

Tribes and the Census

2020 Census Moves into Full Swing

With the first enumeration of the 2020 Census in Toksook Bay, Alaska nearly a month ago, the nation's decennial headcount is now fully operational. Over a decade of planning, testing, a major redesign of key procedures and other preparations are now complete and the count begins in earnest.

The list below reviews the key dates for the 2020 Census and what the major operations may mean for Indian Country.

Continuing - Count in "Remote Alaska." Toksook Bay was the first Alaska Native village in "Bush Alaska" to be counted. The count is ongoing in many of the other villages. There are a total of 220 Alaska Native Village Statistical Areas in the Census Bureau's geography. Most, though not all, are off the road network that connects the major cities in the state. The Census Bureau uses special procedures in these villages involving Census enumerators going to each household and collecting the information on the Census questionnaire in person. Native people living in the major cities will be enumerated using the same procedures as those used in the "Lower 48" contiguous states.

Continuing - Recruitment of Census Enumerators. The Census Bureau needs about 500,000 enumerators for various aspects of the 2020 count. It remains behind in hiring the full number needed, even in Alaska where the enumeration is already underway. The agency is trying to hire people for temporary, part time jobs in a relatively tight labor market, but offers what it considers to be good wages based on the wage levels in the local area. Even so it continues to have problems in hiring the work force it needs.

Enumerators are particularly needed this spring to handle what the Bureau calls the "Nonresponse Followup" (NRFU) operation where the enumerators go door-to-door to attempt to interview and count the households that did not respond to earlier mailings asking them to complete a Census questionnaire.

Anyone interested can learn more and apply at <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs.html>.

Continuing - Campaign to Recruit National and Local Community Partners. In order to more effectively spread the word about why everyone, including the "hard-to-count" segments of the population, should complete their Census form, the Bureau has launched a massive campaign to recruit Census "partners" at both the national and local levels.

Partner materials explaining and promoting the 2020 Census that are focused specifically on American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) audiences are available on the Web at <https://2020census.gov/en/partners/tribal-resources.html>.

Continuing - Involvement of Complete Count Committees. Many tribes and Native organizations have joined the effort by forming or becoming members of the Complete Count Committee that coordinates promotional efforts among their members and on their reservations. To find whether your tribe or community has a Complete Count Committee, check www.Census.gov/2020ccc. Click on the appropriate state in the list. The governments and other organizations with Complete Count Committees are shown in alphabetical order, most with contact names and/or phone numbers.

Just Started - The 2020 Census Advertising Campaign. The Census Bureau has begun a massive \$500 million advertising campaign, with paid ads in major media along with Public Service Announcements and a presence on social media. The AI/AN portion of the campaign is being handled by an Indian-owned firm, G&G Advertising. The firm also played the same role in the last decennial Census. The campaign is due to run until late June.

Mailings to Households Nationwide. The official Census mailings for 2020 are due to go out during the period from March 12th to the 20th. Most of the mailings consist of a letter inviting the household to complete the Census questionnaire on-line. These provide a Web address and an ID number linked to that household. In other areas the Bureau will mail a paper copy of the questionnaire and ask the household to mail it back.

Census Day, April 1, 2020. This is officially Census day. All responses are, in theory, based on where each person was living on that day. However, the schedule involves a collection period that runs from the beginning of the first enumeration in Toksook Bay on January 21, 2020 through July 31, 2020.

Enumerators Collect Data by Visiting Households Not Contacted by Mail. Some households will not receive their Census questionnaires in the mail. Instead most of these remaining households will be contacted in person by a Census enumerator who will update the physical address of the housing unit and leave a paper questionnaire for the household to complete and mail back. That procedure is called "**update leave.**" Nearly all reservations in rural areas are in this category unless the tribe has opted for the "update enumerate" procedure described below.

The "**update enumerate**" procedure involves a Census enumerator coming to the housing unit, updating the physical address and collecting the information from the householder on the spot, recording it on a specially equipped cell phone. The phone

immediately encrypts the information and then transmits it wirelessly to a Census Bureau computer.

Most American Indians living off reservation in larger urban communities with standard street addresses will receive invitations to participate on-line.

Continuing - Effort to Reach "Hard-to-Count" Communities. This Census there is a great deal of emphasis on so-called "hard-to-count" communities. These are communities that have experienced low response rates in prior Censuses. Many reservations fall into this category. A table prepared by the Leadership Conference Education Fund shows that from 50% to nearly 80% of the American Indian/Alaska Native single or multiple race population live in "hard-to-count" Census tracts in the states of Alaska, Arizona, New Mexico and South Dakota. The percentage was from 40% to 50% in the states of Hawaii, Mississippi, Montana, North Carolina, North Dakota and Wyoming.

