

New York City

Faith Leaders Toolkit



Take action in your
community with our toolkit,
which includes everything
you need to make the
Census count.



Uniting Faith,
Empowering Our Future

Interfaith Census **2020 Count Coalition**



INTERFAITH
CENTER OF NEW YORK



UJA Federation
NEW YORK



Table of Contents

3 Calling all Faith Leaders

- 5 Take the Faith Leader Pledge
- 6 About the Coalition

7 What is Census and Why Does the Census Matter?

- 7 You Count and Your Count Matters
- 9 10 Census Myths – True and False
- 10 Why are the People of New York Undercounted?
- 11 Who are 'the Hard to Count'?
- 12 Census Action Calendar

13 How to discuss the Census with your congregation

- 14 Planning your messaging efforts
- 14 The Census in Your Religious Service
- 14 Religious Service Notes and Spiritual Reflections
(Hebrew, Catholic and Protestant, Islamic, Sikh, Buddhist, Hindu)
- 21 Making Announcements in your House of Worship
- 22 Sharing Information on Social Media
- 22 Get information out through media channels

23 Get your congregation active in outreach and "Get Out The Count" (GOTC)

- 24 Local Organizing Support
- 25 Getting Volunteers Involved
- 26 Host Events at Your House of Worship
- 26 Census 101 training for you and your Congregation

27 Additional Resources



Calling all Faith Leaders

As a faith leader, you play a critical and trusted role in your neighborhood, creating a place of safety and security for your community while providing spiritual as well as practical guidance to those under your care. The upcoming 2020 Census is an opportunity to help those in your community not only get their fair share of needed resources, services, and care, but help craft what the community will become over the next 10 years and beyond.

Every 10 years, the United States Constitution requires a count of all people in the country. In 2020, you will be able to complete the Census in four ways: online, by phone, by paper questionnaire, and through a designated Census enumerator. Our count will determine the apportionment of 435 congressional seats and the distribution of over \$650 billion in federal funding for health care, education, housing, economic development, social services, roads, transportation, and more.



What does Census participation mean?

- It means getting classrooms that have the right resources and staffing for all the kids in the neighborhood.
- It means adequate SNAP benefits for families that need it.
- It means upkeep that fits actual local use on roads and public transit.
- It means local businesses and jobs coming into the neighborhood.

The Census is our opportunity to press the reset button. Count yourself and contribute to an improved quality of life for yourself and your neighbors. The household details are held safely and separately by the US Census Bureau and Census staff and protected under Title 13, the strongest privacy regulation in the country.

However, New York City has one of the lowest response rates in the entire country, with a high number of communities that don't respond. Those who tend not to respond, and therefore tend not to get counted include children, immigrants, impoverished individuals and families, non-homeowners, formerly incarcerated persons, and people of color-regardless of income.

Fear, lack of understanding, lack of trust, apathy, physical barriers, digital barriers, and declining investment in Census education and outreach are all leading to the threat of our communities not being seen and counted in this upcoming Census, and that is why we need your help.

This toolkit includes everything you need to take action in supporting your community, including sermon notes, organizing strategies, a Census organizing calendar, and social media templates to announce the Census in your religious services, templates to get the word out to the greater congregation, and detailed support on how to organize outreach activities within your community to spread the word even further.



We Need You to...

1. **Take the Pledge:** *"I pledge to be proactive with my congregation, to aspire to full participation in the Census and to encourage, to educate, and to aim for every member of the community being counted. Together, we shape our future."*
2. **Learn about the 2020 Census** and why it is important for our communities.
3. **Talk to your congregation** about the Census and have them commit to responding.
4. **Mobilize your congregation to get active** in reaching others in the community.



Faith Leaders Take the Pledge

"I pledge to be proactive with my congregation, to aspire to full participation in the Census and to encourage, to educate, and to aim for every member of the community being counted. Together, we shape our future."

By pledging to be part of the 2020 interfaith census effort, you'll...

1. Be listed on the website
2. Receive regular action alerts and updates
3. Have access to additional interfaith outreach resources
4. Get organizing support to help your congregation get counted

Take the Pledge Here:

<https://www.interfaithcensus2020.nyc/>



About the Interfaith Census 2020 Count Coalition

We are a diverse collective of faith leaders and faith-based organizations across NYC who seek to decrease fear, shatter apathy, and inspire hope to ensure a better future for everyday New Yorkers through a complete count in the 2020 Census.

Catholic Charities of New York, Council of People's Organization, Federation of Protestant Welfare Agencies, Interfaith Center of New York and UJA Federation of New York have organized the coalition to provide a resource for faith communities to learn about the census, increase awareness in hard to count neighborhoods, and mobilize for a complete count.

Interfaith Census
2020 Count Coalition

Uniting Faith, Empowering Our Future



What is the Census and Why Does the Census Matter?

You Count and Your Count Matters

What is the Census?

- The Census is a set of **10 questions** that takes **10 minutes** to complete and will determine the next **10 years** of your quality of life in NYC.
- It is a count of ALL adults and children living within the United States as of April 1st, 2020, regardless of citizenship status, age, or place of residence.
- The information they collect determines important local services and projects like where new roads, bridges, and schools will be built; and determines the number of federal, state, and local government representatives for communities.

Through encouraging your congregation's census participation, you are **helping provide for your congregation through increased funding for education and healthcare**. Think about the baby you just welcomed into the house of worship and how these services will support this infant for the next ten years.

What is asked on the Census?

- The number of people living in your home or apartment as of April 1, 2020.
- The name, sex, age, date of birth, and race of each person in the home.
- The relationship of each person to a central person in the home.
- No questions about citizenship status, social security or financial details will be asked.

The answers to the Census help and plan what services will be needed in the next ten years. Your answers will open schools and allocate funds or resources for educating your children.

How can I complete the Census?

