

General Guidance re: GOTC and the coronavirus

With the coronavirus, COVID-19, reaching pandemic-status, public health officials have recommended that people limit the amount of mass-gatherings and travel that people participate in throughout the next few weeks. This means that many of us will have to shift our strategies for getting out the count!

In order to comply with social distancing measures, State Voices strongly recommends postponing canvass programs. If your state has postponed or canceled in-person census-related events, please consider the following tactics to shift your census program. Additionally, make sure that your organization is complying with local guidance.

Remember that the Census Bureau has three ways for households to complete the 2020 Census: by phone, by internet, or by paper. All outreach should encourage people to take advantage of these many response methods.

Table of Contents

Digital Tactics	p. 2
Phone Programs	p. 3
Print Materials	p. 4
Press and Media	p. 5
Information on Canvassing	p. 5
Information on Community Events and Census Kiosks	p. 6
Train the Trainer Modifications	p. 6
Messaging to Consider	p. 7

Digital Tactics

- **Think about using Twitter or Facebook** to create paid ads. Both platforms require ad verification before posting GOTC-related ads. You can find out more about how to verify your account and ads [here](#). You can also use regular posts and host social media campaigns with partner organizations and allies
 - Looking for a place to start? United We Dream has [shareable graphics and posts](#) you can share!
 - Additionally, you can use [this sample social media campaign from the State Voices network](#) as a template to build out a campaign that works for you!
 - Create videos to share on social media that provides basic census information and urges households to complete their census form. This could include volunteers sharing out why the census is important to them or how easy it was to fill out their form at home.
- **The Census Bureau has several recorded PSAs available** for organizations to use or modify. Learn more about these PSAs [here](#) or use any of these [script templates](#)
- **Use State Voices digital tools:** Hustle, GetThru, or Action Network digital pledge cards. SMS messages can include direct links to the [census webpage](#)
 - For Hustle and ThruText: Host “Text from Home” Parties where all texters use the system at the same time from their own homes and communicate via Slack or an instant messaging system that allows them to connect with each other. Text important information about participating in the census, along with links to webpages with more information and your census pledge cards
 - Digital Pledge Cards: Create digital pledge cards on Action Network and use social media, your website, text messages and emails to spread your pledge card link and get more pledges
 - Consider short-code SMS vendors.
- **National groups have hotspots!** We are able to send hotspots with data abilities to state tables ASAP. Tables and partners may use these hotspots during community census support events or for rural partners who may not have reliable wifi access. We realize these may not be as helpful in the

immediate but hope this offer can support digital organizing efforts. If you are interested in getting free hotspots, please reach out to your national partner.

- **The Census Counts website now has a chat bot feature** with thousands of answers to questions that can be shared online or by SMS. Text a question to 442020 or input a question in the chat box on censuscounts.org. The HelpDesk is automated and covers around 10,000+ topics about the census. It can also detect English and Spanish language text.
- **Check out CensusU!** There are many digital organizing trainings with national experts on the Census Counts website. These trainings include setting up social media campaigns, SMS programs, creative content, and digital advertising. All training is an hour in length and includes shareable information. Check out the full training suite [here](#)

Phone Programs (*scripts are coming!*)

- All phone scripts should include information about how households can respond to the 2020 census.
- **Virtual Phone Banks (free!):** load phone lists into VAN's VPB tool and have volunteers or staff make hand dial calls and enter the data into the system as they make the calls
- **VAN's Predictive Dialer:** load landline phone lists into this tool where callers can be automatically connected to landline phones and enter the data into the system as they make the calls
- **ThruTalk:** load cell phone lists into this tool where callers can be automatically connected to cell phones and enter the data into the system as they make the calls
- **Host "Phone Parties from Home" using any of these tools**, where callers all use the system at the same time from their own homes and communicate via Slack or an instant messaging system that allows them to share their calling stories
- Contact datateam@statevoices.org with questions about any of these tools.
- Need to stock up on cell phones or tablets? Check out this [helpful guide](#) for the best value for prepaid or low-cost plans

Print Materials

- Many households will likely continue to visit essential locations, like their workplace, grocery stores, gas stations, or clinics. Consider dropping off outreach and education materials for folks to pick up during a visit:
 - [Printable 'I count' stickers](#)
 - [Printable brochures](#)
 - [Printable posters and flyers](#)
 - [Downloadable materials from Sesame Street Workshop](#)
 - [Printable Census Basics Handout](#)
 - [Printable postcard in 7 languages including English](#)
 - [Visit your local state partner's website for more state-specific materials](#)
 - [Additional brochures and flyers to print](#)
- Mailers: Targeted mailing lists with both registered voters and new households can be created and exported from VAN. All mailers should have information about how households can respond to the 2020 census by phone and the internet.
 - Consider including the national GOTC hotlines on all printed materials so households can contact someone if they have questions:
 - Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law: (888)-COUNT20 or (888)-268-6820
 - Arab American Institute: (833) 333-6864; (833)-3DDOUNI ("Count me" in Arabic)
 - Asian Americans Advancing Justice | AAJC: (844) 202-API or (844) 202-0274
 - The hotline will be available in English, Mandarin (普通話), Cantonese (廣東話), Korean (한국어), Vietnamese (tiếng Việt), Tagalog, Urdu (اردو), Hindi (हिंदी), and Bengali/Bangla (বাংলা).
 - NALEO Educational Fund: (877)-EL-CENSO or (877)-352-3676

