

GET OUT THE COUNT: A TOOLKIT FOR CENSUS ADVOCATES

OURCOUNT

powered by Color Of Change

THE 2020 CENSUS IS ABOUT MONEY AND POWER, AND IT'S TIME FOR BLACK COMMUNITIES TO GET OUR FAIR SHARE.

This simple survey happens every ten years, and the results shape our reality in countless ways. Census data determine where and how billions of dollars are spent on critical programs like SNAP, Medicaid, Head Start, and more. Businesses use census data to decide where to open new stores, offices, and factories, creating job opportunities in those areas. States use them to redraw legislative districts, and the federal government uses them to determine how many votes each state gets in the House of Representatives and the Electoral College.

There is a long, disturbing history of Black people being undercounted in this country. And many of the same forces that try to suppress the Black vote also work to suppress Black participation in the census. They know that it's a critical way to ensure our communities get the resources and representation we deserve.

But we refuse to let efforts to cheat our communities prevail. We know how important it is to understand why the census matters, and to share that knowledge with everyone in our families and communities. We all have a role to play in ensuring that we all get counted in the 2020 Census when the survey opens for response beginning in mid-March.

It's going to take a strong movement of local and national organizations, community leaders, influencers and individuals to reduce the risk of a massive undercount in Black communities. Thank you for being a part of this movement. Together, we can build a legacy of economic justice and political power for present and future generations.

HOW TO GET OUT THE COUNT:

- **GET INFORMED**
- **SPREAD THE WORD:**
 - On video
 - Face to face
 - On social media
 - Via email
- **RESPOND TO THE 2020 CENSUS STARTING IN MID-MARCH!**



OurCount is a campaign by Color Of Change.



GET INFORMED

WHAT IS THE CENSUS ALL ABOUT?

Our Constitution requires the federal government to count every person living in the United States, regardless of citizenship, every ten years. The first census was in 1790, and the next census is this year, 2020. Beginning in mid-March, households will be able to respond to the census online, by phone, and on paper. The results of the census are used in a variety of ways by federal, state, and local governments as well as businesses and advocacy groups, including:

- To determine where and how over \$800 billion in federal funding is spent on programs our communities need to thrive, including Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP), Medicare, Section 8 Housing, the National School Lunch Program, Special Education Grants, State Children's Health Insurance (CHIP) and Head Start.
- To determine how many votes each state gets in the United States House of Representatives and the Electoral College.
- To redraw the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts in ways that account for population changes.
- To trace our roots and learn about ancestry. We currently have access to more detailed census data from 1850 to 1940, data we can use to learn about ancestors' birthplaces, occupations, marriage information, military service and much more.
- Businesses use census data to decide where to build new factories, stores, and offices.
- Advocacy groups use census data to understand communities' populations and needs, to detect trends that expose problems like environmental injustice, housing and employment discrimination, and health disparities, and to fight for adequate facilities and resources in our communities.

WHAT IS THE BLACK UNDERCOUNT?

Studies indicate that more than 800,000 Black people were not counted in the 2010 Census. Without census recounts in cities with high Black populations — including New York, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Baltimore, Washington, DC, Atlanta, and Miami — these communities could have lost millions of dollars in funding for important programs and services. And we can't assume similar recounts will happen if we don't get counted in 2020.

HOW IS A COMMUNITY UNDERCOUNTED?

- Residents don't complete the census questionnaire.
- Residents complete the questionnaire but fail to include everyone in the household (ex. young children).
- Census interviewers are not properly trained to conduct non-response follow-up interviews in the location that they've been assigned to.
- Census interviewers are afraid to interact with residents of the location that they've been assigned to.
- The Census Bureau doesn't have the proper address on file for certain residents because they've moved to a different home in the area.

IS MY COMMUNITY AT RISK OF BEING UNDERCOUNTED?