- **Online, by phone, or by mail** sent from the Census Bureau.
- The Census website and phone assisted response are available in English and 12 other languages including Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, with additional language guides available online in 59 non-English languages.
- A Census worker will visit you in person if you don't respond by the end of April.



Why does the Census matter?

- The Census is our opportunity to get our fair share of power, money, and representation for our communities.
- The Census tells the federal government how to divide the \$675 billion in annual federal funds that go towards schools, roads, community centers, food assistance programs, WIC, SNAP, Medicare, hospitals, fire stations, police stations and other vital programs that we depend on every day.
- The Census data determines how many congressional representatives each state receives, so your Census response helps ensure that our communities are fully represented and that our neighborhoods have a louder voice.
- The Census also triggers the redistricting process for elected districts. A stronger count in your neighborhood tells your representatives that you exist and matter in your district.
- The Census informs businesses about where to locate their offices and create more jobs.

Is the Census data safe and secure?

- Yes, it is!
- The Census Bureau, the agency tasked with collecting the information, is not allowed to share any information you provide to federal, local, or state agencies in an individual or household identifiable way.
- Each Census Bureau employee has taken an oath to protect your information and can serve jail time, a fine, or both for disclosing any information.
- Your information is protected by authentication and authorization methods that can only be accessed by the Census Bureau cybersecurity team and fully trained Census workers.
- Your responses cannot be used against you and are only used for aggregated community-level data.
- The Census Bureau has a team of cybersecurity experts who monitor and protect all agency technology around the clock. No matter how you respond, your information remains protected. The Census Bureau designed the information collection process with layers of security to keep your information safe and secure.

Every response to the 2020 Census is protected by law. Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the U.S. Census Bureau cannot release any information that identifies you individually. Every Census Bureau employee and contractor is sworn for life to always protect your information. Violating that oath carries stiff penalties for all Census Bureau workers — a fine up-to \$250,000 and/ or up to five years in prison. The Census Bureau uses your information for statistical purposes only, such as helping to inform decisions for new hospitals, schools, and roads.



10 Census Myths – True or False

1. *Undocumented residents should not take the Census.*

False: The Census is a count of all individuals living in the United States at the time regardless of citizenship status (including citizens, permanent residents, and the undocumented).

2. *The Census Bureau will give my information and address to Immigration Services.*

False: Your responses to the 2020 Census are protected by law and used for statistical purposes only. All government agencies, including Immigration, are not permitted access to view the personal information you report to the Census Bureau.

3. *Of course, the President has the right to view my address and information through the Census Bureau. He's the President!*

False: In a democracy, the President is not all-powerful! By law, the President is not permitted access to view the personal information you report to the Census Bureau.

4. *The Census Form will take too long to complete.*

False: The Census form is easy and quick to fill out. It will ask you 10 basic questions that take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

5. *I am not required to list my children on the Census form. (My children will be counted in school, so I don't have to count them)*

False: Children will not be counted in school. You are required to list your children on the Census questionnaire to make sure they count.

6. *Refusing to take the Census is a great way to protest President Trump.*

False: Refusing to take the Census means your community may be undercounted, underfunded, and underrepresented in government. When we don't complete the Census, you tell the government you don't count.

7. *The Census form will ask for a social security number or financial information.*

False: The Questionnaire will not ask for a social security number or any financial information. The form will ask basic demographic information such as name, date of birth, ethnic background, and the names of each individual currently living in your household.

8. *I don't have to answer every single question of the Census form.*

False: You must fill out the Census form completely. If you do not fill out the entire questionnaire, Census workers are obligated to come to your address to get that information.

9. *The Census will not impact my day-to-day life. Completing a form is not going to fix the problems in my neighborhood.*

False: Almost every part of your daily life is impacted by decisions made based on Census data, like planning public transit, job creation, school funding, maintenance, and essential local, state, and federal programs.

10. *It's more important to vote in the 2020 election than it is to complete the 2020 Census.*

False: Why not do both? A huge portion of the federal budget is allocated every year based on the Census, not by politicians. If you want to ensure your community gets its fair share you need to make sure you and your household get counted.



Why are the People of New York Undercounted?

What do people think of the Census?

- According to the 2020 CBAMS Survey, the less educated, young, and those of a racial and/or ethnic minority group are among those who expressed the least intent to respond to the Census.
- Reasons for the lack of response: privacy concerns, fear of repercussions, and general distrust of government presented severe barriers to the potential response.

Why New Yorkers don't respond?

1. Fear

- 42% of Non-Hispanic (NH) Asians, 38% of NH Blacks, and 35% of Hispanics were most likely to be "extremely concerned" or "very concerned" that the U.S. Census Bureau would share Census data with other government agencies.
- 28% said that they were "extremely concerned" or "very concerned" and another 25% responded that they were "somewhat concerned" about the possibility that the Census Bureau might share answers to the 2020 Census with other government agencies.

