



SAN MATEO COUNTY CENSUS 2020 MESSAGING GUIDE



December 2019



BACKGROUND

The next national census is around the corner! Every 10 years, the federal government is required to count each and every person living in the country – regardless of citizenship status, age, or criminal history. Ensuring a complete and accurate count in Census 2020 is critical for many reasons.

The decennial census serves as the cornerstone of our democracy and is written into the U.S. Constitution. It was included to ensure that everyone is equally represented in our political system and government resources are allocated fairly. It is also used to make important community decisions, like where to build homes, parks, schools, and roads and where to offer health, childcare, and transportation services. And businesses rely on census data to determine where to open facilities, what products to develop, and how to market their services.

There is a lot at stake for San Mateo County residents in the upcoming Census 2020. If we don't have an accurate count, we won't have adequate representation in state and national government or get our fair share of funding for services that residents rely on. Critical community programs will be affected, like public libraries, early childhood education, school lunch programs, health services, and affordable housing. Traffic will get worse and public transportation will fall short of demand. Planning for natural disasters and emergencies will miss their mark.

That's why it's important that EVERYONE participates in Census 2020.

We need your help to make sure residents across San Mateo County understand what census is, why it matters, and how to participate. We are asking all partners to share information through their communication and outreach channels to educate, motivate, and activate residents. You can tailor the messaging in this guide to be most understandable, relevant, and compelling to your audiences.

This guide provides:

- Census 2020 Communication Phases
- Census 2020 Relational Approach to Community Engagement
- Census 2020 Key Messages
- Census 2020 Pledge Campaign
- Tips for Addressing Common Barriers to Census Participation
- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about Census 2020
- Message Maps for Census 2020 Top Questions

Additional outreach resources, including factsheets, articles, and videos are available on: www.smccensus.org.

If you have any questions, please email SMC_Census@smcgov.org.

CENSUS 2020 COMMUNICATION PHASES

<p>APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2019</p> <p>AWARENESS & SUPPORT</p>	<p>OCT – DECEMBER 2019</p> <p>ENGAGEMENT & EDUCATION</p>	<p>JANUARY –MARCH 2020</p> <p>MOTIVATION & PERSUASION</p>	<p>APRIL – MAY 2020</p> <p>COMPLETION SUPPORT</p>
<p>Obtain support of local community leaders and trusted messengers</p> <p>Increase awareness through existing networks, channels, and programs</p>	<p>Increase understanding of the value of Census 2020 and importance of everyone being counted through broad media and community outreach</p>	<p>Motivate residents to respond and address questions/concerns through targeted media and community outreach</p>	<p>Remind residents to complete the census in their preferred format</p> <p>Support residents in completing census through digital access, language support, and help desk</p>
<p>KEY MESSAGES</p> <p>Every 10 years, the federal government is required to count every person residing in the U.S. through a national census.</p> <p>Ensuring an accurate count in Census 2020 is essential because it affects political representation, funding for critical programs, and decisions made by local governments, businesses, and nonprofits.</p>	<p>KEY MESSAGES</p> <p>There is a lot at stake with Census 2020 for all of us.</p> <p>If some residents are not counted, their voices will not be heard and their needs will not be considered.</p> <p>Critical community programs will be affected, like public libraries, early childhood education, school lunch programs, health services, and affordable housing.</p>	<p>KEY MESSAGES</p> <p>Standing up for the count is one of the most powerful things you can do to support your community.</p> <p>It is the best way to ensure that the diverse voices across the county are heard, growing needs are met, and the right programs and services are available.</p> <p>Without an accurate count, the programs and services you rely on may not be available.</p>	<p>KEY MESSAGES</p> <p>You can now complete the census form online, on paper, or by phone in different languages.</p> <p>If you need help filling out the form, there is support.</p> <p>The information you give to the Census Bureau will be confidential (protected by law) and only reported as statistics.</p>
<p>CALLS TO ACTION</p> <p>Join complete count efforts.</p> <p>Learn more about Census 2020.</p>	<p>CALL TO ACTION</p> <p>Learn more about how Census 2020 will affect your community.</p>	<p>CALL TO ACTION</p> <p>Pledge to participate in Census 2020.</p>	<p>CALL TO ACTION</p> <p>Complete your census form now and encourage everyone you know to fill it out.</p>