Members of several Committees of the Congress have urged the Census Bureau to do more to encourage persons in "hard-to-count" areas to participate, in part by using mobile Census facilities that enable persons to access computers and fill out a Census form on-line. Tribes are stepping up by placing computer kiosks in buildings where tribal people go for services to enable them to complete 2020 Census questionnaires on-line. No household IDs are required.

The 2020 Questionnaire Itself. A sample of the first three pages of the 2020 Census form is attached to this newsletter. The full questionnaire has space for detailed information on six persons in the household, and abbreviated space for four more.

There are several things to note with respect to the questions as they pertain to AI/AN respondents.

Person 1 is supposed to be the person that owns or rents the house. However, it can be any adult. The Census is a household survey, with one person answering the questions for every person in the household. The race marked for Person 1 determines the race of the family and of the household in the data the Bureau provides on AI/AN households and families. It also determines whether the housing unit is tabulated as an AI/AN housing unit.

All the race data that the Census Bureau publishes is based on **the response to the question on each person's race.** American Indian or Alaska Native is one of the five major race groups. A check of the AI/AN box on that question establishes the person as AI/AN. It is entirely a matter of self-identification; no proof of AI/AN status is sought or required.

Since the 2000 Census those responding to a Census questionnaire have been able to check the box for more than one race group. Such multi-racial persons are counted in Census tables as AI/AN "in combination" with one or more other races. They are included in Census tables as part of the AI/AN "alone or in combination" population.

However, in many of the published tables they are combined together with everyone else who has checked multiple boxes and shown only in the "Two or more races" category.

Persons checking only the AI/AN race box on the form are included in every table that the Bureau publishes with information by race.

Special Census Operations. The Census Bureau has procedures for counting persons not living in a normal housing unit, such as a house, apartment or mobile home.

For the homeless living on the street or in a shelter for the homeless, the Bureau conducts a special operation from March 30th through April 1st. Enumerators go to the places where the homeless congregate, such as shelters, soup kitchens and street and other locations to conduct the counts there.

For persons living in what the Bureau calls "Group Quarters" the Bureau may contact the persons in charge of the facilities to collect a count. In other cases, the Bureau may send in enumerators to collect data directly from the individuals living there. Group Quarters include establishments like college dormitories, assisted living facilities, jails and prisons.

The Bureau also has a special program for collecting data on **military personnel serving overseas**. Those counts are usually credited to the geographic areas where the military units are stationed in the US.

March 16 through April 27. Reminder notices are mailed to households that have not responded by filling out the questionnaire on-line or mailing back a paper copy. For the households originally invited to provide answers on-line, the Bureau will provide a paper questionnaire on the fourth mailing. Persons will be cautioned that if they do not respond, an enumerator will come to their door.

Nonresponse Followup (NRFU). This is the Census operation intended to collect information from an estimated 40% of all US households that are not expected to provide an on-line response or send in a paper form. It is the most labor-intensive and most costly aspect of the 2020 Census operations. An estimated 420,000 enumerators will be needed for this operation.

After all attempts to get a household to complete a questionnaire, enumerators take to the field to knock on doors and collect information on everyone living there. Special procedures, including the use of administrative records collected from other agencies, are used when necessary to account for every resident of the US.

The NRFU operation is scheduled to run from mid-May until the end of July.

At a later point in 2020 the Bureau is expected to conduct a "**Post-Enumeration Survey**" (PES) to produce estimates of what populations were over or undercounted in 2020.

Editing and Tabulation of Results. The Census Bureau will publish the results of the 2020 Census primarily in the form of tables, summarizing the results at a number of geographic levels. Key levels for the data on the AI/AN population include: federal and state reservations; tribal political subdivisions for the reservations that have them; former reservation areas in Oklahoma, called Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Areas or OTSAs; Alaska Native Regional Corporation (ANRC) areas; and Alaska Native Village Statistical Areas, ANVSAs.

But before the tables are prepared for public release, the Bureau implements its "**Disclosure Avoidance System (DAS)**" to insure the confidentiality of the personal information collected on a Census form. In the past, this system primarily involved swapping data from the location where the person lived to another location. Around 2016 or 2017 Census Bureau officials discovered that this relatively simple system would not do in 2020. Entities or persons with big computers and access to other governmental and commercial data bases would be able to combine information on individuals and reconstruct the personal information for those answering the Census. A new system would be necessary for 2020.