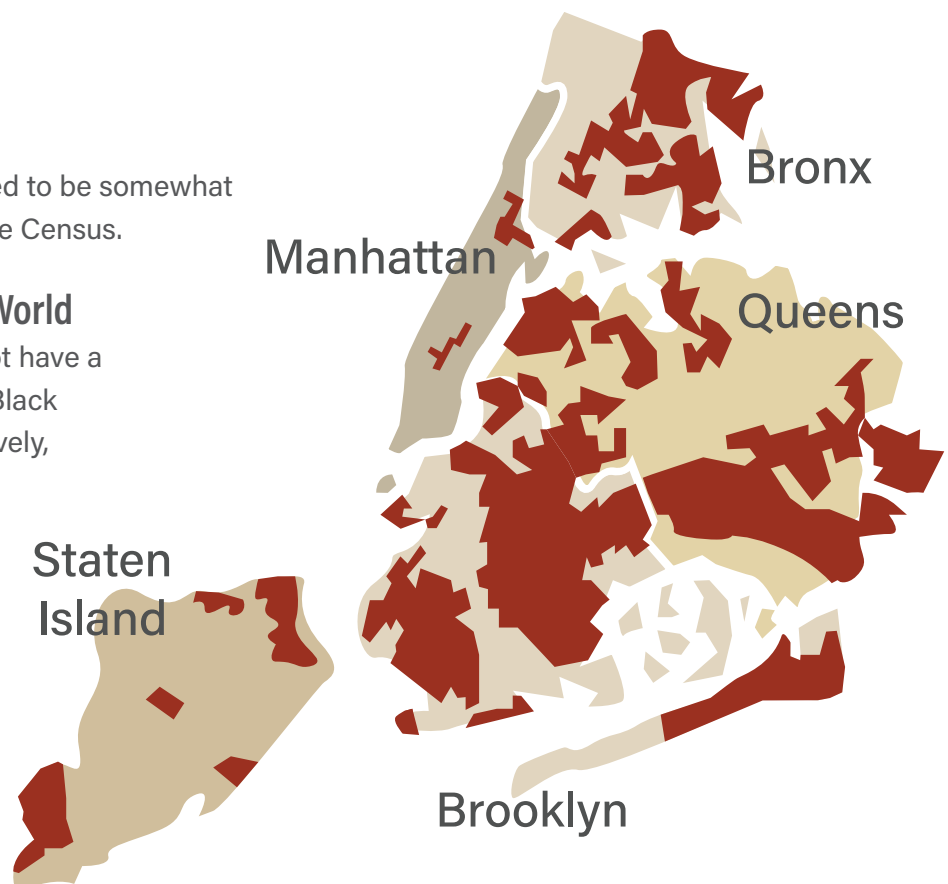
(2020 CBAMS Survey)

2. Lack of Understanding

- 67% of survey respondents reported to be somewhat familiar or not familiar at all with the Census.

3. Lack of Access to the Online World

- 17% of New York households do not have a computer at home. 27% and 26% Black and Hispanic households, respectively, lack broadband at home, compared to 21% White households and 15% Asian households.





Who are ‘the Hard to Count’?

People of Color

Census data shows that hard-to-count census neighborhoods in New York City are predominantly composed of people of color (40% Non-Hispanic (NH) Black, 39% Hispanic, 11% NH White, 8% NH Asian), while most responsive neighborhoods are majority White (59% NH White, 23% NH Asian, 12% Hispanic, 3% NH Black).

People Living in Poverty

Hard-to-count NYC neighborhoods have the highest rate of their population living below the poverty line (26.8%), while most responsive neighborhoods represent the lowest rates of their population living below the poverty line (12.1%). Hard-to-count neighborhoods have a low median income of \$43,780 compared to \$76, 273 in most responsive neighborhoods. Finally, hard-to-count neighborhoods are overwhelmingly renters (76.5%) compared to most responsive neighborhoods which have a low renter population (51.4%).

Households Without Internet Access

17% of New York households do not have a computer at home, while 27% and 26% of Black and Hispanic households, respectively, lack broadband at home, compared to 21% White households and 15% Asian household. While there are other ways to respond to the census, the lack of internet and computer access will make responding to the Census a hurdle for some households.

Immigrant Communities

Due to the policies and rhetoric of the Trump Administration, many immigrant communities are on high alert for government agencies, fearing for their safety and livelihoods in the United States. These communities tend to be hard to count under the best circumstances, but with strong fears of their data being shared with Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) and resulting in deportation, they are at higher risk than ever of not responding to the census.

Children Under 5

Children under 5 are among the most undercounted segments of the population. In the 2010 Census, over 2 million young children around the country were not counted. This means that classes are overcrowded due to inadequate school funding, resources for children’s healthcare aren’t allocated, and other critical programs remain underfunded.

People Experiencing Homelessness

The Census counts people experiencing homelessness through Service-Based Enumeration (SBE) and Enumeration at Transitory Locations. SBE is a process in which census workers count people at places where they receive services, such as shelters, soup kitchens, and mobile food vans. SBE will run for three days from March 30 through April 1, 2020. Enumeration at Transitory Locations counts people in transitory locations such as hotels, motels, and campgrounds.



Census Action Calendar

March 12–April 27

The Census Bureau will begin mailing out the first set of information to households and will continue with several rounds of reminder letters to those that did not respond. We want to emphasize that people should respond online or by phone as soon as they get their info. Drive self-response by informing the public that the 2020 Census has begun and that people should participate using available response modes.

Census Worship Weekend in March 27-29, 2020

April 1 **Census Day** - By this date, every household will receive an invitation to participate in the Census.

May–July **Census Takers will visit each household's door** that did not yet respond online, by phone, or by mail.

Awareness Building About the Census (January 2020–February 2020)

What to talk about: Let your congregation know the basics of what is coming with the census

- How they can complete the census (online, phone, by mail) and why it is important for your local community.
- Where they can access additional information (2020census.gov or interfaithcensus2020.nyc).

How to take action during this phase

- Add to your calendar 5 Census Faith Weekends of Action (Census Friday/Saturday/Sundays): **Jan 3rd-5th and Feb 7th-9th**
- Take the Pledge @ interfaithcensus2020.nyc
- Make a plan to work towards ensuring your congregation is 100% counted
- Contact us for help with your plan and attend a local workshop.

Motivating a High Census Self-Response (March 2020–April 2020)

What to talk about: You should emphasize where specifically in their community individuals can go to fill out the census and how quick it is to get it done (10 minutes)

- Fill it out online via a home computer, library computer, or on a smartphone.
- Call the phone number to respond over the phone.
- Return the paper copy if or when one is sent by mail.

How to take action during this phase

- Census Faith Weekend of Action (Census Friday/Saturday/Sundays): **March 6th-8th and April 3rd-5th**
- Census Worship Weekend is **March 27-29, 2020**
- Launch your efforts to encourage your congregation and community.
 - Hold a worship service on the census, provide encouragement in regular announcements, share information by mailings, email, or newsletters, pass out fliers, or post to social media – whichever way works to reach your congregation.
- Host a census pop-up event or educational session.
- Ask your congregation to be involved in reaching out to their friends, neighbors, and community - get involved in local organizing efforts.

