

EVERYONE COUNTS!

Census 2020



NEXT!

United States
Census 2020
Name: ALICE SMITH

John Smith

A CC SPIN SPECIAL SECTION

Many teens unaware of pending 2020 Census

By **Shruthi Narayanan**
Dougherty Valley High School

"I have heard of the census, but I don't know what it is," Dougherty Valley High School sophomore Sydney Mock said. "I think it's a document?"

"Even though I know what the census is, I don't know why it's important," Saadhvi Natarajan, another sophomore at Dougherty Valley, said.

Mock and Natarajan aren't alone in their knowledge of the 2020 U.S. census, which began in late March. Out of 20 students randomly surveyed recently at Dougherty Valley, 17 said they didn't know what the census was. Even after they were provided with a definition — "The U.S. census counts every resident in the United States and every 10 years" — 15 of the students said they hadn't heard of this.

According to the Pew Research Center, "31 percent of 18-29 year-olds say they have never heard of the U.S. Census, and 17 percent say they are still unfamiliar with it even when it is described as the count of all people living in the country."

This is a big problem.

"Participating in the census is in everyone's best interest because the information on the forms is used by decision-makers to determine which communities, schools, hospitals and roads need federal funding," wrote Dave Roos, a journalist, in his article, "How the Census Works," published on the HowStuffWorks web site which contains explanations of how things work. Roos noted that

by participating in the census one can improve public places and allow people to live better lives.

Johann Somerville, a Dougherty Valley U.S. history teacher, noted that the census is used for many things. He said it provides invaluable data to governments which helps them make important decisions that affect nearly everyone in the U.S. He said the census "helps us understand how each community is comprised demographically." Then, for example, the data can help governments "give funding to areas that have a lower income level."

Somerville, who covers the census as part of his curriculum, said, "It decides what the appropriate number of members of the House of Representatives there should be per state. It's even more important because it helps appropriate billions of dollars of funding to each state."

Many young people, however, fail to see the importance of the census. The Pew Research Center found that fewer than half of people younger than 30 said the census is very important for the country. "I personally am just not interested in the census," Mock said. "All of the statistics don't seem very interesting to me."

Some may argue that teenagers can be forgiven for being unaware. After all, they were very young when the last census was held. But educators and others concerned about civic life say it's never too early for young people to learn about events that impact their lives and communities.

Somerville said that voting districts and federal funding changes, based on census results, and that "businesses around the country rely on census results to make decisions, such as where to

open new stores, restaurants, factories, or offices; where to expand operations; where to recruit employees; and which products and services to offer," all of which affect teenagers' lives in major ways.

To work on solving this issue, there are a multitude of steps to be taken. For one, people can work on educating teenagers about the census, allowing them to be more aware about its existence and what it entails. The government can also do outreach programs in high schools that increase awareness of the census and help students understand its importance.

A program called "Statistics in Schools," makes interactive, informative, and interesting activities and resources for school-aged children using census data in order to better educate them about the importance of the census. This allows schools to receive better funding, thus incentivizing them to continue teaching about the census.

"We need to educate the public on this topic, which in my opinion can be taken care of outside the classroom," Somerville said. "More time needs to be spent explaining what the census is and how it helps."

The Census Bureau has taken a number of steps to encourage educating teenagers about the census. For example, it made a community outreach tool kit available that schools can use in their curriculum to increase young people's general understanding of the census.

The importance of the census may be overlooked in today's world, but "in an era of misinformation," it's more important than ever, Somerville said. Census information "helps us truly fight for

what we are owed and what we deserve, and we can't have it taken away from us without even a fight."

To learn more about resources in this story, go to:

<https://people.howstuffworks.com/census.htm>
<https://www.ichabodcrane.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/2020-Census-Stats-in-Schools.pdf>
<https://www.census.gov/partners/toolkit.pdf>

Shruthi Narayanan is a sophomore and staff writer on her school newspaper, *The Wildcat Tribune*.



California mounts statewide effort for 2020 census

By **Izabella Ge**
San Ramon Valley High School

California is spending big on the 2020 Census, with amounts totaling \$187.2 million. The stakes have never been higher for the Democrat-controlled state and serious efforts are being funneled towards obtaining an accurate count of every resident.

One major concern behind the state's hefty spending is the possibility of losing a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. According to the Census Bureau's 2019 population projections, California could lose one of its current 53 seats.

"We could stand to lose anywhere from one to two congressional seats," said Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda Solis, in a *Los Angeles Times* article, and that could impact traditionally underserved communities such as where African American and Latino residents live.

The U.S. Constitution requires a census be taken of "every person" every 10 years on the zero number year and, based on population change or movement, electoral districts to be redrawn. If there is no change or movement, then the district stays the same.

Democratic counties often record smaller populations while Republican counties benefit from increasing populations, explained Jeff Davis, an Advanced Placement Government and U.S. History

teacher at San Ramon Valley High School. In the past, this has provided Republicans with the power to redistrict states in a way so that Republicans are likely to be elected to the legislature.

Using census data, Republicans set up "safe-seat districts" that were overwhelmingly Republican, Davis said. That allowed them to gain control of the U.S. House and Senate in 2012. While the Democrats may have received more popular votes, Republicans won more districts.

"A political district is a geographic area from which voters choose representatives," Davis said. "For the U.S. Senate, for example, the entire state is the district. But for the U.S. House of Representatives, the state has to be divided into districts. For California, that's 53 districts or 53 representatives."

Davis said an undercount of the California population benefits the Republicans because those who get missed are often hard-to-count communities such as immigrants who generally are more supportive of Democrats and their social policies.

For this reason, Democrats and immigrant activist groups have charged the Republican Party of deliberately trying to keep immigrants from being counted in the census. The Republicans have a history "of trying to prevent every person from being counted," said Maria Alegria, chair of the Democratic Party of Contra Costa County.



Maria Alegria, Chair, Democratic Party of Contra Costa County.



Matt Shupe, Chair, Republican Party of Contra Costa County.

Alegria cited the Trump administration's failed effort to include a question about citizenship on the census questionnaire as an example.

"This has never been asked, and in my opinion was an effort to intimidate individuals who are undocumented or noncitizens," she said.

Matt Shupe, chair of the Republican Party of Contra Costa County, said of this criticism: "I don't think it's fair to say that." He added, "I believe that when it comes to districts, as far as voting,

only citizens can vote [therefore] they should be proportioned in a way that represents American citizens."

The census does not merely represent the nation's population, but a central debate between the Republicans and Democrats as to whether undocumented immigrants are welcome in this country. Democrats have been more supportive of accommodating undocumented immigrants.

"We are a nation of immigrants," said Alegria. "After all, the U.S. Constitution was drafted by immigrants who fled England and a king." Moreover, "everyone in America should be treated fairly and with dignity, regardless of their status," she said.

Both Alegria and Shupe said they wanted an accurate count in Contra Costa. "Every resident needs to be counted and we deserve to have our fair share of federal and state funding for our residents," said Alegria.

"I think that it is incredibly important every census is accurate because the census essentially shapes how our government and budget is run," said Shupe. "Every resident needs to be counted and we deserve to have our fair share of federal and state funding for our residents," said Alegria.

Izabella Ge is a junior and a member of the school's *Journalism Club*.

Census officials say state could lose congressional seat

By **Faizan Azhar, Nihal Singh, Soham Kinikhar**
Dougherty Valley High School

U.S. Bureau Census officials predict California will lose a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives for the first time in history following the decennial census due to an exodus out of California over the past decade.

Representation in the House is proportional to the population of each state. California currently has 53 of the 435 seats, making it the most represented state in Congress.

"We predict California to lose a member in the House of Representatives this year," Bay Area Census Bureau media specialist Josh Green said.

California will still have the largest congressional delegation by a wide margin, leading the second most represented state of Texas's 36 seats by 17. However, the loss of one seat may still have

ramifications on the broader political spectrum, especially if it is filled by a non-Democrat.

Currently California's delegation is comprised of 45 Democrats and six Republicans, with two vacancies. With the House of Representatives split 197 Republicans, 232 Democrats, with one independent and five vacant seats, the Democrats hold a house majority. As the blue state of California begins to lose representation this opens the chance of spots being filled by Republicans, threatening the Democratic house majority.

