



Memorandum

TO: HONORABLE MAYOR
AND CITY COUNCIL

FROM: Kim Walesh

SUBJECT: 2020 CENSUS UPDATE

DATE: October 25, 2019

Approved

Date

10-25-19

INFORMATION

This information memorandum provides an update of key activities and developments related to the 2020 Census.

BACKGROUND

The Census is the decennial count of every person living in the United States. Census data helps determine political representation and the annual allocation of more than \$675 billion in federal funds for critical programs that support education, housing, transportation, emergency, and disaster relief services of which California receives over \$76 billion annually. A Census undercount could put billions of federal dollars and congressional representation at risk for California.

Nationally, there has been a longstanding and significant undercount of hard-to-count groups in the Census, including the homeless and unstably housed population, immigrant population, ethnic and racial minority groups, young children, people with limited English-proficiency, and low-income households. Historically, these groups have been underrepresented in the Census for a variety of reasons such as socioeconomic and cultural considerations, lack of awareness and understanding of the Census, and fear and mistrust of government.

The 2020 Census is facing unique challenges that may significantly impact overall participation. These include:

- **Inadequate Budget:** The federal government has significantly underfunded the 2020 Census, compared to past Census. In 2020, more households will need to be counted with less resources, including fewer local Census offices, less field staff, and limited follow-up with non-responsive households;

- **Digital Census:** For the first time, the Census will be primarily online. This may decrease response rates due to worries about information security and privacy, and lack of access to internet and computers in certain communities;
- **Government Mistrust:** Fear and lack of trust in the federal government and questions about how the Census information may be used may also deter participation;
- **Recruitment Challenges:** Having Census Bureau workers who understand the different communities and how to best reach them is critical for ensuring a full and accurate count. The nation's strong economy and low unemployment rate are among some of the challenges to recruiting qualified bilingual Census Bureau workers; and
- **Language Accessibility:** Although the online questionnaire and phone language assistance will be available in 12 different languages (Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polish, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Japanese), the paper-based Census survey will only be available in English and Spanish. The Bureau will provide written materials such as language guides, and glossaries in 59 languages. San José residents who need assistance or do not have computer or internet access will be able to visit any City library or community center for assistance.

Until recently, the federal government was planning to include a citizenship question on the census survey. However, in July 2019, President Trump announced that he was no longer pursuing this after the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the lower court of New York's decision and rejected the Department of Commerce's reasons for adding a citizenship question. The President's reversal came after numerous lawsuits were filed by government agencies and civil rights groups who argued that the inclusion of a citizenship question would suppress participation and consequently the accuracy of the census count. The President subsequently issued an Executive Order requiring federal agencies and departments to provide the Department of Commerce with all legally permissible information regarding the number of U.S. citizens and non-U.S. citizens in the country. Advocacy organizations, such as the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund and Asian Americans Advancing Justice, have filed a legal challenge to the Executive Order.

Last week, the U.S. Census Bureau requested states to voluntarily provide driver's license records that typically include citizenship information. This raises serious concerns for government agencies and civil rights advocates who worry that state participation in this request could deter certain groups such as minorities and immigrants from taking part in the Census, thus resulting in an undercount. Experts caution that inaccuracies in state motor vehicle records also make them a poor choice for tracking citizenship. For example, records are not necessarily updated when a person naturalizes, so relying on such data would result in an undercount of people who became U.S. citizens after getting their driver's licenses or identification cards. While many states have received records requests from the Bureau, California has not yet been contacted. City staff will continue to monitor developments and will provide updates as needed.

ANALYSIS

City's 2020 Census Outreach Campaign

The City of San José is committed to a complete and accurate count of its residents. Staff is working with non-profit organizations, government agencies, businesses, faith-based organizations, schools and colleges, and the media to educate and motivate residents to take part in the Census. The City is developing community-driven outreach strategies that reflect the diversity and unique needs of each of the City's hard-to-count populations. To this end, the City has assigned staff with marketing, social media, civic engagement, and policy experience, as well as Vietnamese and Spanish language skills, to support the census efforts.

The City's 2020 Census outreach campaign includes the eight different components presented below:

- 1. External Partnerships:** Staff is working closely with different stakeholders, including local non-profit organizations, churches, businesses, schools/universities, etc. to augment and enhance the City's staffing and funding resources.