Reminder to Self-Respond (May 2020–July 2020)

What to talk about: You should remind your congregation that the census is taking place and that their response is crucial for the community.

- Encourage your congregation to complete it if they have not yet done so, otherwise, enumerators will come to their door to check in person.
- They can still complete the census online, over the phone, or by mail, but will now be able to respond in person as well.

How to take action during this phase

- **Add to your calendar** Census Faith Weekend of Action (Census Friday/Saturday/Sundays): **May 1st-3rd, June 5th-7th, and July 3rd-5th.**
- Ask your congregation members to be involved in following up with those in their community that hasn't responded yet and encouraging self-response even while enumerators are out going door to door.



How to discuss the Census with your congregation

Talking to your congregation members about the Census is one of the best ways you can be a hero for your community and make a big impact on the Census response rates in your neighborhood. Many people won't know the Census is coming and what is at stake for funding, services, and infrastructure in your community. By spreading the word about the Census, you may be that one point of contact that moves someone from uninformed or undecided to someone committed to responding to the Census.

Here are some of the ways we encourage you to spread the word in your congregation:

- **Hold a worship service on the Census:** Discuss the Census as part of an upcoming worship service.
- **Provide encouragement in regular announcements:** Voice support and encouragement for congregants to respond to the Census and get involved in outreach to their communities.
- **Sharing information by mailings, email, or newsletters:** Distributing a short message to your wider congregation and community encouraging Census response.
- **Pass out Fliers:** Information to pass out or post in key areas to help reenforce the message.
- **Post to Social Media:** Leverage your own and that of your congregants to spread the word farther into the community.
- **Get information out via newspapers, radio, and other media:** Work with local media as a community leader to cover the key themes.



This section compiles some well researched guidance and sample language to use in whatever way works best for you. Please adapt the words and themes into what you think will resonate most for your own community.

Planning your messaging efforts

Make a plan of those couple of key actions you can take when you'll take them, and who will need to be involved to ensure your congregation is counted.

1. Define your Audience
2. Set your Goals
3. Pick your Strategies
4. Assign tasks to your Team.
5. Build your Timeline

Share that plan with us and we'll help support you in getting it done! Contact us to make a plan for your own house of worship's messaging and marketing efforts!

The Census in Your Religious Service

As a leader in your faith and your neighborhood, we encourage you to integrate the Census into your worship experience by preaching, teaching, and singing about social justice. Directly asking your members to fill out a very important 10 question survey may not work for every spiritual community. Instead, the Census can serve as a vehicle to demonstrate our spiritual commitment to justice, love, compassion, and care for one another.

Religious Service Notes and Spiritual Reflections

Dignity

- We believe that all people, regardless of race, religion, or immigration status, are made in the divine image. Our existence and our divinely given dignity demand recognition by our government. That means we must all be counted in the Census.
- What we declare when we answer the Census is that we are here, and we are part of "we the people" and we refuse to be excluded.
- "Fear not" is the most often-repeated phrase in Hebrew and Christian scripture – mentioned a combined 365 times. Do not be afraid to state your presence by answering the Census.
- Originally, the Census counted every white man, woman, and child as a full person counted enslaved people of African descent as 3/5 of a person and didn't count Native Americans at all. But now we have an opportunity to reclaim the Census as a tool for dignity, justice, and equity.



Community

- When you count yourself by completing the Census, you are also making sure your neighbor's children have a seat in their classroom and their mother has access to medical care. We must work together to make sure that everyone in our community is counted so we all get the resources we deserve.
- The 2020 Census' impact on our communities is profound. It shapes everything from whether we have fair political representation in Congress to whether our roads, hospitals, schools, and fire departments have the funding they need to support our health and well-being.
- You count in this country. Your work and your contribution to the common good moves beyond the walls of where we worship. Your voice matters. All people, regardless of your voting eligibility, can be counted in the Census.

Democracy

- If we are undercounted in the Census, we are under-represented in Congress, diminishing our voices and depriving us of democracy and equality.
- A full, accurate count lays the foundation for a healthy democracy and communities where families thrive and flourish. By completing the Census and encouraging our communities to do so, we claim our rightful representation and fulfill our responsibility to our neighbors and future generations.
- It is important to be counted in the Census because it provides economic empowerment and political empowerment. To participate in our democracy is to be counted.

A Jewish Reflection on the Census

Rabbi Menachem Creditor

In Jewish terms, the act of counting residents is unambiguous: everyone matters.[1] The individual – citizen and resident alien alike – that the Torah frames the governing power's responsibility to count equally every person in its jurisdiction by invoking its opposite: Egyptian slavery.[2] Just as Jewish tradition outlines the responsibility of those in power to provide adequate food, rest, and justice[3], it also obligates residents who are not (yet) citizens to abide by the nation's covenantal laws.[4] While the very category of ger (resident alien) indicates a legal distinction between citizens and non-citizens, there is no difference in the assertion of communal responsibility for both.[5] The poor, the widow and the orphan of society are to be represented with dignity. Judaism affirms that by counting everyone, we both distribute justice ethically in our midst and we structurally remind ourselves that everyone counts.

1. Ex. 22:20, 23:9; Lev. 19:33; Deut. 1:16, 10:18-19, 24:17, 19
2. Lev. 19:34
3. See Exod. 20:10, 23:12; Lev. 19:9-10; 23:22; Deut. 5:14, 24:19-22, for some examples.
4. Lev 24:16-22; Deut. 29:10
5. See Jeremiah 7:6; 22:3; Ezekiel 22:7, 29; Zechariah 7:10; Malachi 3:5 for some prophetic responses to injustice perpetrated against resident aliens.