Over the past 10 years, charts by the Public Policy Institute of California show that the state's population growth rate has decreased by greater than 50 percent. This is due to an immense increase in people moving out of the state. In 2019, nearly 700,000 people left California for destinations such as Texas, Arizona and Colorado. These states are predicted to gain representatives, according to published reports.

"I love California; it's just not the Golden State in my eyes anymore," said Susanna Cardenas-Lopez in a *Calmatters.org* article. Cardenas-Lopez left Salinas for Idaho.

Cardenas-Lopez, along with countless others who are leaving California, point to this theme: financial restraints. Studies show that the majority of people leaving the Golden State are composed of low and middle-income households. California's rising cost of living makes it increasingly difficult for people. In other states, the average income may be significantly lower, but the immense gap in cost of living creates a much more stable life for many.

California's housing crisis is another reason why people are leaving the state. According to a Bloomberg article the median price home recently reached more than \$600,000, double the national figure.

"About 32 percent of households in California can afford to buy a median-priced home," said Oscar Wei, the Realtor Association's senior economist and director of research, in the same *Calmatters.org*

article. If California does lose a seat, a reapportionment committee will decide how to redraw district lines. The National Conference of State Legislatures states this committee will be made up of five Democrats, five Republicans and four from neither party.

To learn more about resources in this story go to:

<https://calmatters.org/california-divide/2020/01/not-the-golden-state-anymore-middle-and-low-income-people-leaving-california/>
<https://www.ncsl.org/research/redistricting/5-trends-shaping-redistricting.aspx>
<https://www.bloomberg.com/graphs/2019-california-housing-crisis/>

Faizan Azhar, Nihal Singh and Soham Kinikhar are sophomores and staff writers on the school newspaper, *The Wildcat Tribune*.

GAO estimates this will be the most expensive census ever

By **Nicholas Harvey**
California High School

The U.S. Government Accountability Office estimates the 2020 census will cost \$15.6 billion. If this estimate proves to be correct, the census is on track to be the most expensive in U.S. history, beating the runner-up 2010 Census cost of over \$12 billion.

And some steps being taken help reduce cost—such as adding the option of filling out the census online—have introduced new risks.

The census cost has risen over the past few decades, even when adjusting for inflation and population size. The 1990 Census cost \$49.20 per household to conduct (in 2019 dollars) while the current estimate for the 2020 Census is a per household cost of \$121.30. (The census is conducted on the scale of households, not individuals).

The 2020 Census Lifecycle Cost Estimate Executive Summary, issued by the Census Bureau in 2017, outlined eight reasons for the cost increase: constrained fiscal environment; rapidly changing use of technology; information explosion; declining response rates; distrust in government; increasingly diverse population; informal, complex living arrangements; and, a mobile population.

Another concern raised by the National Research Council in 1995, and still valid today, is a change from paying temporary census workers, who are called enumerators, by each assignment to paying hourly. The NRC pointed out that workers with little oversight can take advantage of hourly pay by intentionally working slowly and driving up costs.

The new census is using new helpful methods that may reduce some costs. For example, this will be the first census to allow every person to take it online. A trial census was conducted online in 2000, but that was only available to a limited population.

"Once you scale up [the online census], it is much more efficient," said Joshua Green, a Bay Area media specialist with the U.S. Census. "It's much cheaper because the more people take it online, the fewer enumerators you have to hire, you'll have to send less paper, and you are saving on human resources."

Moving the census online lowers costs by reducing the amount of paper census forms that need to be transcribed by hand, as well as making it easier and cheaper to give the census in minority languages. In contrast to the two languages being used in census paper forms and mailing, the online census will be conducted in 13 languages.

However, with digitalization comes the threat of hackers, which poses its own monetary costs to fix. During a test of online U.S. census systems in 2018, Russian IP addresses were able to access portions of the system that were supposed to remain away from public eyes, according to a Reuters article which interviewed two directly involved census officials. One of the two officials also mentioned a separate incident, where a census site IP address experienced a domain name service (DNS) attack.

Although no known damage was caused by these attacks, it suggests the census could be at the receiving end of hacks. Online censuses have been hacked before in other parts of the world, to the detriment of taxpayers.

When Australia rolled out its first online census in 2016, a distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack disabled the census website for days, which resulted in a total increased cost of \$21 million.

Another way malicious actors can hijack census statistics is using sophisticated algorithms to determine the information of specific people by extrapolating from published census statistics. "Hackers are pretty sophisticated; it's an arms race, you have to keep up," said Green when referring to protecting the integrity of the online census.

The 2020 Census will be using a new, state-of-the-art technique called "differential privacy" to reduce the risks of this occurring.

"To do this, you randomize the data so no algorithm can trace the data back to anyone, and the data is still accurate," said Green.

The 2020 Census will also be using satellite imagery to canvas. This is the process of compiling the addresses of Americans in order to conduct the census, which should help reduce costs by decreasing the need for personnel to canvas on the ground. Canvassing in the field will only be conducted when satellite imagery fails to accurately assess addresses, according to the Census Bureau.

Social media is also an increasingly important part of promoting the census at a lower cost. According to the Census Bureau, 29.1 percent of the 2020 Census' media budget is for digital advertising.

For the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau said it is requiring by law to reuse data already held by other government organizations in conducting the census in order to reduce costs. This data is and will be confidential.

To watch a tutorial on how census data and privacy are protected, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pt19VwBqAqA>

Nicholas Harvey is a sophomore and a reporter on the student paper, *The Californian*.

Census takers on front line of decennial count

By Clara Stevenson
Ygnacio Valley High School

This year's census can be done over the phone, online, or on a paper form. But the fourth and final way dates all the way back to 1790 when the first census was taken: people go out to houses to help people complete the census.

Those people are known traditionally as census takers, although today's official job title is enumerators. They are sent to households where people haven't filled out the census form using any of the first three options.

Linda Marshall-Smith, a Los Angeles-based partnership specialist for the 2020 Census, was a census taker and a manager of census takers in the 2010 Census. She talked about what it takes to be a census taker and what you can expect working for the census.

"It's a really good job, especially if it's one of your first jobs because it's great for your resume that you've worked for the federal government," she said.

"It's also a good job for students 18 and older because you can do it after school," Marshall-Smith said. "You can make your own hours as long as you get the job done."

The current pay for a census taker in the Bay Area ranges from \$21 to \$30 an hour. In Contra Costa County, it's \$25 an hour, according to the Census Bureau.

Marshall-Smith said census takers are assigned to go to

households in areas near where they live so they don't have to travel far. Since you are located to work near your home, it is a great way to meet people and engage with members of your community, she said, adding sometimes you can find some really nice people.

"One time I was invited to go inside and it was a big family and I was there for quite some time and they made me lunch," she said. "You might even get to meet a furry friend along the way, she said. "Another time I went inside and I made good friends with the doggy who gave me kisses the whole time."

But she added that not everyone can be trusted. "You have to be aware of your surroundings because some dogs may not be as nice. And you have to be aware of things in your surroundings. You need to know how to deal with those types of situations and the training you get helps you to deal with those types of situations."

Marshall-Smith said there's plenty of training. "There will be classroom training, self-study training and person-to-person training. Even after your training, you also get accompanied by a supervisor on your first time out."

Marshall-Smith explained that the first notices to people to fill out the census form are sent out in mid-March. The Census Bureau tracks who fills out the census and then mails reminders to those who haven't completed the form.

After several reminders to households that didn't respond, "then we'll send the census takers out," she said.

The bulk of hiring for census takers took place earlier this year,

but hiring continues through the summer. The last day to fill out the census is July 31, 2020.

The number of census takers that will be hired depends on how many cases are leftover in an area. For example, if Contra Costa County has only five percent of the houses left to complete the census by a certain time, fewer census takers will be needed, Marshall-Smith said. On the other hand, if only 25 percent has completed the census, a lot more census takers will be needed to handle the remaining 75 percent.

Once out in the field, census takers follow a procedure in asking people to fill out the form. They enter the data directly into a little computer, iPad or iPhone, if completed in English or Spanish. But the census takers will provide paper forms if the respondent prefers that, Marshall-Smith said. It takes about 10 minutes for an individual to answer the nine questions.

Before becoming a full-time employee for the Census Bureau, Marshall-Smith had a career in marketing and collecting data. "I thought of the Census Bureau as the granddaddy of all research because we collect data, so working for the census has always been a treat for me."