One example includes the City's partnership with the Office of the Registrar of Voters. This partnership has been instrumental in connecting with the community by leveraging the events that the Office of the Registrar of Voters attends that otherwise City staff would not be able attend due to limited resources. Every month, for example, the Office of the Registrar of Voters attends citizenship ceremonies and distributes census information. Thousands of people attend these ceremonies. Another example is with the Diocese of San Jose which has committed to supporting the City's Census education efforts. The Census team is working with the Diocese on various ways to get involved, including designating Sundays once the census survey goes live as "Census Sundays." City staff would be available after Mass on site at churches to assist people in completing the Census survey.

Staff is developing education materials and will make them available to partners through an on-line sharing platform.

- 2. City Department Outreach:** Staff has met with City departments to enlist their support and commitment to the City's census efforts. Staff is developing materials and resources that will be available for City Departments to access and customize to their audiences. City Departments are already carrying the Census message into the community through their regular outreach efforts. For example, the City Census team provided training to PRNS staff who shared Census information at the Viva Parks and Viva Calle events. Police staff also distributed Census information at National Night Out and Neighborhood Watch. This same strategy will be used in the upcoming months and will include additional Departments. The Library Department will incorporate Census information into their educational programs and provide access to computers and the

Space(Maker)Ship for mobile Census operations at various community events. In addition, Census staff will begin to work on the implementation of the census kiosk plan that will make available designated computers at every library branch and community center for the public to use to complete the census survey. Once the Census Bureau releases more details on the online survey, staff will develop materials to train staff and volunteers to educate, motivate and assist residents complete the survey.

3. **Citywide Education:** National and local market research is helping City staff understand and compare barrier, attitudes, and motivators across demographic subgroups to develop creative strategies, outreach materials, and demographic-specific messaging with San José focus and brand. This effort was supported from recent County-sponsored survey and market research centering on hard-to-count communities. This research gathered opinions from hard-to-count groups to understand their barriers to Census participation, test messages and messengers, and understand how to encourage participation in the 2020 Census. The City Census Team is using this and other research data to develop its marketing and outreach campaign.
4. **Social Media:** Social media plays a key role in the daily lives of our community, and will be critical in not only helping inform and motivate residents but also in fighting misinformation and disinformation. Staff is developing targeted campaigns for each of the hard-to-count populations and identifying the best social media vehicles to reach each group. In addition, staff is evaluating pledging and texting tools from the State, United Way Bay Area, and the County for incorporation into its outreach campaign.
5. **Mass Marketing:** The City, in partnership with the Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), has recently launched a census poster contest for college students attending school at one of the private or public colleges/universities in Santa Clara County. The goal of the contest is to engage college students, who historically have been undercounted in the census, to create an original poster design around the “Everyone Counts 2020 Census” theme. Up to five designs will be selected to run as 2020 Census advertisements on VTA operated buses, trains, and transit real estate. Student artists whose designs are selected will receive an honorarium of \$750. The deadline for submission is November 21, 2019. Contest guidelines can be found at <https://try.vta.org/vta-partnership-2020-census>.

In addition, staff will install over 340 street pole banners throughout the city to promote the census. The banner art design and messaging has been carefully created to resonate with and motivate San José residents to take part in the census. The banners are being produced in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

6. **Community Events and Presentations:** In addition to a citywide comprehensive education campaign, staff will need to connect at a personal level with residents. To do this, the City will dedicate staff and resources to attend community events, especially neighborhood type of events. Staff has already attended numerous community events,

including Viva Calle, Viva Parks, Fourth of July neighborhood celebrations, Silicon Valley Pride Parade, National Night Out, and the Almaden Valley Art and Wine Festival. Staff has also presented to community groups, neighborhood associations, Senior Nutrition Program participants and various City Boards and Commissions. For the census message to resonate with the community, it will need to enlist the assistance of trusted messengers and take the message into the community where it typically gathers.

7. **Traditional Media:** As a trusted messenger in the community, local media, especially ethnic media, will play a key role in educating residents about the census, its importance, and how to take part in it. The City and residents will depend on local media to provide timely and accurate information. In early 2020, the City will host a media roundtable to present information about Census 2020, its importance, and the City's efforts to get-out-the-count. Staff will identify and train City staff and community leaders to serve as subject matter experts for media inquiries. This proactive effort will better position the City to respond to media requests in a timely matter.