CENSUS 2020 RELATIONAL APPROACH TO COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Relational Approach	Engaging Community Members
Prepare to Engage	<p>Be empathic and remember to validate their opinions and feelings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that each person is unique in their experience, knowledge, and interests • Be open to difference in perspective and opinion • Approach community members with patience, respect, and humility
Gather Information	<p>Ask about them (without being intrusive)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about yourself • How long have you lived in the area? • What do you like about living here? (schools, parks, services, etc.) • What do you not like so much about living here? (housing, traffic, cost of living, etc.)
Take Time to Understand	<p>Find out what they think is important so you can connect census to their priorities and interests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What programs and services do you and your family use (health, education, public transit, housing, etc.)? • What would it mean for you and your family if there wasn't enough funding for those programs/services? • How do you think your community would be impacted if those programs / services were no longer available?
Share Relevant Information	<p>Give concrete examples related to what they think is important for them and their community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we don't count everyone, there won't be enough funding for the program/service that your family relies on • We need to count everyone, so we know where to offer program/service • We need to understand who lives here so we know how to reach everyone who needs the program/service

CENSUS 2020 KEY MESSAGES

1. Every 10 years, the federal government is required to count every person residing in the U.S. (regardless of age, immigration status, or criminal history) through a national census. April 1, 2020 is our next National Census Day.
2. Ensuring an accurate count in Census 2020 is essential because it affects political representation, funding for critical programs, and decisions made by civic, business, nonprofit, and community leaders.
3. If San Mateo County has an undercount in Census 2020, critical community programs will be affected, like public libraries, early childhood education, school programs, health services, and affordable housing.
4. Without an accurate Census 2020 count, services we rely on may not be available, traffic could get worse, and public safety could be compromised.
5. Making sure everyone you know participates in the Census 2020 count is the best way to ensure that diverse voices across San Mateo County are heard, growing needs are met, and the right programs and services are available.
6. The Census 2020 questionnaire will only ask basic questions about each person living in the household (name, age, sex, race/ethnicity). **It will NOT ask about citizenship or immigration status.**
7. Residents will be able to complete the Census 2020 questionnaire starting in mid-March 2020, either online, on paper, or by phone in English and other languages.
8. Households that don't respond on their own will be visited by Census Bureau workers starting in late April 2020 for in-person interviews.
9. Household and individual information provided on the Census 2020 questionnaire is strongly protected by law. The Census Bureau only reports data as statistics and does not share personal information with any other government agencies (FBI, ICE, Welfare, local code enforcement).
10. The Census Bureau takes many steps to protect the privacy of the information they collect, and census data cannot be used against individuals in a court of law.

CENSUS 2020 PLEDGE CAMPAIGN


We ask that all partners encourage San Mateo County residents to participate in the Everyone Counts + Bay Area Counts 2020 pledge campaign.

Residents can opt-in to receive timely information **via text or email** such as local census events, a reminder to complete the survey, and support finding a nearby Questionnaire Assistance Center.

This campaign is designed to build intention to participate in Census 2020 and keep residents engaged after initial outreach.

The campaign is offered in multiple languages.

LANGUAGE	START WORD
Arabic	دافع
Chinese	计算在内
English	COUNT
Farsi	گزارش
Hindi	जनगणना
Japanese	国勢調査
Korean	센서스
Punjabi	ਮਰਦਮਸ਼ੁਮਰੀ
Spanish	CENSO
Tagalog	KABILANG
Telugu	జన శే
Vietnamese	Thống kê dân số

ADDRESSING COMMON BARRIERS ABOUT CENSUS PARTICIPATION

“The Census doesn’t impact me.”

- **The census impacts ALL of us EVERY day.**
- The census count impacts funding and planning for programs and services we rely on, like roads, schools, housing, and health care.
- The census count impacts how much of a voice we have in government and the policy decisions that affect us.
- The census count impacts the number of businesses, jobs, and development projects in our communities – our local economy.

