

2020 Census: Shape Your Future. START HERE> **PRSSA 2020 Bateman Case Study Competition Project Brief**

Client Information

The U.S. Census Bureau is the federal government's largest statistical agency. It tracks statistical information about the nation's population and economy. The Census Bureau's mission is to serve as the nation's leading provider of quality data about its people and economy.

As mandated by the United States Constitution, the census counts everyone living in the United States every 10 years. The first census was taken in 1790.

Background Information

What is the 2020 Census?

In March of 2020, the Census Bureau will send instructions to households about how to complete the 2020 Census. The instructions will feature information on how to complete the simple questionnaire and the three options for responding: online, by phone, or by mail. The 2020 Census will include questions on the age, sex, and number of people who live in your home, including children, and it will be the first time people can respond to the census online. April 1, 2020 is the reference date for responses to the 2020 Census. In March of 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will mail out invitations to complete a simple questionnaire about who lives at your address on April 1st. 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.

Individual responses are confidential and protected by law. Your responses will not be shared with immigration or law enforcement agencies.

Why is the 2020 Census important?

Responses help shape critical decisions about how billions in federal funding will be distributed annually to local communities over the course of the next 10 years. This includes funds for important community services such as school programs, fire and emergency services, roads, and healthcare services.

The census count also helps determine political representation and the number of seats states get in Congress. It provides population counts to states for the redrawing of congressional and state legislature district boundaries.

Finally, businesses use census demographic data to decide where to build factories, offices, and stores. Developers use the census data to know where to build new homes and revitalize neighborhoods. Local governments use census data for public safety and emergency preparedness planning. Residents use census data to support community initiatives. Nonprofits and advocacy groups use census data to help demonstrate local needs.

Competition Details

Campaign

We need your help to make sure everyone is counted in the 2020 Census.

The 2020 Census presents a unique opportunity for you to assist the Census Bureau in its efforts to reach individuals across the country to encourage them to participate, with the goal of counting everyone once, only once, and in the right place. You can also help in ongoing efforts to educate people about the value of the census, as well as inform your community about the source of quality data available from the Census Bureau about their communities.

As part of this effort, we would like you to develop and implement a comprehensive communications campaign that complements the current communications goals of the 2020 Census and the Integrated Communications Plan, which you can read about [here](#). Your campaign should reach audiences using the ways they prefer to receive information, whether from digital or traditional media, community leaders and trusted individuals, organizations and groups they belong to, or friends and neighbors.

Target Audiences

The 2020 Census will count every person living in the United States of all ages, races, ethnicities, and socioeconomic classes. To ensure all audiences are reached, the Census Bureau conducted a study: the 2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study (CBAMS). CBAMS included a national survey and a series of focus groups to better understand people's attitudes toward the 2020 Census. The study was conducted among racial and ethnic minorities, those with low internet proficiency, young people who recently moved, rural residents, and audiences at risk of low self-response. The [results of CBAMS](#) helped determine hard-to-reach and hard-to-count populations to focus on, such as:

- Renters.
- Female heads of household—not married, lives with another adult.
- Household with young children 0–4 years old.
- Household income less than \$35,000 per year.
- Less than a high school education.
- Non-white races.
- Large household—comprised of more than four people.
- Multi-unit or mobile home structure.

For the purposes of your campaign, you will focus on only two target audiences. Your campaign should communicate the value of participating and being counted in the 2020 Census to both:

- a) Your on-and-off campus student community, and
- b) More broadly, one hard-to-count group of concern within the community surrounding your college campus:
 - Parents and guardians of young children 0–4 years old living in complex housing situations (e.g., children residing with a neighbor/friend/extended family, grandchildren staying with grandparents, or natural disaster survivors) and those who need to count them (i.e., the parents or guardians who are responsible for including them);
 - Young Black and Hispanic males (at-risk populations of low self-response, often hard to reach for participation); or

- Renters (historically difficult to reach).

Hard-to-count populations are typically less likely to participate in the census and are a key priority for the Census Bureau.

Please note the size of your community may vary depending on where your university or college is located. The areas you choose to include for your local community should also reflect the areas covered in your college newspapers, which may be the city of your college or university, or the county(ies).