Hebrew Scriptures

"On the first day of the second month, in the second year following the Exodus from the land of Egypt, the Lord spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting, saying: Take a Census of the whole Israelite community by the clans of its ancestral houses, listing every name."
(Numbers 1:1-2)

"The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 'Among these shall the land be apportioned as shares, according to the listed names.'
(Numbers 26:52-53)

"Rich and poor have this in common: The Lord is the Maker of them all."
(Proverbs 22:2)

"Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."
(Proverbs 31:9)

"Learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression." (Isaiah 1:17)

"But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream." (Amos 5: 23-24)

Christian Scriptures

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed." (Luke 4:18)

A Protestant Reflection on the Census

"...We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet are well known; as dying, and see—we are alive; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything." -2 Corinthians 6:8b-10 (New Revised Standard Version)

"Be amended, five-fifths human."-Lonnie Lynn

I can only trace my family history but so far using traditional methods like Census data before I hit the wall that is slavery. The further back I go, the more likely I am to have to search for my ancestors in documents related to estate sales and wills. It is a reminder the people I come from were seen as property.

My faith teaches me that hope is born out of seemingly contradictory paradigms: big fulfillment that comes through a little baby, eternal life through death. Honoring God and my ancestors means claiming the fullness of my humanity in the midst of things that might seek to question it. The Census is an opportunity for us to overcome the ways that our respective communities have been underrepresented, to bring resources to the margins, gain power and a voice.

Rev. Dominique C. Atchison, M. Div., United Church of Christ

A Catholic Reflection on the Census

Fr. Eric Cruz, Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New York, Bronx Regional Coordinator

If not for the Census described in Luke 2:1-5, the origin of Christianity and Christmas traditions may have been very different. Here in the U.S., the Census goes far beyond mere counting; it is an instrument used for taxation, for tracking demographics, and for social justice and equity.

As Catholics, we believe in the dignity of every human person as the foundation of a moral vision for society. Working to support a fair and accurate count is part of helping our neighbors, especially those who are excluded. In the name of justice, we believe that everyone must be included in the Census count.

A Census undercount is a challenge within this archdiocese, as failing to respond harms vulnerable communities in need of support. Although personal information from the Census is kept confidential by law and cannot be shared with other agencies or law enforcement, many still fear it and fail to respond.

Census numbers are important for us to make sure we're serving the people.

Our efforts to support the count are an essential part of making sure that every person has their very basic needs met: from just wages to safe housing, quality healthcare to quality education for all, clean parks to healthy affordable foods.

We have both a legal and moral responsibility to take part in the Census for the sake of the common good.



"But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it." (1 Corinthians 12:24-26)

"In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child." (Luke 2:1-5)

Islamic Scriptures

"They ask thee what they should spend. Say, 'Let whatever of your wealth you spend be for parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the indigent, and the traveler. Whatever good you do, truly God knows it.'" (Qu'ran 2:215)

"You will never attain piety till you spend from that which you love. And whatever you spend, truly God knows it." (Qu'ran 3:92)

"He knows each one of them, and has counted them a full counting." (Maryam 19:94)

"Surely those who deny the truth spend their wealth to hinder people from the way of Allah, and will continue to so spend until their efforts become a source of intense regret for them." (Al-Qur'an 8:36)

A Muslim Reflection on the Census

Imam Dr. Tahir Kukaj, Albanian Islamic Cultural Center in Staten Island

Census is an important action that is encouraged in Islamic Tradition.

In Islamic Tradition we have two types of obligations, Individual (such as Salaat (prayer), Zakat (charity), Sawm (Fasting), and Hajj (Pilgrimage)), and Collective Obligations, which involves actions towards community and our country. Reporting into Census falls into this category.

Islamic history has shown the importance of count as well. One example as the Last Prophet (peace be upon him) is cited in Bukhari "We were with the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he said, 'Count for me how many people profess Islam.' So we asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, are you afraid for us, while we are between 600 to 700 in number?' He replied, 'You never know, perhaps you may be faced with misfortunes.'"

In history, as the Muslim population grew larger and larger, it became harder to provide. Companions/Imams have had to keep count, to provide for food, shelter, and services as community needs grew in (men, women, and children).



"Do not mix truth with falsehood or hide the truth knowingly." (Al-Baqarah 2:42)

"They ask thee what they should spend. Say, 'Let whatever of your wealth you spend be for parents, kinsfolk, orphans, the indigent, and the traveler. Whatever good you do, truly God knows it.'" (Al-Baqarah 2:215)

"You will never attain piety till you spend from that which you love. And whatever you spend, truly God knows it." (Ali 'Imran 3:92)

Sikh Scriptures

"Everything and everyone contains the same light. It's Divine Light within us all." -- Guru Nanak

"I see no strangers and no enemies. The whole world is connected to me." -- Guru Arjan

"O my mind, know that the truly liberated person is one who sees the oneness between happiness and pain and connection between friend and foe." -- Guru Tegh Bahadur

"O Ravidas -- It is rare to find someone who understands that divinity is in everyone equally." -- Bhagat Ravidas

Buddhist Scriptures

The Buddha provided us the following compassionate directives:

"If we fail to look after others when they need help, who will look after us?"

"Better than a thousand hollow words, is one word that brings peace."

Sikh Reflection on the Census

Simran Jeet Singh, Senior Fellow, Sikh Coalition

Guru Nanak taught us that we each embody the divine light and that life is a precious gift. He also taught us that spiritual attainment is meaningless if we do not use our progress to help others.

The tradition of seva remains strong among Sikhs 500 years later, and it's something that continues to sustain us. Giving to others – Vand Chhakna – is at the core of who we are.

Honoring our collective divinity meant to uplift all of humanity (Sarbat da bhalla). And what we learn from our gurus is that we must stand up for our own dignity as well as the dignity of others. This is how our gurus lived their lives, and it's how we aspire to live ours as well.

