



HOW TO ORGANIZE A WORKSHOP FOR THE **2020 CENSUS**

A guide to help you organize a 2020 Census
workshop for local journalists.

prepared by

CENTER FOR COOPERATIVE MEDIA
MONTCLAIR STATE UNIVERSITY • SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION AND MEDIA



with help from
OpenNews

About the Center



The mission of the Center for Cooperative Media is to grow and strengthen local journalism, and in doing so serve New Jersey residents.

We do that through the use of partnerships, collaborations, training, product development, research and communication.

We work with 250 partners throughout the Garden State, including hyperlocal digital publishers, public media, newspapers, television outlets, radio stations and multimedia news organizations. We are a grant-funded organization based at Montclair State University's School of Communication and Media.

Learn more at www.centerforcooperativemedia.org.

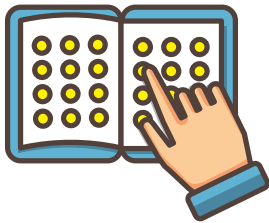
About this guide

This is a guide to help you organize a 2020 Census workshop for local journalists. The information in this guide is based on an August 2019 workshop in Newark, NJ organized by the Center for Cooperative Media at Montclair State University. The guide is intended to help you quickly organize a similar workshop in your community.

The Census is coming up quickly, and activity will really start picking up speed during the first couple months of 2020, so the time to help local journalists get ready is NOW!

Why host a workshop?

The U.S. Census is a monumental task that underpins the workings of our nation's democracy, and the results of the upcoming Census will deeply affect communities for years to come. That's why it is critical for media to play a role in getting accurate and timely information about the Census out to their audiences.



Help other journalists in your area better understand the Census.

Since it only happens once every 10 years, many reporters haven't covered a Census before. There are also an infinite number of stories that are related to the Census that could intersect with every single beat in your newsroom; in other words, learning about the Census isn't just for the designated Census reporter. And of course, tools change so much in between each Census that it's necessary to re-strategize coverage each time.



Drive knowledge about the Census.

We live in an era of misinformation and of proliferation of social media, and people need reliable, accurate information more than ever, especially when it comes to the Census. Hosting a workshop will help drive knowledge- and information-sharing about the Census across your community.



Better understand data that impacts your community.

The amount of information that the Census collects and tabulates is astounding, and it can provide rich stories about your community. But since the data is so vast and complex, understanding how to dig through it takes some time and training.



Find new stories about your community.

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Start organizing.

First order of business will be to recruit your most important speakers: Someone from your local nonprofit or community Census coalition and folks from the PIO office at the U.S. Census Bureau.

If you don't have such a coalition in your state, you could consider asking someone from an active Complete Count Committee member to attend and speak. In New Jersey, we worked with Peter Chen of the Census 2020 NJ Coalition.

For the Census Bureau, we got in touch with the folks in the Washington, D.C., office who had helped coordinate some of Poynter's Census training earlier this year. To request that Census staffers speak at your training for journalists, contact Virginia Hyer at virginia.hyer@census.gov and Christine Taylor at christine.e.taylor@census.gov. And be sure to CC pio@census.gov in your email, too, just in case.

We also decided to invite a couple reporters who had been covering the Census to speak, as well as some of the community organizations that had been most active so far with our state's nonprofit and community coalition.

Craft an agenda.

Since Peter had done so much speaking on this topic around our state, we decided he would lead the agenda with a Census overview, focusing on our state's perspective. This may or may not make sense for your workshop; if it doesn't, the folks from the Census Bureau can start your workshop with an overview.

NOTE: We are happy to share a digital version of the sample agenda below so you can use the design and tweak it; it's in Canva. Email us at info@centerforcooperativemedia.org.

2020 CENSUS WORKSHOP FOR NJ JOURNALISTS



OVERVIEW OF TODAY'S WORKSHOP

The U.S. Census is a monumental task that underpins the workings of our nation's democracy, and the results of the upcoming Census will deeply affect communities for years to come. That's why it is critical for media to play a role in getting accurate and timely information about the Census out to their audiences.

9:00 AM

WELCOME! WHO'S HERE?

Arrival with light breakfast snacks and coffee available – welcome from **Stefanie Murray** and **Peter Chen**

11:30 AM

LUNCH TIME

Take a break and enjoy a boxed lunch!