Aspects of a Successful Campaign

Your campaign should use multiple communications tools including social media, traditional media relations, and public relations events designed to reach target audiences. Campaigns should:

- Communicate with and educate people about what the census is and why it is important to respond.
- Connect with your local or state [Complete Count Committee](#), as applicable.
- Spread key messages about the 2020 Census, particularly:
 - The 2020 Census counts everyone.
 - The 2020 Census counts everyone who lives in the United States on April 1, 2020.
 - The census is required by the U.S. Constitution.
 - The 2020 Census counts everyone living in the household, including children and newborn babies.
 - The 2020 Census is important.
 - Your response shapes decisions about how public funds are spent for schools, fire and emergency services, and healthcare for your community.
 - Responses to the 2020 Census shape how billions in federal funding is distributed to local communities.
 - 2020 Census results determine representation, including how many seats your state gets in the United States Congress.
 - The census provides data for redrawing legislative districts.
 - Your response to the 2020 Census is safe and secure.
 - Your response to the 2020 Census is confidential and protected by law.
 - Census Bureau employees are sworn for life to protect your personal information.
 - The Census Bureau has strong security measures in place to safeguard against cyberthreats.
 - The Census Bureau will not share your responses with immigration or law enforcement agencies.
 - It's easy to respond.
 - For the first time, you can respond to the census online.
 - Completing the 2020 Census is quick and easy.
 - Responding to the 2020 Census only takes a few minutes.
 - Respond to the 2020 Census. Your response matters.
 - Respond online, by phone, or by mail.
 - Help shape the future of your community, today and for future generations.
 - Do your civic duty by responding to the 2020 Census.

- Illustrate the impact census data have on your community and the hard-to-count audience you select, explaining how census results are used to potentially benefit that community.
- Encourage people to respond online, when possible, and dispel common misconceptions related to the census.
- Align to the 2020 Census campaign platform: “Shape your future. START HERE>.”
 - “Shape your future. START HERE>” is an umbrella communications platform, developed after extensive research and testing, to inspire for use in all messaging, advertising, and communications about the 2020 Census. You can learn more about the campaign platform [here](#).

Judging

The judges will take a phased approach to assess each campaign to ensure it correlates with the goals of the 2020 Census and the Integrated Communications Plan. Campaigns also will be judged on the following criteria:

- Creative ways to encourage self-response to the 2020 Census among your target audiences.
- Integration of public relations elements including a situation analysis, information on your strategy development, messaging, measurable objectives, tactics, and evaluation. While it will not be possible to correlate your campaigns to actual response rates, the judges will be looking to your recommendations of other ways to measure the effectiveness of your campaign.
 - Your background research on the census and the communities your campaign will target should inform your campaign strategy and tactics.
- The results from implementing the objectives and tactics in your plan for your community to help determine success.
- How well you understand the target audiences’ needs in their communities based on census data and other research.
- Your ability to demonstrate the value of census data for your target audiences and community to help determine a community’s needs.
- Incorporation of the 2020 Census messaging and platform.
- The overall campaign and creativity.

Resources

To prepare for the 2020 Census, we suggest students read the following materials as background for their work. We expect teams to use this research to inform their communications campaign strategy. As additional information becomes available, we will share it with participating teams.

- 2020census.gov, census.gov, and ask.census.gov are Census Bureau websites that students should visit to learn more about the 2020 Census, get questions answered, and gather relevant research. The following materials are available on the websites listed above:
 - Fact sheet: [Census 101: What You Need To Know](#).
 - Fact sheet: [The 2020 Census at a Glance](#).
 - Timeline: [Road to the 2020 Census](#).
 - Fact sheet: [How the 2020 Census will invite everyone to respond](#).
 - Blog: [Counting Everyone Once, Only Once and in the Right Place](#).
 - Fact sheet: [Why We Ask](#).

- Fact sheet: [The 2020 Census and Confidentiality](#).
- Fact sheet: [Counting Young Children in the 2020 Census](#).
- Fact sheet: [The Undercount of Young Children](#).
- Video: [Shape Your Future: The 2020 Census](#).
- Press Release: [Census Bureau Press Briefing Marks One Year Out From Census Day](#).
- Video: [National Advisory Committee \(NAC\) Spring Meeting](#).
- Guidelines: [United States 2020 Census Brand Guidelines](#).
- Press Release: [Census Bureau Unveils 2020 Census Communications Campaign Platform](#).
- Webpage: [Who to Count on Your Census](#).
- 2018 Census Test: [Group Quarters Information](#).
- The [2020 Census and the Integrated Communications Plan](#), mentioned above, is available for the students' review for deeper understanding of the path forward for future communications-related efforts.
- The [CBAMS](#) report, mentioned above, allows students to more fully understand how audiences feel about the 2020 Census. Following are other relevant CBAMS materials:
 - Press Release: [New Study Examines Barriers, Attitudes and Motivators Toward Participating in the Upcoming 2020 Census](#).
 - Graphic: [How Likely Would You Be to Fill Out the Census Form?](#)
 - FAQ: [2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study \(CBAMS\) Survey and Focus Groups Reports Fact Sheet](#).