

Greetings. I am Mitchell Stein, a Partnership Specialist with the Census Bureau (some of you may know me from my health care work). In my current role, I am working to ensure that the Census Bureau can conduct a complete count in the 2020 Census.

As a Partnership Specialist, I work with organizations to help them understand the importance of the Census so that they can encourage their communities to complete the Census in the Spring.

The faith-based community has an important role to play in the 2020 Census. Among the most trusted voices here in Maine, your support will be instrumental in ensuring a complete count. Below I will outline the key facts regarding the Census and discuss how we can work together to encourage participation.

Now let's look at the importance of, the safety of, and how to help with the 2020 Census.

Importance

In the show he did about the Census, John Oliver reminded us the Founding Fathers considered it so important they put it in the sixth sentence of the Constitution ([yes, John Oliver did a show about the Census](#)). As mandated in Article 1, Section 2 of the constitution, the Census has been conducted every ten years since 1790.

We use the Census results for a wide variety of purposes, but two stand out above the rest.

First is the allocation of funds. Over \$675 billion a year is allocated based on the Census results. Here in Maine where we don't always have enough resources to help everyone we would like to help these allocations are critical. If everyone completes the Census, we will receive every dollar that should be coming to us, enabling us to help more people. In addition to the \$675 billion figure provided by the Census Bureau, George Washington University has calculated the relevant allocations for individual states. You can see their calculations for the State of Maine [here](#).

Second is apportionment. The Census results determine the number of seats each state receives in the House of Representatives. Every ten years, these numbers change. A complete count ensures that Maine continues to be appropriately represented in the House. Additionally, Maine uses the data to define the State districts.

Safety

The law is very clear. The purpose of the Census is to produce statistics. Personal information may NOT be used against an individual by any government agency or court. The Brennan Center for Justice (part of New York University) has produced a review titled [Federal Laws That Protect Census Confidentiality](#), providing a thorough review of the topic. The sanctity of census data has been upheld all the way up to and including the Supreme Court. Note also that Census Bureau employees are sworn to protect respondent confidentiality for life and can be punished by up to five years in prison, a fine of \$250,000, or both. To ensure that the 2020 Census count is as complete as possible, everyone must understand these protections.

An additional safety concern is the security of the data. The Census Bureau devotes considerable resources to Cybersecurity. From the beginning, when a respondent answers, to the end when the data products are released, data are encrypted, safe, and secure using industry best practices.

You can access a review of Census safety and confidentiality [here](#).

The Process

The 2020 Census will be easier to complete than ever before, but we still need your help to ensure a complete count.

For the first time, in addition to sending their responses by mail, individuals will be able to complete the Census over the internet or by phone. With the availability of online and telephone options, there is much greater language support available for this Census. In addition to the English version, individuals will be able to complete the Census in 12 different languages (that cover approximately 99% of US households) and access language guides in a total of 59 different non-English languages.

Initial invitations to participate will go out to most people the second week in March. Then, after a series of mailings, field enumerators will begin knocking on the doors of households that have not responded.

While the Census Bureau is doing everything we can to secure a complete and accurate count, we can't do it alone. As one of the most trusted voices in the community, we are looking to partner with as many faith-based organizations as possible to amplify the dual messages of the importance and safety of the Census.

The national organization Census Counts, working with one of their member's Faith in Public Life, have produced resource for the faith-based community around the idea of conducting a "Census Worship Weekend" March 27-29. You can read more about the concept and access resources [here](#).

As you might imagine, conducting the decennial census is a mammoth undertaking. It is the largest civilian mobilization of the Federal government. To successfully conduct the 2020 Census, we are looking to hire 500,000 people by the Spring to knock on the doors of households who have not responded by mail, internet, or phone. If you're interested in helping, you can begin right away by [displaying this recruitment poster prominently](#) (field personnel will earn \$17.50 an hour here in Maine).

Above I've discussed why the Census is important and why we need your help. Here is additional information on [Why Your Faith Community Should Become a 2020 Census Official Partner](#).

If interested in helping, please let me know so that I can make the process as easy on you as possible. I'm available to discuss ideas, provide additional information, answer questions, make public presentations and more.

Below is my contact information. I look forward to hearing from you.

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