



**2020 CENSUS PROGRAM MEMORANDUM SERIES: 2018.06**

**Date:** February 27, 2018

**MEMORANDUM FOR:** The Record

**From:** Albert E. Fontenot, Jr. **(signed February 27, 2018)**  
Associate Director, Decennial Census Programs

**Subject:** 2020 Census Non-English Language Support

**Contact:** Jennifer Kim  
Decennial Census Management Division  
301-763-1311  
jennifer.kim@census.gov

This memorandum documents the 2020 Census Program decision regarding the number of non-English languages that will be supported, and the level of support, during the 2020 Census operations.

**Overview**

For the 2020 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau plans to provide the Internet Self-Response Instrument and Census Questionnaire Assistance in 12 non-English languages; enumerator instrument, bilingual paper questionnaire, bilingual mailing, and field enumeration materials in Spanish; and language guides, language glossaries, and language identification card in 59 non-English languages.

**Discussion**

The Census Bureau determined the non-English languages by using the 2016 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates to identify language groups with a high number of limited-English speaking households. The definition of a “limited-English-speaking household,” as used in the current ACS estimates, is as follows: no member 14 years old and over speaks only English at home or speaks a language other than English at home and speaks English “very well.”

In determining the languages, the Census Bureau followed the process outlined below:

1. Created tabulations of languages spoken by limited-English-speaking households, at the national, regional, and state levels.
2. Transcribed to a list the languages spoken by at least 2,000 limited-English-speaking households, sorted by the number of limited-English-speaking households, in descending order.
3. Assessed these languages for translation feasibility, to ensure that the Census Bureau is able to provide effectively translated materials.
4. Added American Sign Language (ASL) to the list, to provide a video guide for ASL users.

This process yielded the languages below (in order—top to bottom, left to right). The Census Bureau will provide language guides, language glossaries, and a language identification card in these languages.

Spanish	Haitian Creole	Bengali	Romanian	Tamil	Tigrinya	Igbo
Chinese	Portuguese	Greek	Telugu	Navajo	Ilocano	Marathi
Vietnamese	Japanese	Amharic	Burmese	Hungarian	Dutch	Sinhala
Korean	Italian	Somali	Punjabi	Hebrew	Croatian	Slovak
Russian	Farsi	Thai	Lao	Malayalam	Bulgarian	American Sign Language
Arabic	German	Gjurati	Hmong	Swahili	Twi	
Tagalog	Armenian	Khmer	Albanian	Yiddish	Lithuanian	
Polish	Hindi	Nepali	Turkish	Indonesia	Yoruba	
French	Ukrainian	Urdu	Bosnian	Serbian	Czech	

In determining the languages for Internet Self-Response and Census Questionnaire Assistance, the Census Bureau transcribed to a list the languages spoken by at least 60,000 limited-English-speaking households, sorted by the number of limited-English-speaking households, in descending order. This yielded the following 12 non-English languages: Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polish, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, and Japanese.

The Census Bureau further determined that the field enumerator instrument and materials, bilingual paper questionnaire, and bilingual mailing will be supported in Spanish.

## Decision

The Census Bureau will provide non-English instruments and materials in the following non-English languages for the 2020 Census:

Instrument/Material	Non-English Language
Internet Self-Response Instrument	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 Non-English Languages<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Spanish, Chinese (Simplified), Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polish, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Japanese</li></ul></li></ul>
Census Questionnaire Assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 12 Non-English Languages<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Spanish, Chinese (Mandarin, Cantonese), Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polish, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Japanese</li></ul></li><li>• Includes Telecommunication Device for the Deaf</li></ul>
Enumerator Instrument, Bilingual Paper Questionnaire, Bilingual Mailing, Field Enumeration Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spanish</li></ul>
Language Glossaries, Language Identification Card	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 59 Non-English Languages</li></ul>
Language Guides (Video and Print)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 59 Non-English Languages</li><li>• Includes American Sign Language, braille, and large print</li></ul>

## The 2020 Census Memorandum Series

The 2020 Census Memorandum Series documents significant decisions, actions, and accomplishments of the 2020 Census Program for the purpose of informing stakeholders, coordinating interdivisional efforts, and documenting important historical changes.

A memorandum generally will be added to this series for any decision or documentation that meets the following criteria:

1. A major program-level decision that will affect the overall design or have significant effect on 2020 Census operations or systems.
2. A major policy decision or change that will affect the overall design or significantly impact 2020 Census operations or systems.
3. A report that documents the research and testing for 2020 Census operations or systems.

Visit [2020Census.gov](https://2020Census.gov) to access the Memorandum Series, the 2020 Census Operational Plan, and other information about preparations for the 2020 Census.