

Census 2020 Faith-Based Ambassador Talking Points

April 1, 2020, is “Census Day.” The enumeration starts in Waco of the country in March 2020. Our goal is to ensure every adult and child in Waco is counted, regardless of race, faith tradition, immigration status or economic status.

Who is Hard to Count?

Historically, certain population groups are more likely to be missed in the census:

- Children under age 5
- People living in poverty or experiencing homelessness
- People of color
- Immigrants
- Religious minorities

It’s worth noting that most of these communities are “hard to count” as a result of a long history of systemic racism and exclusion. The tragic result is that these communities are then unjustly punished by receiving fewer federal resources and less political representation. The 2020 Census is our opportunity to break this immoral cycle.

Talking Points

1. Everyone deserves to be counted. Our shared faiths teach that every person is created with equal dignity by God. That means everyone deserves to be counted by their government.

2. The Census is completely confidential. When you fill out the Census survey, your personally identifiable information will not be shared outside the Census Bureau with any other government agencies. Everything is confidential and protected by ironclad laws. Personal census information is only public after 72 years, and historians often use those data for important research.

3. The 2020 Census is the first high-tech Census with an online response option. However, you will have the option to respond by telephone or with a paper questionnaire.

4. Our community benefits from everyone being counted. Over \$800 billion in annual federal funding is distributed based on the 2020 Census.

- Federal agencies use census data to allocate billions of dollars at the state and local levels for vital community services such as hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, job training centers, senior centers and police departments.
- It also determines how many Representatives each state has in Congress.
- Our Congressional and state legislative districts are redrawn using census data.
- If we get undercounted, we get underfunded and underrepresented.

5. As a consequence of systemic racism, people of color have historically been undercounted in the Census.

- In the 2010 Census, 3.7 million African Americans and 3.8 million Hispanics were not counted.
- The legacy of racist systems that have privileged white communities with access to capital and education have contributed to people of color being harder to count.
- Ensuring everyone is counted in the 2020 Census is a matter of racial justice long overdue.

6. We have a legal and moral responsibility to participate in the Census.

- Part of looking out for our community is ensuring that we have the resources we need to thrive. We have a responsibility to participate in the Census.
- Our families, children and neighbors are counting on us. We have to work together to ensure that everyone in our community is counted.

7. Completing the Census is easy and you can get help or support. The 2020 Census will be the first high-tech Census with an online response option.

- 80% of households will receive a postcard from the Census Bureau in the mail including a link to the official 2020 Census website and a unique identification code. With the identification code, you can answer the 11 questions online.
- If you do not respond online or by phone, a paper questionnaire will be sent to you which you can fill out and mail back to the Census Bureau.
- If you do not respond to that, individual Census workers may come to your door to collect your responses.
- The other 20% of households, mostly those with older adults and low broadband access and internet usage, will be sent the actual survey to be completed and returned by mail along with a unique identification code to respond online.

Important Dates

March 2020 — Census Bureau mails or drops off census packages at every residential address, starting the self-response period.

March 16 to April 30, 2020 — Self-response phase of the Census.

March 16, 2020 - Update Leave (UL) & Update Enumerate (UE) operations in rural and remote areas without reliable or direct mail delivery begin.¹

March to April, 2020 — Enumeration at Transitory Locations operation running to count people in transitory locations (such as hotels and campgrounds).

March 30 to April 1, 2020 — Service-Based Enumeration operation running, conducting in-person interviews to count people experiencing homelessness.

April 1, 2020 — Census Day.

May 13 to July, 2020 - Primary Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU) operations encompassing occupied housing that did not self-respond (Early NRFU operations begin April 9 for areas with significant off-campus college student populations).

Summer 2020 — Census wraps up.

By December 31, 2020 — Congressional reapportionment determined; state population totals sent to the president.

Sacred Texts Relevant to the Census

Hebrew Scriptures

On the first day of the second month, in the second year following the exodus from the land of Egypt, the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, saying: Take a census of the whole Israelite community by the clans of its ancestral houses, listing the names, every male, head by head. (Numbers 1:1-2)

“The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Among these shall the land be apportioned as shares, according to the listed names’” (Numbers 26:52-53)

Christian Scriptures

“In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of all the inhabited earth.” (Luke 2:1)

“Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.” (Matthew 10:30)

Islamic Scriptures

“They ask thee what they should spend. Say, ‘Let whatever of your wealth you spend be for parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the indigent, and the traveler. Whatever good you do, truly God knows it.’” (Qu’ran 2:215)

“You will never attain piety till you spend from that which you love. And whatever you spend, truly God knows it.” (Qu’ran 3:92)

We would love to include relevant sacred texts from other faith traditions. If you have suggestions please email Ashley Wucher at awucher@wacofoundation.org.

Ideas for spreading the word

Faith communities have a unique moral voice, and you are a trusted Waco community leader. As such, you are poised to be a key messengers in turning out our community to be counted in the 2020 Census.

Here are some ideas for spreading the word so that we can ensure everyone of our neighbors is fairly and accurately counted.

- Post a flyer in your congregation to raise awareness
- Preach about the importance of being counted in the 2020 Census and what's at stake for your community
- **Attend a Waco-area Census training** to become a Census Faith Ambassador and help lead Waco's get out the count efforts.
- Educate your colleagues and speak at events
- Recruit others to be Ambassadors since the harvest is great and the laborers are few.