8. **Grant Funding to Non-Profit Organizations:** Finally, the City in partnership with the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, will make up to \$275,000 in grant funds available to qualified non-profit organizations to provide community outreach and education services in San José to help increase census awareness and participation in hard-to-count communities. These City funds will be in addition to the over \$800,000 that has already been awarded to non-profit organizations in Santa Clara County by United Way Bay Area and the Bay Area Census Funders Collaborative that is also administered by the Silicon Valley Community Foundation. In addition to supporting education and outreach efforts, funding will support the operation of Questionnaire Assistance Centers where people can receive assistance with completing the census survey, and provide legal, policy, and technical expertise to non-profits on census related matters. Via a separate memorandum, staff will provide more details on the agencies selected and work to be undertaken.

Staff anticipates that in the next month the County of Santa Clara will release a request for proposals (RFP) to local non-profits to further augment Census education and outreach efforts. Once details about the County's RFP are available, staff will share them with Council Offices and the City's network of community-based organizations to ensure awareness of the RFP and maximize participation from local non-profit groups.

Santa Clara County Complete Count Committee Update

The City continues to work closely with the County regarding the Santa Clara County Complete Count Committee. Since its formation, the City has been attending meetings and events, and staffing census subcommittees focused particularly on ways to educate, motivate, and engage hard-to-count groups. The Complete Count Committee is comprised of over 80 organizations, representing a broad spectrum of government community leaders from advocacy, education, healthcare, and elected officials. These trusted voices are key in helping to develop and

implement outreach and education strategies based on their knowledge and experience working with specific audiences. The next Complete Count Committee meeting is scheduled for mid-November 2019. Details about the meeting will be shared with Council Offices once they are available.

U.S. Census Bureau Updates

City support for Census Bureau Recruitment Efforts: In September 2019, the U.S. Census Bureau commenced its vital recruitment effort for Census takers - also referred to as census enumerators. These are the individuals who will go door-to-door to make sure that everyone who has not self-responded to the Census is indeed counted.

The Bureau is actively seeking to hire approximately 3,000 census takers in Santa Clara County. These positions will pay \$30/hour, and offer a flexible work schedule, paid training and weekly paychecks.

To support the Census Bureau, the City has been leading a wide variety of efforts to promote census employment opportunities in San José and the County using the City's social media platforms, e-mail blasts to residents, advertisement in City publications, and through partnerships with employment development agencies, community-based organizations, and colleges/universities. For example, in September 2019, the City's work2future office, in partnership with the Diocese of San Jose hosted a public hands-on workshop to help people complete the census online employment application. Census staff was available onsite to provide assistance. Over 40 people attended the workshop. Having the Diocese of San Jose as a sponsor of the event was extremely beneficial. The Diocese promoted the workshop during Mass and through its communication channels. work2future will host two additional workshops in October, with others forthcoming in the subsequent months.

Local Census Offices: The Census Bureau is opening temporary offices nationwide that will house managers, staff, materials, and equipment needed to support census operations, including local recruiting, non-response follow-up and other enumeration operations. In Santa Clara County, the Census Bureau will open two offices: one in south San Jose and the other in Sunnyvale. Exact locations are still pending. Both offices will serve San Jose and it is anticipated that they will open before the end of the year. These offices will not be open to the public.

Census Mailing Information Timeline

Below is information that outlines the types of communication the Census Bureau will send to households regarding the Census survey:

Households will receive:	
March 12-20, 2020	An invitation to respond online to the 2020 Census. Depending on how likely an area is to respond online, some households will also receive paper questionnaires along with the invitation.
March 16-24, 2020	A reminder letter
If a household has not yet responded:	
March 26-April 3, 2020	A reminder postcard
April 8-16, 2020	A reminder letter and paper questionnaire
April 20-27	A final reminder postcard before the Census Bureau follows up in person, also referred to as Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU).
May – July 2020	NRFU Operation

CONCLUSION

The City Manager’s Office, by way of the Office of Economic Development and the Office of Immigrant Affairs, will continue to work closely with the County and Complete Count Committee partners to ensure alignment of Census 2020 efforts. City staff will continue to provide regular updates as the Census outreach strategy takes form and moves to implementation, or sooner when other circumstances critical to the success of the Census occur.

/s/

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For questions, please contact Jeff Ruster, Assistant Director of Economic Development, at (408) 535-8183.