

# Census 2020: What Partners Should and Should not do to Support Census Self-Response

It's Important. It's Easy. It's Safe.

## The Role of Partners and Technology in Supporting Census Self-Response

For the first time people will be able to respond to the Census online from anywhere, anytime. Thousands of partners, including non-profits, tribal, state and local governments, are working to ensure a complete and accurate count. The use of technology on the 2020 Census provides new opportunities to support people responding to the 2020 Census, including the ability to respond without a Census-provided identification code.

A key principle for the 2020 Census is the Census Bureau's obligation to protect the confidentiality of the public's answers to the census. Door-to-door canvassing may actually discourage response because it elevates concerns by residents of a potential scam, intrusion or other suspicious activity.

## What Partners **should** do

The Census Bureau welcomes support from its partners, including:

- Encourage response to the Census in the mailed or hand-delivered materials from the Census Bureau;
- Provide secure links to <https://2020census.gov/en> where people can easily respond to the 2020 Census;
- Help non-English speaking respondents log in to the Internet response questionnaire in the appropriate language;
- Help a visually-impaired individual dial the appropriate telephone number to provide their responses;
- Encourage people to call the 2020 Census phone line to respond in English or in any of the other 12 languages available for self-response;
- Provide access to computers and tablets to facilitate on-line response; and,
  - As always, help people understand that responding to the 2020 Census is important and safe.

## What Partners **should not** do

While the Census Bureau welcomes assistance, for security and confidentiality reasons there are several things they do NOT want local partners, or tribal, state and local governments, to do:

- Encourage anyone to respond to the census on behalf of a household that they are not part of (e.g., it is illegal to fill out a census response for your neighbor's house, even if you believe they did not respond);
- Create websites or apps designed to directly collect 2020 Census response data; Collect data over the phone or in person with the intention of submitting to the Census Bureau.

Door-to-door canvassing may actually discourage response because it elevates concerns by residents of a potential scam, intrusion or other suspicious activity. If the public is not sure who is knocking on their door, they will not answer.

## Potential issues with door to door canvassing by non-census employees

A key principle for the 2020 Census is the Census Bureau's obligation to protect the confidentiality of the public's answers to the census.

No one other than Census Bureau employees, not even officials from tribal, state or municipal governments, should go door-to-door to collect information for the 2020 Census. Doing so could create confusion for households that have already responded, or for households that must be interviewed by census takers because they have not yet responded to the census.

Census data collection consists of two phases, a self-response period and the "Non-Response Follow Up" operation. Census enumerators will visit households for several reasons, including non-response. A key component of the Census Bureau's communications effort is to raise awareness of how to identify an official census enumerator.

Although the majority of census enumerators will be in the field beginning in mid-May during the Non Response Follow-Up operation, enumerators will work on a variety of operations throughout the entire self-response period.

Data collected by census takers employed by the Census Bureau is protected under Title 13 of the US Code. Census employees take an oath to ensure that respondent information is used for statistical purposes only and not for any other reason. Census employees cannot share information with anyone else, including law enforcement - not the FBI, ICE or even local police.

Data collection by non-census employees, regardless of the intent of the persons or organizations collecting the data, violates Title 13 and is against the law.