SVCN
Silicon Valley Council of Nonprofits

Census 2020 Fact Sheet

What is the Census?

The Census is a constitutionally required federal population count, conducted across the United States every ten years. Census data tracks important demographics such as income, age, gender, race, size of households, etc. This data directly affects the allocation of about **$1.5 trillion** in federal funds, grants and support to states, counties and communities, as well as proportional representation in Congress.

Government, business, education, and nonprofits use this data to gather important information to guide the need for programs and services to aid vulnerable populations. The integrity of data is key in portraying an accurate picture of the County's demographics, and **undercounting** can lead to inadequate allocation of federal resources and funding for those who need it most.

Due to its high percentage of low-income, homeless, and elderly populations, **Santa Clara County is considered a hard-to-count county and therefore at high risk of not being fully counted**. Other hard-to-count populations include: low-income individuals, immigrants, children ages 0-5, renters, limited English proficient households, and non-high school graduates.

Did you know?

Our state has estimated that for every Californian not counted in 2020, state and local governments will lose **$1,950 per resident per year** in federal funds. One in every five Californians lives in a hard-to-count (HTC) area.

What's at Stake?

Loss of significant federal funding to California could impact **critical social service programs** such as:

- Medicare
- Medicaid (Medi-Cal in California)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/CalFresh food stamps)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- State Children's Health Insurance Program
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children
- Community Development Block Grants
- Public Housing Assistance (e.g. Section 8 vouchers)
- Free and Reduced-Price School Lunch Programs
- Head Start Early Childhood Services
- Pell Grants for College Students
- Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

Census information is also used to **bolster public infrastructure**, helping governments and businesses determine where to locate schools, transit, housing, and retail. Undercounting could lead to under-funding of infrastructure repairs and improvements, like roads, highways, and public transportation.

It could also lead to the **loss of a congressional seat** in the House of Representatives – or prevent the gain of a seat to adjust for increased population. Census information is also used to make adjustments to the **Electoral College** and to **draw the lines** for state legislative and local district seats.

This means the Census will impact our ability to have a voice in the decisions that impact us the most!

What Nonprofits Can Do

As trusted messengers in the community, **nonprofits are in a unique position to assist with Census efforts**. Nonprofits are already in regular contact with many hard-to-count populations and can offer assistance in multiple languages.

But as a 501(c)3, can you participate in activities to promote the Census?

YES! Nonprofits can absolutely engage in activities to promote a fair, accurate, and complete Census count. In fact, it's imperative that we get a good count to ensure our programs get the funding they need.

Promoting the census and supporting **Get Out The Count (GOTC)** efforts are considered forms of civic engagement that are not subject to restrictions placed on 501(c)3 organizations on lobbying or election-related activities.

According to the National Council of Nonprofits:

> *Advocacy is fine*: Federal tax laws regulating lobbying by charitable nonprofits do not apply to informing the public or distinct populations about the census, participating in complete count commissions or committees, or speaking out in support of a fair, accurate, and complete count.
>
> *Nonpartisanship is fine:* The longstanding Johnson Amendment in federal tax law does require nonprofits to remain nonpartisan, which means they may not endorse or oppose candidates for public office. But promoting the census, such as by engaging in GOTC efforts or encouraging people to be counted, would not be partisan, election-related activities.

Just because some politicians and their operatives have tried to misuse the 2020 Census for their partisan gain, their self-serving actions cannot diminish the rights of charitable nonprofits to work in support of a fair, accurate, and complete count.

Federal law requires every person to fill out the census questionnaire. There would be no violation of the Johnson Amendment's mandate for nonprofit nonpartisanship under 501(c)(3) when nonprofits encourage people to fulfill their legal obligation to complete the census form.

Nonprofit Census Resources

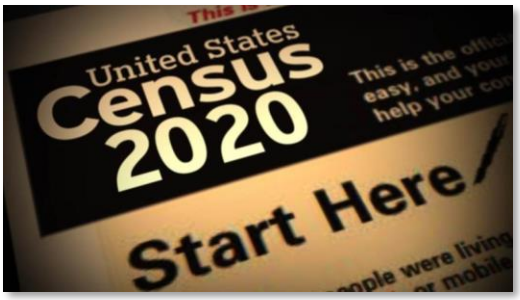
- National Council of Nonprofits - US Census 2020
- National Council of Nonprofits - Can Nonprofits Promote Census Engagement?
- Nonprofit Vote - Nonprofits Count: 2020 Census
- US Census Bureau - The 2020 Census and Confidentiality
- United Way Bay Area Counts 2020
- Santa Clara County Outreach Materials

Materials will be available in Arabic, Chinese, English, Farsi, Hindi, Japanese, Korean, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog, Telugu, and Vietnamese.

Timeline for Census 2020 *updated 9/29/20

- **March 12-20:** Census invitation postcards will be mailed to households.
- **March 16-24:** A reminder letter will be sent to households.
- **April 1:** Official day that Census surveys are due.
- If you haven't responded…
  - ***March 26-April 3:*** *A reminder postcard will be sent to households.*
  - ***April 8-16:*** *A reminder letter and paper questionnaire will be sent to households.*
  - ***April 20-27:*** *A final reminder postcard will be sent before a Census worker follows up in person.*
- **July-Oct 5:** Period for self-response and field data collection. Census workers visit addresses that did not complete a Census questionnaire and collect information at the door.
- **December 31:** The Census Director delivers apportionment counts to the president.
- **March 31, 2021:** The Census Bureau completes delivery of redistricting counts to the states.

Online Resources & Language Supports



The 2020 Census marks the first time that households will be expected to complete the questionnaire **online**, reducing costs for resources, staff, and postage.
However, an online survey poses challenges in attempting to get an accurate Census count. Not every resident has easy access to a computer or the internet, especially in areas deemed hard-to-count. This could create discrepancies between survey data recorded and actual data of residents living in those communities.

That's why the Census Bureau is offering expanded resources for households to participate:

- The questionnaire will be available online in 12 languages — **Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polish, Haitian Creole, Portuguese,** and **Japanese**.
- Census language guides will also be available in 60 languages. Paper Census questionnaires will only be available in English and Spanish.
- Households that need assistance in completing the questionnaire will be able to receive **help over the phone or in person** at Questionnaire Assistance Centers.
- Visit the **U.S. Census Bureau** website at census.gov for updates and more information.