To apply to be a census taker you must be 18-years-old and a U.S. citizen. For more information visit www.2020census.gov/jobs.

Clara Stevenson is a senior and a writing editor for the Ygnacio Valley High School yearbook.



Census Bureau Partnership Specialist Linda Marshall-Smith at a booth set up at a Carson City festival, where she helped promote the 2020 Census and recruited census takers. Photo Courtesy of Linda Marshall-Smith.

CENSUS 101: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The 2020 Census is closer than you think. Here's a quick refresher of what it is and why it's essential that everyone be counted.

- Everyone counts.** The census counts every person living in the U.S. (except only one, and in the right place).
- It's about fair representation.** Every 10 years, the results of the census are used to reapportion the House of Representatives, determining how many seats each state gets.
- It's in the constitution.** The U.S. Constitution requires that everyone in the country be counted every 10 years. The first census was in 1790.
- It's about \$675 billion.** The distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funds, grants and support to states, local and tribal governments are based on census data. That money is spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works and other vital programs.
- It's about redistricting.** After each decade's census, state officials redraw the boundaries of the congressional and state legislative districts in their states to account for population shifts.
- Taking part is your civic duty.** Completing the census is mandatory. It's a way to participate in our democracy and help "COUNT."

Some Contra Costa residents are anxious about what the census could mean for their families

By Siddhant Gupta
California High School

While many American's enthusiastically fill out their census forms every decade, some immigrants to our nation fear the government may use their responses to track them, oppress them and even deport them.

This group of individuals include people who don't know the purpose of the census, people who migrated illegally, or immigrants from countries with oppressive governments where citizens fear the government having their information. Many of these immigrants live with family members who will be faced with the decision on whether or not to include their immigrant relatives on their census question.

One 20-year-old undocumented immigrant, who immigrated to the United States last summer, said his family would not count him when they fill out their census in spring. (He asked that his identity not be revealed.)

"Never," the immigrant said, "I don't want the govern-

ment to have any personal information about me."

The Contra Costa County census team said it is aware of these circumstances and it is working with various groups to try to achieve complete coverage.

"People may have been asylum seekers, undocumented, or persecuted in their country of origin and the biggest source of anxiety for these immigrants is the prospect of government officials coming to the door of where they live," said Ali Saidi, deputy public defender and director of Stand Together Contra Costa, a rapid response and immigrant advocacy organization run through the public defender's office. "The stakes have never been higher for immigrant communities under assault by the rhetoric and legal aggression of federal government."

Saidi said the now-removed question of citizenship on the census was an explicit attempt at census suppression in order to reduce the representation of the immigrant community. He believes this effort can be countered by naming it for what it is, encouraging people to exercise the right to participate in democracy and standing together as one community.

He said Stand Together Contra Costa's mission goes beyond giving adequate representation and federal resources to immigrant communities. Participating in the census serves as a first step into integrating immigrants into the civic institution and democracy. The organization provides free community outreach and legal services year round.

"If we did a better job throughout the decade - not just when the decade turns - making sure everyone in our community regardless of immigration status, socioeconomic status, race or language, has access to our civic institutions and government and are incorporated into our systems and resources, they will become stakeholders in a common enterprise," said Saidi. "Then hard-to-count communities in this census will not be hard to count next time around."

To learn more about resources in this story, go to: <https://standtogethercontracosta.org/about/our-program/>

Siddhant Gupta is a senior and managing editor of the student newspaper, The Californian.

Three census tips

By Clara Stevenson
Ygnacio Valley High School

Linda Marshall-Smith, a partnership specialist for the 2020 census, said there are three important things to keep in mind about participating in the count.

"First, it's easy. There are many different ways to do it: by phone, on the computer, on a printed form, or with a census taker.

"Second it's safe. Everyone's information is protected and we keep everyone's privacy confidential."

"Third, it's important. The census and population count determines how many representatives in the House each state will get... and it determines the boundaries of the voting districts for the next 10 years (this is called redistricting). Then, over \$675 billion dollars a year gets distributed to states and local communities services, and it's all based on population count.

"That's why it's very important that we count everyone in the community because the population count determines how much money your county gets. That's why we need to count everyone once and only once. Those are the three things to remember."

Five reasons a robust decennial census benefits all

1. It is a foundational tenet of our democracy.
2. It determines how to allocate spending for many federally funded programs.
3. It determines legislative districts and ensures accurate representation in Congress.
4. It is the foundation for important data products and projections for the rest of the decade.
5. It is a key information source for all groups and stakeholders.

-U.S. Census Bureau

Census welcomes you in 59 unique languages

By Sabrina Contreras
California High School

Many non-English speakers don't participate in the census for a variety of reasons. Some may not understand how to participate, while others simply don't feel the need to.

With language being a barrier, many non-English speakers feel isolated from the community. Some might even be skeptical about being questioned during the census since they are so used to being isolated.

"I don't like to be part of that stuff because I don't want the people and the government to know stuff about me," said Francisco Diaz, who just moved here from Venezuela. The 20-year-old works at Pizza My Heart in San Ramon.

Diaz understands English but is still having a hard time speaking it. (In an interview, Diaz spoke in choppy English, but a few words were translated from Spanish because he is still learning the language.)

The barrier language can lead to a loss of trust from those who don't speak English. "I can't even talk to the cashier at the grocery store," said Elda Arrieche, 83. "How am I supposed to participate in something like [the census]?"

Arrieche also moved to San Ramon recently from Venezuela with her husband, Victor Arrieche. The couple speaks no English and were interviewed in Spanish. They are living with their daughter who is fluent in both English and Spanish.

Victor Arrieche said they came to escape the crisis Venezuela is facing under Nicolas Maduro who's serving as president but who the Arrieches regard as a dictator.

Immigrants such as the Arrieches and Diaz said their experiences in their home country contributed to them not wanting to participate in something run by the government.

"I'm more Venezuelan than I am American," said Victor Arrieche, who has lived in the US for half a year. He said he would have preferred to have stayed in Venezuela, but with crime at its peak and food shortages, he agreed to live with his daughter for the time being.

More than 40 languages are spoken in Contra Costa County, according to the county government's web site. Around 150,000 residents do not speak English, which is more than the population of the county's largest city, Concord: 130,000.

The most common non-English language spoken in Contra Costa is Spanish, according to county data. Around 18 percent of the county's population are native Spanish speakers, some of whom don't speak English at all while others are bilingual.

Reaching non-English-speaking residents is important because an accurate count determines how much federal dollars come to the community to support essential services such as road repairs and schools, said Joshua Green, a media specialist for the Census Bureau who helps citizens with questions in the Bay Area.

"It's important to participate in the census because every community should get its fair share of federal funding," said Green. "Also, every community deserves to be fairly represented in Congress."

Green said for the 2020 Census there will be video

INFORMACIÓN BÁSICA SOBRE EL CENSO: LO QUE USTED NECESITA SABER

El Censo del 2020 está más cerca de lo que usted cree. Esto es un resumen rápido de lo que es y, ¿por qué es esencial que todos sean contados.

- Todos cuentan.** El censo cuenta a todas las personas que viven en los Estados Unidos una vez, solo una vez y en el lugar correcto.
- Se trata de una representación justa.** Cada 10 años, los resultados del censo se usan para redistribuir el Congreso y la Cámara de Representantes, determinando cuántos representantes recibe cada estado.
- Está en la Constitución.** La Constitución de los EE. UU. exige que cada 10 años se cuente a todas las personas que están en el país. El primer censo se hizo a cabo en 1790.
- Se trata de \$675 mil millones.** La distribución de más de \$675 mil millones de fondos federales, subsidios y apoyo a los estados, condados y comunidades se basa en los datos del censo. Ese dinero se usa para escuelas, hospitales, carreteras, obras públicas y otros programas vitales.
- Se trata de la redistribución legislativa.** Cada 10 años, los datos del censo y los funcionarios estatales rediseñan los límites de los distritos legislativos congresionales y estatales en sus estados que reflejan los cambios en la población.
- Participar es su deber cívico.** Completar el censo es obligatorio. Es una manera de participar en nuestra democracia y decir "¡YO CUENTO!"

We keep your data like you keep your kids. Safe and secure.

All 2020 Census responses are kept confidential and private. It's the law. Your responses cannot be shared and cannot be used against you by any government agency at least for 75 years.

