

2020 Census Response Rate Challenge Toolkit



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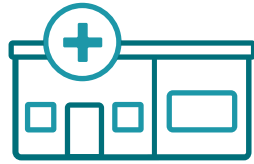
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2020 Census Response Rate Challenge Toolkit

Beginning in mid-March, the U.S. Census Bureau will invite households across the country to participate in the 2020 Census. The 2020 Census counts every person living in the United States, as of April 1. The count is mandated by the Constitution every 10 years, and the results help to Shape Your Future in a variety of ways – from determining the number of seats each state gets in the House of Representatives to informing decisions about how hundreds of billions of dollars are allocated each year to local communities for vital services like schools, healthcare, roads and bridges, and emergency response.



The goal of the 2020 Census is a complete and accurate count of everyone living in the U.S. and five of its U.S. territories. That's where *you* come into play: As a town, city, state, or tribal leader, **the Census Bureau needs your help to motivate all individuals in your community to respond on their own to the 2020 Census as early as possible, beginning in mid-March.** We encourage you to engage people around the 2020 Census, and to explain why it's important for you and everyone in your community to respond. More people responding to the census means more opportunities to shape the future of your town, city, or state – and the country. **Start Here.**

What is the 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge?

The 2020 Response Rate Challenge is about getting as many people as possible to respond to the census on their own as soon as possible.

Most households in the country will receive invitations to complete the 2020 Census beginning in mid-March. For the first time, you can choose to respond to the census online—in addition to responding by phone or by mail. In mid-August 2020, census takers will begin following up with households that haven't responded on their own to make sure everyone is counted. Our goal is to get as many people as possible to respond quickly, and on their own, reducing the need for more costly in-person interviews.

Counting everyone in the U.S. requires everyone's help - and it starts with you and the people in your community responding to the 2020 Census.

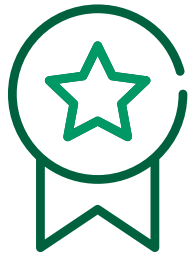
Important Dates

- **January 2020:** The Census Bureau begins counting the population in remote Alaska.
- **Mid-March 2020:** The Response Rates Map <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>> will go live and begin reporting 2020 Census responses. Most households will receive their initial invitations to respond, which will be followed by three additional mailings. People can choose to respond to the census in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail.
- **April 1, 2020:** Census Day is observed nationwide. By this date, most homes will have received an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. Respond based on where you live and sleep most of the time as of April 1, 2020.
- **August 11, 2020:** Census takers begin visiting homes that haven't responded to the 2020 Census to make sure everyone is counted. This operation, called "Nonresponse Followup," will last through October. We will still accept self-responses to the census during this time.

See the latest operational timeline <<https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/factsheets/2020/dec/2020-census-operational-adjustments-long-version.pdf>> for the latest important dates for the 2020 Census.

The 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge is a challenge to every city, town, and state to beat their 2010 Census response rates.

This toolkit offers two overarching ideas for participating in the 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge:



- 1. Challenge your community** to beat its 2010 Census response rate.



- 2. Challenge another community** to a friendly competition to see who can achieve a higher response rate.

The concept behind each of these ideas is that everyone “wins” when you respond to the 2020 Census, because when everyone is counted, there are more opportunities for shaping your community’s future. By encouraging your community to respond on their own to the census in a timely manner, you’re playing a big role in ensuring a complete and accurate count.

In this toolkit, we’ve created a guide for **planning, prepping, executing,** and **celebrating** the 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge. Included are helpful ideas, activities, outreach materials, resources, and more. We hope you will use it to guide and inspire your own Response Rate Challenge.

Planning

There are a variety of ways you can take the 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge and make it your own. From the simple to the more complex ideas and every level in between, the best approach is the one that will motivate as many individuals as possible in your community to respond to the census on their own. The following ideas can be used as a guide to get started on your community challenge.

No matter which approach you take, the Response Rates Map on [2020CENSUS.GOV/RESPONSE-RATES](https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html) <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>> can help guide you through your challenge. In February, check the map to find the 2010 Census response rate for your town or city. These rates are reflective of the percentage of people that responded on their own – not the total amount of people counted.

Beginning in mid-March, when the online questionnaire becomes available, the map will display daily updates of response rates (people responding on their own) across the United States, including Puerto Rico. It will also show comparisons to 2010 response rates so you can always keep track of your progress.



