Justice	<a href="https://www.advancingjustice-aajc.org">https://www.advancingjustice-aajc.org</a>	@advancingjusticeaajc	@advancinginjusticeaajc	@Adv Justice	
Asian Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote)	<a href="https://www.apavote.org">https://www.apavote.org</a> <a href="https://www.countusin2020.org/">https://www.countusin2020.org/</a> <a href="https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ncapa/pages/612/attachments/original/1580153800/2020.01.24_Lunar_New_Year_Census.pdf?1580153800">https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/ncapa/pages/612/attachments/original/1580153800/2020.01.24_Lunar_New_Year_Census.pdf?1580153800</a>	@APIAVote	@apiavote	@APIAVote	#CountUsIn
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA)	<a href="https://www.apalanet.org/census.html">https://www.apalanet.org/census.html</a>	@APALANational	@apalanational	@APALANational	#CountUsIn #AAPI2020

LATINO COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS					
Organization	Web Link	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Special Census Social Media Hashtag
Luz Collective	<a href="https://luzcollective.com">https://luzcollective.com</a>	@luzcollective	@theluzcollective	@LuzCollective	#thepresentislatina
National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials	<a href="https://naleo.org/census2020">https://naleo.org/census2020</a>	@naleo.org	@naleoedfund	@NALEO	#HagaseContar
U.S. Hispanic Leadership Institute	<a href="https://www.ushli.org">https://www.ushli.org</a>	@TheUSHLI	@theushli	@theUSHLI	
Voto Latino	<a href="https://votolatino.org/initiative/somos-mas">https://votolatino.org/initiative/somos-mas</a>	@votolatino	@votolatino	@votolatino	#SomosMas

NATIVE AMERICAN COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS					
Organization	Web Link	Facebook	Instagram	Twitter	Special Census Social Media Hashtag
Center for Native American Youth (CNAY) at the Aspen Institute	<a href="https://www.cnay.org">https://www.cnay.org</a>	@Center4Native	@center4native	@Center4Native	#IndianCountryCounts
National Congress of American Indians	<a href="http://www.ncai.org/initiatives/indian-country-counts">http://www.ncai.org/initiatives/indian-country-counts</a> <a href="http://indiancountrycounts.org">http://indiancountrycounts.org</a>	@NCAI1944	@NCAI1944	@NCAI1944	#IndianCountryCounts
National Indian Education Association	<a href="http://www.niea.org">http://www.niea.org</a>	@NIEAFanPage	@NIEA1969	@NIEA1969	
National Urban Indian Family Coalition (NUIFC)	<a href="https://www.nuifc.org/about-census2020">https://www.nuifc.org/about-census2020</a>	@UrbanIndianCommunities		@UrbanIndianNews	#WeCount #IndianCountryCounts

Urban Indian Health Institute (UIHI)	<a href="https://wecount.uihi.org">https://wecount.uihi.org</a>	@UrbanIndia nHealthInstitu te	@urbanin dianhealth institute	@TheUIHI	#WeCount #BeCounted
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