



Business for the 2020 Census

The Business Case For An Accurate 2020 Census

Talking Points

Census Basics:

- A count of the population every 10 years is **mandated by the Constitution**. Includes everyone residing in the U.S., regardless of age, citizenship status, etc.
- The next decennial count begins on April 1, 2020
- In modern era, the decennial census system includes:
 - Short, basic survey of all residents every 10 years
 - A longer survey (called the American Community Survey) sent to a smaller percentage of residents that provides more detailed annual data.

An accurate 2020 Census will help fuel a thriving economy:

- Businesses rely on the census for demographic information (which no other body produces) to **assess potential employees, customers, products and markets**. It helps companies identify where to open a new store or office and what items to offer on shelves.
 - Amazon is determining where to locate its HQ2 using info from the census including population density, worker education levels, and transportation.
 - Target and other retailers use the census to determine what products to offer on their shelves at each store.
 - National Association of Home Builders provides home builders and remodelers with housing market information based on census data including home values, income, and number of homeowners and renters in an area.
- As the largest set of population data, the **decennial census is used to test the accuracy of databases that businesses rely on to make data-driven decisions**, including:
 - Private, commercial databases and market analysis
 - Important demographic and economic data gathered by the government
- **Billions of dollars in economic activity at stake:** Many economic and business decisions are based on products benchmarked by the decennial census. An inaccurate count may impact the calculations and/or decisions about:
 - The national unemployment rate
 - Interest rates
 - Inflation rates
 - Exports

- The Consumer Price Index
 - Housing sales
 - Construction figures
 - Entrepreneurship
- Each year roughly **\$800 billion in federal funding** is effectively allocated based on population data from the census, including key investments in the economy such as transportation, education and workforce development resources.
 - Information from the census is used to **ensure proper distribution of political representation**. For example, an estimated 16 states could potentially each lose or gain Congressional seats based on the 2020 count.

Without adequate resources, the 2020 Census may not produce accurate data about the U.S. population:

- The US Census Bureau is implementing its **first-ever tech-based census** in 2020, offering an online census form and mobile data collection tools.
- **The bureau received less than the Secretary of Commerce requested in Fiscal Years 2012-2017**, affecting its ability to properly field test the new tech-based data collection system and to effectively prepare for the decennial count.
- Other challenges include **implementing a robust security system** to protect data from being stolen and **hiring the necessary temporary staff** during a period of low unemployment, meaning fewer people are looking for work and may want higher wages than paid by the Census Bureau.
- Although Congress appropriated significant resources in the FY 2018 federal budget, the Census Bureau had already been forced to cut multiple regional tests designed to identify and solve problems. **It's critical that the Bureau continue to receive adequate resources in the FY19 and FY20 budgets** so that it can achieve an accurate count and implement appropriate security measures to protect the data.

Businesses can help achieve an accurate count in 2020 by:

- **Supporting adequate federal funding** via social media, op-eds/LTEs, communicating with Members of Congress, and participating in business sign-on letters.

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- **Encouraging employees, customers and residents in hard-to-count communities (young children, rural households and minority communities) to complete census forms** via:
 - Employee communications (Ex. Info in break rooms, newsletters, company intraweb)
 - Customer communications (Ex. Store signs, grocery bags, utility bills)
 - Use of social media
 - Connecting with a local or state-based Complete Count Committee
- **Join the National Business Network for an Accurate Census** - a free, private listserv that will provide strategic opportunities by email to lend a name to many of the activities described above.

Want to help support an accurate count? Join the National Business Network for an Accurate Census - a free, private listserv for business persons

- The Network consists of business people from companies, trade associations and business membership organizations.
- The dual objectives of the Network are: (i) communicate business support for an accurate 2020 Census including adequate federal funding, and (ii) help educate and encourage employees, customers and the general public to complete census forms.

Overview of Participation:

- **Time-limited**, ends in 2020
- Membership is **private**, the list is never shared publicly
- **No dues** to participate
- **No meetings**, the network is virtual
- **No obligations**: Members choose their level of participation on a case-by-case basis. Members will be invited to lend their name to tactics such as business sign-on letters; earned media pieces (e.g., op-ed); and communications with Members of Congress (e.g., phone calls, emails, meetings). Later, members will receive opportunities to help educate and encourage employees, customers and the general public to complete census forms.
- **Time to participate is minimal**: Members agree to receive approximately 6-8 emails *per year, many of which are informational*. Any request for action is at the member's sole discretion and would be fully supported by our team to make the opportunity as streamlined as possible and minimizing the member's time if/when (s)he chooses to participate.

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