How AAPI Organizations Can Support an Accurate 2020 Census

Background
Every ten years, the U.S. Constitution mandates that the Census counts every person in the U.S. Data from the Census is an important tool utilized by the federal government every day, and its accuracy is critical for allocating resources to schools, hospitals, roads, libraries, and many other public programs. In 2020, for the first time, most people will complete an online form, although paper and phone options will still be available. Many groups face barriers to getting counted: these “hard-to-count” populations include young children, communities of color, immigrants, and low-wage workers.

Partner organizations can play a vital role in educating, engaging, and mobilizing AAPI communities around the 2020 Census. Given the barriers that face our communities, such as immigration status, limited English, and non-standard housing arrangements, getting AAPIs counted will require sustained and diverse outreach contacts. This toolkit offers (i) a basic overview of the 2020 Census; (ii) a four-phase outreach model, and (iii) examples of tactics for supporting a fair and accurate Census.

Census 2020 Overview
The U.S. Census Bureau will urge the vast majority of people to complete the Census online in 2020. Most households will receive a unique identification number, tied to an address, in the mail starting March 2020. This unique ID will be used to complete their questionnaire online or by telephone; households can also complete the Census without the ID. If a household does not respond by April 30, a Census worker will follow up in person to complete the questionnaire.

The U.S. Census Bureau will deliver the final state population totals and resultant reapportionment of seats in Congress to the President in December 2020. Census data is critical for allocating more than $800 billion in federal funding each year. It guides redistricting processes for Congress. The top ten federal programs guided by the Census are, by size:

- Medicaid
- Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Medicare
- Highway Planning and Construction
- Section 8 Housing
- Title 1 Grants to Local Education Agencies (low-income schools)
- National School Lunch Program
- Special Education Grants
- State Children’s Health Insurance (CHIP)
- Head Start / Early Head Start Programs

Questions? Email vivian@apalanet.org
Four-Phase Outreach Model

Encouraging all AAPIs to participate, especially hard-to-count groups with limited Internet access, will require the usage of a range of tactics. Outlined here is a four-phase engagement program with multiple modes of contact in each phase, beginning with folks pledging to get counted in the Census. Depending on whether folks complete digital or paper pledge, every person will receive a combination of postcard reminders and text messages, or text messages and email reminders. See page 5 for a sample Census pledge and page 6 for a sample email encouraging folks to pledge.

- **Phase I: Strategic Education (April 2019 - September 2019):** Build a base of understanding and trust about the census. Host community events.
  - 2 contacts, at least 1 text message
  - Key information to share: What should folks expect in the 2020 Census? What's at stake? How does the Census impact jobs, education, communities?

- **Phase II: Raising Our Community’s Voice (October 2019 - November 2019):** Leverage the 2019 general elections and upcoming 2020 caucuses as a hook to get folks involved.
  - 1-2 contacts
  - Framing: Use a message of civic duty to connect with Census.

- **Phase III: Awareness and Preparation (December 2019 - February 2020):** Send communications to raise awareness and walk people through the process of completing the Census.
  - 3 contacts, at least 1 text message
  - Key messages: Explain the importance of the Census, why people should participate, and how they can complete their census forms.

- **Phase IV: Mobilization (March 2020 - May 2020):** Starting in mid-March, all households will receive mail from the Census Bureau with their unique ID. Send messages for folks to complete the Census and connect them with resources to help them fill it out.
  - 3 contacts, or until the respondent has reported completion of the questionnaire
  - Include a text reminder on Census Day (April 1, 2020)

Ladder Emails

Parallel to the four-phase engagement program, run a ladder email program targeting folks who have taken the Census pledge. Ladder emails move people up increasing engagement opportunities by providing decision points and filtering the most engaged action-takers. Create a sequence of emails that focuses on organizing folks to educate their community and do outreach in their own networks. The timing is independent of the four-phase model above (because emails are lighter touch), so ladder emails can be sent any time during Phase I or II. If someone takes the Census pledge during Phase III, adjust the timing to shorter intervals.

**Direct Ladder:**
- Step 1: For everyone who takes the Census pledge
  - Message: Thank you for pledging. Now get 5 friends to pledge too!
- Step 2: For people who complete step 1

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○ Message: Now that you’ve created a team, join our webinar on how to get engaged on Census.

● Step 3: For people who RSVPed or attended the webinar in step 2
  ○ Message: Now that you’ve been trained, sign up to host a Census event.

● Step 4: For people who sign up in step 3
  ○ Message: Toolkit on how to host a Census event

● Step 5: For people who download the toolkit in step 4
  ○ Message: Run a Census pledge campaign.

● April 1, 2020: For everyone who took the Census pledge
  ○ Message: Get Counted!

Alternative Ladder:

● Step 1B: For people who did not complete step 1
  ○ Message: Overview of why the Census is important to AAPI communities. Remember to get 5 friends to pledge too!
    ■ If people share the pledge, move them to the Direct Ladder at step 2.

● Step 1C: For people who did not complete Step 1B
  ○ Message: Specifics on What’s At Stake. Remember to get 5 friends to pledge too!
    ■ If people share the pledge, move them to the Direct Ladder at step 2.

● Step 2B: For people who did not complete step 2
  ○ Message: Copy message from step 1B. Remember to watch our webinar recording.
    ■ If people click on the link, move them to the Direct Ladder at step 3.

● Step 3B: For people who did not complete step 3
  ○ Message: Copy message from step 1B. Are you interested in attending a local Census event?

More Tactics for Census Outreach

Getting AAPI communities counted will require a variety of tactics, especially hard-to-count populations that face barriers of language access or immigration status.

