

# Lesson Title: Participating in the 2020 Census Online

## Content Area: Online Census Survey

### Overview:

This lesson shares the importance of participating in the 2020 Federal Census and how the information is utilized to determine proportional representation in government and the distribution of monetary resources. Participating in online surveys requires individuals to utilize reliable internet browsers to safely identify legitimate websites. Identifying, navigating and completing online surveys has become an essential skill, but caution must be used to ensure individuals' private information remains secure.

### Objectives:

After participating in this lesson, adult learners will be able to:

- Describe the purpose of collecting census information
- Demonstrate how to utilize an internet browser to identify safe and secure websites
- Demonstrate basic navigation skills to explore websites
- Apply safe internet practices to complete online surveys

### Materials & Supplies:

The following materials and supplies are needed for this lesson:

- Digital devices: computers, tablets
- Access to the Internet
- *The Count* vide (from Sesame Street) <https://youtu.be/KZmLI7eYjmw> (activity 1)
- *Census 101: What you Need to Know* handout  
<https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-10/census101.pdf>  
(activity 1)
- *How the 2020 Census will Invite Everyone to Respond* handout (activity 2)  
[https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-10/Fact\\_Sheet\\_About\\_How\\_Census\\_Invites\\_Everyone.pdf](https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-10/Fact_Sheet_About_How_Census_Invites_Everyone.pdf)
- *2020 Invitation Letter* (activity 3) handout  
<https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-12/2020-informational-invitation-letter.pdf>
- The Census Bureau provides a website <https://www.census.gov/> (activity 3) Access the *How to use the Census Form Online*
- Census Tutorial Weblink <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/respond/respond-online.html>. (activity 3)
- Online Questions and Answers about the Census <https://2020census.gov/en/about-questions.html>
- The *Avoiding Fraud* handout <https://2020census.gov/en/avoiding-fraud.html> (activity 3)

**Preparation:**

In preparation for this lesson, facilitators should:

- Review lesson plan
- Ensure Internet connectivity and check website links
- Print handouts

**Terminology:**

The following terms will be discussed during the lesson:

- United States Census: a counting of persons living in the United States conducted every 10 years mandated by the Constitution for the purpose of allocating representation and disseminating resources.
- **Web address or URL:** the address of a website expressed as <https://www.website.xxx> where "xxx" can be ".com", ".gov", ".org" or some other organizational identifier.
- **Browser address bar:** the top line of a web browser that begins with <http://> where the user can type the web address or URL (Uniform Resource Locator).

**Background Information:**

For the first time the Federal Census will have an option for participants to complete their household survey online. The Census Bureau provides a 2020 Census web site that provides information about the census and a tutorial on how to use the online form. It is important that citizens know how to identify and navigate websites safely to participate in online surveys ensuring they protect their private information.

**Activity 1: Why participate in the census**

The 2020 census is legally required from every U. S. citizen and can be done in one of three ways: online, via telephone and by mail. Information gathered from the Census is utilized by government to determine voting representation, distribution of resources, and for funding local, state and federal governments. Utilize: The Count video (from Sesame Street) <https://youtu.be/KZmLI7eYjmw> to introduce the Census. Distribute and review the *Census 101: What you Need to Know* handout <https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-10/census101.pdf> Have a discussion with participants on how Census data will impact their lives, their families, their communities.

**Activity 2: How is the census conducted?**

Everyone is required to participate in the 2020 Census. Surveys are conducted online, via telephone, by mail (or in the past, in person). However, even if you are not contacted for a survey, your participation in the 2020 Census is still required. The census begins in mid-March 2020, and homes will receive an invitation to respond. April 1 is Census Day, so by this date every home will have received an invitation. In May through July census takers will begin visiting homes that haven't responded to make sure everyone is counted. By December the Census Bureau will deliver counts to the President and Congress as required by law. Utilize the handout *How the 2020 Census will Invite everyone to Respond* [https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-10/Fact\\_Sheet\\_About\\_How\\_Census\\_Invites\\_Everyone.pdf](https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-10/Fact_Sheet_About_How_Census_Invites_Everyone.pdf) to review the process and timeline.

### Activity 3: How do I complete the census online?

The Census Bureau provides a website <https://www.census.gov/> that contains information about the census, its history, tutorials and the census form itself. You will need to know how to find this website and use it to complete the census. Participants will receive an invitation to participate in the mail.

Review the *2020 Invitation Letter* (handout)

<https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-12/2020-informational-invitation-letter.pdf>. Discuss how this letter is specific to their household and provides the website and individual passcode for completing the online survey. Access the *How to Use the Census Form Online* <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/respond/respond-online.html>. Walk through online directions and view the online video. It will be helpful to prepare participants for the type of questions asked by reviewing with them: <https://2020census.gov/en/about-questions.html>. It is important to help participants protect themselves from fraud by reviewing the *Avoiding Fraud* handout <https://2020census.gov/en/avoiding-fraud.html>. Allow participants time to visit the website and complete their surveys online if they have brought their household invitation with household code.

#### Reflection:

While the intent for the activity is to build privacy and security skills related to technology, it is important for the facilitator to lead a debrief discussion at the end of the lesson. Potential debrief questions could include:

- Why & When is the census conducted?
- How is the census conducted?
- How can I find the Census Bureau online and use the website?
- How do I avoid scams and protect my private information?

#### Resources:

- US Census website <https://www.census.gov/>
- How to use the census form online <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/respond/respond-online.html>
- Questions about the census/survey <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/surveyhelp.html>
- Ways to respond, video guide <https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond.html>
- Questions asked <https://2020census.gov/en/about-questions.html>
- Avoiding fraud <https://2020census.gov/en/avoiding-fraud.html>
- Census online form <https://respond.census.gov/acs>
- About the census office, why the census bureau exists [https://www.census.gov/about/what.html#par\\_textimage](https://www.census.gov/about/what.html#par_textimage)
- What the Bureau does <https://www.census.gov/about/what.html>
- Timeline <https://2020census.gov/en/important-dates.html>