Press + Media

- **Consider placing radio or television ads.** Check out [script ideas here](#) or contact [Tim Lim](#) with Lim Consulting for guidance on placing local ads
- **Pitch an op-ed or article** to local papers or media outlets about the significance of the census. [Tips on writing a pitch can be viewed here.](#)
- If you land an interview with a journalist, **make sure your spokesperson/spokespeople are prepped.** [Tips on spokesperson training and development are linked here.](#)
- Review [this messaging guidance](#) or visit the Census Counts [website](#) to see what narratives are most compelling to our different communities

Canvassing

- **State Voices recommends postponing or canceling canvassing or event programs until further notice.** If your table or partners decide to continue to knock doors, please consider the following measures:
 - DO NOT send any volunteers or staff who may be sick out to canvass or into a community setting.
 - Have hand sanitizer available in your office wherever canvassers may be launching in to or returning from their shift(s).
 - Post CDC safety guidelines in your office or at community events to ensure that people are taking safe precautions.
 - Provide all canvassers with a portable/travel size hand sanitizer during their canvass shifts and encourage them to be carried on their person during shifts.
 - Require canvassers to politely refuse offers of handshaking, fist-bumping, high-fiving, hugging, or other skin contact with other people in the field.
 - Wipe down clipboards or other handled canvas materials with sanitizing wipes (minimum 60% alcohol) upon return from a shift.
 - Consider doing a lit drop to leave materials with a household without having face-to-face contact.

Community Events and Census Kiosks

- **If your area has been impacted by COVID-19, State Voices strongly recommends cancelling or scaling back any community events and NOT providing census kiosks until further notice.** Additionally, make sure that your organization is complying with local guidance. Please consider the following guidance:
 - **DO NOT** send any volunteers or staff who may be sick out into a community setting. DO NOT host community events in areas with a population considered [at-risk](#) such as older adults and those with serious chronic medical conditions. It is important to remember that while you might feel comfortable, there are others who are at a higher risk for contracting COVID-19 and it is our responsibility to provide a safe environment for all members of our community.
 - **Clean locations:** Have hand sanitizer stations available at your event, particularly near exit and entrance locations. Wipe down any tablet, laptop, or phone with disinfectant after each use. Ensure restrooms at your locations are well-stocked with soap and paper towels. Post CDC safety guidelines around your community event to ensure that people are taking safe precautions.
 - **Avoid skin contact:** Require volunteers to politely refuse offers of handshaking, fist-bumping, high-fiving, hugging, or other skin contact with other people in the field.
 - **Safe census kiosk locations:** Place hand sanitizing stations near your kiosk and ask that anyone who uses your devices use hand sanitizer before and after using the device. Wipe down these devices after every use using sanitizing wipes with a minimum of 60% alcohol.
 - Continue to work with the Census Bureau and stay up-to-date on any shifts they may make to census operations given the changing environment with the coronavirus. Ensure that you are aware of how and if the locations for MQAs change and how to communicate that out to your communities.

Train the Trainer & Teletown Halls

- If your area has been impacted by COVID-19, State Voices strongly recommends moving all Train the Trainer events to virtual events only.

Considering using platforms like Zoom that allow you to share your screen with participants and facilitate the use of break out rooms.

- Zoom hosts regular live trainings and several recorded trainings to teach you how to [get started using Zoom](#) (see how to use breakout rooms [here](#)). Google Hangouts is an additional tool you can use for up to 25 people. Find more information on Google Hangouts [here](#).
- Digital trainings might require more staff members than in-person training to ensure technology runs smoothly. Ensure you have at least one staff-member dedicated to troubleshoot any tech problems as they arise. When utilizing the breakout rooms consider dedicating one staff member per breakout room to facilitate discussion in the digital space, which might flow more awkwardly than in-person.
- If you decide to host a Train the Trainer in-person please follow the canvassing and community event guidelines above. Learn more about hosting virtual meetings [here](#).
- **Teletown Halls:** Similar to training events, all community events can easily be transitioned to a digital version. This is a great tactic if your organization has a large membership base or active social media followers. A series of teletown halls may run \$5,000-10,000 depending on platform and audience. A few platforms to consider:
 - Adobe Connect
 - Stones Phones:
 - Twitter Town Halls:
 - Facebook Live:
 - [Tele-town hall](#):

Messaging to Consider (*more to come!*)

- The census determines funding to important health-related resources in our communities. Health care centers, Medicaid, Medicare, children health insurance programs, and more receive federal funding based on census counts in our neighborhoods. It's crucial for us all to be counted to make sure our healthcare system can keep us safe and healthy.

- You can complete the census this year online, by mail, or by phone. It only takes 10 minutes!
- If you're on quarantine or otherwise need to stay at home because of the COVID-19 pandemic, take 10 minutes to complete the census.
- The COVID-19 pandemic emphasizes the need for a liberated society in which everyone has the resources to healthcare and wellness. From advocating for paid leave for all, to organizers making sure people in prisons and jails are heard, to the Black TLGBQIA+ advocates pushing for mutual aid projects across the country, we're inspired by the way the people are rising up and demanding justice, safety, and power.
-