



Data for a Strong Economy

Securing an accurate 2020 U.S. Census is essential for business

The U.S. Constitution mandates that the nation count every person in America every ten years, and companies rely on the accuracy of the census for a variety of reasons. **First**, it ensures that federal dollars are allocated appropriately and where they will have the greatest impact. More than \$800 billion from 300 federal programs, such as the Highway Planning and Construction Program, are distributed each year based on population data collected by the census.¹ Census data also helps direct funding to key programs for disadvantaged children that support the development of the current and future workforce, such as child care for working families.²

Second, the census is a source of essential data for businesses, providing demographic information to assess potential employees, customers, products and markets. **Third**, the count is used to determine political



An accurate census helps both business and government make better decisions and invest in our communities and our nation.



Brian Wallace
President & CEO
Coin Laundry Association

representation at the local, state and national levels, so accuracy is important for appropriate governance. For all of these reasons, ReadyNation is working with America's business community to call for both robust support for the 2020 census and widespread participation in this critical civic duty.

The census ensures the efficient allocation of taxpayer dollars

Each year, the federal government allocates billions of dollars to states and localities based on information derived from the census. These taxpayer dollars fund programs of direct benefit to businesses, such as the \$38 billion Highway Planning and Construction program that allows states

to construct and repair highways and bridges.³ Moreover, in order to develop a highly-skilled future workforce to compete in the global marketplace, we must invest in high-quality children's programs that help the next generation achieve academic, career and life success.⁴ Data from the census allows for effective allocations for programs such as Head Start, child care and children's health insurance.⁵ Children under age five, particularly those from disadvantaged families, are the age group most likely to be undercounted, with more than one million missed in the 2010 census.⁶ Without an accurate census, funds for these programs may be misallocated, with valuable resources failing to reach the constituencies for whom they can have the greatest impact.

“Effectively allocating public resources to the intended children, families and communities requires an accurate census.”



Robert Myers
Chairman & CEO (retired)
Casey's General Stores, Inc.

American businesses rely on the census for decision-making

Businesses rely on census data to inform a variety of strategic decisions.⁷ They use census data when identifying new locations to determine if the local workforce has the level of education needed, or if the local population has the demographic characteristics of the company's target customer base. In addition, market research conducted by individual businesses or market research firms often utilize census data. The Census Bureau's Census Business Builder website provides free census data to businesses.⁸ This tool includes a Small Business Edition that offers information about “potential customers and similar businesses for those starting or planning a business,” as well as a Regional Analyst Edition with data on “residents and businesses in an area for regional planning.”



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The census ensures appropriate political representation

Information from the census is used to ensure appropriate political representation at the local, state and federal levels - for example, to determine how many U.S. Representatives are allocated to a state. Businesses with deep interests in their state, or simply in good governance, want accurate numbers to fulfill those goals.

We must act to promote an accurate census - join us

The U.S. Census Bureau will use modern and cost-efficient technology, including an online form, to maximize response rates for the 2020 census. But challenges to reaching hard-to-count populations will

persist, especially in counting young children and those in rural and minority communities. To generate accurate data used by thousands of businesses and every level of government, census preparations must be adequately funded now and through the completion of the census.

In addition, businesses can play a key role in encouraging customers, employees and other community members to fill out their census forms. **A robust census is, simply put, good for business and good for our nation.**

ReadyNation is a nonprofit, nonpartisan business membership organization that is working with executives across the country to support an accurate count and encourage residents to complete their census forms.

Join us at www.ReadyNation.org/join.

Endnotes

- 1** GW Institute of Public Policy (2018). Counting for dollars 2020. <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/GWIPP%20Reamer%20Fiscal%20Impacts%20of%20Census%20Undercount%20on%20FMAP-based%20Programs%2003-19-18.pdf> ; GW Institute of Public Policy (2018). Counting for dollars 2020 #4 Highway planning and construction. <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/Highways%20CFD%2008-18-17.pdf>
- 2** GW Institute of Public Policy (2018). Counting for dollars 2020. #1 Initial analysis: 16 large census-guided financial assistance programs. <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/counting-dollars-role-decennial-census-geographic-distribution-federal-funds>
- 3** GW Institute of Public Policy (2018). Counting for dollars 2020 #4 Highway planning and construction. <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/Highways%20CFD%2008-18-17.pdf>
- 4** Foundation for Child Development (2013). Investing in our future: The evidence base on preschool education. <https://www.fcd-us.org/assets/2016/04/Evidence-Base-on-Preschool-Education-FINAL.pdf>
- 5** GW Institute of Public Policy (2018). Counting for dollars 2020. #1 Initial analysis: 16 large census-guided financial assistance programs. <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/counting-dollars-role-decennial-census-geographic-distribution-federal-funds>
- 6** US Census Bureau (2014). The undercount of young children. <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2014/demo/2014-undercount-children.pdf>
- 7** Bloomberg View (2017). Act now to save the 2020 Census <http://www.aei.org/publication/act-now-to-save-the-2020-census>
- 8** US Census Bureau (n.d.) Census Business Builder overview. <https://www.census.gov/data/data-tools/cbb/Overview.html>

ReadyNation: Business. Kids. Workforce.

Business executives building a skilled workforce by promoting solutions that prepare children to succeed in education, work, and life.

Council for a Strong America is a national, bipartisan nonprofit that unites five organizations comprised of law enforcement leaders, retired admirals and generals, business executives, pastors, and prominent coaches and athletes who promote solutions that ensure our next generation of Americans will be citizen-ready.

1212 New York Avenue NW / Suite 300 / Washington, DC 20005 / 202.464.7005