Buddhist Reflection on the Census

Rev. James Lynch, President of the Buddhist Council of New York

The Buddha asks that we give and that our giving results in peace. He notes that mere words are not enough that we must act upon our good intentions to bring others peace and yet through our actions, there is a corresponding benefit conferred to ourselves.

He notes that our actions have a real benefit and that at times we must take actions that are neither popular or easy but which respect and revere the other. That each person is our teacher and hence worthy of respect.

In this way, our community is healed naturally by and through our individual and collective compassion.



"If you knew what I know about the power of giving you would not let a single meal pass without sharing it in some way."

"Give, even if you only have a little."

"Imagine that every person in the world is enlightened but you. They are all your teachers, each doing just the right things to help you learn perfect patience, perfect wisdom, perfect compassion." "However many holy words you read, however many you speak, what good will they do you if you do not act on upon them?"

Hindu Scriptures

स्वस्त्यस्तु वश्वस्य खलः प्रसीदतां
ध्यायन्तु भूतानि शिवि मथो धिया ।
मनश्च भद्रं भजतादधोक्षजे
आवेश्यतां नो मतरिप्यहं तु की ॥ ९ ॥
svasty astu viśvasya khalah prasīdatāṁ
dhyāyantu bhūtāni śivam mitho dhiyā
manaś ca bhadraṁ bhajatād adhokṣaje
āveśyatāṁ no matir apy ahaitukī

- May the entire Universe be blessed with peace and hope.
- May everyone, driven by envy and enmity, become pacified and reconciled.
- May all living beings develop abiding concern for the welfare of others.
- May our own hearts and minds be filled with purity and serenity.
- May all these blessings flow naturally from this Supreme benediction.
- May our attention become spontaneously absorbed in the rapture of pure love unto the transcendent Lord.

Bhāgavata Purāṇa 5.18.9

A Hindu Reflection on the Census

Dina Bandhu Das, The Bhakti Center

In this benediction uttered by Sri Prahlada Maharaja, we find a heartfelt prayer for unity and mutual concern among all living entities. His plea also offers a practical course of action—by letting go of misunderstandings, we may cultivate a broader vision and at last, think seriously about the welfare of others, and in doing so, experience a natural blossoming of serenity and devotion in the heart.

When we live in a community, our kindnesses must be reciprocal. It is through a loving exchange that we build relationships, learn from one another, establish trust, and appreciate both commonalities and variety. As favorable as it is to direct our vision toward others, we must also allow ourselves to be visible and better understood by those around us. This is where genuine connection begins.

When we think of the act of participating in the census, we may initially conceive of it as a formality or even an imposition. However, without making our presence fully known within our extended communities, we may miss positive opportunities for meaningful discourse, collaboration, service, and cooperation. This expansion of our sanga beyond our immediate congregations may bear fruit on many levels and increase our overall connectivity. In this way, we hope that this initiative may lead to significant developments within New York City and bring unique blessings for many.

Om Tat Sat



Feel something is missing? Let us know if you'd like to contribute passages, reflections, and bullets that you feel are significant for your faith tradition and visit <https://www.interfaithcensus2020.nyc/> for additional resources.

Litany on Dignity and Justice

Reader: God, you tell us that we are made in your image. We believe that all people, regardless of race, religion, or immigration status have an inherent dignity because you made us. Our God-given dignity demands recognition.

All: We will celebrate our dignity and we will count ourselves!

Reader: We know you long for the freedom of all people and for chains of oppression to break. For far too long, too many of your children have been excluded and counted as less than human, which has resulted in inequality and injustice. But we know you count each of us as equal in your eyes.

All: Just as you count us, we will count ourselves!

Reader: You've commanded us to love our neighbor as ourselves. When we count ourselves, we are helping make sure not only our needs are met, but also that our neighbors have good schools, hospitals, roads, critical resources, and fair political representation.

All: For our neighbors, we will count ourselves!

Reader: Lord, you assure us to 'fear not.' You walk with us in our lives and we trust in your spirit and guidance. We proclaim ourselves as your children and our dignified presence in this nation.

All: We declare our presence and we will count ourselves!

Adapted from: <https://s3.amazonaws.com/s3.faithinpubliclife.org/images/FPL-newCensusToolkit-v4.pdf>



Making Announcements in your House of Worship

Use these core points as a guide and adapt them to your own needs and your own audience.

Make a Verbal Announcement

- The 2020 Census is just around the corner. This is an important event for every person living in America. Everyone from the age of 0 to 100+ deserves to be and must be counted. Completing the Census is easy, safe, and imperative.
- There are 10 questions that will take you 10 minutes to complete and will impact you and your family's lives for the next 10 years. Any information provided on the Census cannot be accessed by anyone other than the Census Bureau.
- The count from the Census provides us with money and power: it affects our resources, representatives, rights, and redistricting. \$675 billion is divided up between communities based on Census data. This money is used to fund over 200 programs, such as Medicaid, SNAP, and the schools your children attend.
- When you participate in the Census you're helping communities get funding that is critical for the future of your family. Complete the Census and make sure your voice is heard!

Template language:

Post an Announcement in Your Print or Online Newsletter or Bulletin

In 2010, New York had a 61.6% response rate to the Census. With this rate, over 1 million children were not counted. Without being counted, these children were not funded for resources in their public schools. A census completion provides power and a voice to yourself and your family.

The Census data determines how billions of federal funding is divided amongst communities. This funding is used for public education, public housing, roads and bridges, and more. The more federal funding we receive the more we must alleviate and address the problems within the community. The data also decides how many seats New York has in Congress. A stronger count in your neighborhood tells your representatives that you exist and matter in your district. The more seats New York has, the more power and voice we will have in the decisions that are being made.

There are ten questions that take 10 minutes to complete and will determine the next ten years of your quality of life in NYC. These questions ask about your household size and demographic information. This information cannot be shared with any other entity other than the Census Bureau. Your responses are strictly used to acknowledge that your household exists and that funds are therefore needed to support your quality of life.