“I’m just one person - my participation doesn’t matter.”

- **EVERY person that is counted in Census 2020 makes a difference.**
- Participating in the census is an important civic responsibility and a powerful tool for making your voice heard.
- The census count directly affects how billions of dollars are distributed every year for important services and programs that we all rely on.
- For each person not counted in Census 2020, we could lose up to \$10,000 over the next 10 years in federal funding.

“I don’t feel comfortable sharing my information.”

- **By law, information you give to the Census Bureau is confidential and only used for statistics.**
- Census 2020 will only ask for very basic information, like age, sex, and race/ethnicity. Citizenship or immigration status will NOT be asked.
- Your personal information can’t be shared with anyone outside the Census Bureau or be used against you by immigration authorities, a court of law, or any law enforcement agencies.
- The Census Bureau takes many steps to make sure personal information is protected.

“I don’t have time to fill out the census.”

- **It will only take 5-10 minutes to fill out Census 2020.**
- Census 2020 will only ask basic questions about everyone living in the residence.
- You can fill out Census 2020 online, by phone, or by mail – whatever is convenient for you.
- The 10 minutes you spend filling out the census will mean more funding, services, and jobs in your community for the next 10 years.

“I need help filling out the census.”

- **There will be support for anyone who needs help filling out Census 2020.**
- Census 2020 can be filled out online, by phone, or by mail in different languages.
- Assistance Centers and Kiosks will be set up across San Mateo County to provide digital, language, and disability support.
- For more information, visit www.smccensus.org

ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CENSUS 2020

What is Census 2020?

Every 10 years, the federal government is required to count ALL RESIDENTS in the United States through a national census. This information is used to make sure everyone is equally represented in our political system and that government resources are allocated fairly. The next National Census Day is April 1, 2020.

NOTE: The Census Bureau also fields an on-going survey called the American Community Survey, which asks more in-depth questions of a sample of the population. It is different than the decennial census happening in 2020. Households that complete the ACS in 2019 will still have to complete the Census 2020.

Why is Census 2020 important?

The national census is central to our democracy. It makes sure everyone is equally represented at local, state, and national levels. Census data determines the number of U.S. representatives each state sends to Congress and sets district boundaries for congressional, state senator, state assembly member, county supervisor, and city council elections.

Census data also informs how the federal government will allocate *\$800 billion per year* in funding to state and local governments based on the number of people living there. These funds go towards critical programs that support education, housing, health, and transportation services in our community.

Lastly, census data is used to make other important decisions in our community:

- City governments use census data to decide where to provide utilities and build parks, schools, libraries, and other community buildings.
- Businesses use census data to decide where to open facilities and what types of services/products to provide.
- Developers use census data to decide where to build new homes and revitalize old neighborhoods.
- Transportation planners use census data to decide on public transit routes.
- Citizen organizations rely on census data to identify community needs, request and fund programs, monitor trends and assess program effectiveness.
- Residents use census data to support community legislation and advocacy initiatives.

The Census 2020 count will serve as our national statistics that shape political representation, funding, community programs and much more for the next decade.

What information will be collected for Census 2020?

The government needs to know how many people live in an area. Census 2020 will collect basic information about each household (number of people living there, home ownership, phone number) as well as the people living in that household, including:

- Name
- Sex
- Age/Date of Birth
- Race/ethnicity

The Census 2020 will not ask about citizenship or immigration status.

Will Census 2020 include a question on citizenship?

No, the Census 2020 will not ask about citizenship or immigration status. It will only ask basic information: name, sex, age/date of birth, and race/ethnicity. Personal information will not be shared with the public or any government agency (local or federal).

NOTE: The Trump Administration did issue an executive order to gather already existing citizenship data from federal databases. This is not a new policy.

How will the government collect information for Census 2020?

Starting in March 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will contact all housing units in the U.S. through mail. Most people will receive a postcard with instructions on how to complete the questionnaire online or over the phone. Some might receive a paper form to mail back.

