

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 12 Marks the Beginning of the 2020 Census

Local Leaders Kick Off Online Response Phase with Real Stories Campaign

Phoenix, Ariz.—March 10, 2020—If Arizona achieves an accurate population count in the upcoming 2020 Census, the state stands to receive roughly \$20 billion in federal funding and an additional seat in Congress. This monumental effort starts with the availability of the first-ever online census form scheduled to be live across the U.S. starting March 12. In the Maricopa region, it also coincides with the introduction of the *iCount2020* ‘real stories’ campaign featuring short stories about people who live and work in local communities that see the value in participating in the 2020 Census and are eager to share that message.

“We are almost to the start of the 2020 Census and that is the reason this mass media campaign is being launched now,” said Julie Arendall, City Manager of Goodyear and Co-Chair of the Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Census Communication Group. “March is the start of the most critical time for us to connect with our communities and to inspire them to participate.”

“We have been working collectively to educate our residents about the census for months,” said Marsha Reed, City Manager of Chandler and Co-Chair of the Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Census Communication Group. “The release of real stories about people who have built their lives here and who will see the benefits from federal dollars over the next ten years as the result of an accurate census count, is timely and important.”

Six people from around the region are featured in the new *iCount2020* campaign television commercial which can be seen on the *iCount2020* Facebook page. The stories capture the diversity of the Maricopa region and are unique. The aim is to remind the public that the census impacts everyone. A short summary on each person follows:

- Breezee Morrison from Avondale is the owner of Tutu’s Hawaiian Shaved Ice. Her blended family of three are witness every day to her entrepreneurial spirit and her efforts to educate others about her Hawaiian culture.
- Marissa Kopp from Phoenix is a first-generation college graduate who is single-handedly raising a son while working as a clinical research assistant. Her research work has the potential to improve the lives of people living with liver disease.
- Russell Prim from Tempe is a music producer and a student at Arizona State University. He believes that music transcends differences and helps people connect in a very special way.
- Samantha Harris from Phoenix has devoted her life to mentoring local Native American youth. She seeks to ensure that the next generation has a support system who understands Native American heritage to bridge social, cultural and societal gaps that come with living in an urban community.
- Jonathan Buckley from Litchfield Park is a theater student who despite being in a wheelchair since birth seeks to be a pioneer for actors with disabilities and to increase their representation in films.
- Roman Reyes from Phoenix became a U.S. citizen more than 50 years ago. His love for art took him around the world to paint high-profile murals and led to his current profession teaching art at the Latino Cultural Center.

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) is a regional planning agency representing 27 cities and towns, three Native nations, Maricopa County and portions of Pinal County leading census education efforts locally. The region aims to achieve the most accurate count possible. Nearly \$3,000 in federal funding is at stake for every person counted. Learn more at www.icount2020.info.