We need to commit to ensuring that our communities will have a complete and accurate count for the 2020 Census. It is the job of each of us to educate our family, friends, and community about the importance of the Census and the need for a complete count!



Sharing Information on Social Media

Social media is another way to connect with your congregation where they are on a day to day basis outside of the house of worship. Leverage any social media accounts you have access to through your house of worship, as well as your accounts to encourage those in your networks to respond to the Census.

You can focus on some of the most common platforms like Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Twitter, and Snapchat but platforms like Weibo, WeChat, WhatsApp, and KakaoTalk are popular within specific communities.

Below are a couple of examples to start from, but you can also post your own message to help get out the count!

Children under 5 are among the most undercounted. In 2010, over 2 million U.S. children were not counted causing overcrowded schools, lower-quality healthcare & critically underfunded programs.

\$675 billion is at stake based on Census data. This funds 200 programs like; Medicaid, SNAP and the schools your children attend. Be counted and shape your kids' future.

Shape the future by responding to the 2020 Census. Your response is safe, secure and, by law, cannot be used against you!

Use the hashtag #NYCFaithCounts2020 and create a hashtag of your own to make sure your House of Worship gets counted by using #———Counts2020 (e.g. #RiversideCounts2020)

Visit <https://www.interfaithcensus2020.nyc/> for additional content, up-to-date social media messages, and email updates.

Get information out through media channels

Local media can be a powerful tool for amplifying our ability to get the word out to our communities. This is especially true for the media outlets that are unique to your neighborhood, community, or faith tradition because they may not be reached through the City or Census Bureau led advertising efforts.

Do you know local faith-based (or secular) publications, news outlets, or radio stations? Reach out to them about doing a quick segment on the importance of the Census. Share some of the key details using the messaging, talking points, and templates earlier in this guide. Even a short shout-out is one more point of contact for those who may not hear about the Census otherwise.

Need additional support? Reach out to us to talk about local media opportunities. We can highlight your local efforts and showcase what is being done in your neighborhood.



Get your congregation active in outreach and “Get Out The Count” (GOTC)

Your community needs to hear from you and hear from each other that the Census is a safe and necessary thing to ensure our neighborhoods get the resources they need. The Census is a unique opportunity to get members of your congregation active in reaching out to your broader community and making sure the full community is counted.

To do that, we want to encourage and support you in taking action in whatever form works best for you and your house of worship. Anything from simply saying a quick few words during announcements encouraging Census response to something as dedicated as hosting a Census day of action or encouraging your members to talk to others on their street.

One-on-one conversations are the best way to motivate someone unsure about responding to the Census or fearful about providing that information to the Census Bureau. By talking to them one-on-one, this helps to build trust, allows you to address fears and concerns, and helps get someone to commit to responding to the Census. These one-on-one conversations are be done by phone, face to face, tabling at community events, messaging, or at community gatherings. Members of your congregation are the best volunteers to have these conversations in your community.

Talk with your leadership, team, and active members about how best to get involved. With over 10,000 houses of worship in New York City, we have an opportunity to reach millions of New Yorkers locally and make a powerful difference in our neighborhoods. In this section, we include outlines, tools, planning guidelines, and templates to help you get your congregation mobilized to ensure a complete count of your community.



How members of your congregation and community can help:

- **Promise to respond to the Census** for themselves and their household.
- **Serve as a trusted source of information to others in their neighborhood** and help to spread the word.
- **Become a volunteer** to reach out to others in the community by joining a local NOCC.

You can encourage your congregation to get involved in these ways:

- **Host Census Events at your House of Worship:** Hold an informational event or a Census pop-up site at your house of worship to answer questions and help people respond.
- **Table at Community Events:** Attend, table, or pass out fliers at local markets, block parties, and community events.
- **Organize a Community Canvass:** Organize a volunteer day to go out and walk through the community to talk to community members and inform them about the Census.
- **Host a Phonebank:** Organize a volunteer calling day to members of your congregation and community to inform them about the Census and encourage them to get involved in the outreach efforts.
- **Hold a Texting/Messaging event:** Do peer to peer outreach via text or on messaging platforms to reach members of your community.

Local Organizing Support

Neighborhood Organizing Census Committees (NOCCs)

As part of the extensive organizing push by the city government and community-based organizations, the City has formed 245 distinct Neighborhood Organizing Census Committees (NOCCs) that will empower and organize local community-based volunteers to be active in Census outreach within their neighborhoods.

The NOCCs will help to lead and coordinate organizing efforts as well as provide training, support, and tools to help you mobilize your community. Many NOCCs will be led by a local community-based organization that knows and works within the community. The Mayor's Office and the NY City Council dedicated \$40 Million to give communities the resources to effectively organize themselves and others within their neighborhoods.

Find your local NOCC by visiting: nyc.gov/census

Community Faith-Based Organizers

The Interfaith Census 2020 Count Coalition is supporting boots on the ground efforts at key houses of worship and faith-based partners to build the capacity of houses of worship to mobilize their congregations and others within their faith tradition.

These organizers are there to support you in helping to reach more members of our communities. They can help do the legwork of getting volunteers involved from your congregation, adapt needed messaging for your faith tradition, or organization outreach events.



You're not in this alone.

Numerous resources are available to help you and your house of worship take action and make this as easy as possible. This includes training, organizing support and additional capacity, and resources to help make this happen.

Reach out to us for updates on training, organizing support, and additional resources:

Visit <https://www.interfaithcensus2020.nyc/>

Plan your Outreach Efforts

The first step is planning: What kind of impact do you want to have in your community and how many people do you want to reach? What will be your congregation's contribution to the census effort?

To achieve your goal, you must understand the incremental steps along the way and what it'll take to make it happen. It makes every part of the project come together in an organized and orderly way.