To begin planning your challenge, choose something that your community can get behind. Here are a couple of ideas:

➤ **Approach A: Challenge your community with a goal**

Whether you are a mayor, county supervisor, other elected official, or head of a Complete Count Committee, a Response Rate Challenge to your community means you are encouraging your own constituents to beat their 2010 Census response rates by responding to the 2020 Census, beginning in mid-March through the end of April. Use the Response Rates Map on [2020CENSUS.GOV/RESPONSE-RATES](https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html) <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>> to identify your 2010 response rate, down to the geographic level that best matches your community.

➤ **Approach B: Challenge another community to a competition**

If you want to take your Response Rate Challenge to the next level, why not challenge another community to a friendly competition? Everyone likes a good old-fashioned friendly rivalry, and in this case, responding to the 2020 Census means everyone wins. For this approach, again, there are many directions you could take: you could challenge another town, city, or state to see who can get closer to their response rate goal, or find a neighbor with a similar goal and see who can reach their response rate goal faster.

Creating the challenge

An effective Response Rate Challenge will be measurable with a specific goal, such as “Raise our response rates from 2010 by 5% for 2020” or “Achieve a 60% response rate by April 30.” Targeting a specific number and deadline gives people something to work toward, and helps create a sense of urgency, which is important for ensuring a complete and accurate count for the 2020 Census. April 1 is Census Day, and it’s a great time to rally your community along with the rest of the country to encourage early response to the census before census takers complete in-person visits. You may even plan an event to encourage response in your community, whether people complete their questionnaires at home or at a public venue such as the local library or community center.

However, there are a couple of important considerations when planning and issuing your challenge:

- **How to respond:** You can choose to respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail. *Responding online is the easiest and fastest* way to complete the 2020 Census – and it is safe and secure to respond online.
- **Timing:** Beginning in August 2020, census takers will begin to visit homes that haven’t responded to the 2020 Census to make sure everyone is counted. We recommend you encourage your communities to respond to the 2020 Census as early as possible to get us off to the best possible start towards counting everyone in the nation, minimizing the need for in-person visits. Pick a date, one your community can rally around and that is realistic to achieve.
- **Keep it going:** Census Day, April 1, 2020, is a nationally recognized day to rally the nation around the census count, and a reference day for counting everyone where they live on the same day. It is not a deadline for completing the census. Regardless of when people respond to the census, they should count themselves where they were living on April 1. Even if your challenge initially ended on April 1, we encourage you to continue to motivate your community to continue responding and ensure everyone is counted. When people respond early and on their own, it significantly lowers the need for census takers to visit homes, and allows the Census Bureau to receive responses more quickly.

How can you motivate your constituents to respond? Again, there are many directions you can take your challenge, and you can make the incentives as fun, quirky, or exciting as you choose. Is a county supervisor willing to shave his head if the county beats its 2010 response numbers? Will the mayor jump into the river? In the “Celebration” section later in the toolkit, we offer other ideas for incentives and rewards for reaching the goal you have set forth.

Here are some other ideas to inspire your challenge:

1. Respond in record time

Hold a kick-off event in late February or early March to announce the challenge: Beating your community’s 2010 response rate or your competitor’s ... in record time. Use our media outreach templates and our sample social media messaging to spread the word (coming soon!). Consider a special event at the local library, high school, or community center to get people excited about the challenge and to remind them why it’s important to respond to the 2020 Census. For a community rally, host pop-up “respond to the census” meetups around town on April 1, recognized nationally as Census Day, and check in on your response rates. More information on national events and other key dates will be available on 2020CENSUS.GOV <<https://2020census.gov>> in early 2020.

2. Involve local businesses

Partner with local businesses to spread the word about the 2020 Response Rate Challenge. Ask them to display related materials and promotional items, or if they can host a “Respond to the 2020 Census” meetup, where people bring their laptops and phones to respond online, or their mail-in questionnaires to complete on site. Talk to a local Census Complete Count Committee and Census Bureau Partnership Specialists about having someone on hand to answer questions.

3. Leverage a partnership

The 2020 Census has partnered with thousands of organizations, including several online services and corporations. In addition to businesses big and small, 2020 Census partners include libraries, civic and non-profit organizations, houses of worship and faith-based organizations, and many more. These trusted members of the community are great sources of information, energy, and ideas. Contact your Regional Census Center (RCC) <<https://2020census.gov/en/contact-us/rcc.html>> to connect with a local partnership specialist.

4. Statistics in schools collaboration

The Census Bureau's Statistics in Schools (SIS) <<https://www.census.gov/schools>> program is a great way to highlight the importance of a complete count using hands-on classroom activities and multimedia tools. SIS provides educator guides and toolkits to make it easy for key stakeholders to execute in-class programming and share information with community members.