Share your future your way

Census 2020

language guides, print language guides, and language glossaries in 59 non-English languages, covering 99 percent of all languages spoken in Contra Costa County.

Seema Shah, who has been a U.S. citizen for 17 years, said she doesn't find the census a problem even though English is her third language, especially if it can be translated.

"I personally don't think the census requires too much English knowledge because the questions it asks are simple," she said. Shah, who came from Afghanistan, grew up speaking Farsi and Pashto. She added that she was also comfortable with the census because her children help her with the translating.

To learn more about resources in this story, go to: <https://contracosta.ca.gov/2527/Hard-to-Count-Maps>

Sabrina Contreras is a junior and editor of the school newspaper, The Californian.

Impact of the CEN

Housing



The Dougherty Valley neighborhood has contributed to San Ramon's growing population. Photos by Jake Gerbracht, California High School.



Signs for new homes for sale are common in San Ramon. Photo by Daniela Wise, Dougherty Valley High School.

Transportation



The Concord BART station is located between downtown businesses to the west and residential neighborhoods to the east. Photos by Nima Pendar, California High School.



Two modes of transportation are seen here in Danville (right): a bus stop and a bicycle lane. Photo by Daniela Wise, Dougherty Valley High School.



Schools and Education



The long awaited Montano, Dougherty Valley High School and Dejean Middle School.

A Snapshot of Contra Costa

From Richmond to Walnut Creek, the census

By CC Spin Staff

The census has been coined "a snapshot of America." "The census is not just a decennial headcount. It is a snapshot of the nation that affects just about every important decision policymakers at the federal, state, and local level will make over the coming decade," emphasized Dan Stein, president of FAIR, the country's largest immigration reform group.

For Contra Costa County, that means learning about the need for new housing and how to help big and small businesses. The census provides important data to support planning for schools and aid for public services such as immigration, non-English communication, homelessness and mental health.

It also provides information so the political debate of whether there is too much growth or not enough growth and what kind of growth can be based on facts.

Five high school photographers went out to capture their own "snapshots" of Contra Costa County for CC Spin. Their images reflect different issues for the region that will be impacted by the census.

BUSINESS

In 2017, total employment in Contra Costa County was 336,654, up 3.3 percent from the previous year, according to census data. In 2012, men-owned firms totaled 47,721, compared to women-owned firms at 34,296. Minority-owned firms numbered 35,831.

Daniela Wise of Dougherty Valley High School took photos of small and large businesses. The Lafayette Body Shop in Lafayette represented "the many small and old yet thriving businesses, especially along Mt. Diablo Boulevard," she said.

Wise, a junior and social media editor of the school newspaper, The Wildcat Tribune, noted, "Lafayette hasn't changed a whole lot; rather what keeps people coming are the small businesses," (Rachel Decker is the adviser to the school newspaper.)

In contrast, Walnut Creek sports a massive outdoor shopping space at Main Street and Mt. Diablo Boulevard that "illustrates the perfect dichotomy of the old and new," said Wise. A large and eye-catching Neiman Marcus dominates the landscape, but there are also boutique shops along Heritage Walk.

Wise also explained that San Ramon's changes include City Center at Bishop Ranch, a massive and upscale outdoor shopping mall that opened in 2018. She photographed children playing at Alexander Square, located in the center.

For Richmond High School Senior Alejandro Durate, businesses such as Frosty King are vital necessities of life. "I've spent quite a good amount of time eating at Frosty King on weekends when there's nothing good to eat at home."

Durate's photographs are part of a visual essay titled "Home: A collection of pictures from my community that all relate to the theme of Home." He said, "These are images of places where I feel happy and feel at home."

("Home" was produced as part of the Advanced Media & Communications class at Richmond High School taught by Maya Kosover.)

HOUSING

Housing is a highly controversial subject in the Bay Area because there isn't enough and housing costs are so high. According to the Census Bureau, the median value of an owner-occupied house was \$582,400 between 2014-2015. There were 2,907 building permits issued in 2018 and a total of 415,919 housing units.

To photograph new home construction in Dougherty Valley, a neighborhood in San Ramon, California High School Sophomore Jake Gerbracht used a drone. Gerbracht said his iPhone X was synced to the controller of the drone so he was able to view the photos taken while flying the drone.

"I got into drone photography because I love aviation as well as photography and drone flying blends both of those passions together perfectly," said Gerbracht, who is

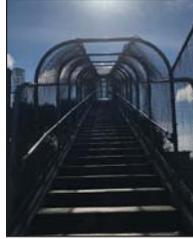
City Government and



CENSUS on our lives

tion

Business and Economy



new campus for Pinole Valley High (left) opened last year after six years of construction. Photo by Masonry Valley High from a drone. Photo by Jake Gerbracht, California High School. A stairway leads to school in Richmond. Photo by Alejandro Duarte, Richmond High School.

a Costa County will help shape the region's future

a photographer for the student newspaper, The Californian. (Brian Barr is the adviser to the school's newspaper.)

On this assignment for the census project, he said, "I included Mt Diablo in the background of one shot because I felt it would tie in the new houses and the school perfectly with the old time charm of Mount Diablo."

TRANSPORTATION

It's a common refrain: traffic has gotten terrible in the Bay Area, and some of the worst commutes are in Contra Costa County. For example, the county was included in four of the top 10 worst Bay Area freeway spots in 2017, according to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission:

Interstate 80 westbound, all day, State Route 4 to Bay Bridge Toll Plaza (number 2)

Star Route 4, eastbound, p.m., Contra Costa County Morello Avenue to Port Chicago Highway (number 5)

State Route 4, eastbound, p.m., Interstate 580 to Wilder Road (number 9)

Interstate 680, northbound, p.m., Sycamore Valley Road to Buskirk Avenue/Oak Park Boulevard (number 10)

Planners working on the future of the county's freeways and roads and public transit depend on census data. For the period 2014-2018, the mean travel time to work among workers 16 years old and up was 38 minutes, according to the Census Bureau.

Nima Pendar, a sophomore and photo editor for The Californian High School student newspaper, visited the Concord Bart station, one of seven stations in Contra Costa County, while Wise captured two other modes of public transit: a bicycle lane and bus stop in Danville.

GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

Contra Costa County's estimated population is 1.1 million with a growth rate of 0.67 percent in the past year, according to the most recent census data. That makes the region the ninth largest county in California.

With that growth comes more pressure on city and county governments to manage services and to make decisions impacting their communities. They are aided by nonprofit and community organizations, without which

many social services couldn't be provided.

Duarte photographed the Ryse Center in Richmond, a nonprofit organization youth center "born out of the organizing efforts of Richmond and West County young people who were determined to create safe spaces for themselves and their peers," the web site said. "Named by the founding youth council, Ryse is not an acronym but a bold call to action inclusive of the many diverse communities that we serve."

"The Ryse Center is a blessing in disguise for the Richmond youth," said Duarte. "It has helped provide many opportunities for youth in Richmond who have wanted to reach some goal they might have thought unattainable before."

Not only has it helped the youth but all of Richmond with its fairs and fundraisers, but it has raised awareness to many issues and injustices that happen in our community."

Duarte also took a photo of the Richmond City Hall, which he called "the heart of the city." He thought the fountain "somewhat looks like a heart or veins, which sort of fits in with the idea of this being the heart of the city."

Wise's photograph of directional signs on Railroad Avenue in Danville reflect the civic life in a community she described as "homey and comforting."

QUALITY OF LIFE

Farmer markets are plentiful throughout the Bay Area, and Wise captured one in Danville. She observed that they attract both older people and young families. She also captured some "quirky statues and iconic things," such as the Bullman with Bulldog statue in Downtown Walnut Creek along North Main Street.

Schools and Education

Pinole Valley High School's Mason Montand photographed the school's new campus, which opened last year. He noted it was a tough six years for students who had to endure temporary structures while the new school was being built. Montand is senior and the music editor on the school newspaper, Spartan Ink.



Nieman Marcus anchors Walnut Creek's upscale shopping. Photo by Daniela Wise, Dougherty Valley High School. Small businesses such as Foster King in Richmond Photo by Alejandro Duarte, Richmond High School. Auto body shops in Lafayette are important contributors to the local economy. Alexander Square is part of the City Center at Bishop Ranch which opened in 2018. Photos by Daniela Wise, Dougherty Valley High School.

