

## Census 2020 outreach in a digital sphere

### Virtual Civic Engagement Approaches

- **Share weekly Census or voter registration messages on your social media platforms.**  
Emphasize the importance of completing your Census form / registering to vote today online. Social media can amplify your message, and you can ask for individuals to leverage their personal network to “spread the word” about why participating in the 2020 Census / voting is important to them.
- **Create a virtual event on the platform of your choice!** For example, host a Facebook party and ask community members to complete their Census / register to vote at the same time.
- **Design a TED Talk-style or Town Hall-style event.** Have guest speakers on (they can be influential members of the community, or individuals educated on the 2020 Census / voting) to educate the community and share the importance of participation. Encourage every household to take ten minutes to complete their Census / register to vote directly following the event to increase motivation to participate.
- **Have a Census completion competition!** Establishing a light sense of competition can motivate individuals to participate in a civic engagement action (individuals value social recognition). Divide your targeted outreach area into teams and whichever team has the most Census participation wins! To participate, ask community members to complete their Census and post a picture or catchphrase on a social media to be counted in the competition.
- **Create a Census 2020 talent show.** Ask local artists to produce Census related art (Census song, Census short film, Census collage or art project, etc.) and share them either on a social media platform through a hashtag, or host an event where everyone can share at once, i.e. through Zoom.
- **Assemble small-group virtual discussions.** Increase community engagement and discuss the importance of the 2020 Census / voting has on your community in small groups to be able to discuss the topic in depth. Allow for discussion and at the end encourage every household to take ten minutes to complete their Census / register to vote directly following the event to increase motivation to participate.
- **Participate in the “I Count” campaign.** Jefferson Counts is developing a social media campaign which encourages community members to share a photo of themselves after they have completed their Census form with a Jefferson Counts “I Count” sign.
- **Develop family centered activities.** Utilize Census Bureau educational resources online
- **Additional Ideas from The US Census Bureau:**
  - Post a blog or video message from your leadership encouraging census response.
  - Send notices to your employees and email lists to encourage response. Leverage collaboration platforms, employee resource groups, text messages, and customer bills and receipts.
  - Host a webinar or teleconference to share census information and answer questions.
  - Write letters to the editor or op-eds on why census participation is important, particularly to support challenges like the coronavirus (COVID-19).
  - Provide free advertising opportunities to promote the 2020 Census.
  - Actively monitor, fact check, and correct census misinformation on social networks.

**Reminder: Individuals are most likely to participate in a civic engagement action if:**

- They (are made to) feel empowered and confident to share ideas;
- The message manages to spark their curiosity and hold their attention;
- They are approached during appropriate times (preferably when they're not doing anything else anyway, i.e. social distancing);
- The government's role is trustworthy and neutral;
- The participation process is smooth and not too time-consuming.

**Important things to note:**

- **A sense of community is important and will likely increase participation.** Social media can be a helpful tool to foster your community.
- **Emphasize the importance of individual participation** to make it feel as though the reader is being "singled out" to participate. This can reduce the bystander effect and makes the individual feel confident and realize the impact their participation can have.
- **Provide links to sources to allow continued research.** There is a lot of misinformation on the internet. Linking to reliable sources instills trust and increases the possibility of follow through. Individuals feel more confident to act and share the message if they feel well informed.
- **Share specific messaging** to target populations who are more likely to be undercounted.
- **Spread the message.** Encourage community members to spread the message of the importance of participating in the 2020 Census / voting to amplify your virtual campaign.
- **Have a strong "Ask" for immediate participation.** Encourage community members to complete their Census /register to vote *now*. Try to make participation as quick and easy as possible by providing the Census Bureau's website to your social media messages to allow your community members complete the Census today, now, and online. (This is also true for voter registration, provide links directing community members to the online registration.)