



Date: January 6, 2020

To: Chair Trescases and Members of the Parks & Community Services Board

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Subject: 2020 Census: The What, Why and How
(No Board action requested)

At your meeting on January 14, 2020, staff will provide an overview of what the decennial census is, why it is important, how it will be conducted in 2020 and how board members can help raise awareness in the community.

Background

Beginning next March, the U.S. Census Bureau will invite households across the country to participate in the 2020 Census.

What is the decennial census?

The census is a head count of every person living in the United States. To be sure the government represents the people, the U.S. Constitution requires a population count every ten years. Ever since 1790, the census has determined the number of seats each state receives in the U.S. House of Representatives. In 2010, Washington State gained a tenth seat in the House because its population had grown, and people were counted in the decennial census. The census is, and always has been, a cornerstone of our democracy.

Why is it important?

Leaders use Census data to make decisions. Census data help guide planning for the future of communities. The 2020 Census will help inform decisions on how billions of dollars are allocated annually for critical services like roads, schools, hospitals and healthcare clinics, fire and emergency response services, and hundreds of other programs.

Since the last decennial Census, the City of Bellevue has received \$76.2M in federal and state funding for Transportation projects, \$7.1M for Park projects, \$5.8M for Community Development Block Grants and \$40.9M guided by census results. Bellevue School District has also received over \$112M in federal revenue over the past ten years guided by census data.

How will it be conducted?

In 2020, for the first time, residents will be able to complete the census online, by phone or by mail. It asks a few simple questions, such as how many people live in your home on April 1st, including their age and sex, and if there are any children living there.

How is the information protected?

By law, all census responses are completely confidential and personal information cannot be shared with any law enforcement agencies.

Who counts?

Every person counts, no matter who they are or where they live. Whether a family has participated for decades or the 2020 Census will be their first, everyone has a role in shaping the future of our country.

How You Can Help

Spread the Word - Through the power of social networks and social media channels, commissioners can help raise awareness of the 2020 Census by sharing interesting facts, real-life stories, and how-to information to encourage the community to participate in the 2020 Census.

Stay Up to Date - The 2020 Census marks the first time that residents will be able to respond to the census online. Commissions can sign up [here](#) for updates and to receive a reminder when it's time to respond.

Set the Record Straight - An accurate count is critical for communities across the country. One of the best ways to show support for the 2020 Census is by knowing the facts. Review the basics of the 2020 Census and how the Census Bureau protects everyone's data, then share these facts with the community. If you hear false information or are wondering whether a rumor is true, please contact rumors@census.gov.

Learn How Others Are Helping - Across the country, people are stepping up to support the 2020 Census. Check out the creative ways that Census Bureau partners, community leaders, and others are making a difference.

- City of Bellevue 2020 Census [webpage](#)
- East King County [Communities Count Committee](#)
- King County [Regional Census Committee](#)
- Pierce County [2020 Census webpage](#)
- Washington State [Complete Count Committee](#)
- U.S. Census Bureau webpages: [2020 Census](#) and [Become a Census Partner](#) and [Partner Spotlight](#)

ATTACHMENTS

1. Sample questionnaire.