



2020 CENSUS WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Once every 10 years, the Constitution requires that there be a full count of the population residing in the country. Called the 2020 Census, the exercise will begin in mid-March 2020 – and the time to prepare for it is NOW!

An accurate census will bring important economic and political benefits to your community so be sure to respond to the invitation you receive in the mail in mid-March 2020. It is quick, easy, and safe!

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Put simply – it drives decisions that will affect economic investments in your community and the weight of your political influence until 2031! You and your family can't afford NOT be counted!

The Census determines how we share political power in our democracy. The outcome of the count in 2020 will decide the number of representatives that each state gets in the US House of Representatives and the Electoral College. It will also be used to draw political boundaries for state and local districts. In the last census, Washington gained a seat – and now has 10 representatives defending our interests in the nation's capital!

The Federal Government also uses numbers from the Census to distribute more than \$800 billion dollars in health, education, and infrastructure funds to states, counties, and cities. Locally, private and public agencies, organizations, businesses, and institutions use Census data to help determine where to build schools, roads, healthcare facilities, child care and senior centers, grocery stores, and new factories.

In 2016, Washington received \$16.7 billion of these funds – or \$2,319 per person! The funds included:

- Almost \$1 billion in transportation planning and construction
- \$8.5 billion for health programs
- \$2.4 billion for education (K-12 and higher ed)
- \$1.2 billion for housing
- \$555 million in rural assistance programs

Based on these numbers, the state would lose up to \$5.8 million for each 100 households missed in the census, which would affect our ability to support children, veterans, senior citizens, and middle- and low-income families adequately.

An accurate count of your community will ensure that you and your family get your fair share of state and federal resources and that your voice matters.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

10 questions in 10 minutes!

Beginning in mid-March 2020, the US Census Bureau will send each household a letter, inviting the household to go online (or call) and provide information about the number of people residing at that address. The questionnaire will also ask for the names, sex, age (including date of birth), and

race/ethnicity of each person living at the residence. Finally, the form will ask if residents own or rent and will ask for a phone number in case there is a need to follow up for any reason.

If you have questions about why the government wants this information, click [here](#). If you or your community need language assistance, learn about assistance provided in languages other than English and the answers to other frequently asked questions [here](#).

WHAT IS THE TIMELINE?

The process begins in mid-March 2020 and will last until the end of July.

The first mailing from the US Census Bureau will arrive at residences between March 12 and 20, and a second letter will arrive four days later. If you don't respond to the first two mailings, you will receive another three reminders in the mail. The fourth mailing will include a printed copy of the questionnaire, but you will continue to be able to respond online or by phone, as well.

If you still haven't responded by the beginning of May, a Census Bureau employee will visit your home repeatedly to attempt to collect the information needed.

IS IT SAFE?

The Census Bureau takes every effort to protect the confidentiality of your responses!

The Bureau recognizes how important accurate information is to community decision-making and planning so it doesn't want to do anything to discourage you from responding. It uses the highest levels of data security to safeguard the privacy of the information it receives. Also, there is a law that makes it illegal for anyone in the Census Bureau to use responses provided against an individual or to share the information with other agencies. In fact, the information on census forms can ONLY be used to produce statistical information about the population. The penalties for violations are severe. For more information, refer to the [Factsheet on Census and Confidentiality](#).

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP?

- Inform yourself – www.ofm.wa.gov/2020census
- Do a scan of your community
 - Who might have difficulty or be afraid to respond to the census?
 - What solutions can you devise to help overcome these difficulties for those in your community?
 - What answers can you provide to allay the concerns of your community?
- Create an inventory of all mailing lists, newsletters, recurrent communications (bills, invoices, etc.) that could be used to spread the word about the Census
- Make a list of community leaders who could develop an understanding of the importance of the census and enjoy the public trust – and educate them about the upcoming census
- Begin to develop a contact list of people who understand the importance of the census and are willing to Commit to the Census – when the time comes, contact them with reminders
- Identify places with internet access and computers/tablets to host Census Assistance Centers for those who need help completing the form online
- Recruit and educate volunteers ready to go door-to-door and staff assistance centers

For more information, contact Lisa McLean, Complete Count Committee Coordinator, lisa.mclean@ofm.wa.gov.