Quality of life



Downtown Walnut Creek features public art, while a Farmers Market in Danville is a popular draw. Smart lockers (above) at the Rancho San Ramon Park in San Ramon allow residents to borrow sporting equipment. Photos by Daniela Wise, Dougherty Valley High School.

and Services



A fountain sits in front of Richmond City Hall, part of a renovation completed in 2009. This mural in Richmond captures the energy and cultural mix of Richmond and gives a shout out to the public library. Photos by Alejandro Duarte, Richmond High School. Richmond High School. Signs point to civic buildings in Danville, including the Town Hall. Photo by Daniela Wise, Dougherty Valley High School. Ryse Center in Richmond provides important services for youth. Photo by Alejandro Duarte, Richmond High School.



Taking away immigrants' fear of the census

By Vanessa Macias
Making Waves Academy

The last census was in 2010, and I was eight years old and in third grade. My little sister was three. I remember going to the San Pablo library with my mother to pick out new books. At the checkout a librarian told my mom to come back for a census information session.

My mom didn't take up the offer.

The year before my father was in a work accident, rendering him unable to work. As my mom told me recently, "With everything going on in my life, the census wasn't important to me."

"Sometimes immigrants are living such hard lives that they try to be as invisible as possible to remain hidden," she explained. "You try to avoid the government as much as possible, at all costs. Even though it feels bad to be invisible, it's better than the alternative."

I talked to my mom about the 2020 Census to better understand the concerns immigrants have about the count. She said she hardly remembers anything about the last census but she does remember the fears she had.

We were a family of four, living in a one-bedroom studio apartment behind my aunt's house. It was cramped and stuffy. My dad was bedridden. My sister and I slept on a mattress on the kitchen floor. We were trying to fill up as little space as possible.

My mom recalls my aunt telling her not to fill out the census and my mother didn't disagree. "I had another fear," she said. "We're not going to say you're living here" because like many people after the recession we were living in studios and garages illegally.

We weren't the only ones hiding. My parents were scared they would be sent back to Mexico, like so many others.

"As an immigrant you don't understand the benefits that come from the census," my mom said. "I didn't even know what questions would be on there. I assumed it would ask me what government benefit programs I was in like Supplemental Nutrition Programs and food stamps. How would that help me? You're trying to survive above all."

My mom didn't see a good reason to fill out the census. "I was scared. I wasn't even going to run the risk. I didn't believe it. Why else gather so much information on who we were and where we lived? It's illogical to think otherwise."

With a deep sigh, she added, "Fear is the primary reason

why immigrants don't self report. Even now I can't think of a reason that would convince them because the fear is so overwhelming."

The reality for many immigrants is that they live in fear of being deported to their home countries that are unsafe due to violence, drugs, poverty, and human trafficking.

I want to push for a higher self-response rate in Richmond and San Pablo by educating the community. I urged my mom to talk with our neighbors and her friends and to encourage them to fill it out.

She looked at me sadly and said, "I can't encourage others to fill the census because when I was in their place I didn't have the courage to do it, so I can't tell them to."

"Everything you do has a reaction, therefore, I imagine that if they do complete the census they will have positive consequences but also negative ones," she added.

"For example, the more immigrants registered on the census could anger people and make them feel like we are invading them. It is both sides. It is positive and negative."

It breaks my heart that no matter how we try to tell our community that the census is safe to answer, they won't believe us because they are scared of the government that is supposed to help them. We can try our best to encourage and educate our

friends and family. At the end of the day, the biggest impact we can make is filling it out ourselves, adding to the other brave people in our community pushing for a better redistribution of government funds in Contra Costa County.

Last year my mother and I became legal residents and that has changed her attitude about the census.

"I think it's important to participate for me and for all those people that are feeling the fear I felt. If I can make any difference now in my current situation I have to do it."

Vanessa Macias is a senior at Making Waves Academy and president of the school journalism club.

"Sometimes immigrants are living such hard lives that they try to be as invisible as possible to remain hidden. You try to avoid the government as much as possible, at all costs. Even though it feels bad to be invisible, it's better than the alternative."

This census defining moment for all of us

By Alejandro Duarte
Richmond High School

This year's presidential election is probably going to be the most important one in my life. Not only is it going to be the first year that I am going to be able to vote, but it's also the defining moment where I decide what my political stance is.

As a Latino youth I constantly see the discrimination and oppression that is expressed by our president Donald Trump. His hate for minorities and illegal immigrants especially is one of the things I constantly see. I experience the hate and oppression not only through his words, but through his followers, his actions, and now the 2020 census.

A census is used to know the population of the country so we can determine how many seats each state needs in the House of Representatives, and where government money is needed to help communities. So why did the president want to put a citizenship question on the 2020 census requiring residents to state their immigrant status?

Well, other than the fact that it would possibly make it easier for ICE to track down illegal immigrants and deport them, it would put a big smile on Trump's face as well as most Republicans in this country. If the census included that question it would cause most if not all illegal immigrants to avoid filling it out.

Many immigrants come to America seeking refuge from their countries that are being torn apart by civil wars and poverty. Talk of a citizenship question on the census causes fear in immigrants as the last thing they would want is to be deported back to the place they're trying to escape.

This puts fear in me as well as I fear that this could cause me to lose my family members and some of my closest friends. If this census included a citizenship question it could lead to mass deportation of immigrants, heavily affecting the economy as many immigrants pay taxes. By deporting all of these people, our economy could take a pretty big hit.

This census could also make it so the government might want to divert from giving federal money and political power to states and cities that tend to have large numbers of non-citizens and instead give it to more rural areas that are probably leaning towards the right wing.

This could then affect me as I live in California, which is the most populated state in America and has the largest number of immigrants. My community which is here in Richmond/San Pablo isn't one of the best communities to say the least. Our schools aren't that good, we suffer from both environmental racism and food deserts, and we have a pretty high crime rate compared to that of a white community.

The Bay Area is already one of the most expensive places to live in America. By taking away both money and political power from this state and area it would make a hard situation even harder for people who work day and night to support their families.

On June 27, 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that president Trump could not put the citizenship question in the census.

Citizenship can be very complicated issue for immigrants in regard to census

By Leonardo Ceja
Richmond High School

The question of citizenship is very complicated for many people, as it is for me. Because I'm a product of immigration I always have this chip on my shoulder and feel tons of pressure. The 2020 Census caused a controversy because some in the federal government wanted to include a citizenship question. If it had included that question it could have resulted in a lack of funding for immigrant communities and worse.

My whole family are illegal immigrants from Mexico. My parents have been fighting for their citizenship for about 20 years. If the question of citizenship were on the census, it would scare immigrants and would cause persecution, even though the government said it wouldn't.

Illegal immigrants are the reason why the U.S. economy in agriculture and other industries is doing well.

Just because I am the son of two immigrant parents, I am seen as a minority. I have many disadvantages and have to try ten times harder than other people. Although many immigrants hide their true identities I've learned to take pride in it.

Keep the census focused on purpose

By Jasmine Vazquez
Richmond High School

The Census Bureau was created on July 1, 1902 by the United States Congress to facilitate the decennial census mandated by the Constitution. It is used to count the population of every state and with that information the federal government makes decisions on funding for education, social services and needs of cities such as Richmond.

According to information from the United States Census website, "The census tells us who we are and where we are going as a nation, and helps our communities determine where to build everything from schools to supermarkets, and from homes to hospitals. It helps the government decide how to distribute funds and assistance to states and localities."

This can be a very good thing for towns and poor communities. It is also very easy to fill out the census. It asks for your gender, race, how many people live in the household and other questions.

But there is a problem. The government wanted to add a new question about citizenship. This had a lot of people worrying about their safety. California has more immigrants than any other state, some without documents or legal status.

The person who pushed for the citizenship question on the census is the one and only, President Donald J. Trump.

People were scared about the citizenship box. If they said that they are undocumented immigrants their safety could be threatened. They feared that if they answered ICE could use that information to track down undocumented immigrants. Trump said there was no problem with the question, that if the census can ask about race, why not ask about citizenship?

The truth is, there was no need to ask. Thousands, perhaps millions, of people would have refused to participate in the census. And thousands of others would have hid how many people live in their household.

This would have affected the community. If people refuse to fill out the census the count would be short and federal funding for cities such as Richmond would be less than the need.

Richmond would lose money for its community. We wouldn't be able to fix roads, schools or even clean the city properly.