In early May 2020, the Bureau will begin sending census workers (called enumerators) out to visit households who have not yet responded to gather the information in person.

The U.S. Census Bureau will also collect information from residents who are homeless, living in group quarters (like dorms, nursing homes, shelters), or transitory housing.

NOTE: A housing unit is any place people live, including house, apartment, cabin, mobile home, etc. One person from each housing unit is required to fill out the census. All people living in the unit should be counted, regardless of age and whether they are related or not to the person filling out the form.

What does the government do with the information they collect through the census?

The Census Bureau collects data for statistical purposes only. It combines your responses with information from other households to produce data, which never identify your household or any person in your household. Your information is confidential. By law, the Census Bureau will never identify you individually or share individual or household information with any other government agency. Census statistics are reported publicly so they can be used to make policy, program, and budget decisions.

Who should be counted in Census 2020?

The Census Bureau needs to count every person living in the U.S. on April 1, 2020, regardless of age, citizenship status, or criminal history.

Every residence will receive an invitation to complete the Census Questionnaire by April 1, 2020. Make sure someone in your household is responsible for filling out the form. Every person living there, whether related or not, of all ages (don't forget young children) should be included.

People with unstable housing (including those who are homeless) will be counted in March 2020. The Census Bureau counts people at shelters, encampments, where food is distributed, and where people are known to sleep outdoors. People living in nursing homes, correctional facilities, mental hospitals, dorms, barracks, group homes and other group quarters will be counted in April 2020 by the Census Bureau.

Why should I participate in Census 2020?

Participating in census is an important civic responsibility and powerful tool for making your voice heard. It directly affects the programs and services in your community because it influences how more than \$675 billion in federal funding per year is distributed. That is why it is critical that you – and *everyone in your community* - be counted in the Census. Every person counted can make a difference.

When you fill out the census, you help:

- Determine how many seats your state gets in Congress.
- Guide how government funding is distributed for critical community programs and services like healthcare, education, transportation, and emergency response.
- Bring support to your local community, including jobs, housing, schools, roads, and hospitals.

This is why everyone is legally required to respond to the U.S. Census. You could be subject to a fine for not responding or providing false answers. However, the U.S. Census Bureau has not historically enforced penalties.

How do I know the information I provide is going to be safe?

The Census Bureau collects information only to produce statistics. By law, they cannot share your data with federal agencies, immigration authorities, welfare, or law enforcement. Federal law also does not allow your personal census information to be used against you by immigration authorities, a court of law, local housing agencies, any law enforcement agency, or any other government officials, for any reason whatsoever. You are protected in many ways.

All Census Bureau employees take an oath of privacy and are sworn for life to protect all information that could be used to identify individuals. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

The Census Bureau follows federal requirements and industry best practices to ensure data security from the beginning of the data collection process through the final storage of information. This includes data encryption and two forms of authentication to secure system access.

What languages is the form available in?

The Census 2020 will be available:

- [Online and By Phone](#) in English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polish, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Japanese
- [By Mail](#) in English and Spanish

The Census Bureau will provide video and print language guides and language glossaries in 59 non-English languages (including the 12 listed above).

How will Census 2020 be made accessible to people with disabilities?

- **Online:** The 2020 online questionnaire will follow the latest web accessibility guidelines. A video in American Sign Language will also be available to guide people through responding online.
- **Phone:** People can respond in English by Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) at 844-467-2020 if they choose to respond by phone.
- **Mail:** People can access braille and large print guides online to assist them with completing the paper questionnaire if they want to respond by mail.

What happens if I don't participate in Census 2020?

Everyone is legally required to respond to the U.S. Census. You could be subject to a fine for not responding or providing false answers. However, the U.S. Census Bureau has not historically enforced these penalties. Every person who does not participate means we won't have an accurate count of who lives in our county, which could affect districting, representation, and funding. It is estimated that each person not counted could result in a loss of up to \$1000 in federal funding to CA per year for the next decade. This will directly impact the programs and services you, your family, and your community rely on.

What happens if I skip questions on the Census 2020?