- Invite your local school to begin using these materials as part of your challenge.
- Participate in SIS Week, March 2-6, to generate excitement and engagement about the 2020 Census.
- Excite the kids in your town or city's schools by adding the 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge to baseball, soccer, volleyball, and other sports and clubs on the list of competitions with your biggest rival in another town.

If you are challenging another community, find inspiration below on how to create a plan:



Establishing a challenge

What would make this challenge fun for both communities? What are the incentives to motivate response, and how can the competitors work together to benefit everyone? Think of ways you can tap into existing friendly rivalries to encourage both communities to respond. If your community wins, will the other community have to paint a mural of your sports team mascot? Will the governor with the lower state response rate send a basket of local foods to the other governor?



Identify a "competitor"

- Geography-based: Neighboring towns, cities, parishes, counties, or states, i.e. Minneapolis vs. St. Paul; Seattle vs. Tacoma; Montgomery County vs. Howard County (Maryland).
- Rivalry-based: Sports city vs. sports city (Boston vs. New York); industry or business (citrus states - Florida vs. Georgia; or BBQ cities - Memphis vs. Kansas City).
- Name-based: Oxford, Ohio vs. Oxford, Mississippi; or Portland, Oregon vs. Portland, Maine.
- City vs. city Complete Count Committees.
- Sister city challenges.
- Government to government challenge: Mayor vs. mayor; governor vs. governor.

#ShapeYourFuture: Ideas & Inspiration for Your Community

The following is a list of ideas for community leaders, government officials, and Complete Count Committees (CCCs) or State Complete Count Committees (SCCCs) to encourage 2020 Census response and engagement within your communities while the country is following social distancing guidelines. For more ideas and resources, visit 2020census.gov/response-rates. <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>>

- > **City vs. City/County vs. County Challenge:** Embed the Response Rates Map <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>> on your website or take a screenshot of your city/county's current response rate, compared to the national rate. Use the Response Rate Rankings Dashboard <<https://public.tableau.com/profile/us.census.bureau#!/vizhome/2020CensusSelf-ResponseRankings/RankingsDashboard>> to compare to neighboring cities and counties, then share the rankings on social media to announce a friendly challenge with a fun wager for elected officials, while encouraging your community members to respond. You could also try this challenge between rival college or university towns and schools and capitalize on sports rivalries between cities, states, and school districts.
 - *Examples: Dundas vs. Northfield, MN Challenge* <<https://patch.com/minnesota/northfield/dundas-defeats-northfield-2020-census-response-rate-challenge>>; *Jamestown vs. Valley City, ND Challenge* <<https://www.newsdakota.com/2020/01/15/challenge-that-counts-census-challenge-between-jamestown-valley-city/>>
- > **Community Parade:** Host a community “parade” of cars and emergency vehicles featuring first responders, community leaders, and trusted voices. Include your local CCC or SCCC and 2020 Census promotional items and banners. Include a call-to-action to respond to the census by the mayor, school superintendent, or other leader. Encourage attendees and virtual viewers if livestreamed to share photos and video of the parade on social media using #2020Census and #shapeyourfuture.
 - *Examples: Easter porch parade in Illinois* <<https://www.chicagotribune.com/suburbs/norridge/ct-nhh-easter-parade-tl-0416-20200409-wnh37j2obzaqxnjggy7en3afba-story.html>>; *NH teachers host caravan parades for students* <<https://www.wmur.com/article/teachers-across-nh-hold-caravan-parades-to-show-students-they-re-missed/31962696>>
- > **Virtual Community Gathering:** Host a “Response Rate Challenge Meetup” on your community’s YouTube channel or on Facebook Live. Feature local trusted voices and well-known people such as news anchors, athletes, entertainers, and spokespeople from your CCC or SCCC. Consider contests, giveaways, and positive community stories to fill out the show, especially ones focused on the community benefits of responding to the census, like emergency response, healthcare, and schools.
 - *Examples: #TurnUptheCount Rally in Atlanta* <https://www.mdjonline.com/neighbor_newspapers/t-i-ludacris-and-killer-mike-will-participate-in-fultons-2020-census-turnupthecount-virtual-rally/article_e42a739c-8006-11ea-8e7e-2302cb457b5f.html>; *Madison Couch Census Party* <<https://www.facebook.com/events/531093860884579/>>