The system agreed upon is called "**Differential Privacy.**" It is a sophisticated mathematical process for injecting "noise," basically false data, into the cells of the published tables to obscure the personal information of every individual.

The process has proven to be controversial. To illustrate to data users how the use of Differential Privacy would affect the published data, the Bureau reran the results of the 2010 decennial Census, applying Differential Privacy. Data users were then able to review how this new system would affect data that they are most concerned with.

A technical work group led by Yvette Roubideaux, the Policy Research Director for NCAI, with technical help from Randy Akee, an Assistant Professor at UCLA, checked these files and found that many reservations would have had their populations undercounted had Differential Privacy been used as the Disclosure Avoidance System in 2010. Additional analysis indicated that this system would probably reduce the fund allocations of Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) and Tribal Transportation Program

(TTP) money for many Indian and Alaska Native tribes, especially those with AI/AN on reservation or Alaska Native village populations of less than 500. NCAI objected strongly and encouraged individual tribes to also object, demanding consultation and changes to avoid such undercounts in the published data from the 2020 Census.

These protests have had an effect. The highest officials at the Bureau have pledged to look at the problems and try to remedy them. The Chief Scientist for the Bureau, who is responsible for the development of the system, was quoted in the New York Times as saying that the undercounts in the demonstration files for the AI/AN population were "unacceptable."

Just how the Bureau will fix the system and whether that fix will correct the basic problems remains to be seen. Tribes and Native organizations still have time to weigh in on the issue. A sample letter on this issue can be found at <http://www.ncai.org/policy-research-center/research-data/research-recommendations> under the section on "DIFFERENTIAL PRIVACY - U.S. CENSUS BUREAU.

Release of Results from 2020 Census. The results will be released in stages.

Reapportionment Data. No later than December 31, 2020 the Census Bureau will deliver counts of the total population in each state to the President. These counts will determine how many seats each state gets in the House of Representatives. As the total number of seats is fixed at 435, shifts in the relative population among the states are expected to lead to some states losing seats, and others gaining.

Redistricting Data. The data used by states to draw the boundaries for Congressional Districts (in states with more than one seat in the House of Representatives) and for state legislative districts is released in files mandated by Public Law 94-171. This data is issued by state from January 1 to April 1, 2021. It is the first release that contains any AI/AN data.

Full Results. The main Census file with complete results, including AI/AN counts at all levels of geography, will appear in the late spring and summer of 2021 in a file now called the Demographic and Housing Characteristics File. It is unclear whether the Census Bureau will publish what has been the American Indian and Alaska Native Summary File, a file that in the past contained data for individual tribes collected on the write-in line under the AI/AN box for the race question on the Census questionnaire.

Planning for the 2030 Census. Already underway.

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Redistribution of this information is encouraged

February 20, 2020

This is the official questionnaire for this address.
It is quick and easy to respond, and your answers are protected by law.

Para completar el cuestionario en español, dele la vuelta y complete el lado verde.

FOR
OFFICIAL
USE ONLY



Start here OR go online at [url removed] to complete your 2020 Census questionnaire.

Use a blue or black pen.

Before you answer Question 1, count the people living in this house, apartment, or mobile home using our guidelines.

- Count all people, including babies, who live and sleep here most of the time.
- If no one lives and sleeps at this address most of the time, go online at [url removed] or call the number on page 8.

The census must also include people without a permanent place to live, so:

- If someone who does not have a permanent place to live is staying here on April 1, 2020, count that person.

The Census Bureau also conducts counts in institutions and other places, so:

- Do not count anyone living away from here, either at college or in the Armed Forces.
- Do not count anyone in a nursing home, jail, prison, detention facility, etc., on April 1, 2020.
- Leave these people off your questionnaire, even if they will return to live here after they leave college, the nursing home, the military, jail, etc. Otherwise, they may be counted twice.

1. How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2020?

Number of people =

2. Were there any additional people staying here on April 1, 2020 that you did not include in Question 1?

Mark all that apply.

- Children, related or unrelated, such as newborn babies, grandchildren, or foster children
- Relatives, such as adult children, cousins, or in-laws
- Nonrelatives, such as roommates or live-in babysitters
- People staying here temporarily
- No additional people

3. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home — Mark ONE box.

- Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan? *Include home equity loans.*
- Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan)?
- Rented?
- Occupied without payment of rent?

4. What is your telephone number?

We will only contact you if needed for official Census Bureau business.

Telephone Number

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