

AUGUST 2020

2020 CENSUS: ENSURING IMMIGRANT COMMUNITIES ARE COUNTED

WHAT IS THE CENSUS AND HOW DO I PARTICIPATE?

Simply put, the Census is the way in which the federal government produces an accurate headcount of all persons living in the United States. Since 1790, the census has been performed every ten years. The deadline to complete the 2020 Census is now **September 30, 2020**. For the first time ever, you can conveniently complete the Census online with options to also complete it by phone or mail. Be sure to count everyone in your household, including children!

WHAT IF ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF OUR HOUSEHOLD ARE UNDOCUMENTED?

It is safe to complete the Census, even if persons do not have legal status. Although the Trump Administration announced a new policy to exclude undocumented immigrants from the overall count that determines the number of representatives in Congress each state receives, the U.S. Constitution is clear that the census must count everyone. That is why there are many lawsuits throughout the country to make sure this new policy does not go into effect.

Regardless, this change does not prevent undocumented persons from completing the Census and by law, the Department of Commerce – which ultimately oversees the Census – is prohibited from sharing any responses identifying individuals with the public or with other government agencies, including immigration enforcement authorities at the Department of Homeland Security (e.g. ICE). Additionally, the 2020 Census **does not ask about citizenship**.

Completing the census is a way for undocumented persons to make their voice heard and to fight back against an administration that seeks to exclude them.

WHY DOES THE CENSUS MATTER?

This constitutionally mandated process is designed to ensure that decision-making at various levels of government properly considers the needs of diverse populations in each city, county, and state. In other words, the Census helps decide how almost a trillion dollars in taxpayer money is shared across the country – which includes funding for things like schools, local health clinics, emergency response systems, roads, and much more. Another critical feature of the Census is that it forms the basis for how many elected officials each state will have in the US House of Representatives, one of the two bodies that makes up Congress. **This is key so that immigrants can have their voice heard in our representative democracy.**

