

Census Bureau Adapts Operations to Ensure Everyone Is Counted

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AUGUST 14, 2020 — As the U.S. Census Bureau continues to monitor the impacts COVID-19 has on 2020 Census operations, changes to operations are being deployed to ensure the safety of staff and the public while maximizing the number of households that respond on their own to the 2020 Census.

“We are taking steps and adapting our operations to make sure everyone is counted, while keeping everyone safe,” said Census Bureau Director Dr. Steven Dillingham. “Our commitment to a complete and accurate 2020 Census is absolute. In this challenging environment, we are deploying these tactics to make sure we reach every household in every community. If you haven't responded, the time to respond is now! Responding to the 2020 Census online, on paper, by phone, or in person with a census taker, helps secure vital resources for your community.”

As of today, over 63.5% of households have responded to the 2020 Census. People can still respond [online, over the phone or by mail](#) — all without having to meet a census taker.

The Census Bureau will follow up with some nonresponding households by phone.

In order to supplement our capabilities to send census takers to households in person, the Census Bureau is training census takers to follow up with households by phone. Using information provided to the Census Bureau and third-party purchased data, the Census Bureau has a strong contact list for both landlines and cellphones assigned to houses on the Census Bureau's address list. These phone calls will enable the Census Bureau to have maximum flexibility for conducting field operations and is one more method that census takers can use to reach nonresponding households. If a voicemail is available, the census taker will leave a message asking the household to call one of the Census Bureau's call centers.

Census takers have begun following up with households nationwide. Census takers will continue to follow up with nonresponding households in person and will follow CDC and local public health guidelines when they visit.

If no one is home when the census taker visits, the census taker will leave a “Notice of Visit” with information about how to respond online, by phone or by mail, to encourage response. During Census Bureau tests, the “Notice of Visit” proved successful in encouraging people to respond on their own to the census.

The Census Bureau will mail an additional paper questionnaire to nonresponding households.

To encourage more households to respond on their own to the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau is contacting nonresponding households by mailing an additional paper questionnaire to some households that have yet to respond.

The Census Bureau is sending a seventh mailing, including a paper questionnaire, in late August to early September to the lowest-responding census tracts.

The Census Bureau is emailing households in low-responding areas.

The Census Bureau recently announced that households in low-responding areas would be receiving emails to encourage response to the 2020 Census.

The emails will go to all households that the Census Bureau has contact information for in census block groups with a response rate lower than 50%. This will include households who may have already responded. In total, the Census Bureau expects to email more than 20 million households in these low-responding areas. The email messages will come from 2020census@subscriptions.census.gov and will give recipients the option to opt out of receiving future messages.

The Census Bureau is using email addresses that households have provided in response to another Census Bureau program or received from states (such as from their WIC, SNAP or TANF programs) or from a commercial list.

In addition to contacting households through these new methods, the Census Bureau is increasing other outreach efforts during one last push to encourage everyone to respond to the census online, by phone or by mail. The Census

Bureau recently announced that it has launched Mobile Questionnaire Assistance, a program that offers assistance with responding at locations, such as grocery stores and pharmacies, in low-responding areas.

Additionally, the Census Bureau has expanded its paid advertising, launching a series of new advertisements aimed at increasing online response. Now, 45 non-English languages are receiving some level of paid media support.

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Contact

Public Information Office

301-763-3030