Coordinate Field and Direct Outreach

● Host community education events to educate folks on the Census and engage them on getting counted.

● Run a Census pledge card campaign (paper, digital, or both). Canvass neighborhoods and events at which you collect pledge card signatures, and build a list for outreach. Create a database of folks to educate, mobilize, and get counted.

● Integrate Census outreach into existing efforts such as voter registration drives, GOTV, or community events. Hand out flyers and put up posters about the Census in grocery stores, parades, festivals and other community events. See sample materials.

Train and Organize Volunteers on Community Outreach

● Train volunteers to do Census education and outreach.

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• **Train organizers** to coordinate door-knocking from March-May 2020.
• **Build a database of contacts** through relational organizing to reach people that are difficult to contact through other means.

**Utilize Digital Media**
• **Use social media** to promote educational messages and engagement on Census. Make posts (in multiple languages) to drive folks to [www.censuscounts.org](http://www.censuscounts.org) and [www.countusin2020.org](http://www.countusin2020.org). Use APALA’s [Census graphics and photo frames](http://www.countusin2020.org) to help folks learn about the 2020 Census.
• **Text Census messages** to community members and your audience using Hustle.

**Communicate the Importance of Census for Labor and Jobs**
• **Share talking points and materials** on the intersection between labor and Census with partner organizations.
• **Write op-eds and letters to the Editor (LTEs)** about the importance of Census to AAPI workers. Emphasize one or more of these messages:
  • Allocating adequate federal (or state and local) funding for the 2020 Census.
  • Highlight the impact of the Census on the allocation of public resources for schools, hospitals, roads, libraries, housing, businesses, and more.
  • Encourage local residents and AAPIs to participate in the 2020 count.
  • Focus on the importance of Census data for the allocation of funding to programs that strengthen the workforce, or how data are used to determine funds for schools and hospitals that impact education and healthcare jobs.
• **Sponsor or speak at local, state and national events** about the importance of the census to build awareness among the AAPI community.

**Connect with National, State and Local Partners**
• **Join the States Count Action Network.** The network is a free, private listserv for state and local partners. It distributes information and provides opportunities to support the census. Learn more by contacting medinaloveless@civilrights.org.
• **Connect with a state or local Complete Count Committee (CCC).** CCCs may develop locally-focused marketing materials such as talking points, posters, flyers, and infographics. They coordinate advocacy advocating for local and state funding on Census. Learn more at [www.census.gov/2020completecount](http://www.census.gov/2020completecount).
• **Become a U.S. Census Bureau Partner.** The U.S. Census Bureau provides an array of free support and materials. Learn more at [www.census.gov/partners](http://www.census.gov/partners).
• **Meet with state and local legislators** to advocate for greater Census funding.
• **Establish partnerships** with community organizations working on the Census. Join partners in canvassing or engaging hard-to-count communities that they plan to target.
• **Use data** to assess which hard-to-count neighborhoods to canvass.

Questions? Email [vivian@apalanet.org](mailto:vivian@apalanet.org)
SAMPLE PLEDGE CARD

Get your community counted!

PLEDGE TO FIGHT FOR GOOD JOBS AND SCHOOLS IN OUR AAPI COMMUNITIES.

bit.ly/CensusPledge

#COUNTUSIN #AAPI2020

A MORE ACCURATE CENSUS COUNT COULD MEAN BETTER RESOURCES FOR OUR COMMUNITIES.

The 2020 Census is coming. Our community is counting on you!

EMAIL

NAME

CELL PHONE (OPTIONAL)

ADDRESS

CITY / STATE

ZIP CODE

Questions? Email vivian@apalanet.org
SAMPLE CENSUS EMAIL

Subject line: Our communities need you: pledge to be counted!

Dear Vivian,

Join us to secure better jobs, education, healthcare, and more for our communities. **Pledge to get counted in the 2020 Census.**

Get your community counted!

**PLEDGE TO FIGHT FOR GOOD JOBS AND SCHOOLS IN OUR AAPI COMMUNITIES.**


#CountMeIn #AAPI2020

A more accurate Census count could mean better resources for our communities.

One year from now the 2020 Census will be in full swing. The Census takes place only once every ten years, and it’s our responsibility to make sure all Asian American and Pacific Islanders get counted. **This is our opportunity to show that AAPIs want and need good jobs, well-funded schools, comprehensive healthcare, and so much more.**

More than $800 billion in federal funding for schools, hospitals, roads, and dozens of public programs is at stake. **If our communities DON’T get counted, we WON’T get allocated the resources we need.** Our communities could lose out on critical funding. Employment opportunities could be negatively impacted.

The Trump administration is also trying to scare and prevent our immigrant communities from participating in the 2020 Census by adding a citizenship question, engaging in political manipulation, and slashing funding.

**That’s why we need your help to get a fair and accurate count of our communities.** That means **pledging to participate in the 2020 Census.** It also means getting your aunts, uncles, parents, and neighbors to make a pledge. It’s up to us to get limited-English speakers, low-wage workers, and immigrants counted in the 2020 Census.

APALA is a part of Census Counts, a diverse nationwide coalition committed to ensuring hardest-to-count communities are not left behind!

**Join us by pledging to #CountUsIn.**

In solidarity,

APALA

The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), AFL-CIO was founded in 1992 as the first and only national organization for Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) union members to advance worker, immigrant and civil rights. Learn more at [www.apalanet.org](http://www.apalanet.org). Renew or become a member [here](http://www.apalanet.org).

Follow us on social media!

Questions? Email [vivian@apalanet.org](mailto:vivian@apalanet.org)