- > **Community Pick-up Picnic:** Partner with local businesses and organizations for a drive-thru “pick-up picnic” with a “Respond to the 2020 Census” theme. Baskets or boxes with food, 2020 Census promotional materials, and other goodies can be distributed to people in their cars, or from a safely designated “pick up” area in town. Consider a raffle component: each household that picks up a picnic box is entered into a drawing for other prizes like gift cards to local restaurants or businesses, or a special experience later in the year when people can safely gather again.
- > **Chapter Challenge:** National organizations such as businesses, associations, membership groups, and nonprofits can encourage their affiliates to challenge one another to increase local, regional, or state response rates. Announce challenges over social media and share them with the local and regional media outlets to raise awareness, and share on your website, email newsletters, and in blog posts.
- > **Instagram (IG) Live Talks:** Host an Instagram Live talk with local government officials, the local CCC, and organizations and businesses that use census statistics to plan and support the community. This could include the fire chief, hospital administrator, school superintendent, or city councilperson. Part of the live discussion could include pulling up your community on the Response Rates Map <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>> and a call to respond to the 2020 Census together now.
- > **Summer School Challenge:** Keep school-aged kids engaged while they’re at home by tracking community activity with the Response Rates Map. They can create fun posters, graphics, and art for tracking their community or another one and engage with the 2020 Census using a variety of resources <<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/2020-resources.html>> provided by Statistics in Schools (SIS) online.

More inspiration: 2010 Census challenge examples

In 2010, many elected officials checked the Response Rates Map hosted on the 2010 Census website and saw that their community was completing the census at a lower rate than the national average. They used map results to encourage their communities to respond with a variety of challenges. Below are some examples of their actions around their Response Rate Challenge—inspiration for **Approach A: Challenge your community**. Take it, tweak it ... make it your own!

- Lewiston, ME - Mayor Laurent Gilbert, Sr. encouraged the city to respond to the census, stating, “Lewiston is again setting the pace.” At the time, their participation rate was higher than the state average.
- Jamestown, NY - Mayor Sam Teresi encouraged the city to fill out and mail in their census questionnaires. At the time, their participation rate was higher than the state and national rates.
- Cleveland, OH - Mayor Frank Jackson attended a “Census Blitz” where he encouraged people to mail in their census questionnaires, advocating for higher response rates in concert with the rest of the nation.

And here are some examples of how communities challenged each other in 2010 that can be inspiration for **Approach B: Challenge another community**. Again, start here, and define your own challenge.

- Newark, NJ vs. Jersey City, NJ - Jersey City wanted to pass Newark as the state’s most populous city. They tried to get people to work census-related jobs in their own neighborhoods to improve census participation while creating revenue for the city.
- Fort Worth, TX vs. Arlington, TX - The Mayor of Arlington issued a challenge to the Mayor of Fort Worth. If Arlington had the higher participation rate, Fort Worth would make May 4, 2010 “Arlington Counts in Fort Worth Day.” If Fort Worth had the higher mail participation rate, Arlington would make May 4, 2010 “Fort Worth Counts in Arlington Day.”
- South Orange Village, NJ vs. Maplewood, NJ - The Mayor of Maplewood and the President of South Orange Village competed against each other to see who would get the highest mail participation rate. The winner would receive a meal at the loser’s expense.
- Madisonville, KY vs. Prattville, AL - The Mayor of Madisonville challenged the Mayor of Prattville to see who would get the higher mail participation rate. The loser, the Mayor of Madisonville, had to wear paraphernalia from Troy University, Auburn University, and the University of Alabama to a council meeting.

- St. Anthony, ID vs. Sugar City, ID vs. Ashton, ID - The Mayor of St. Anthony challenged the mayors of Sugar City and Ashton on who would get the higher mail participation rate. The winner and their spouse would receive dinner courtesy of the other couple.
- Springfield, IL vs. Peoria, IL - The mayors of the cities challenged each other on who would have the higher mail participation rate. The loser would have to travel to the winner's city and buy them dinner at their favorite restaurant.
- St. Louis, MO vs. Kansas City, MO - The mayors competed against each other to see who would improve the most against their mail participation rate from Census 2000. The loser would have to send the winner a case of their hometown's favorite beer and "most delicious" barbeque.

If you can't decide between the approaches above, why not engage your community with both? You could challenge your community to beat its 2010 response rate, and you can also challenge another community at the same time. The more incentives people have to respond to the 2020 Census, the more opportunities they have to help shape their future.

Response Rate Challenge

sample scenarios

(The following examples are meant for inspiration only, and are not real scenarios.)

Locally-based challenge in action



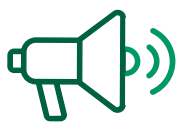
Mayor Pat Jones knows he needs his city of Newberry to achieve a better census response rate than in 2010 – it was in vital need of important federal funding to help build new schools, repair the bridge over the riverfront, and support the local fire department. So, Mayor Jones decides to challenge Newberry to get even better response rates for the 2020 Census.



