Mobilizing the Faith Community to Be Counted

The 2020 Census is an issue that impacts us all. Faith leaders have a unique position and voice to help people understand the importance of responding to the 2020 Census and to ensure that their community is counted. People of faith believe in the God-given dignity of every person. The faith community believes everyone counts in the eyes of God and so they should count in the eyes of our government. When faith leaders answer the Census and encourage their neighbors to do so too, they declare that they are part of “We the people…” and refuse to be excluded from the critical funding and political representation all people deserve.

Certain groups have been consistently undercounted in past Censuses and therefore are classified as Hard to Count (HTC), including the Arab American community. When our community is undercounted, the results are the inaccurate drawing of political boundaries and denial of a fair voice in important local, state and national policy decisions. It also means the unequal allocation of critical resources and funding for programs meant to address gaps in education, healthcare, food security, poverty rates and housing. The 2020 Census is our opportunity to fill these gaps and faith leaders have an important role to play to ensure everyone is counted.

We invite you to use these talking points below as a guide while you address your faith community in a presentation or speech in order to create dialogue and bring awareness to each person’s vital role in responding to the 2020 Census. When talking about the census with your faith community, always be sure to lead with faith values: Dignity, Community, and Democracy.

Make sure you are counted!
#YallaCountMeIn #2020Census #CountMeIn #WeCount

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Dignity
- Faith communities believe that all people, regardless of race, religion, or immigration status, are made in the divine image. Peoples existence and their divinely given dignity demand recognition by our government. That means everyone must be counted in the Census.
- What the faith communities declare when they answer the Census is that they are here, and are part of “we the people.”
- 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 there is an opportunity to reclaim the census as a tool for dignity, justice, and equity.

Community
- People of faith are called to love their neighbors as themselves. When you count yourself by completing the Census, you are also making sure your neighbor’s child has a seat in their classroom and their mother has access to medical care. The faith community must work together to make sure that everyone 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 departments have the funding they need to support our health and well-being. A full, accurate count lays the foundation for a healthy democracy and communities where families thrive.
- You count in this country. Your work and your contribution to the common good moves beyond the walls of where you worship. Your voice matters. All people, regardless of your voting eligibility, can be counted in the census.

Democracy
- If the faith community is undercounted in the Census, we are under-represented in Congress, diminishing our voices and depriving us of democracy and equality. We all deserve equal political representation, no matter who you are.
- A full, accurate count lays the foundation for a healthy democracy and communities where families flourish. By completing the Census and encouraging our communities do so, the faith community claims our rightful representation and fulfill our responsibility to our neighbors and future generations.
- It is important to be counted in the Census because it makes a way for economic and political empowerment. To participate in our democracy is to be counted.

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