



ensus 2020 Census 2020: We all count. But will we all be counted?

Overview: This is a guide for a small group of people (4-8) to learn about each other and explore an important public issue. It is based on the Living Room Conversations model <https://www.livingroomconversations.org/>, a resource for guides on a range of public issues and topics. This guide was prepared by the Minnesota Higher Education and Census 2020 Network, in partnership with Minnesota Campus Compact (mncampuscompact.org, snichols@compact.org). Special thanks to Metropolitan State University graduate interns Ben Baglio and Nima Hussein and the State of Minnesota Demographer's Office.

Conversation Agreements

- **Be curious and open to learning.** Conversation is as much about listening as it is about talking. Enjoy hearing all points of view. Maintain an attitude of exploration.
- **Show respect and suspend judgment.** Human beings tend to judge one another; do your best not to. Setting judgments aside opens you up to learning from others and makes them feel respected and appreciated.
- **Find common ground and note differences.** Look for common ground you can agree on and take an interest in the differing beliefs and opinions of others.
- **Be authentic and welcome that from others.** Share what's important to you. Speak authentically from your personal experience. Be considerate of others who are doing the same.
- **Be purposeful and to the point.** Notice if what you are conveying is or is not pertinent to the topic at hand.
- **Own and guide the conversation.** Take responsibility for the quality of your participation and that of the conversation. Be proactive in getting yourself and others back on track if needed.

Though feedback is consistently positive, some people are concerned about managing people that dominate the conversation as well as off-topic, or disruptive situations during the Living Room Conversation. We offer these tips:

- Everyone shares responsibility for guiding the conversation and is invited to help keep the conversation on track.
- The group can decide to keep track of time in some way to help people remember to keep their comments similar in length to others. Soft music when the time is up is a great reminder.
- If an area of interest has arisen that has taken the group off topic, ask the group if they would like to set aside the new topic for a separate Living Room Conversation.
- If someone is dominating, disruptive or has found their soapbox, respectfully interrupt the situation, refer to the Conversation Agreements and invite everyone to get back on track with the current question
- If the group opts to shift from the format, please provide us with feedback for future learning.



Census 2020: Overview Information

2020 Census: When & How?

- **Census Day April 1, 2020:** Federal law requires that we all be counted based on where we live on Census Day -- citizens, non-citizens, visitors, babies -- everybody counts.
- **You can do the census online, by phone, on paper, or in person.**
 - Every household, including apartments, will receive a postcard before Census Day with an online link or phone number to submit census information. If no one in your household submits census info online or by phone, you'll get a paper census form in the mail. If no one fills out the form, enumerators from the Census Bureau will come to your door to collect your information.
- **You include everybody in the house or apartment on one census form.** One person fills it out on behalf of everyone living in their household (including non-family roommates). Every household is responsible for submitting their census information.
- **Languages: The census will be offered online in 12 languages,** with questionnaire support made online or available by phone in those same languages. Videos and printed materials will also be made available in 59 total languages. Many local community centers, libraries, schools, and nonprofits are also offering other census resources.¹

A Complete Count

- **The Census is supposed to include everybody. Still, some people don't get included.**
 - The U.S. Constitution mandates a complete census count for everyone living in the country, and everyone is required by law to participate however there is no penalty for non-participation.
 - Historically, undercounted communities are less visible and less powerful by not fully represented in the census count. The U.S. Constitution even historically stated that slaves were to be counted as just three-fifths of a person in the census.
 - Many communities still go undercounted today, including those experiencing homelessness, Native American communities, and immigrant communities.
 - Children and infants should always be included in a household's count.
- The number one predictor of going uncounted in the census: being a renter.

The Costs of Going Uncounted²

- Minnesota receives \$2,796 in federal funding, per person per year -- and that's determined by our census count. That's almost \$28,000 per person over the course of ten years!
 - This is the estimated amount that Minnesota could receive for each of its residents based on federal population-based formulas that use census data.
- School lunches, Pell grants, special education, contracts for small businesses, and Medicaid³
 - The census determines how much money our state gets for programs like these.
- The census count determines how many congress members each state has.