1. Figure out which Populations to Reach
2. Set your Goals
3. Pick your Strategies
4. Calculate your Numbers
5. Build your Timeline

Contact us to help you develop your outreach effort!

Getting Volunteers Involved

Your neighborhood is a big place and we'll need some additional help to make sure that everyone in our communities are counted. To organize an effective community outreach activity you'll need volunteers to do the work.

We know you get volunteers and community members involved in many things within your house of worship throughout the year. You can use this section as a reminder, a guide, or a training for someone new.

Where to recruit volunteers:

1. Asking your congregation during announcements.
2. Direct phone calls to your congregation members.
3. Tabling following religious services.
4. Ask them face to face at regular church events



How many volunteers do you need:

The rule of halves is a great shorthand to estimate how many people you'll need to recruit for a particular action: If you need 10 people to show up for your phonebank, you typically need to get 20 people to say "yes," to coming which means you need to talk to 40 people to get those 20 "yeses."

Host Events at Your House of Worship

Your house of worship sits as a central space for your congregation and community to meet and discuss the details of the Census. We encourage you to use the space to bring your community together to stress the importance of the Census and to get people involved in reaching out to others in the community.

Host a Census Sanctuary Event

Sanctuary events are designated times you intentionally incorporate the importance of the Census into the daily life of your spiritual community. We encourage you to host Census trainings, coffee hours, and informational sessions in collaboration with official Census Bureau representative and designated community partners. Additionally, here are a few creative options to consider and modify to the needs of your community and tradition.

Talking about the Census is like talking about spinach. It's not attractive until we spice it up. A Census Plus event seeks to pair Census facts with a relevant and attractive advocacy topic within your community. Your event can highlight the intimate connection between the Census and a variety of issues such as climate change, mass incarceration, education, affordable housing, affordable healthcare, redistricting, and more. A Census Plus event can also serve as an opportunity to work closely with relevant CBO's, city agencies, concerned persons, and the Census Bureau. For a draft agenda and talking points for a "Census and Affordable Housing" Census Plus event, visit <https://www.interfaithcensus2020.nyc/>.

Census Pop-up Site

During the self-response period, identify your house of worship as a Census sign up site during certain days. To designate your house of worship as a safe Census response site, you are making your building available to anyone who would like to complete the Census to complete the questionnaire using your secure network. You may also help community members who seek assistance in completing their form. Such an option is feasible for communities with a secure internet connection, access to laptops and tablets, or communities

Census 101 Training for you and your Congregation

It is essential that you or a designated member of your congregation possess a clear understanding of the purpose and process of the Census. The Census will be conducted differently in years past and new realities pose challenges in our communities. Are you a Census expert? Sign up for or host a Census 101 teach-in by getting in touch with us!



Additional Resources

Visit the Interfaith Census 2020 Count Coalition website to access additional resources, translated materials, and planning guides:

<https://www.interfaithcensus2020.nyc/>

If you have any questions, please contact us at 212-801-1331 or email interfaithcensus2020@fpwa.org or write to us at Interfaith Census 2020 Count Coalition, 40 Broad St, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10004

Thank you for creating a place of safety and security for your community while providing spiritual as well as practical guidance to those under your care. Your commitment to the 2020 Census will help those in your community not only get their fair share of needed resources, services, and care but help craft what the community will become over the next 10 years and beyond.

Plan of Action:

- ☐ **Take the Pledge:** "As a faith leader in New York, I pledge to complete the Census survey and work to ensure everyone in my congregation and community is counted."
- ☐ Learn about the 2020 Census and why it is important for our communities.
 - ☐ Know the Census 101 and why communities are undercounted
 - ☐ Familiarize yourself with the 2020 Census Timeline and Key Dates of Action
 - ☐ Understand how your neighborhood responds to the Census
- ☐ Talk to your congregation about the Census and have them commit to responding.
 - ☐ Develop your religious service notes and reflections
 - ☐ Plan how you'll use announcements, fliers, newsletters to get Census information out to your congregation
 - ☐ Post about the Census on your social media accounts
- ☐ Mobilize your congregation to get active in reaching others in the community.
 - ☐ Build your community outreach plan
 - ☐ Recruit and engage volunteers
 - ☐ Plan when you will host Census events at your house of worship
 - ☐ Schedule your community outreach activities like canvassing, phone banking, and peer-messaging

Let's make New York Count 100%!

If you have any questions, please contact us at **212-801-1331** or email interfaithcensus2020@fpwa.org or write to us at Interfaith Census 2020 Count Coalition, 40 Broad St, 5th Floor, New York, NY 10004

Where can I go for help responding to the Census?

A digitally secured location like:

Your local library

- New York Public Library: <https://www.nypl.org/census2020>
- Brooklyn Public Library: <https://www.bklynlibrary.org/census>
- Queens Public Library: <https://www.queenslibrary.org/>

2020 Census Website: <https://2020census.gov>

Faith Based Holidays 2020

- | | |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ January 25: Lunar New Year (Buddhist)▪ February 26-April 9: Lent (Catholic/Protestant)▪ March 9-10: Holi (Hindu/Sikh)▪ March 9-10: Purim (Judaism)▪ March 10: Hola Mohalla (Sikh)▪ April 5: Palm Sunday (Catholic/Protestant)▪ April 8-16: Passover (Judaism)▪ April 9: Holy Thursday (Catholic/Protestant) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ April 10: Good Friday (Catholic/Protestant)▪ April 12: Easter (Catholic/Protestant)▪ April 13: Vaisakhi (Sikh)▪ April 18: Birth of Guru Angad Dev (Sikh)▪ April 23-May 23: Ramadan (Islam)▪ May 7: Wesak: Buddha Day (Buddhist)▪ May 23-24: Eid al-Fitr (Islam)▪ May 28-30: Shavuot (Judaism)▪ June 16: Birth of Guru Arjan (Sikh) |
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