

# Key Messages & Talking Points

Updated 19 March 2019

## Top 3 Messages

1. Residents of Salt Lake County and Utah benefit from nearly **\$5.7 billion in federal funds** distributed each year to our state and local governments using information from the U.S. Census. That's about **\$1,870 per Utahn person per year**.
2. A less-than-accurate Census count in 2020 is *likely* and could **deprive Salt Lake County communities** of needed funding to address challenges of growth, affordability and opportunity.
3. Overcoming obstacles to an accurate Census count requires Salt Lake County and public and private partners to **invest time and resources to encourage participation** and reach 'hard-to-count' communities.

*NOTE: Federal funding statistics from the Counting for Dollars 2020 Project at The George Washington University's Institute of Public Policy, Jan. 30, 2019.*

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*Key messages help proactively paint a picture and communicate Salt Lake County's Census 2020 story using the words and images we choose. The following key messages can be used verbatim or paraphrased and adapted to the speaker's delivery style. The number of messages covered, and level of supporting detail provided, will vary depending on the communication opportunity.*

The United States Constitution requires a census – a complete count of everyone living in the country – every 10 years.

- This includes residents of all ages, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.
- The census is an actual count of individuals and housing units, not a sampling.
- Annual update surveys sample small parts of the population to track changes; the decennial census provides the baseline data.

Ensuring an accurate count is essential for critical reasons.

- **Federal Funding:** Census data provides the statistical underpinning for allocating more than \$675 billion per year in federal funding to state and local governments for dozens of programs. Utah's share totaled nearly \$5.7 billion in 2016, according to a George Washington University study.
- **Decision-making:** Census data provide official statistics for Salt Lake County and are a key source of information for decision-making made at the national, state, and local levels. Government, businesses, nonprofits, and foundations use Census data to allocate funding, define where services are delivered, and promote economic development.
- **Political Representation:** Census data determine the number of U.S. representatives each state sends to Congress and are used to set district boundaries at the state, county and city levels.
- **Democracy:** It is important for everyone to be counted in the Census to ensure all voices are heard and fairly represented. When information is not accurate, it suppresses the voices of undercounted groups and areas, and undermines the basic political equality that is central to our democracy.

## Census 2020 is at high risk for an undercount.

- The U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) says Census 2020 is at “high risk” for not fully accomplishing a complete count due to several major challenges.
- **Budget and Staffing Cuts:** Despite declining self-response rates, the Census Bureau will conduct the 2020 Census at a lower cost-per-household than in 2010. In Utah and throughout the nation, there will be fewer local offices, fewer field staff and fewer in-person and telephone follow-ups.
- **Internet-Focused Responses:** For the first time, there is an expectation that most households will complete the Census survey online, rather than filling out traditional paper documents. This presents barriers for those with limited digital access/literacy or cybersecurity concerns.
- **Citizenship Question:** One of the most significant changes to Census 2020 survey is the potential reinstatement of a citizenship question. This question is likely to discourage immigrants, who are facing a negative and uncertain climate, and their families from participating.
- **Distrust & Data Privacy:** There is a widening distrust of government among diverse segments of the population, particularly New Americans, raising concerns about how census data will be used and whether it will remain confidential.

## An undercount in Census 2020 could deny Salt Lake County residents of needed services.

- An incomplete count will hinder Salt Lake County residents from receiving their fair share of federal funds that support critical programs, including:
  - Highway planning and construction
  - Medicaid and Medicare Part B
  - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
  - Section 8 and other housing assistance
  - Special education grants (IDEA)
  - Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
  - Head Start
  - Emergency planning

## Not counting just one person means our community loses \$1,870 in federal funding, every year for a decade.

- State and local governments in Utah received just under \$5.7 billion (\$5,694,470,987) in 2016 to fund 55 major programs, according to the GW Institute of Public Policy at The George Washington University, which tracks and analyzes the amount of federal funding received each year by Utah and other states.
- With a state population of just over 3 million, our federal funding works out to be about \$1,870 per person.
- An undercount of the County's population by just 1,000 people means foregoing \$1.87 million a year in federal funding that our residents are entitled to. An undercount of 10,000 would cost \$18.7 million a year.

## Salt Lake County is working hard to ensure that *all* residents are counted in Census 2020.

- **Census Master Address File Update:** Salt Lake County, together with cities and metro townships, submitted (and continues to submit) thousands of address corrections and additions to the Census Bureau Master Address File, which will be used to send out information about Census 2020 and conduct follow-up for households that don't respond.
- **Complete Count Committee:** Together with public agencies, nonprofit groups and private partners, the County has formed a Complete Count Committee to guide the development and implementation of strategies to reduce undercount.
- **Coordination with state and regional efforts:** The County is working closely with the State of Utah's Complete Count Committee and representatives from cities and metro townships to ensure our Census 2020 outreach efforts maximize resources and benefit County residents.
- **Community Engagement:** The County is collaborating with trusted community organizations and institutions to educate residents – particularly those in hard-to-count communities – about Census 2020, motivate them to participate, and support them in completing the survey.
- **Communications Effort:** The County is developing and implementing a modest campaign using media and community outreach to increase awareness and encourage participation in Census 2020. The County's campaign will be coordinated with state and federal efforts.

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