On March 1, Mayor Jones holds a press conference and issues a news release challenging Newberry to increase its 2010 Census response rate by May 5. One incentive: If the city achieves its goal, the Coffee Café would offer free coffee to customers from 9 a.m. to noon on May 8. Also, Discount Cinema will offer free movie tickets to the first 100 children (10 and under) who visit the theater on May 9. Mayor Jones explains the various community benefits impacted by census responses, such as funding for schools, roads and bridges, and emergency response. “Do you want to shape your future?” he asks. “I do, too! Start here – respond to the 2020 Census.”



For the next few weeks, Mayor Jones issues daily updates about his city’s response rates using the Response Rates Map on 2020census.gov, <<https://2020census.gov>> and through a mix of media outreach, social media posts, and public signage, inspires people to respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail.



At a press conference on May 1, 2020, Jones announces that Newberry met its response rate goal ahead of deadline. The city achieved a 70 percent response rate in 2020 compared to a 66 percent response rate in 2010. As a result, Newberry community members would get free coffee, a group of lucky children would see a free movie, and most important – the people of the city played a role in shaping their future.

Competitive challenge in action



Wanting to leverage her county's competitive nature to encourage people to respond to the 2020 Census, county executive Jane Smith, leader of the largest orange-growing county in Florida, issues a challenge to county executive Joe Brown, her peer in Georgia's largest peach-growing county. The challenge: The county that achieves the greatest increase over its 2010 Census response rates by May 15 would win a truckload of produce from the other county to be donated to a local food bank. Once agreeing to the challenge, Jane and Joe issue press releases outlining the challenge and providing information on the importance of responding to the census and promoted the challenge with good-natured teasing on their county's Twitter and Instagram accounts.



For the next couple of months, Jane and Joe build buzz about the challenge in their counties, and even participate in a Facebook Live Q&A to answer questions from the media and the public about what the census is and why it's important. A couple of days after the challenge ends, they hold a joint news conference to announce the challenge winner and final response rate numbers.

While Joe's county wins the challenge, both counties are winners because community members took the opportunity to shape their future by responding to the 2020 Census. Those responses will inform how a portion of federal funding can support various community services for the next 10 years.



Later that week, Joe Brown accepts a large delivery - a giant truckload of freshly picked oranges, which he personally escorted to the food bank.

Prepping

Now that you've decided on the type of challenge, it's time to get down to the details and start preparing. There are many things to determine: the specifics of your challenge, how you will announce it, and how you will promote it to your constituents and to the media.

Know the goal of the 2020 Census, which is to achieve **a complete and accurate count of every person living in the United States.**

Below, we've outlined some key steps and ideas for how to prep for your 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge - an opportunity for your community to shape its future:



Setting the challenge goal

You may have a general idea of what you want your challenge to look like, but how are you going to pull it off? For this stage of the plan, you should get specific about your exact goal so that everyone knows the target. For example, "Town X will beat its 2010 Census response rate by 10% by April 1," or "Boston will have a higher response rate than New York City by April 30." (Remember: Keep the timing and response methods in mind when creating language and calls-to-action related to the challenge.)

The key to any great challenge is a great incentive. The best incentive for responding to the 2020 Census is that responses help inform how billions of dollars in federal funding are distributed to communities every year for 10 years. Responses also affect Congressional representation. Responding to the census truly can Shape Your Future.

We recognize that sometimes people need a fun or creative reason to get engaged, or to incentivize a competition. See the Celebrating section for some ideas to help you choose what works for your community.



Community outreach

Now that you have your challenge details finalized, it's time to begin spreading the word and generating excitement in the lead-up to being able to participate in the 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge. Below, we've listed some suggestions for how to conduct outreach to three different audiences who can help to support your challenge:

Constituents

This is the most important group of people you need to reach to educate them about the importance of responding to the 2020 Census and how they can do so by participating in your Response Rate Challenge. How will you reach every person in your area? Here are some ideas:

- Local government website content and email newsletters.
- Flyers and posters.
- Social media (local government & neighborhood).
- Neighborhood email lists.
- Meetups and townhalls.
- Municipal leagues and county associations.
- Online communities.
- Local sports events.
- Advertising with local media outlets and publications.

