



July 28, 2018

Ms. Jennifer Jessup
Departmental Paperwork Clearance Officer
Department of Commerce
Room 6616
14th and Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Submitted [via regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

RE: Comments on Proposed Information Collection on 2020 Census

Dear Ms. Jessup:

On behalf of Vitalyst Health Foundation, thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments on the 2020 Census Federal Registrar Notice dated June 8, 2018. After a thorough review of the available information and discussion with local partners and grantees, we urge the Department of Commerce to withdraw the citizenship question from the 2020 Census questionnaire, as it will significantly undermine efforts to achieve a fair and accurate census.

Since our inception in 1996, Vitalyst Health Foundation has existed as a non-partisan non-profit organization, dedicated to improving the health of all Arizonans. Over our twenty-two year history, we have consistently been reminded of the importance of maintaining a robust public infrastructure to support the public's health and well-being. In contrast to our mission, the Commerce Department's recent decision to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census, coupled with years of congressional underfunding for the Census Bureau, poses a significant threat to the vitality of our state count.

A critical underpinning of Arizona's public and private sectors, the decennial census serves as a foundation from which our state derives congressional representation, finances public programs and makes decisions regarding economic development. Any degree of undercounting in the census jeopardizes Arizona's ability to accurately allocate resources and plan for its future. According to one analysis by George Washington University, Arizona stands to lose at least \$887 of federal funding for every person undercounted in the census. Should Arizona's population be undercounted by just one-percent, the state would lose more than \$53 million dollars in Medicaid funding alone.

Such undercounts would have a disproportionate impact on many of the communities we serve, further cementing institutional barriers that prevent underrepresented populations from attaining good health. Disparities that currently exist across race, income, geography, age and gender would only grow as the combination of reduced funding and distrust among immigrant communities pushes hard-to-count Arizonans further away from enumerators. Communities residing in Arizona's expansive rural areas and its growing Hispanic population face the greatest risk of consequences associated with this future.

A CATALYST FOR COMMUNITY HEALTH



The decennial census is an essential part of what helps Arizona fulfill its potential. Our commitment to an accurate census is key to our democracy, future decision-making and the health of our communities. Unfortunately, the addition of the citizenship question and the Commerce Department's disinvestment in the 2020 Census jeopardizes our nation's ability to accurately meet its constitutional mandate.

Vitalyst Health Foundation stands ready to contribute to ensuring a fair and accurate count in Arizona's 2020 Census, and we thank you for your attention to our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Suzanne Pfister". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and a long, sweeping underline.

Suzanne Pfister
President & Chief Executive Officer
Vitalyst Health Foundation
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