By law, you are required to accurately complete all questions asked on the census. It will be possible to skip questions on the Census 2020 and still have it count. However, skipping questions on the census form will increase likelihood that a Census Bureau worker (enumerator) will follow up in person to collect the information.

If I live with people I don't know well, can I complete the Census 2020 for just myself / my family?

If possible, it is best to complete the Census 2020 together with all the people you live with in your housing unit. If that is not possible or comfortable to do, you will be able to complete the Census 2020 for just yourself/your family. You can do this even without the unique code provided in the Census 2020 invitation letter, you will just need to provide your address.

MESSAGE MAP: WHY participation in Census 2020 matters

Key Message 1

Standing up for the Census 2020 national count is one of the most powerful things you can do for yourself, your family, and your community.



Supporting Points

- The national census is how we make sure everyone has equal representation in government and everyone gets their fair share of government resources.
- Unlike voting, every single person – regardless of age, citizenship status, criminal history – can participate and should be counted in the national census.
- By making sure you and everyone you know participates, you can raise your collective voice and help bring support to your community including jobs, housing, schools, public transportation, and health services.

Key Message 2

Everyone deserves an equal voice and a fair share of government resources.



Supporting Points

- The national census is how we make sure everyone has equal representation in government and everyone gets their fair of government resources.
- Californians pay more in federal taxes than any other state, and we need to have an accurate census count to get our tax dollars back for the programs and services our residents need.
- Census data determines how much representation we have nationally and how district lines are drawn locally, so an accurate count ensures that diverse voices are heard and changing needs are met.

Key Message 3

If we do not have an accurate count in Census 2020, critical community programs will be affected, leaving many residents without the services they need.



Supporting Points

- California receives about \$77 billion in federal funding a year based on census data to support health services, nutrition, early childhood education, transportation, affordable housing, and other programs that residents rely on.
- Census data is used by local governments and nonprofits to determine what services are needed and where to provide them. If they don't have accurate data, their services will fall short or not reach those that really need them.
- Census data is used by local agencies for planning, so an undercount could mean that traffic gets worse, schools don't have enough teachers, and public safety is compromised.



MESSAGE MAP: WHO should be counted in Census 2020

Key Message 1

EVERYONE who is living in the U.S. on April 1, 2020 should be counted.



Supporting Points

- The U.S. Constitution mandates an actual count (Enumeration) of every person living in the country.
- Unlike voting, this count includes everyone regardless of age, citizenship status, and criminal history.
- The decennial count serves as the national statistics for the following decade, and is used for research, policy, and decision-making.

Key Message 2

It is critical that ALL residents participate in Census 2020.

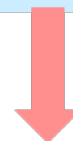


Supporting Points

- An accurate count ensures that all residents are equally represented and their voices are equally heard in all levels of government, from local to state to national.
- Without an accurate count, residents will NOT get their fair share of federal and state resources for health services, education programs, affordable housing, and public transportation.
- Census data is used to make many important decisions from where to build hospitals, parks, schools, and roads to how to attract better jobs and strengthen local economies.

Key Message 3

Do not forget to count children, extended family, and any nonfamily living in your residence.



Supporting Points

- Children under 5 are one of the most undercounted groups, which affects funding for early childhood programs like Head Start.
- If not everyone is counted, there won't be enough public services, traffic will get worse, and emergency planning will fall short.
- Information about overcrowded housing will not be shared with local code enforcement officials.

MESSAGE MAP: HOW everyone will be counted in Census 2020

Key Message 1

By April 1 2020, residents will be able to complete the census questionnaire online, on paper, or via phone in different languages.



Supporting Points

- Most households (88% in San Mateo County) will receive a postcard with instructions on how to complete the questionnaire online in English and 12 other languages.
- Residents who do not have broadband access or prefer to complete the form offline can request a paper copy (available in English and Spanish) or answer the questions over the phone in English and 12 other languages.
- There will be support for residents who need help completing the census questionnaire, including language assistance, disability accommodation, or digital support.

Key Message 2

There are special efforts planned to count the homeless and those living in group quarters.