Partners

From businesses and nonprofits to community organizations, faith-based organizations, corporations, and schools, the 2020 Census has thousands of partners at the national and local level. Who can you partner with regionally or locally to help spread the word about your Response Rate Challenge? How can you work with Census Bureau Partnership Specialists and Complete Count Committees to target hard-to-count and hard-to-reach communities in particular? Here are a few opportunities for partners to support your challenge:

- Collaborate with the local library system to host dedicated hours and space for people to respond.
- Work with local businesses to promote the challenge in their physical locations and via their digital communications.
- Include 2020 Census messaging, activities, and marketing at school sports events in the spring.
- Hold a local “Shape Your Future” mural competition.
- Have a “Shape Your Future” town beautification event (litter pick up, garden planting, painting, etc.).
- Work with local Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to promote the challenge.

Media

A key tactic for ensuring more people learn about your Response Rate Challenge is working with the media across channels, including print, television, radio, and online. Identify the appropriate outlets to contact that will reach a variety of audiences in your area, and make sure that they lead with the fun and creative aspects of your challenge for a compelling news hook. As timing is an important element to the challenge, provide plenty of lead time and be sure to follow up with updates and new details as they come together. Here are some ideas on how to promote the challenge with media:

- Issue a media advisory and/or press release announcing your challenge and details for any related events and activities.
- If you are challenging another community, host a joint press conference.
- Offer exclusive interviews with media outlets about the benefits of responding to the 2020 Census, and how to participate in the Response Rate Challenge.
- Provide regular updates to media based on data from the Response Rates Map on 2020CENSUS.GOV. <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>>



National outreach

Throughout your local efforts, connect with the Census Bureau and the Shape Your Future campaign to share with us your community's Response Rate Challenge and engage in the national conversation. We will look for posts using the #ShapeYourFuture and/or #2020Census hashtags and will share our favorites on the Census Bureau's own social media channels. Be sure to tag @uscensusbureau on social media, too.

Additionally, sign up to receive updates about new materials and other 2020 Census news by subscribing to our 2020 partner email list at 2020CENSUS.GOV/PARTNERS. <<https://2020census.gov/en/partners>>

Stay connected

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- INSTAGRAM.COM/USCENSUSBUREAU <<https://www.instagram.com/uscensusbureau/>>

Executing

The execution phase of your challenge can begin once people can begin responding to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail. People will begin receiving invitations by mail beginning in mid-March with instructions for how to respond. Your challenge should begin on March 12, the date when most households will receive their first mail invitation to complete the census.

Using the Response Rates Map

Once the challenge begins, a key component to ensuring you are on track to meet your goal is using the Response Rates Map on [2020CENSUS.GOV/RESPONSE-RATES](https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html) <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>> to get daily updates. The Response Rates Map will begin showing 2020 Census response rates across the U.S. and Puerto Rico in mid-March, and can be filtered to show response rates at the national, state, county, congressional district, incorporated place, active minor civil division, census tract, legal tribal area, and tribal census tract – and it will also display 2010 Census response rates.

The map will be mobile-friendly and will include social sharing, links to the 2020 Census events calendar, and the ability to embed it on your website. Other features: you can download files with response rate data, and the map and its downloadable data files will be updated daily with the latest rates for all forms of response.

Using social media to drive response

There are many ways you can use social media to help kick off your challenge, encourage participation within your community, and to challenge other communities or your own constituents to participate!

Some ideas for you to consider:

- Use social media to challenge another community by tagging their mayor, sports teams, town council, etc. Challenging your opponent publicly is a great way to engage both of your communities by encouraging them to root for their town, and help you win by getting people to participate.
- Encourage your constituents to challenge one another on social media by sharing the Response Rates Map (e.g., “Let’s see a jump in our responses by April 1! Tag your team in the comments to get them to help.”).
- Engage with local teams, businesses, and nonprofits on social media to help spread the word – call them out in a playful way to encourage their participation in your challenge. Getting them to talk about the challenge on social media may motivate others in the community.
- Ask schools and businesses to create their own challenges and have them share their results on social with #ShapeYourFuture.
- Run a creative challenge for generating social media content. Learn more at accelerate.census.gov. <<https://accelerate.census.gov>>

Throughout the challenge, we'll be looking for social media posts using the #ShapeYourFuture and/or #2020Census hashtags and will share our favorites on the Census Bureau's own social media channels.

Social media downloadable assets and other resources

Check back in mid-March for graphic assets and materials such as:



Tools and digital swag you and your constituents can use to build excitement, such as custom social media filters and stickers.



Templates to post your progress on social media and keep the momentum going by encouraging participation.



2020 Census materials and information to share on social media to educate your community about the impact of the census and why their participation matters to their community and the country.

Celebrating

Once you have checked the Response Rates Map for the final results of your challenge, it will be time to share the good news and celebrate!

The best part of completing a challenge is the reward – and in addition to the various benefits your community will receive from completing the 2020 Census, you may want to consider some fun incentives and rewards for participating in your Response Rate Challenge. How will you celebrate with your constituents if you beat your 2010 Census response? How will you celebrate if you beat your challenge competitor?