Let's be honest, a lot of our hard-working neighbors are immigrants. They help small and big communities with the culture of hard work they bring.

Thankfully, a court ruled that the question could not be added to the census.

America is the land of the free, the land of the dreamer. People come here for a better life. The Constitution says the census is supposed to count every person, not every citizen. It should not matter what anyone's status is. It matters only that they live in the community so they are part of it.

We are all Americans.

In the U.S. there are stereotypes about Mexicans that are a product of discrimination. Stereotypes like Mexicans are lazy or immigrants are rapists and criminals, or are bad people. Stuff like this is being said by our current president, "President 45."

Due to stereotypes and how the media portrays us, we sometimes are seen as evil human beings. However, I beg to differ. I don't know any lazy Mexicans and we aren't all rapists. The Mexicans I know are hard-working, honest and kind human beings.

When I was a child I was ashamed that my parents didn't know English and didn't do things as other kids' parents did. My parents had to work weekdays and weekends, which made me mad, but they had to provide for me and my older brothers. My Mexican parents taught me the best lessons and have instilled important

These four essays were written by Richmond High School seniors as part of the school's Multimedia Academy program for 12th-grade Government teacher Carlo Juntilla. The opinions expressed herein are those of the students only.

Census participation can improve Richmond

By Viviana Bejarano
Richmond High School

As someone from a low-income community, an accurate census count of my community could mean a chance to improve the conditions of my community. Everyone's participation could be beneficial for my community, but according to census report findings by the West Contra Costa County office, Richmond has a low response score, with roughly 30 percent of residents completing the previous census.

Richmond is also considered a hard-to-count area because of the heavy concentration of non-English speakers, homeless and undocumented residents within the city.

I believe this is a result of my community's fear and distrust of the government or maybe an overall lack of understanding of the reason for the census. I wasn't aware of the census until recently and didn't really care for it until I learned about how the information gathered from the census is used.

Besides the population count, the data from the census allows the government to determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives and distribute federal funds for state, county, and cities.

With an accurate count in Richmond, my community can receive more funding for schools, roads, and local businesses that we strongly need since we suffer constantly from lack of funds that keeps us with poor infrastructure.

With more funding for schools especially, that could mean better supplies, updated school structures, and an overall better environment for students and staff alike that'll give students the resources and opportunities to thrive. This is important to me because students that come from low-income communities are typically at a disadvantage academically.

Many don't receive a proper education because of hurdles related to the school's financial status. At Richmond High for example, there are instances where there aren't enough laptops for students, preventing them from completing work because various classes' curriculum are technology-based.

Richmond High's infrastructure is outdated with rotting ceilings and no windows. This impacts the learning environment and forces students to learn in an inadequate environment.

I want the best for my community and I believe the consequences of choosing not to respond to the census can put residents like me and my family at a greater disadvantage. If funding for Richmond is reduced that would cause an even greater financial struggle for residents, local businesses and schools that are dependent on government money.

Although I recognize that for certain groups of Richmond's population such as the homeless make it hard to complete the census, I encourage those who can, to take the time and complete it. Whether it's through mail or online, increasing the number of Richmond residents who complete this year's census can be a beneficial boost for our community.

values in me. Those values have taught me to be open-minded and to be respectful of others.

America is benefitting from immigrant labor. California and Texas are the top two manufacturing states. According to Bloomberg News, in 2017 6 percent of the labor force in those two states were undocumented immigrants.

The Bloomberg article said, "Unauthorized immigrants can make up as much as 17 percent of the workforce each year."

This shows how much discrimination is rooted in the United States. It shows how our president is a hypocrite. He says we are stealing jobs, even jobs like cleaning bathrooms, working in hard construction, working in the fields. White people don't want to work in these jobs.

Meanwhile the illegal immigrants you say are stealing your jobs are the ones feeding you. They are the ones that pick the produce you get from the store. This country was and is still being built by undocumented folks. But the president didn't want the census to show that. He wants to say terrible things about immigrants, not count them.

So the next time somebody says this remind them that this country was built off black and brown bodies.

The huge impact of census participation

By **Tania Norzagaray**
Making Waves Academy

The census is a count by the federal government -- as mandated by the U.S. Constitution -- of all residents in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories every 10 years. It is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, a non-partisan government agency.

As this year's census gets underway, I urge everyone, especially people living in low-income and underserved communities of color, to answer the short questionnaire -- either online, by phone, or by mail.

This participation may assist in bringing more government resources to your communities. The government takes into account the information that participants provide and uses it to decide how to allocate funds around the country.

The census consists of questions like age and sex, employment, family members, living arrangements, race/origin, income etc. Although these matters may seem basic and the census itself may not seem important to some people, it is imperative to take part in it. Especially when it comes to low-income and underserved communities, participating in the census will help federal-funded programs to determine how to allocate spending.

According to Diana Elliott, a researcher at the Urban Institute,

"In 2015 states received nearly \$590 billion from 16 large federally funded programs, the allocation of which was determined by the 2010 census counts." These programs ranged from healthcare (Medicaid, or Medi-Cal in California), infrastructure (highway planning and construction), education (Head Start), and food security (the National School Lunch Program.)

In addition, the data determines how congressional seats and Electoral College votes are apportioned and play a role in how voting districts are drawn.

Elliott also warns that research shows certain groups -- including people of color, low-income people, and in many cases in northern Contra Costa County and elsewhere across the country, undocumented immigrants -- are more likely to be undercounted.

Why? According to the Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality, "Households with low incomes are more likely to include people of color, who are also historically hard-to-count. In fact, the 2010 Census undercounted African Americans, Hispanics, and American Indians and Alaska Natives living on reservations.

The results of undercounting include skimpier-than-normal allocation of federal resources, underrepresentation in Congress, and most importantly perhaps, setbacks for civil rights. People in undercounted areas are denied power they are entitled to.

Because of the undercount, according to the Georgetown

Center on Poverty and Inequality, political boundaries may not accurately represent reality. That means people in some areas are denied a full voice in policy decision-making, resulting in their community's needs to be given short shrift in relation to the community's real share of the population.

In 2010, my undocumented mother and many of her friends who were also undocumented refused to participate in the census for fear of deportation. Why were they afraid? Because they knew the census was associated with the government. They feared admitting their undocumented status would lead census officials to notify ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and cause them to be deported.

Because my community consists primarily of people of color, including Latinx immigrants, we are often undercounted and underrepresented.

In planning for this year's census, the Trump administration wanted to include a question about citizenship status, but after court fights it was eventually dropped. Its inclusion would have resulted in an even more severe undercount of people of undocumented status.

But regardless of exclusion of the citizenship question, there is still concern about Hispanic/Latinx participation in the census because of the current presidential administration's anti-immigration policies and rhetoric.

Although such fears about deportation are genuinely felt, under federal law, the census bureau cannot share responses that identify individuals with the public or other federal agencies, including immigration authorities and other law enforcement agencies.

This year, as a result of several informational forums with a nonprofit organization dedicated to immigrant justice, my mom became convinced to take part in the year's census. Her immigration status has not changed unfortunately; she is still undocumented and will most likely stay that way for a long time due to this administration's focus on immigration.

To learn more about the resources in this story, go to:
<https://www.urban.org/urban-wire/five-reasons-robust-decennial-census-benefits-all-americans>
<https://www.npr.org/2019/03/31/707899218/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-2020-census>
<http://www.georgetownpoverty.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/Low-Income-Families-HTC.pdf>
<https://journalistsresource.org/studies/government/2020-census-research-undercount/>

Tania Norzagaray is a senior at Making Waves Academy and a member of the school journalism and media club.

Demographic diversity demands an accurate census

By **Mahika Arya**
Dougherty Valley High School

Contra Costa County remains an ever-changing landscape with its demographics diversifying over the years. The 2020 Census data should reflect this and assist in the type and amount of government attention in communities.

Accurate demographic data from the census is essential because it allows governments to promote local, state, and national representation. How large are populations by their ethnic backgrounds, sex, income, and where do they live can aid government and social services in knowing which places need attention in specific sectors.

And demographic change results in more understanding of social and economic problems, and their potential solutions, from market research to economic development.

Contra Costa County has a number of cities with exceptionally high populations compared to other cities in the U.S. on average. The county includes Concord (population 123,812), Antioch (population 112,635), and Richmond (population 110,040).

