

Alexandria Library's 2020 Census Activities

City-wide Coordination

- Library staff served on Alexandria's Complete Count Committee.

Technology *(Prior to facilities closing due to COVID-19 pandemic)*

- The library prepared for expected demands for potential surges in public computer and Internet usage.
- The library waived computer access fees from March 12-April 12 so that cost would not be a barrier to filling out Census forms.
- Barrett, Burke, and Duncan set aside computers specifically for Census use. Each library location, including Beatley, also had a library iPad specifically dedicated for this purpose. All of these computers were configured to take users directly to the Census website, and also provided direct links to Census resources in English, Spanish, Arabic, Amharic, and large print.
- Specific attention was paid to ensure the confidentiality of personal information shared on Census forms. Library locations have signage urging customers to take care with their personal data when using public computers and public WiFi at all times, but the library took this one step further for the Census. IT systems were partially reconfigured to ensure the confidentiality of personal information (i.e., taking certain computers off of the public network) and providing additional signage on how to avoid protect private data on public computers and publicly accessed WiFi.

Educating the Public

- The library provided three virtual programming sessions to educate the public on the importance of completing the Census, with Councilmember Canek Aguirre as host and featuring city government officials, educators, and nonprofit executives.
- The Census was incorporated into children's programming, and the library purchased Census counting books in English, Spanish, and Arabic to be distributed and used as teaching tools.
- Each branch was scheduled to host information tables on April 1, Census Day, to educate the public about the importance of responding to the Census *(cancelled due to covid-19)*.
- Print and electronic materials in multiple languages were available to library users at all branches to help them complete their forms; these were located at the dedicated Census computer stations.
- Notices on how to protect personal information while filling out the Census on public computers and/or using public WiFi were displayed at all branches.
- The library provided accurate information to counter false narratives and disinformation campaigns.
- The library promoted the Census through its website, email blasts, and social media. Complete Count Committee and Census Bureau print materials encouraging Census completion were posted prominently in all branches in multiple high-visibility common areas.
- Library staff coordinated with local Census job recruiters, and the library provided space and distributed PR materials for several Census job recruitment events.

Internal Training

- All front-line staff received a one-hour training on how to assist patrons with their Census forms and important issues regarding the 2020 Census.
- A continuously updated “Census FAQ” document was available on the library intranet to provide up-to-the-minute guidance on Census developments.

Outreach

- Upon receiving a mini-grant from ACT for Alexandria in October 2019, library staff distributed 120 gift cards of \$25 each to people who completed their Census form with library staff present. Outreach was conducted in Chirilagua, Holmes Run Park, Ben Brenman Park, around the Foxchase Shopping Center, around the Mark Center Shopping Center and the Mark Center offices.
- Library staff also worked with local Spanish-speaking community groups and canvassed Chirilagua shops to distribute PR materials and speak with people about the 2020 Census.