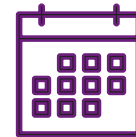
Below, we've listed some potential ideas to help fuel your challenge plan and what happens after you reach your goal:



Partner with local businesses to provide free food, discounts on retail items or experiences, or contests to win concert tickets or prize packages.



Display creative works such as posters, murals, or poetry about the importance of the 2020 Census in a prominent location in the area.



Host a “Census Saturday” or “Census Sunday” celebration the weekend after your challenge ends, inviting the community, local VIPs, partners, and the media.



Livestream the promised activity from a community vs. community challenge (such as the mayor jumping into the river or shaving their head) on social media.



Update local and regional media with the results and conduct post-challenge interviews.



Share your success on your social media channels and tag local media and participating organizations and partners (and the Census Bureau!).

If you're not ready to quit the challenge just yet, you can take it to the next level and continue to encourage your constituents to respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail. Set a new goal, or a rematch with your challenge competitor, and see how high your response rate can go until the 2020 Census is over!

Resources

To ensure you have all the information and resources you need for a successful 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge, we have included a variety of helpful one-pagers, videos, toolkits, media outreach materials, social media templates, and creative templates to help with planning, prepping, executing, and celebrating. Visit 2020CENSUS.GOV <<https://2020census.gov>> for more information and many more resources.

- > Census fact sheets <<https://www.census.gov/library/fact-sheets.html>>
- > Census 101 one-pager <<https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-03/census101.pdf>>
- > How the census will invite everyone to respond <https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-10/Fact_Sheet_About_How_Census_Invites_Everyone.pdf>
- > Partner outreach materials <<https://2020census.gov/en/partners/outreach-materials.html>> (check frequently for updates and for materials in languages other than English)
- > Complete Count Committee resources <<https://2020census.gov/en/partners/complete-count.html>>
- > Governmental resources <<https://2020census.gov/en/partners/government-resources.html>>
- > Tribal resources <<https://2020census.gov/en/partners/tribal-resources.html>>
- > Creative & video assets:
 - (Video) Shape your future: the 2020 Census <<https://2020census.gov/en/partners/tribal-resources.html>>
 - (Video) Census 101 <<https://2020census.gov/en/partners/tribal-resources.html>>
 - 2020 Census logo <<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/planning-management/promo-print-materials.html>>
- > PSA toolkit <<https://2020census.gov/en/partners/psa-toolkit.html>>
- > 2020 Census press kits <<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/news/2020-press-kits.html>>
- > 2020 Census Community Benefits Toolkit <https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2020-01/2020_Census_Community_Benefits_Toolkit.pdf>
- > 2020 Census toolkit for state and local officials <<https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-09/toolkit-state-local-officials.pdf>>

- > 2020 Census stakeholder webinar <<https://www.census.gov/library/video/2019/webinar-series-2020-census-stakeholder.html>>
- > Statistics in schools <<https://www.census.gov/schools>>
 - Frequently asked questions <<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/get-involved/frequently-asked-questions.html>>
 - Take-home flyer <<https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sis/2020census/get-involved/take-home-flyer.html>>

Downloadable Materials and Graphics

- > Media outreach materials
 - Challenge announcement press release (page 24)
- > Social media materials (coming soon!)
 - Social hub <<https://2020census.gov/en/how-to-help.html>>
 - Sample posts
 - Filters, graphics
 - Other
- > Community and partner outreach materials
 - Drop-in Newsletter or Blog Post (page 25)
 - Sample Website Copy (page 26)

Challenge Announcement Press Release

Instructions: *If you'd like to share information about your 2020 Response Rate Challenge with the media, please feel free to use the press release template below and make any necessary changes to align with your own challenge. We recommend sharing this information with local, regional, or national media outlets in early March when you announce your challenge and following up as your challenge progresses and upon completion.*

[TOWN/CITY/STATE] Launches 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge

DATELINE— [Community Leader] announced today that [TOWN/CITY/STATE] will be participating in a 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge, with a goal of XX% of community members responding to the 2020 Census on their own by [XX date].

In 2010, [TOWN/CITY/STATE] had a response rate of XX% – and for 2020, [Community Leader] has challenged its residents to beat that number. An interactive response rate map on 2020census.gov <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>> will allow [TOWN/CITY/STATE] to track its progress. [Adjust this paragraph to reflect a challenge against another community, if appropriate.]

The 2020 Census will count everyone living in the United States as of April 1, 2020. Responses will help shape the future of the community and inform how billions of dollars in federal funding are distributed across the country every year for the next 10 years. Responses also affect congressional representation.

