The 2020 Census and Disability: Everyone Deserves to be Counted

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What is the Census?

The Census is conducted every 10 years

The census aims to count every person living in the United States regardless of citizenship status.

This year’s census will serve as America’s 24th census and will count every person living in the United States as of April 1st, 2020 (Census Day).
How Do You Respond to the Census?

We will be able to respond online, by phone or by mail.

If you forget or fail to respond, then someone will come out to your home to ask the census questions in person.
Census Timeline Before April 1, 2020

**Between January–September 2019:** The U.S. Census Bureau opened 248 area census offices across the country. These offices support and manage the census takers who work all over the country to conduct the census.

**In Massachusetts** we have five area census offices: Boston, Quincy, Lawrence, Taunton, Waltham and Worcester.
Timeline Before April 1, 2020 continued

**January 2020:** The Census Bureau begins counting the population in remote Alaska.

**April 1, 2020:** Census Day is observed nationwide. By this date, every home will have received an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census. Census takers begin visiting college students who live on campus, people living in senior centers, and others who live among large groups of people.
Timeline Before April 1, 2020 Continued

Once the invitation arrives, you should respond. You can respond in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail. When you respond to the census, you tell the Census Bureau where you live as of April 1, 2020.

The following 12 non-English languages are supported whether you respond online, by phone, or by mail:

Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polish, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Japanese
Timeline after April 1, 2020

**May 2020:** The Census Bureau begins visiting homes that haven't responded to the 2020 Census to make sure everyone is counted. The visits will continue through July 2020.

**December 2020:** The Census Bureau delivers apportionment counts to the President and Congress as required by law.

**March 31, 2021:** By this date, the Census Bureau will send redistricting counts to states. This information is used to redraw legislative districts based on population changes.
The Census – What Do We Know?
The Census Collects Specific Information

Next year’s census will collect the following information:

- Age
- Hispanic origin
- Race
- Sex
- The number of individuals living in a household
- If the household owns or rents the property
- **NOT CITIZENSHIP INFORMATION**
Does the Census ask About Disabilities?

No, the 2020 questionnaire will not ask about disabilities. Disability data is collected in the American Community Survey (ACS).

However, it is important to make sure that EVERYONE is counted. **WE MUST SELF-REPORT**
How is the Census Information Used?

The collected census information is used to:

• Figure out how more than $675 billion in federal government resources will be distributed

• Allocate seats in the United States House of Representatives

• Draw the appropriate boundaries for congressional districts, state legislative districts, school districts, and voting precincts
What Does the Census Information Mean for Us?

In Massachusetts, the Census Information will determine federal funding for the next 10 years for things like:

- public health programs and services
- planning of public transportation improvements
- education grants
- designing facilities for people with disabilities, the elderly, and children
Massachusetts and the Census

*In Fiscal Year 2015*, Massachusetts received $16 billion for programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, SNAP, Section 8 Vouchers, Title 1 Education Grants, and Head Start.

For every resident who is not counted in the state, $2,372 in funding is missed.
How Does the Census Information Help Us in Massachusetts?
Housing and Community Services

Census data:

• Affects the grants to Massachusetts for Low Income Home Energy Assistance, Foster Care, and block development grants

• Determines areas for housing assistance and rehabilitation loans

• Affects funding for federal programs like SNAP, Section 8 Housing, and Title 1 Grants

• Is used by planners to determine where to build shelters, clinics, and other centers that benefit the community.
Healthcare

Census data:

• Determines federal funding to programs such as Medicare and Medicaid, MassHealth, State Children’s Hospital Insurance Program, and several Health Center programs

• Is used by planners to determine where to build hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, shelters, and other centers that benefit the community

• Assists with planning health services for people with disabilities
Schools

Census data:

- Determines the funding that goes into Title 1 Grants, Free and Reduced Lunch Program, *Special Education Grants*, and Head Start/Early Head Start

- Helps to direct services to children and adults with limited English-language proficiency

- **Assists with planning educational services for people with disabilities**
THE CENSUS AND
PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES
There are many communities in Massachusetts that are designated as hard-to-count. The Hard-to-count designation is determined by a low response rate to the 2010 Census and other surveys.

