



April 23, 2020

Dear CAU Friends and Colleagues,

While we are all focused on the coronavirus pandemic, let's act on the 2020 Census too. A common theme is doing what's right to protect ourselves and our loved ones today and in the future.

The 2020 Census is underway and it really matters that you respond. Why does it matter?

Because your responses, along with others, are combined to decide how much government funding is distributed to groups and communities. All of us benefit in some way, from roads and public transportation, to food and housing subsidies, job creation and employment supports, social services, healthcare and hospitals, and educational systems.

The census is especially important for organizations like Community Access Unlimited who serve "hard to count" groups.

CAU's first priority is to support people and families with disabilities and older youth transitioning to adulthood. But CAU impacts the community in many other ways as well:

- We assist people who are homeless or who lack other basic necessities, like food.
- We assist people who are recent immigrants and those representing ethnic and religious minorities.
- We assist older adults as well as people with mental health challenges.

All are considered "hard to count" due to access barriers, and who may therefore be undercounted by the Census. Any undercount deprives people of government funding and political representation.

Many "hard to count" people benefit from health insurance [Medicare/Medicaid/CHIP], Section 8 and other housing subsidies, SNAP and other food assistance, advocacy and community development programs, special education [IDEA] and employment training, residential and community supports, assistive technology, home health care, recreation and social services.

Political representation in Congress and in state, county and local offices is determined by census counts. Fewer people counted means less political influence on issues and programs important to you.

Our middle name is "Access" and we are determined to make sure everyone counts and has access to needed services and adequate representation.

CAU is a 2020 Census Partner (www.2020Census.gov) and part of the NJ 2020 Census (<https://nj.gov/state/census.shtml>) efforts to assist in reaching people who need most to be counted. Our work is made possible by a grant from the New Jersey Department of State. Our focus is on people with disabilities and their families, and on older youth who are transitioning to independent adult lives.

The census is done only once every ten years and the next one won't be until 2030. Until then, this is your only opportunity to be counted.

Completing your census is easy: it takes about 10 minutes for each individual in your household and can be done in any of three ways: online, by phone, or by paper form.

Completing your census is safe: your answers are confidential and may not be shared with anyone. Your personal information is protected by law and any violation is punishable by up to 5 years in prison and/or up to \$250,000 fine. No other government department - including the police, FBI and ICE - can access your information. Completing the census is safe, and it is important for your future to do this.

We have compiled information and resources on our website (<https://www.caunj.org/census-2020/>) and have a special email address (Census.info@caunj.org) to respond to any census-related questions. We are scheduling 5 webinars on the census and sharing census information with our community partners. Webinars are for staff, persons with disabilities and their families, older youth and the general population.

The Census is easy, safe and important:

For You...

For Your Families...

For Your Community...

For CAU and our Staff and Members...

For everyone working in and served by all human services organizations.

Please do your part today to assure that you receive the benefits and political representation you deserve. Join me in completing the census so that we all count!

Thank you,

Bernadette Griswold

Executive Director

Comm**unity** Access Unlimited