

TESOL Statement on the Possible Addition of a Citizenship Question to the 2020 U.S. Census

9 May 2018 (*Alexandria, VA*) - TESOL International Association has serious concerns about the possibility of a citizenship question being added to the upcoming census and its potential impact on English learners and teachers. The United States Census is a high-stakes activity with a tremendous impact across publicly funded K-12 and adult education, both of which are dependent on accurate census data. Both K-12 and adult education programs serve a vital role in providing language instruction for English learners, and in the case of adult education help immigrants integrate into American society.

Furthermore, current laws make it clear that federal funding for K-12 and adult education is available for all residents, regardless of citizenship status. Adding a question to the 2020 U.S. Census that asks for an individual's current citizenship status will have a chilling effect on census participation and negatively impact the accuracy of federal education funding formulas. The association strongly urges both parties in Congress to leverage their oversight authority to avoid potential harm to public schools.