These cities are growing, which follows national trends of population growth, with the United States being expected to grow by 100 million people in the next 40 years, according

to Smithsonian Magazine.

The county's cities are becoming more diverse, as is the entire Bay Area. A 2000 to 2010 census comparison of San Ramon found that although whites make up the majority and its population is still growing, its relative population had dropped from 76.8 percent to 53.6 percent because other ethnic groups grew in greater numbers. Asians more than doubled its share of the population from 14.9 percent to 35.6 percent.

According to the Census Bureau, data on race is "derived from answers to the question on race that was asked of individuals in the United States. The Census Bureau collects racial data in accordance with guidelines provided by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB), and these data are based on self-identification."

The OMB "requires five minimum categories: White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian, and Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander."

The U.S. faces similar diversity developments. By 2050, whites are no longer expected to be the majority; the minority population is expected to grow from 30% to 50% in a matter of 30 years.

Racial diversity positively impacts the Bay Area, a place known for its "melting pot" and entrepreneurship and technological developments. Diversity allows for more incorpora-

tion of ideas and innovation that the world strives for.

The results of the census need to reflect these ongoing changes because the various races and ethnicities all need different resources to thrive. For example, medical units and job opportunities vary among races, and governments should strive to use census results to discover which areas need additional help in reaching racial equality.

More immigration into Contra Costa has led to the springing up of many new households, with about 389,597 households as of 2017. Additionally, the number of teenagers has increased, with 262,014 minors in Contra Costa as of 2018. That means more city and state resources should be directed towards housing and student opportunities to support these families.

The census needs to provide governments with demographic information in order to assist them in what kind and amount of support communities need. Without this knowledge, Contra Costa and all other locations cannot adapt to their changing environment.

To learn more about resources in this story, go to:
<https://www.census.gov/topics/population/race/about.html>

Mahika Arya is a sophomore and a copy editor on the school newspaper, *The Wildcat Tribune*.

FAQ for the 2020 Census

This is the official questionnaire for this address. If in a mobile app, go to Respondent's Home and press on the icon.

Part completion of questionnaire is required, click to verify a completion of this form.

Start here OR go online at (or reviewed) Use a blue or black pen.

2. Were there any **ADDITIONAL** people sleeping here on April 1, 2020 that you did not identify in Question 1?

3. In this house, apartment, or mobile home -- **ALL** -- Did you: (Check **ONE** box) (Check **ALL** that apply)

4. What is your telephone number? We will only contact you if needed for official Census Bureau business.

5. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2020? Number of people

By **Siddhant Gupta**
California High School

Q: How do I fill out a census form?
A: Beginning in late March, notifications on how to fill out the census will be mailed to households. There are three ways to fill out the census: go online, call by telephone, or request a printed form and mail that in. For households that don't do any of these, the Census Bureau will try to send a census taker to your residence.

Q: How long will it take to fill out the census?
A: The Census Bureau says that the estimated time to fill out a census is 10 minutes. If there are others living at your address, there will be more questions, so then it will take a little longer.

Q: How many questions are there?
A: There are nine questions to start. Then there are seven more questions for each of the additional person living at that address on April 1, 2020.

Q: What actually happens on Census Day, April 1?
A: This is confusing to some who think the census is conducted on this day. Filling out the census actually takes place beginning in late March through July 31, 2020. April 1 is the date referred to in the census questionnaire: "How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2020?"

April 1 is also used by the Census Bureau and other census programs to "launch" the census, urging the public to participate.

Q: What's information is in the mail sent out by the Census Bureau?
A: In mid-March the Census Bureau will begin mailing instructions on how to access, fill out, and submit the response to the census questionnaire. This physical mail will have the phone number and list of needed for people who want to respond via telephone or the internet.

Q: Still need help?
A: Go to <https://www.census.gov/en.html>, or Call Center: 301-763-INFO (4636) or 800-923-8282 or ask.census.gov TDD: TTY users can dial 1-800-877-8339 to use the Federal Relay Service

2020 Census projected to decline in accuracy

By **Sneha Cheenath**
Dougherty Valley High School

The 2020 Census is projected to be less accurate than the 2010 Census, primarily due to lack of funding and changing demographics, according to articles on the upcoming count.

In an article titled, "The 2020 Census may be wildly inaccurate -- and it matters more than you think" published by the Brookings Institute, a Washington, D.C.-based research institution, the author reported that in the past decade Congress repeatedly curtailed the census budget. The first instance was in 2014 when Congress voted that the 2020 budget couldn't exceed that of 2010 and without adjusting for inflation.

The article went on to explain that the second cripple to the census' funding was when the Trump administration decreased funding by 10 percent, fully flattening 2018 funding.

According to the Census Project, the Obama administration asked for \$1.21 billion in 2014. But Congress only approved \$1.11 billion, according to the Census Project, an independent organization that lobbies for an accurate census count.

In the Census Project's fact sheet, "Why Full Funding Matters," the organization said there are many new methods that could be implemented to improve the accuracy of the census, but they aren't possible because of insufficient funding.

The report said 2015 was a particularly important year for funding because that's when many of the tests were done to develop a strategy for a more accurate census.

These methods include using administrative or existing data to count houses that are unresponsive and/or automated field data collection.

If these and other technologies could have been

implemented, they had the potential of saving the taxpayer \$5 billion, the Census Project claimed.

Congress ended up approving \$238 million less than what the Census Bureau requested for its 2015 budget, according to a Huffington Post article.

The other major factor in changing the accuracy of the decennial census is changes in demographics.

A study from the Urban Institute called "Assessing Mis-

have an overwhelmingly negative effect on the overall accuracy, particularly in California, the Urban Institute said. California has the highest population of these traditionally undercounted groups.

"Our projections show that even under the lowest-risk scenario -- where we assume that the 2020 Census will perform exactly as the 2010 Census did -- the national population count will be less accurate," the Washington, D.C.-based think tank said.

To counteract these problems, the Census Bureau said it has implemented a number of new initiatives to improve national participation, most notably the option to answer online.

However the Urban Institute argued that these programs remain underfunded, which could be problematic.

"Not only are these new additions insufficiently tested in a decennial census environment, but the best evidence suggests they will disproportionately improve the count of those who are already easiest to count, leaving the hard-to-count population a lingering challenge," it said.

If the 2020 census ends up being less accurate than 2010, it will be the break of a positive trend.

The 2010 census was found to be more accurate than the 2000 census, and the 2000 census was more accurate than the 1990 one, according to a New York Times article.

To learn more about resources in this story, go to:
<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2017/08/31/the-2020-census-may-be-wildly-inaccurate-and-it-matters-more-than-you-think/>

<https://thecensusproject.org/fact-sheets/miscounts-2020-census>

Sneha Cheenath is a sophomore and co-sports editor of the school newspaper, *The Wildcat Tribune*.



Three ways to take the 2020 Census: fill out a paper form, fill out a form online, or do it over the phone. Cartoon by Rebecca Newman, California High School.

counts in the 2020 Census" said that "hard-to-count groups -- including complex households, renters, young children, immigrants, and people of color -- will represent a larger share of the population in 2020 than they did in 2010."

The higher concentration of hard-to-count groups could

Census participation affects school programs

By Hannah Wang and Anvi Vasa
Dougherty Valley High School

The 2020 Census is especially important for government programs because it sets the amount of funding for many for the next 10 years, including programs that impact youth.

For example, the count provides valuable information for officials to plan the amount of funding for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP).

SNAP provides meals for economically-disadvantaged students to help get families out of food insecurity and even poverty. According to Josh Green, a Bay Area media specialist for the Census Bureau, the number of students counted is critical because it gives the federal government an idea of how much funding is necessary to spend on these programs.

For some students, SNAP is the only way for them to get a well-balanced meal. According to the Census Bureau, in 2016 the funding allowed for SNAP to provide around 30.4 million meals for students nationwide; \$71 million was allocated based on 2010 census data collected. (SNAP funding is offered to every school in the San Ramon Valley Unified School District.)

Amy Hill, the Director of Community Engagement & Advocacy of the Pennsylvania Central Food Bank, described the importance

of the program in a published report.

"SNAP is the number one program that helps people when they're faced with the challenge of food insecurity. So, if that program goes away, there really isn't enough as it stands right now to fill that gap."

