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COUNCIL FOR A STRONG AMERICA

Business for the 2020 Census

Census Toolkit for Rhode Island Business Owners and Operators

The success of the 2020 U.S. Census will have important implications for businesses in Rhode Island. The decennial population count contributes to critical data (publicly accessible through the Census Business Builder) that business owners use to identify where to open a new store and what products and services to offer. It helps allocate funding for various federal business loan programs and provides a foundation for many of the resources offered through the Small Business Administration. The census is also used to effectively allocate public funding for investments that grow the economy, including schools, roads, and workforce development, among many others.

Business owners and operators can help achieve an accurate 2020 Census by encouraging their employees and customers to complete their census questionnaires early. Businesses can start promoting the census in March 2020 (when households receive their census materials by mail) using the resources below and can continue to encourage people's participation through October. Beginning in mid-August, however, census takers will start visiting the homes of those who have not responded.

This toolkit provides easy-to-access resources for businesses to promote the census. It includes: (i) draft language for a written communication to employees, (ii) talking points for a staff event, (iii) links to social media graphics, and (iv) a flyer that can be posted in a break room, storefront or near a cash register. Want additional guidance, materials or resources for specific demographic groups? Visit strongnation.org/census or contact your local complete count committee.

✓ LANGUAGE FOR EMPLOYEE EMAIL OR NEWSLETTER

The language below is designed to be copied directly into an employee email, newsletter or other communication. Feel free to modify, as needed.

Potential Email Subject/Title: Have a Say in Rhode Island's Future, Participate in the 2020 Census

Dear (Insert individual name or name of group):

I am reaching out today to encourage you to participate in the 2020 Census. If you have already completed the short questionnaire, thank you, and please encourage your family and friends to do the same! This short activity is truly important for strengthening communities and families in Rhode Island and it only takes a few minutes.

In FY 2017, Rhode Island received an estimated $6 billion[1] in public funding for important community services like schools, police, fire, health care, roads and much more. However, if there is an undercount in Rhode Island, we may not get our full share of these resources.

You can complete the questionnaire online, by mail or over the phone. It is safe and private. In fact, federal law prohibits anyone at the Census Bureau from sharing personal census information, with violations resulting in stiff penalties and jail time. The questionnaire is short and only asks for basic information (e.g., age, sex, race, type of housing, etc.) for all people living in your household. It does not ask for sensitive information like social security numbers, immigration status or bank account information.

Thank you for your kind consideration, and learn more at 2020Census.gov.

✓ TALKING POINTS FOR EMPLOYEE GATHERING:

The talking points below provide essential information about the 2020 Census and why it is important that everyone in Rhode Island participates.

What is the 2020 Census?

- The U.S. Constitution calls on the federal government to conduct a basic count of all residents living in the country every 10 years. The next population count is this year (2020).
- The census questionnaire is short and only asks for basic information (e.g., age, sex, race, type of housing, etc.) for all people living in your household. It does not ask for sensitive information like social security numbers, immigration status or bank account information.

The Census Helps to Improve Rhode Island:

- Information from the 2020 Census will help to distribute billions of dollars in federal resources. In FY 2017, Rhode Island got an estimated $6 billion[i] based on census information that helped pay for schools, roads, police, fire, health care and many more services. An undercount in Rhode Island would jeopardize our full share of these resources.

How Can Someone Complete their Questionnaire?

- For the first time, residents can complete their forms online, but doing so by phone or mailing in a paper questionnaire are still options. Go to 2020Census.gov for more information and to complete your questionnaire starting in March 2020. If you don't respond on your own, census takers will visit your home beginning mid-August.

Is it safe and private?

- Federal law prohibits the Census Bureau from sharing individual census information with any person, organization or government body, including law enforcement. All census staff take a lifetime oath to protect personal information, with up to $250,000 in fines and/or up to 5 years of jail time for violations.

Encourage Others:

- Once you complete your questionnaire, please encourage your family and friends to do the same.

✓ SOCIAL MEDIA TO ENGAGE CUSTOMERS:

Use the language below (or create your own) to promote the census on Facebook and Twitter. Then, download a graphic (below) to include with your post. *(To download, click on the links below. Then, drag the graphics onto your desktop or right click on your mouse and select "save image as.")*. The graphics are also available on strongnation.org/census.

Sample Language: Complete your #2020Census form so Rhode Island receives its full share of the resources that our communities rely on. Go to 2020Census.gov to get started. It's safe, secure, and confidential.

- **Link to Facebook Graphic**
- **Link to Twitter Graphic**

✓ FLYER FOR BREAKROOM, STOREFRONT, ETC:

The one-page flyer in this toolkit is meant to be posted anywhere that employees or customers can view it, such as a break room, storefront or near a cash register.

[i] *Counting for Dollars 2020: The Role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds, GW Institute of Public Policy.*

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.

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Secure Rhode Island's Future
Be Counted in the 2020 Census

Every year Rhode Island gets **Billions** in federal funding, based on census information. Your participation in the 2020 Census will help Rhode Island get its full share for:

- SCHOOLS
- HEALTH CARE (E.G. MEDICAID, MEDICARE)
- POLICE
- FIRE
- AND MUCH MORE

Safe
By law your information is kept safe, secure and confidential.

Easy
Respond online, by phone, or by mail.

Go to 2020Census.gov today!