

Census Outreach Alternatives during COVID-19



The health and safety of everyone living in New Mexico is of the utmost importance in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak. In addition to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's mandate to cancel large events, many organizations and individuals are electing to self-quarantine to prevent exposure to the virus.

As proactive decisions are made to reduce the spread of the virus, we need to make sure 2020 Census outreach tactics shift as well.

So, how are we going to effectively reach every person in New Mexico when so many of our strategies rely on connecting with people one-on-one and sharing information at events?

The most important census message you can convey during this time is that the census can still be completed online, over the phone, or by mail—all from the safety of home.

Below, we outline a few alternatives you can do to still reach your audience without putting yourself and your community members at risk.

OUTREACH ALTERNATIVES

1. COMMUNICATE VIA TEXT

An effective tool to reach people, including many of our hardest to count populations, is through text. People are more likely to respond to texts, especially if they come from someone they know.

iCountNM has produced a few sample texts for your use in the attached document. Feel free to adapt for your specific network. Just be sure to include the link to 2020census.gov and the phone number to respond to the census.

2. REMOTE PHONE BANKING

Create phone lists to distribute to your members so that they can phone bank remotely.

iCountNM has produced sample phone banking messages for your use in the attached document. If people don't answer, leave a short, personal voicemail about the importance of the census.

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3. INCREASE SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Community members will likely be spending more time on social media over the next few weeks to obtain the most current information on COVID-19 and stay connected with friends and family during social distancing. This is a great opportunity to post about the census on your social channels and show that the census is a positive thing for our communities. Share a brief reminder that, amid COVID-19, the 2020 Census is something they can do right now—and from the comfort of their own home—to benefit their community.

Encourage your members to post about the census on their own social media pages. They have the ability to reach all their friends, which is a great way to spread your message to a wider audience.

Also ask your friends and followers to send you a video of them stating that they completed their census. Then post all of the videos as a story on your Instagram or Facebook account. That's a great way to show momentum and give people the social encouragement to complete their own census.

As always, you are welcome and encouraged to share posts from the iCountNM Facebook (@iCountNM2020) and Instagram (@icountnm) pages.

4. LITERATURE DROPS

In the event that your team chooses to venture out, avoid person-to-person contact by dropping census related fliers at people's doors. Use gloves when handling and distributing literature.

iCountNM has produced full-page and half-page fliers for you to use at icountnm.gov/resources. If you need documents to be personalized for your community, email census@mediadesknm.com.

5. WORK WITH HOME CARE PROVIDERS

In some cases, home care providers are the main source of information for their patients. Work with care providers and educate them about the census so that they motivate their patients to participate. Offer to print materials that they can deliver to their patients if you or your organization has the budget to do so.

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EVENT ALTERNATIVES

If your organization's event has been cancelled or postponed, consider the following alternatives:

1. WEBINARS AND DIGITAL TOWN HALLS

If you have meetings setup, we recommend transitioning them into webinars rather than canceling them. Consider doing a webinar through Zoom or another conference call software. This eliminates the need to meet in person, yet allows you to share important information with your members, stakeholders, and community.

2. FACEBOOK LIVE / STORIES

Facebook Live may be an effective way of reaching all your Facebook friends to spread the message of the importance of the 2020 Census.

Again, the most important message to convey to your audiences is that the 2020 Census can be completed online, by phone, or by mail — all from the safety of their home.

Thank you for your tireless work as we all continue to work towards the goal of a complete count in New Mexico.

Sample Text Messages



Text messages are a great tool to use to encourage people to fill out the census if you've corresponded with your community via text before. Below are some sample text messages:

SAMPLE 1 (MORE FORMAL):

Hey [name], Have you filled out the 2020 Census?

We know, sounds like a boring form. But the census does a lot for us. New Mexico receives federal funding for 10 years based on how many people fill out the census.

That money goes towards our roads, schools, public safety, healthcare and so much more! Have 10 minutes to spare? Fill out the census now at 2020census.gov or call 844-330-2020.

SAMPLE 2 (LESS FORMAL):

It's time to fill out the 2020 Census! And it only takes 10 minutes

What does the census do for you? It ensures that New Mexico receives federal funding for the next decade—funding that supports our roads, schools, public safety, and more.

Make sure you're counted.

Fill out your census online (2020census.gov), by phone (844-330-2020), or by mail today. Remember: 10 minutes, 10 years of funding.

SAMPLE 3 (INFORMAL):

Hey! Have you filled out the 2020 Census?

This year, it's easier than ever to fill out the census. And we need everyone to do it so NM receives the federal \$\$\$ we rely on - for the next 10 years!

Do it now at 2020census.gov or call 844-330-2020.

SAMPLE 4 (MORE INFORMAL):

Hey! Help [*community name*] get \$\$\$ over the next decade for schools, roads and health care by filling out the 2020 Census. Just call 844-330-2020 and do your census over the phone or visit 2020census.gov. It only takes 10 min!

WANT TO MAKE YOUR OWN? IT'S EASY!

Messages that are more local and personal are always better. Use the scripts above as samples or make your own! Follow the simple structure below to make sure your message is simple, concise, and covers everything you need to.

Sentence 1: Explain what the 2020 Census is.

Sentence 2: Talk about how it impacts your community.

Sentence 3: Add your call to action! Direct people to 2020census.gov or 844-330-2020.

Phone Bank Messaging



IF THEY ANSWER:

Hi *[name]*, this is *[name]* from *[organization name]*.

I'm calling to remind you know that it's time to fill out your 2020 Census! Are you planning on responding to the census?

[If yes...]

Great, just remember to count every person in your household who lives there MOST of the time. You can complete it online, over the phone or by mail. Go online to 2020Census.gov or call 844-330-2020.

[If no...]

The census is a simple 10 question form that counts everyone living in the United States. It helps determine how federal funding is distributed, which supports our roads, schools, healthcare, public safety and so much more. But our state will only receive the full allocation of funding we deserve if we get a complete and accurate count.

So please fill out your census and make sure to count every person living in your household. You should have received a piece of mail from the Census Bureau with detailed instructions on how to fill it out online, by phone or by mail. You can also go online to 2020Census.gov or call 844-330-2020 to complete your census today.

IF YOU NEED TO LEAVE A VOICEMAIL:

Hi *[name]*, this is *[name]* from *[organization name]*.

I'm calling to remind you to fill out your 2020 Census!

The census is a simple 10 question form that aims to count every person living in the United States. With a full and accurate count, New Mexico will receive federal funding we need and deserve for the next 10 years. That funding supports our schools, roads, health care, public safety and so much more.

Make sure to count every person living in your household! That includes children, relatives, and non-relatives. You can respond online, by phone or by mail. Go online at 2020Census.gov or call 844-330-2020.