General Census Talking Points

- Political change starts with political power, and everyone can build their power by participating in the 2020 Census. Census data determines political representation in the house of representatives and influences redistricting.
  - Everyone living in the United States has the right to be counted in the 2020 Census. Every immigrant, every child, every neighbor, every student, everyone.
  - Even if you can’t vote, filling out the 2020 Census is a way to make your voice heard.
  - The first step to having your needs advocated for is to fill out the Census so that your community can show how strong it is!
- There’s power in numbers and participating in the 2020 Census helps give us the visibility we need to demand real change for our communities. Filling out the census says, “we’re here, we’re part of America, and our needs count.”
  - Too many of us don’t see our needs reflected in the funding our communities receive or in the policies that govern us. The census is a way to claim space -- you can influence how much money flows into your community and how it’s spent.
  - Advocates and lawyers need census data to enforce the laws that protect our civil rights. The census shows the makeup of our communities which can help prove when discrimination occurs.
  - Getting counted also helps give your community fair political representation. Make sure your elected officials, from Congress to city council, represent the actual concerns of your community, not someone else’s agenda.
- A complete Census count is more critical now than ever before for the health of our loved ones and the future of our city. The Census tells the government what they need to know to send critical resources like hospital beds, tests and supplies to our communities, and tells hospitals where they should allocate services and care. Visit my2020Census.gov or call 844-330-2020 and self-respond today.
- The census is easy and should take only 10 minutes! You can respond online at my2020census.gov or by phone through 844-467-2020.
- Now is the time to make your voice heard. You can respond to the Census by phone in 13 different languages through 844-467-2020.
- Census data will remain protected for 72 years. The U.S Census Bureau takes their job seriously and can be trusted to keep your information safe.
- Whether it’s putting money into schools and community food programs, protection from discrimination, or freedom from violence, our communities deserve to be made whole. The 2020 Census is a tool for change -- use it.
- Looking for more direct talking points on the census within the environment our communities are facing? See Census Black Lives Matter talking points here and here and find Census COVID-19 talking points here.
Messaging Guidance for the 2020 Census

1. The topline message to participate in the census is simple: You should participate in the 2020 Census because it’s easy, it’s protected, and it’s important.
   a. It’s easy. People want reassurance that participating in the census won’t be a burden, and are more likely to fill out the questionnaire when they’re told that they can do so on their own schedule, at home, and hear that it will probably only take 10-20 minutes. It’s also important for people to know there are several ways to participate, and that they can choose the one they’re most comfortable with.
   b. It’s protected. Many people in communities that have been traditionally missed by the census are distrustful of the government, largely due to historical and current discrimination and persecution at the hands of government institutions. This can create a barrier to participation, so it’s important that people know about, and trust in, the strong protections in place to protect themselves and their data. Highlight these points:
      i. There’s no citizenship question on the 2020 Census.
      ii. The Census Bureau has very strong privacy protections. It’s illegal, under federal law, for the Census Bureau to share individual census data for 72 years. Anyone who shares that data could go to prison for up to 5 years or pay up to $250,000 in fines — research shows that people need to know the severity of the penalty
   c. It’s important. Census data helps build the foundation of our everyday lives, and an accurate count will help to feed, shelter, protect, heal, and build our communities. To connect with people on an emotional level, avoid relying on vague, broad, or wonky statements about the importance of the census to our democracy or to funding formulas. Tell a story to which people can relate. Talk about specific local issues that make a difference to them: help paying for child care or school lunch, or funding for schools, hospitals, roads, and jobs that their community needs. Make the harm caused by a potential undercount feel unacceptable.

2. We know however that now is the time to segment messaging to those communities that might have a lower response rate. Check out the Census Counts Messaging Toolkit to find specific talking points per community here. Want even more? Check our Census Counts full library to find materials by community or even by language here.