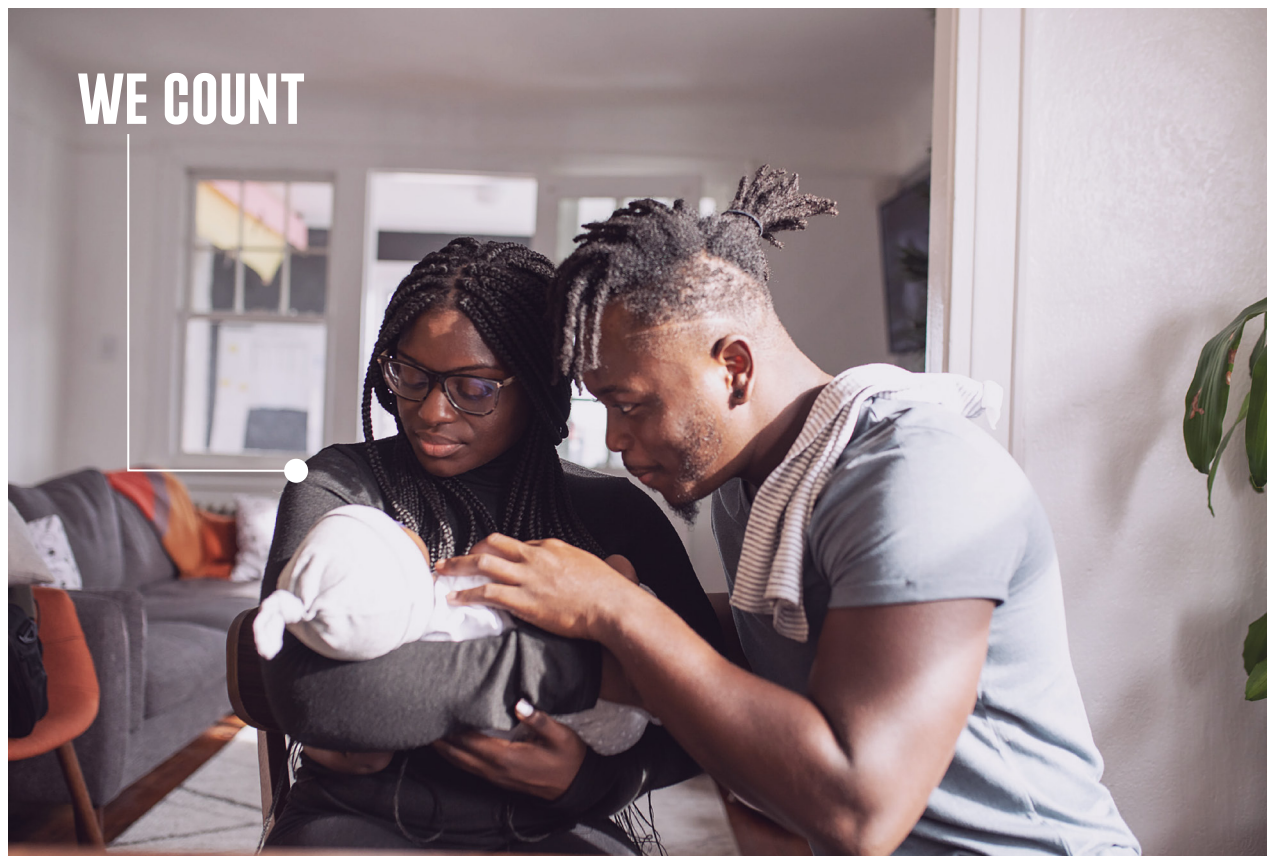
States at great risk of a Black undercount in 2020 include California, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

A NOTE ON THE IMPORTANCE OF COUNTING OUR KIDS

Children under the age of five are the most undercounted people in the country, and Black and Latinx children under the age of five were undercounted by 6.5% in 2010, nearly **twice** the undercount rate for young non-Hispanic white children. That's a major problem. The census only happens every ten years — over half of their childhoods — and census data are used to help determine how many seats and materials are needed in their schools, how much federal money is allocated for local funding for programs such as the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the National School Lunch Program, and more. When our kids don't get counted, that translates into overcrowded classrooms, outdated materials, more child hunger and illness, and a diminished future for all of us.

HOW DO KIDS GET UNDERCOUNTED?

- Their families/guardians don't fill out the census at all.
- Their families/guardians do fill out the census, but mistakenly leave off their children.
- They live with guardians who don't realize they should count **all** kids who live in the home, including those who may not be genetically related to the person filling out the census.



SPREAD THE WORD

HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE 2020 CENSUS

One of the most important things you can do to help ensure a full count in the 2020 Census is to tell your friends, family, and social networks about it. Here you'll find some suggestions of ways to answer common questions about the census.

WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT THE CENSUS?

"Because communities that are undercounted get underfunded. You and your community benefit most when the census counts everyone, including you. By responding to the census, you help attract businesses and job opportunities to your community, and you help your community get its fair share of the more than \$800 billion per year in federal funds spent on schools, hospitals, roads, and other important programs that affect your quality of life."

HOW DOES THE CENSUS WORK, EXACTLY?

"One person in each home will be responsible for filling out the census survey. This person is called the 'head of household' and can fill it out online, by mail, or phone starting in mid-March. The survey will ask for the number of people living in each household, along with some basic information about each person, including their age, gender, race, and ethnicity." *(Note: Feel free to direct people to [our "Census 101" resource](#) for a more detailed breakdown of the census process!)*

IS MY INFORMATION SAFE?

