

January 21, 2020

The Census Office is providing the following guidance in response to questions from outreach partners regarding canvassing, phone-banking, data collection, and identification.

Please Note the Following Key Dates:

Early Education – Now!

Self-Response Period – March 12th through April 30th, 2020

Non-Response Follow-Up Period – May 1st through July 30th, 2020

Identifying Oneself:

Outreach partners must identify themselves as a “community outreach worker.” It is important that outreach partners never represent themselves as a United States Census Bureau employee or enumerator. When introducing themselves to individuals, outreach partners should name the organization that they represent. For example, “I’m Emilio with X organization and I’m here to talk with you about the importance of the 2020 Census.”

Data Collection:

Only United States Census Bureau employees may collect responses for the 2020 Official Census Questionnaire directly from individuals. Outreach partners are not enumerators. While performing outreach activities, partners are permitted to ask “if” the individuals completed the Census Questionnaire and may track responses by address to this specific question. Do not collect any individual’s responses to the census questionnaire.

Door-to-Door Canvassing:

Outreach partners are welcome to canvass during the early education and self-response 2020 Census phases (please refer to the section on Key Dates).

If canvassers are providing devices for a member of the public to respond online and the individual does not need any further assistance, canvassers should provide enough space between themselves and the individual so that their responses are not visible in order to protect their privacy.

If a member of the public requests assistance in completing their form, direct them to the response options provided by the U.S. Census Bureau (online, phone, or a census taker visit to the home) that best suits their needs. For example, if an individual wants to respond online but needs in-language assistance and does not feel comfortable using the Language Guides provided by the U.S. Census Bureau, canvasser should offer them the option to be officially enumerated by the U.S. Census Bureau through the phone by sharing the phone number. Canvasser can also direct the individual to the nearest Questionnaire Assistance Center.

If they still request assistance with online response, canvassers may provide this assistance but should inform the individual that they are not a Census Bureau employee and therefore their answers are not protected by law with you. Their response is only protected by the Census Bureau once their response is received.

If they still want this assistance following that explanation, canvassers should not collect or retain response information outside of the questionnaire and should not guide responses for the questionnaire.

Phone-Banking:

Outreach Partners using telephonic communication (i.e., person-to-person calls, robo calls, peer-to-peer texting, or blast texting) for outreach should ensure that all outreach complies with any applicable restrictions under state or federal law such as Telemarketing and Consumer Fraud and Abuse Prevention Act, 15 U.S.C. §6101 et. seq.; Telephone Consumer Protection Act (TCPA), 47 U.S.C. §227 et. seq.; California Public Utilities Code (PUC), §2872 and California Bus. & Prof. Code §17511.

- **Note:** The law does not prohibit non-profit 501(c)(3) tax exempt organizations from using live person-to-person calls and/or robocalls for purposes of contacting their members.

Recommendations:

- Any such calls should be purely informational and not made for any commercial or fundraising purpose(s).
- The message should clearly identify the person and the organization initiating the call so the recipient does not confuse the caller with a United States Census Bureau employee or enumerator.
- The caller should state that they are not a United States Census Bureau enumerator.
- Outreach partners should consult with their legal counsel or relevant vendor to ensure they are complying with state and federal laws. Any telephonic communication must be purely informational and not for any commercial or fundraising purpose(s).

For more information about TCPA Compliance, please use this link provided by National Consumer Law Center:

<https://censuscounts.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Census-and-the-TCPA-1.pdf> Please direct any questions about these guidelines to the Outreach Team by sending an email to Outreach@census.ca.gov. Thank you for your compliance with these guidelines.

