The Colorado Health Foundation™

Citizenship Question is Out of the 2020 Census for Now

Supreme Court Requests Further Explanation from Department of Commerce

Over the last year, the Colorado Health Foundation has actively advocated for the 2020 U.S. Census to be fair and accurate, providing the opportunity for all Coloradans – regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic or citizenship status – to participate. We believe Census data that reflects all people in Colorado is a key ingredient to advancing health and health equity in our state and throughout the nation.

Earlier today, the U.S. Supreme Court blocked the inclusion of a proposed citizenship question on the Census form, requesting that the Department of Commerce provide a more detailed explanation on the need for including it. If this untested and unprecedented question were to be included, it would create fear among refugee, foreign-born, non-citizen populations and communities of color – leading to biased and skewed Census data. This is just one of many challenges to a fair and accurate count as we head into 2020. Other obstacles in the path of the upcoming Census include hiring shortfalls and leadership vacancies in the Census Bureau, reductions in funding for field offices in communities and the complications of standing up secure technologies for the first-ever online administration.

The U.S. Census is about money, power and data. More importantly, it's about the people who respond to it and the people who benefit from how it is used to

describe our communities. Agencies and institutions across the country have long relied on valid Census data to help inform institutional decision-making and strategies, including us at the Foundation.

We use Census data as a tool for how we engage with communities ranging from the Rocky Mountains to the Eastern Plains and everywhere in between. We use it to track health status and to measure health outcomes. We use it as a gauge to understand what barriers Coloradans face when it comes to living their healthiest lives. And we know the critical importance of counting every Coloradan to ensure our efforts to advance health and health equity are realized.

We are pleased with the temporary reprieve the Supreme Court's ruling has offered, and recognize that our work does not end here. Today, tomorrow and leading up to the close of Census 2020, we will work with partner organizations and local advocates to promote fair representation for all communities that have historically been underrepresented in Census counts. And we will support advocacy elevating this issue within traditionally hard-to-count communities, working alongside public leaders and the business community.

In turn, we ask that you demand transparency and action where it's needed – whether that's the formation of a Complete Count Committee in your local government or organizing among the business and nonprofit sectors to encourage them to use their voices to increase census participation.

Interested in learning more about the upcoming Census? Here are some useful resources you can check out:

- Colorado Department of Local Affairs: Colorado Census 2020
- Together We Count
- United States Census Bureau

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Announcements

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