Supporting Points

- People experiencing homelessness or living in transitory locations (campgrounds, tent cities, marinas, hotels) will be counted in March 2020 through service-based enumeration.
- People living in institutional (correctional facilities, nursing homes, mental hospitals) and non-institutional (dorms, barracks, group homes, missions, shelters) group quarters will be counted in April 2020 through group quarters enumeration.
- The goal of the Census Bureau is to count every person just once where they usually live on April 1, 2020 (National Census Day).

Key Message 3

For households that do not complete the census survey on their own, Census Bureau workers will visit residences to collect the information beginning in May 2020.



Supporting Points

- Households will receive three mailed reminders to complete the census questionnaire before they send enumerators out to gather information through in person interviews.
- The Census Bureau will track self-response and share this information publicly so that local governments and community-based organizations can focus their outreach in areas that need support.
- If the Census Bureau is unable to gather information from a household through self-response or in-person follow up, they will have to estimate the data.

MESSAGE MAP: HOW will my information be kept private?

Key Message 1

The Census Bureau is required by law to keep the information they collect confidential.



Supporting Points

- Title 13 of the U.S. Code makes it against the law to disclose or publish any private information that identifies an individual or business, including names, addresses, social security numbers, telephone numbers.
- Title 13 of the U.S. Code only allows the information collected by the Census Bureau to be used to produce statistics. Your personal information cannot be used against you by any government agency or court.
- Every person with access to data collected by the Census Bureau is sworn for life to protect your information, and if they violate that law they will face severe penalties including a federal prison sentence of up to five years, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both.

Key Message 2

The Census Bureau takes many steps to protect the privacy of the information they collect.



Supporting Points

- The Census Bureau follows IT industry best practices and federal requirements to protect information from data collection to data storage, including data encryption and multifactor authentication to secure system access.
- Before any statistics are published, the Census Bureau applies safeguards (statistical disclosure controls) that help prevent someone from being able to trace statistics back to a specific respondent.
- For 2020, the Census Bureau will use a powerful new privacy protection system (differential privacy) designed specifically to protect against emerging threats in today's digital world.

Key Message 3

The Census Bureau only shares statistics (information that describes a population, like how many people there are in different age groups across San Mateo County).



Supporting Points

- The Census Bureau does not share information about a specific business, household, or person. It combines information to share overall trends in a community.
- Statistics provided by the Census Bureau are used to paint a picture of a community so we know how many people live there and their characteristics.
- Census statistics are used to make decisions about how to plan communities (where to build housing, schools, hospitals, parks, roads) and how to meet the needs of people living there (services for health, education, transportation, safety).



MESSAGE MAP: Will there be a CITIZENSHIP QUESTION?

Key Message 1

Census 2020 will NOT include a question on citizenship or immigration status.



Supporting Points

- In June 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court found that there was sufficient reason for concern about why the Commerce Department wanted to add the citizenship question.
- The Supreme Court ruling left the possibility that the administration could get another chance to justify adding the citizenship question.
- In July 2019, the decision was made to print the Census 2020 forms without the question.

Key Message 2

The Census Bureau is conducting a test of the Census 2020 that includes the citizenship question.



Supporting Points

- Before the decision on the citizenship question had been made, the Census Bureau began a nationwide test to gauge how the public could react to census forms with the potential question. It was completed in August 2019.
- This test census form was sent to ~480,000 households in the U.S. Households were randomly selected to complete forms with and without the citizenship question.
- Households who completed the 2019 Census Test will still need to complete the census in 2020.

Key Message 3

Immigrant families may still be worried about completing the census in 2020, but it is critical that they participate.



Supporting Points

- An accurate count ensures that all residents are equally represented, and their voices are equally heard in all levels of government, from local to state to national.
- Without an accurate count, we will NOT get our fair share of federal and state resources to meet the diverse needs of our residents when it comes to healthcare, education, housing and transportation.
- The Census Bureau takes numerous steps to ensure the privacy and security of the information they collect, and there are extremely strong legal protections against sharing information that could identify individuals.