“The 2020 Census is nearly here, and we want to be sure that everyone in [TOWN/CITY/STATE] gets counted this spring,” said [Community Leader]. “If more people respond early and on their own to the census, then fewer census takers have to visit your home to count you – so respond right away.”

People have the option to respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail. Most households are receiving invitations to respond beginning in mid-March.

“Every person counts, and [XX community] will feel the impact of your response,” said [Community Leader]. “You have the opportunity to shape our community’s future. It starts with you.”

[More info here about the challenge, including details about partners, activities, and rewards.]

#

MEDIA CONTACT: [Name] ([Phone number, email])

For more information about the 2020 Census, visit 2020census.gov. <<https://2020census.gov>> Learn more about [TOWN/CITY/STATE]’s Response Rate Challenge at [WEBSITE].

Drop-in Newsletter or Blog Post

Instructions: If you'd like to share information about the 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge in a newsletter to your community or blog, please feel free to use the copy below, and make any necessary changes to align with your own challenge. We recommend sending this announcement in late February or early March in advance of when people will begin receiving their invitations to respond in mid-March.

Subject/Header: [TOWN/CITY/STATE] is Launching a 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge

Byline: [TOWN/CITY/STATE GOVERNMENT OR Complete Count Committee]

The 2020 Census <<https://2020census.gov>> is coming, and we want to be sure that everyone in [TOWN/CITY/STATE] gets counted this spring. Why is responding to the census important? Your responses to this once-a-decade population count of everyone living in the United States as of April 1, 2020, will help shape the future of our community and informs how billions of dollars in federal funding is distributed for important programs and services in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and emergency response. And, it will impact our representation in Congress.

When more people in our community respond, that means more opportunities for you, your family, and your friends and neighbors for the next 10 years – and that's where you come in: **[TOWN/CITY/STATE] is launching a 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge and we need you to respond to the census as soon as possible!**

What exactly is the 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge? [TOWN/CITY/STATE] had a XX% response rate in 2010, and for 2020, we want to not only match that – we want to beat it! That means when you receive your invitation in the mail to respond to the census, we are asking you to respond online, by phone, or by mail right away. We'll be tracking our response rates via an interactive map on 2020census.gov <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>> so we can check our progress. [TOWN/CITY/STATE]'s goal is to get a XX% response rate by XX Date. Can you help us get there? [Adjust this paragraph to reflect a challenge against another community, if appropriate.]

If more people respond early and on their own to the census, then fewer census takers will need to visit homes – so respond right away! Be sure to follow the instructions on your mailings. You have the option to respond online, by phone, or by mail.

If we beat our goal, we will [insert info here about celebrations and rewards]. Stay tuned for more updates about our 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge at [INSERT WEBSITE AND/OR SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES].

Join me to shape the future of our community and get ready to respond to the 2020 Census. **It starts with you!**

Learn more about the 2020 Census here. <<https://2020census.gov>>

Sample Website Content

Instructions: *If you'd like to share information about the 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge with your community, please feel free to use the draft website copy below and make any necessary changes to align with your own challenge. We recommend sharing this information on your website in late February or early March in advance of when people will begin receiving their invitations to respond in mid-March.*

Page Title: [TOWN/CITY/STATE] 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge

The 2020 Census <<https://2020census.gov>> is coming, and we want to be sure that everyone in [TOWN/CITY/STATE] gets counted this spring. Your responses to this once-a-decade population count of everyone living in the United States as of April 1, 2020, will help shape the future of our community and inform how billions of dollars in federal funding is distributed for important programs and services in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and emergency response. And, it will impact our representation in Congress.

When more people in our community respond, that means more opportunities for you, your family, and your friends and neighbors for the next 10 years – so [TOWN/CITY/STATE] has launched a **2020 Census Response Rate Challenge!**

Here's how it works: [TOWN/CITY/STATE] wants to beat their 2010 Census response rate of XX%. When you receive your invitation in the mail to respond to the census, we are asking you to respond online, by phone, or by mail right away. We'll be tracking our progress via an interactive map on 2020census.gov. <<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>>

The goal: XX% response rate by XX Date. [Adjust this paragraph to reflect a challenge against another community, if appropriate.]

If we beat our goal, we will [insert info here about celebrations and rewards]. Stay tuned for more updates about our 2020 Census Response Rate Challenge at [INSERT SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES].

Join us to shape the future of our community by responding to the 2020 Census. **It starts with you!**

Learn more about the 2020 Census here. <<https://2020census.gov>>