"The information you provide on the census is confidential. Your responses are protected by federal law and can only be used for statistics. It's illegal for the Census Bureau to share your information with law enforcement, immigration enforcement or anyone else, like a landlord. If someone broke that law, they could face fines of up to \$250,000 and spend up to five years in prison."

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA POSTS

You can download graphics to use in your posts [here](#).

2020 will be a groundbreaking year for building power in our communities, and one key way to do that is by participating in the #2020Census. Learn more about what the census is about, and why #OurCount matters for Black communities.

www.OurCount.org

RAISE YOUR VOICE!

YourVoice is our DIY video platform for Color Of Change members and supporters to speak out on important issues like the 2020 Census. You can use this platform to create your own social media-friendly videos to raise awareness of the importance of completing the 2020 Census.



As #OurCount in the #2020Census nears, we can't forget that young Black children were undercounted in 2010. The census informs funding for programs like SNAP, CHIP, & Head Start. Spread the word now to ensure families know they must count their kids! www.OurCount.org

Why is #OurCount so important in the #2020Census? Census data help determine how federal funding is distributed nationwide, including for programs like SNAP, CHIP, Head Start, & the National School Lunch Program. Learn more & spread the word: www.OurCount.org

Sick of overcrowded classrooms and day care waitlists? Make sure to fill out the census, and count all kids living in your home! Learn more about the importance of #OurCount in the #2020Census at www.OurCount.org.

Young Black children are among the most undercounted people in the country. Our kids can't wait another 10 years for the classrooms, books, & other resources they need to thrive. Make sure to count all kids in your home on the #2020Census! #OurCount www.OurCount.org

Our lives matter. Our families matter. Our communities matter. Let's make sure we count. Visit www.OurCount.org to learn more about why completing the 2020 Census is so important for Black communities. #OurCount

Filling out the 2020 Census can help attract businesses & jobs to your community, along with your fair share of the billions of dollars spent on important programs like Medicaid & Head Start. Learn more about what's at stake #OurCount: www.OurCount.org

The 2020 Census is about money & power, and Black communities deserve our fair share. Learn more & take action to ensure #OurCount in the census this year: www.OurCount.org

!! Reporting Disinformation will be critical for getting out the count this year. Disinformation is false or misleading information that has been intentionally designed to confuse, scare, or otherwise manipulate the public. If you see or hear disinformation related to the census, [report it to us here](#). Our team is trained to help stop the spread of disinformation that threatens Black people's participation in our democracy.



SAMPLE EMAIL

Dear [First Name],

The 2020 Census is coming and it will leave a lasting impact on Black communities.

Did you know that more than 800,000 Black people were not counted in the 2010 Census¹?

It's easy to think of the census as just a head count. But it's so much more than that. Census data help determine how \$800 billion is distributed for important programs like Medicaid, children's health insurance, and the National School Lunch Program.² And if Black folks are undercounted, our communities could be severely underfunded.

Our communities deserve a fair count. Will you pledge to take the 2020 Census?

There is a disturbing history of Black people being undercounted in the Census. After colonizing Native land throughout America, white settlers created the Three-Fifths Compromise wherein each enslaved African was counted as three-fifths of a person.³ Although times have changed, Black people are still undercounted, particularly young Black children. In the 2010 Census, young Black children were undercounted at twice the rate as young white children. This is unacceptable.

The census has been chronically underfunded for many years⁴, and we're committed to reversing a Black undercount in 2020 and beyond. Black people are already among the least accurately counted populations in the country, and we can't let that happen again. We need to make sure we're counted to claim our legacy, get our fair share, and mobilize for economic justice for Black people in America. Together, we can ensure our folks know what the census is really about and how our communities benefit from it. [Click here to pledge your participation in the 2020 Census to help stop the spread of disinformation that threatens Black people's participation in our democracy.](#)

[Signature]

References:

1. <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/census/2020/Fact-Sheet-African-Americans-HTC.pdf>
2. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/newsroom/press-kits/2018/counting-young-children-in-2020-census.pdf>
3. <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/following-long-history-2020-census-risks-undercounting-black-population>
4. <https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/following-long-history-2020-census-risks-undercounting-black-population>

Thanks so much for doing your part to prevent a Black undercount in the 2020 Census! Be sure to remind yourself or the head of household in your home to complete the census beginning in mid-March, and remind at least five friends & family to do the same.

Our communities matter — thanks again for helping to ensure that we count.



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