According to the U. S. Census Hard to Count Map, 78.9% of the state's households mailed back their questionnaire, requiring more costly and difficult in-person follow up from the Census Bureau to count the remaining 21.1%.
Who Is At Risk of Being Undercounted?

Those at risk of being undercounted include:

**People with disabilities**
People living in multi-family housing
People of color
Immigrants
People experiencing homelessness
Children under 5 and College Students
Renters
Crowded households and Single parent households
Low income populations
Populations with limited English proficiency
People with Disabilities & The Census

According to the CDC, people with disabilities make up 22% of the American public.

Yet, people with disabilities remain a minority in terms of participation in the census.

Many factors can contribute to this.

What we do know is this: Disability is not only its own category, it is also a subset found within every social, economic, and racial demographic in the United States.
Possible Reasons Why People with Disabilities **Do Not Participate** in the Census

- They have never been asked
- They believe that the census will not have an impact on their life
- They don’t feel comfortable sharing personal information
- They are worried that the information will be used against them
Reasons Why People with Disabilities WILL Participate in the Census

• Surveys are conducted in partnership with a trusted community group, advocacy organization, or person they already know.

• Completing the survey in a place where they are comfortable, such as an independent living center.

• Having someone they trust with them when they are completing the census on a computer or by smartphone.

• Understanding how important completing the census is.

• Having access to web-based information in accessible formats or census information in plain language.
IMPORTANT INFORMATION
ABOUT THE 2020 CENSUS
Who must complete the Census?

Everyone Must Complete the 2020 Census!

If you live in the United States, you are required by law to participate in the 2020 count, even if you recently completed another survey from the Census Bureau.

It's also mandated by the Constitution: The United States has counted its population every 10 years since 1790.
Will My Information Be Kept Confidential?

YES. Several laws exist to protect an individual’s information after completing the Census. Most importantly, here is what you need to know:

▪ Data collected for the census is used for statistical purposes ONLY. It is illegal to use this data for any nonstatistical purpose, such as immigration regulation.

▪ Census workers are sworn to secrecy under the threat of criminal punishment. It is illegal for anyone BUT census workers to see someone’s census information.
Confidentiality Continued

▪ It is illegal for the US Census to disclose individual census responses that will in any way allow someone to be identified.

▪ It is illegal for the US Census to share individual responses with other government agencies.

▪ It is illegal for the Census Bureau or any other government agency to use the census information provided against the person who provided it.
Will the Census be Accessible?

The Census Bureau has indicated that next year’s questionnaire will be fully accessible.

They will provide large print and braille paper questionnaires. Telephone contact centers will utilize Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) technology for the phone questionnaire. The internet questionnaire will also be accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Along with the actual questionnaires, it will be crucial that outreach efforts be fully accessible as well.
What Should We Do?

OUTREACH, OUTREACH, OUTREACH
What Can You do to Ensure a More Accurate Count of People with Disabilities?

- Become a Census Partner – sign up at: [https://census.gov/partners.html](https://census.gov/partners.html) to get updates on important information, to learn ways to take action, and to access tools and resources.
- Participate in the MA Complete Count Committee (CCC) – Contact me if you want to take part!
- Make sure that everyone around you understands the importance of being counted! Tell them to be on the look out for the census materials in 2020 and offer any support that they need to get it completed.
- Access helpful resources that are available.
- ILCs and P&As can and should play a vital role as trusted partners to conduct effective outreach.
Resources

Census 2020 Website: [https://2020census.gov/en](https://2020census.gov/en)

Massachusetts Census Website: [http://www.sec.state.ma.us/census2020/index.html](http://www.sec.state.ma.us/census2020/index.html)


The Census Project: [https://thecensusproject.org](https://thecensusproject.org)

MassCounts: [https://www.masscounts.com/](https://www.masscounts.com/)

2020 Census Partner Materials: [https://www.census.gov/partners/2020-materials.html](https://www.census.gov/partners/2020-materials.html)

Massachusetts Census Equity Fund: [https://www.masscensusequity.org](https://www.masscensusequity.org)
Contact Information

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