9:30 AM

CENSUS 101

Census 101: Why it matters for New Jersey – with **Peter Chen**

12:00 PM

COVERING THE CENSUS

Conversation with NJ journalists who've been covering the Census, about their approaches, challenges, and expectations – with **Monsy Alvarado** and **Colleen O'Dea**

10:00 AM

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

Overview of the Census Public Information Office, resources for journalists – with **Virginia Hyer** and **Lisa Moore**

12:30 PM

THE RESPONSE IN NJ

Conversation with nonprofits and community organizers leading the response across New Jersey – moderated by **Peter Chen**

11:00 AM

PLATFORM AND DATA TOOLS

Tutorial for the Census platform and data tools – with **David Kraiker**

1:30 PM

WRAPPING UP

Finish up and talk about next steps

Find a time and place.

We suggest carving out at least three hours for your workshop. The one we held in New Jersey was five hours long. If you need to make it shorter, we'd recommend focusing on the presentations from the Census Bureau and a discussion with your local nonprofit and community coalition. Don't forget to build in Q+A time. Folks will have lots of questions!

We coordinated our date with our lead speakers, to ensure they could all be there. We settled on a weekday morning for the workshop.

You'll want a space that has enough seating for all of your guests, is easy to get to (hopefully with nearby parking or public transit), and that has audio/visual capabilities. Try to find a space you don't have to pay for, if possible; perhaps one of the larger news organizations in your area has a convening space, or one of the community organizations involved in Census outreach. You could work with a local college or university in your area. Local libraries are usually also very active in Census outreach efforts, and they make great partners for workshops, too.

We provided food for our event and recommend you do, too, especially as it's likely folks will be there for at least three hours. We provided a light breakfast and a boxed lunch.

One other note about timing: We recommend you host your workshop before the end of 2019. The sooner, the better. Advertising about the Census will kick into high gear in January 2020 and people can begin responding to the Census in March. The official Census Day is April 1.

Create a budget.

Our event's cost was a bit on the high side, as we paid for space, linen rentals and some supplies on top of food. Hopefully you'll just have to cover food and a few basic supplies (including name tags, a printed agenda and a couple directional signs).

Depending on how many people you expect and where you are located, some example budgets might look like this:

- \$250 – donated meeting space; picking up coffee & tea for the morning; ordering a bunch of pizzas for lunch
- \$500 – donated meeting space; coffee, tea, and some light breakfast food; individual boxed lunches
- \$1000 – renting the meeting space; coffee, tea, and some light breakfast food; individual boxed lunches

We covered the cost of our workshop with grant funds. If you don't have access to such funding, consider working with a co-convenor who could provide the food or space in-kind.

You could also charge participants a registration fee to cover costs, although note that a charge may dampen attendance slightly.

Prepare the goodie bags.

The Census Bureau staff came loaded with Census stickers, pens and other giveaway items, which was great. They also had folders prepared with some basic Census information. Ask about this when you ask them to attend.

Announce and promote your event.

We used EventBrite for event registration, and you can see our page here. You are welcome to take our language and modify it for your own registration page!

We're happy to also share the event image if it helps you; we created it in Canva.

We find that having folks register in advance gave us a more accurate count of who was going to attend, allowed us to communicate directly with them, allowed us to ask for dietary restrictions, and allowed us to print name tags in advance.



Promote your event far and wide. Be sure to emphasize that the training is not just for the assigned Census reporter, that it will be useful for all news staffers.

Prepare for your workshop.

We created some basic Google Slides ahead of time for the workshop, and we made sure that all of our presenters either sent us their slides or were prepared to plug in their own computer or jump drive at the workshop.

You can view our basic slides and are welcome to modify and use them, too! Visit bit.ly/censusslides to view them.

We also printed agendas and name tags for our workshop. We used [ConferenceBadge.com](https://www.conferencebadge.com) via EventBrite to print name tags.

Supplies to purchase.

Here's an incomplete list of some supplies and other items we recommend purchasing for your event:

- Name badges and lanyards
- SharpiesSticky notes (for pretty much anything and everything)
- Paper easels (to help document group discussions)
- Program folders (to hold your agenda and event materials)
- Sticky dots (for easy in-person polling)

It's showtime , baby!

At this point, you should be ready to host your workshop – good luck!

Follow-up with your attendees.

After the event, we followed up with everyone who had been there to share the presentations and links to items that came up in the discussion.

Have more questions?

We're happy to help! We're sharing this guide to help you, so don't hesitate to reach out to us at info@centerforcooperativemedia.org and we'll get back to you ASAP.

If you'd like to run a Census workshop and could use some help setting it up, you can also reach out to OpenNews. They have some small grants available, and can also talk through any questions you have about event organizing and logistics.

Send an email to info@opennews.org and they'll get back to you.