¹ Language Services Update, Census Bureau: <https://www2.census.gov/cac/nac/meetings/2018-06/kim-language-services.pdf>

² Minnesota State Demographic Center: Why It's Important (<https://mn.gov/admin/demography/census2020/why-important/>)

³ George Washington University, Institute of Public Policy: [Counting for Dollars 2020: The Role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds - Minnesota Statistics.](#)

- o States like Minnesota risk losing a member in the U.S. House when their populations are not growing at as high of a rate as similarly-populated states. The more that go uncounted in Minnesota, the greater the risk we lose representation.
- The census shapes business investment.
 - o Businesses and organizations use census data on growing areas and populations to make decisions about where to expand or invest.

Will Everyone Be Counted in 2020?

- **No Citizenship Question on the 2020 Census**
 - o The U.S. Supreme Court decided on June 27, 2019 that there will not be a question about citizenship status on the 2020 Census.
 - o Despite the fact that the citizenship question will not be included on the 2020 Census, potential inclusion of the question has raised concerns in communities. Immigrants and others report fears about how their census responses may impact them, their families, and their communities.
- **Addressing Fear and Mistrust:**
 - o It's illegal for anyone but the Census Bureau to use your information or share your personal census responses.
 - Title 13 of U.S. Code states that it is illegal for the Census Bureau to share one's information with another government entity – federal, state, or local – until 72 years have passed. This means that until that 72-year period expires, no one is ever identified individually in the census data. This also means that the Census Bureau would not be allowed to share an individual's census information with a local housing authority or a federal agency like ICE.
 - It should be noted that it was still census data that was used during WWII to identify and then forcibly intern Japanese Americans during the war. Title 13 was created in response to how census data was used during WWII.
 - o You don't have to let anyone into your house.
 - Many do not feel comfortable talking to someone from Census at their door. Fortunately, you can reduce the chance of a census worker coming to your home if your household responds to the census online before enumerators begin going door-to-door.
- **Race and Ethnicity Questions:** Previous census questions about our racial or ethnic identities on the census have only provided more limited response options that many did not see themselves in. Our country risks having a much greater misunderstanding of our racial and ethnic makeup, and will make decisions with less detailed data on our diversity, if greater numbers of people do not provide their race or identity on the census.
 - o To help address this, the 2020 census will provide respondents with the opportunity to enter their own description of their ethnicity or identity if the options provided are not listed.
- **Anonymity:** You are not required to put your name on the census for your other responses to be recorded.

Dialogue Guide

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Introduce the Dialogue

Thank you for taking part in today's conversation about the 2020 Census! Many people are wondering about the 2020 Census, how they should participate, and whether we'll all be included. What is it about the census that compels us to be counted, or turn away, feeling it's not worth the risk? In this conversation, we will talk about what why we plan to participate in the 2020 Census, why we might be unsure, or why we might not.

To help ensure that everyone has at least some of the same information, we have included background information on the census in these materials. The conversation host can read the headings aloud and ask if anyone would like more information, pass it out for participants to read, or show an informational video clip about why the census matters, such as:

- *This overview of why the census matters: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fBUfA3n6r7o>*
- *This overview in Spanish: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OuK-c8sbDs&feature=youtu.be>*

Review Agreements

Review the agreements in the first page of this packet with participants.

Round One: Introductions / Getting Started / Core Values

Answer one or more of the following

- What did you find interesting or surprising about the background info about the census?
- What are your hopes and concerns for your community and/or the country?
- What sense of purpose / mission / duty guides you in your life?

Round Two: Will we all be counted?

Remember that the goal for this conversation is for all of us to listen and learn about where we have different opinions and where we have shared interests, intentions and goals. Answer one or more of the following questions:

- Have you or your family participated in the census in the past? What do you think led you or your family to that decision?
- What was your experience in completing the census?
- What are our census responsibilities and obligations?
- How important was the census in your family?
- Do you believe our communities would be different if substantially more people participated in the census? How so?

Round Three: Reflection & Next Steps Answer one or more of the following questions:

- In one sentence, share what was most meaningful / valuable to you in the experience of this conversation.
- What learning, new understanding or common ground was found on this topic?
- Has this conversation changed your perception of anyone in this group, including yourself?
- What is one important thing you thought was accomplished here?
- Is there a next step you would like to take based upon the conversation you just had?

Closing – Thank you!