Census Open Innovation Challenge
May 2017

Census policy priority:
Every decade, in years ending in “0,” the U.S. Census Bureau conducts its Decennial Census, apportioning representation in the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as federal funds for critical infrastructure and services such as housing, highways, schools, hospitals, and scores of programs that are vital to the health and welfare of the U.S. population and economy.

It is critical that all those living in the U.S. participate in the 2020 Census. It is therefore vital that people know the impact that the 2020 Census has on their lives, families, communities, and societies. Yet certain groups have been undercounted at disproportionately high rates, including racial and ethnic minorities, non-native English speakers, low-income people, undocumented immigrants, mobile millennials, children, and those experiencing homelessness. We are bringing together teams of partners from across industries and sectors to ideate new technology platforms and solutions that will drive participation in hard-to-count communities.

What is the problem?
In 2020, our goal is to conduct a complete and accurate census, but there are massive challenges ahead. Historically, certain groups have been undercounted at disproportionately high rates.

These “Hard-to-Count” populations include:

- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Non-native English speakers
- Low-income people
- Young, mobile people
- People experiencing homelessness

User Scenarios:

- Doesn’t speak English
- Doesn’t know what Census is/does
- Doesn’t want to participate or share information
- Doesn’t know how to participate

Why is this problem important? When people participate in the Census, they further drive its value by ensuring a complete count. Having an accurate count then ensures the fair distribution of federal spending and apportionment of congressional seats. When segments of the population are undercounted, it results in fewer resources allocated, imprecise policy recommendations, and less congressional representation for those communities. The 2020 Census will also be the first to have an online response option, presenting new challenges with those who aren’t digitally connected, but also opening up new opportunities for creative solutions to the undercount challenge.

Challenge: How might we enable the Hard to Count to see and experience the value of the Census data and increase their participation?
City SDK won 2016 API World Award.

The goal is to support civic innovation, through the efforts like Code for America, and streamline data at the federal, state, and local levels.

The CitySDK is a collaboration between the Census Bureau, Department of Commerce, HUD, USDA, and other agencies in the federal government.

What is the CitySDK?
Toolbox for civic innovations to connect local and national public data

http://uscensusbureau.github.io/citysdk/

Open-Source Project
Partner Integrations and Example Projects
Combines multiple datasets using a single call.
Example of simple request for State of Maryland geography

Acquiring Census Data
Combining Federal and Local Data

Chicago from the City of
Crime data
ACS data
Uses Census
Case Study: "AirBNB for Tech Spaces"
Submit a GitHub Issue:
https://github.com/usgeospatial/citySDK/issues

CitySDK Project Page:
https://github.com/usgeospatial/citySDK

Census Developer Portal:
https://www.census.gov/developers/

Where to go for more information