Educators say that without the free lunches from SNAP, students can have a hard time focusing in class, which can adversely affect their learning experience and academic success in class. The funding for free lunch also allows for supplementing the food budget, saving money for low-income families that desperately need it.

A large portion of federal funding also goes towards public schools.

According to an Education Votes' article, National Educational Association President Lily Eskelsen Garcia stressed the significance of the count towards educational funding, stating, "Being counted helps ensure that all communities receive their fair share of federal and state funding for schools and other critical services."

The census counts children in each state and uses their statistics to decide which communities are in need. The government then uses their information from the census to allocate the correct amount of money towards increasing support for children.

Without these programs, schools would not have enough to provide students with enough resources, educators say. The \$800

billion in government funding for educational programs is essential because it promotes better learning for students of all ages and leaves a long lasting impact toward a child's academic success, the Education Votes' article reported.

The government also puts aside money for families that need daycare and preschool services but cannot afford it.

According to Educationvotes.org, in 2010, 10 percent of children in the country were missing. This meant that over 2 million children were not counted, leaving many of them vulnerable.

National Education Association Senior Counsel Emma Lehey said in the article, "Job one is to do everything we can to support a complete and accurate census. It's the first step in understanding the needs of the next generation of school-age children."

The census begins in mid-March and ends July 21, 2020.

Sophomore Hannah Wang and freshman Anvi Vasa are staff writers on the student newspaper, *The Wildcat Tribune*.

CENSUS BY THE NUMBERS

- California receives approximately \$76 billion in federal funding, based upon the state's population.
- Each person not counted equates to a loss of between \$1,000 to \$2,000 in State and Federal funding per year.
- 72% of California's population belongs to one of the groups historically undercounted during the once-a-decade census process.
- Contra Costa County has just under 250,000 (20%) people living in "Hard-to-Count" Census Tracts.
- If the county undercounts by 5%, the county will lose between \$500 million to \$1.0 billion over 10 years.

-U.S. Census Bureau

More LGBTQ questions sought

By Alyssa Earnest
De Anza High School

Leading up to the census, LGBTQ activists expressed concerns over which questions would be included in the count.

According to published reports, the Census Bureau began counting same-sex couples in the 2000 and 2010 census using questions about gender and relationships. The 2020 Census is expected to provide an even more accurate count of how many same-sex couples there are in the U.S., census officials said.

But the Census Bureau decided against questions asking about a person's sexual orientation and gender identity that would allow them to count non-coupled LGBTQ individuals. This disappointed LGBTQ advocacy groups, according to published reports.

In interviews with two De Anza High School teachers who identify as members of the LGBTQ community, they offered their insights into the issue of inclusivity and the census.

"When people feel shut out, they're not going to answer the census or answer it accurately," said Erica Lorraine Webb, who teaches English. "So it diminishes the accuracy of the census."

Webb said she has people in within her family life who are non-gender-conforming and that having those choices on the census would have been highly appreciated and it would have made the entire process easier on those who might not otherwise feel comfortable answering the questionnaire.

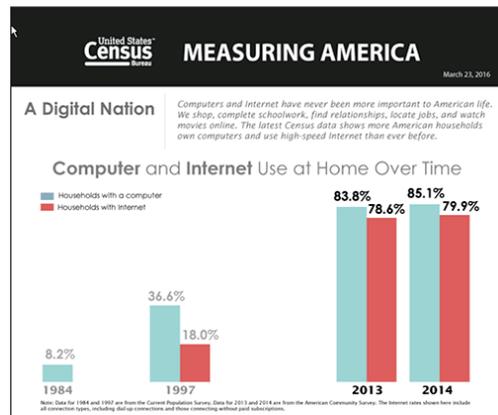
Jane Shetterly, the school's resident art teacher, agreed, and noted that she didn't think the Census Bureau has done a very good job representing historically marginalized groups, including the LGBTQ community.

"I think it's kind of terrible. With the creation of the census, there were so few choices involving race and gender with the census back then," she said.

Shetterly said she believes everyone should be represented, whether it involves ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation.

Advocates of more inclusion have said that these issues are of particular importance in California, which has one of the most diverse populations in the country. They note that for those who've never had to deal with issues relating to gender identity or sexual orientation, it can be difficult to understand the strain put on someone who feels they don't fit into a box, yet still has to be labeled with a number for a survey.

Alyssa Earnest is a junior and staff writer on the school newspaper, *The De Anza Times*.



Latino, Asian communities fear census

By Lauren Chen
Dougherty Valley High School

Last June, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Trump administration was not allowed to include the question, "Is this person a citizen of the United States?" on the 2020 census. The administration argued that the question would lead to improved enforcement of federal voting laws.

However, the Supreme Court ruled that this reasoning was "contrived." Chief Justice John Roberts, writing for the majority, said the court "cannot ignore the disconnect between

the decision made and the explanation given" by the Trump administration.

Even without the question's inclusion, the controversy stoked fear in many minority communities, critics of the administration's immigration policies said.

On Jan. 9, 2019, Congress held a hearing about reaching hard-to-count communities in the census, and witnesses testified that many people in minority communities had worries about their representation in the census.

Many Latinos and Asian Americans fear the census and are less likely to participate because of the Trump administration's hostile attitude toward immigrants, according to an NBC article titled "Latinos, Asian Americans still fear 2020 census over citizenship question, witnesses tell Congress," by Suzanne Gamboa.

Arturo Vargas, executive director of the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Educational Fund, called the citizenship question a "failed debacle" and stated that it "instilled a lasting fear [in Latinos]."

"This is exacerbated by a hostile environment toward immigrants propagated by this



Schools in Contra Costa reflect the myriad diversity of its population. Students at Dougherty Valley meet at lunch. Photo by Lauren Chen, Dougherty Valley High.

administration," he said. The 2010 census left 1.5 percent of Latinos uncoun-

John Yang, president and executive director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice, had similar concerns about the census.

"Asian Americans are the fastest-growing

minority group in the country," so Asian Americans refusing to answer the census questions could have lasting consequences, Yang said.

Lauren Chen is a freshman and a copy editor on the student newspaper, *The Wildcat Tribune*.

Contra Costa County reaches out to include its hard-to-count communities in the census—ten years of funding are at risk

By Caroline Lobel
Dougherty Valley High School

The goal of the 2020 Census is to collect responses from as many households in the United States as possible, but many are difficult to account for. These are what the Census Bureau describes as "hard-to-count" or HIC communities.

They can include people who move often, low-income people, non-English speakers, undocumented immigrants, and others. Contra Costa County is doing its part to make sure that people in these communities are represented in the census because the data helps determine the allocation of federal funding.

One effort that Contra Costa is doing to reach these populations is through the Census' Community Partnership Engagement Program.

"There are 1,500 partnership specialists hired across the

country, including several hundred in California," said Josh Green, Bay Area media specialist for the 2020 Census.

"Those who work in the (community engagement) program have deep experience living and working in their communities and they make connections with local businesses, government agencies, nonprofits and many other institutions to encourage participation," Green said.

The engagement program uses maps to decide which locations to reach. The census' "Response Outreach Area Mapper" is used to provide socioeconomic and demographic features of areas throughout America.

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) publishes an interactive map that highlights hard-to-reach communities and explains why these areas are difficult to account for. The two maps guide engagement program workers.

For example, according to the PPIC map, 11.5 percent of people living in Contra Costa are noncitizens. Additionally,

7.7 percent of households in Contra Costa have a likelihood of no response.

The census considers it critical that these people are accounted for so they can receive proper representation when government funds are allocated, whether it be for public services, infrastructure, or something else.

"These efforts are made year-round, every year at the census, but the work of (the engagement program) began as people were hired in the summer of 2019, and it will last through the count, which officially ends July 31, 2020," Green said. "Our mission is to work in every state and territory, and that's where we are."

To learn more about resources in this story go to: <https://www.ppic.org/blog/video-countdown-to-census-2020/>.

Caroline Lobel is a junior and managing editor of the school newspaper, *The Wildcat Tribune*.

CC Spin

EVERYONE COUNTS! is special feature of CC Spin, a county-wide student newspaper produced by students at participating Contra Costa County public high schools. Story development is supervised by journalism advisers at participating schools and professional journalists who coach the students and guide their reporting and writing. Staff members from Bay City News and other local journalism outlets and retired journalists are available to instruct participating students in professional journalism standards and practices.

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