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2020 CENSUS TOOLKIT  
Updated June 2019



National  
Congress of  
American  
Indians

# AMERICAN INDIANS AND ALASKA NATIVES IN THE 2020 CENSUS



## Why is the Census important?

The census is a powerful information source that significantly influences U.S. policy. It is the foundation of American democracy, determining the allocation of Congressional seats and redistricting of voting geographies. Nearly \$1 billion in annual federal resources are allocated to Indian Country based on census data.

## Native households are at risk of being undercounted.

Nationally, the Census Bureau estimated that American Indians and Alaska Natives living on reservations or in Native villages were undercounted by approximately 4.9 percent in the 2010 census, more than double the undercount rate of the next closest population group.

## How to Be Counted as an American Indian or Alaska Native

Saying that you're American Indian or Alaska Native on the 2020 census form is a matter of self-identification. No proof is required. No one will ask you to show a tribal enrollment card or a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB).

## Helpful Tips for Tribal People and Tribal Households

### Householder Question

Whether a household is counted as an American Indian or Alaska Native household depends entirely on the race of "Person 1" the first person listed on the census form. If that person says he or she is American Indian or Alaska Native, then the household will be counted as one with an American Indian or Alaska Native "householder."

### Option to Check Multiple Race Boxes

In 2000, the Census Bureau introduced a big wrinkle in the data for the Native population. Following a policy laid out by OMB in 1997, anyone filling out a census form (or other federal form) can check off more than one box on the race question.

This option to check off multiple races means that an American Indian and Alaska Native person can identify as both Native and as a member of another race, such as white, Black or Asian.

- If the person checks off only the American Indian or Alaska Native box on the form, the person counts as American Indian or Alaska Native "Alone," meaning that this is the person's only race. If the person checks the American Indian or Alaska Native box and one or more boxes for another race, the person is included in the count as American Indian or Alaska Native "Alone or in Combination" (with one or more other races.)

- The Census Bureau does publish information on the "Alone or in Combination" population. However, many standard profiles of the population lump those who check American Indian or Alaska Native and another racial group into a single category as "Two or More Races," along with all non-Indians who also report multiple races.

*The only way to ensure that you are included in all the counts as American Indian or Alaska Native is to check just that one box on the form.*

## The instruction is pretty simple.

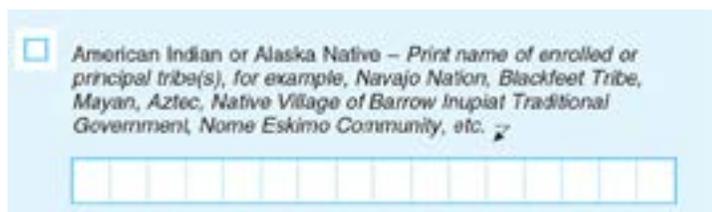
After checking the box to identify your race as American Indian or Alaska Native on your 2020 Census form, print the name of your “enrolled or principal tribe.”

That should be an easy matter for American Indian or Alaska Native people.

The basic federal law setting out U.S. Indian policy defines an Indian person as “a member of an Indian tribe.” Historically, the government dealt with Indian people as part of a tribe or a band of a tribe. Treaties were made with tribes.

Membership in an Indian tribe is determined by a process called “enrollment.” Each tribe uses an enrollment process, applying specific eligibility criteria to determine who belongs to that tribe. Tribal members are citizens of a tribal government, with voting rights and other privileges according to the tribe’s constitution and/or ordinances. The situation of Alaska Natives is similar. Enrollment is a common practice among the 229 tribes in Alaska, based on the government-to-government relationship with the federal government.

The instructions on the 2020 Census form asks the person to list the name of his or her enrolled (or principal) tribe. It’s important that the tribal name that’s used be the proper name of the tribal government involved even if that takes up more than the space provided on the form. This is true with respect to tribal government names in Alaska as well as those in the “lower 48.”



American Indian or Alaska Native – Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. 

There may be other ways to identify a person’s tribe by its general name, such as O’odham, Salish or Ojibwe or even by a specific band of the tribe, such as Miniconjou (Mnikoju) Sioux. However, when it comes time for the Census Bureau to tally

persons by tribe, there will be no confusion if the person lists the proper name of the tribal government in which he or she is enrolled.

Many Indian people can claim descent from several tribes. Their parents or grandparents may have belonged to different tribes. However, most tribes currently do not permit “dual enrollment,” membership in more than one tribe. The tribe in which the person is enrolled should be the tribe listed.

As far as the Census Bureau is concerned, the listing of a person’s tribe is entirely a matter of what the person writes in the blank line provided on the census form. No proof of the person’s relationship to that tribe is required. It’s all a matter of self-identification.

### *What are the benefits of listing your tribe?*

The Census Bureau uses the information that people provide on the census form to tabulate statistics on how many people are associated with a tribe or a group of tribes sharing a similar language or other characteristics. This data can help to provide an idea of the number of persons associated with a tribe living in a particular city or other off-reservation area. Even on a reservation there may be a significant number of Indian people who are not enrolled in the tribe with jurisdiction over that reservation. These show up in the Census Bureau’s numbers on the Indians on a reservation when tabulated by tribe. Tribes, planners, grant writers, and others can use this information to supplement enrollment data and other data sources.

*At the same time, it is important to recognize that only a tribe’s enrollment office not the Census Bureau has the official count of the number of members of that tribe. The right to determine who belongs to an Indian tribe is a fundamental aspect of tribal sovereignty and is held exclusively by each and every tribe.*

# WHY CENSUS IS IMPORTANT TO INDIAN COUNTRY



## Did you know...

- Census data is the basis for over \$1 billion dollars that annually flows into Indian Country to build tribal housing and make improvements, maintain and construct roads, and provide employment and training programs.
- American Indians and Alaska Natives historically have experienced some of the highest Census undercounts of any population in the U.S. – a notable percentage of Natives on reservations were missed in the 1990 Census compared to 1.2 percent of all people in the U.S. and about 4.9 percent of tribal people on-reservation were missed in 2000.
- American Indians were generally not counted up until 1890 and then substantially undercounted until about 1980 when all U.S. residents were allowed to indicate their own race rather than having it determined by a census enumerator.
- Census answers are private and confidential: by law, the Census Bureau cannot share an individual's or a household's answers with any person or agency, e.g. not the IRS, not law enforcement entities, nor tribal housing authorities.

## Why should you be counted in the 2020 Census?

**Power:** In the same way that Native people have begun to flex our muscles at the polls through Native Vote, it is time for tribal citizens to be fully counted in the 2020 Census. An accurate count of American Indians and Alaska Natives is necessary for the upcoming state redistricting processes. The same skills and tools that tribes used in recent Native Vote campaigns are valuable to census outreach and the Indian Country Counts efforts.

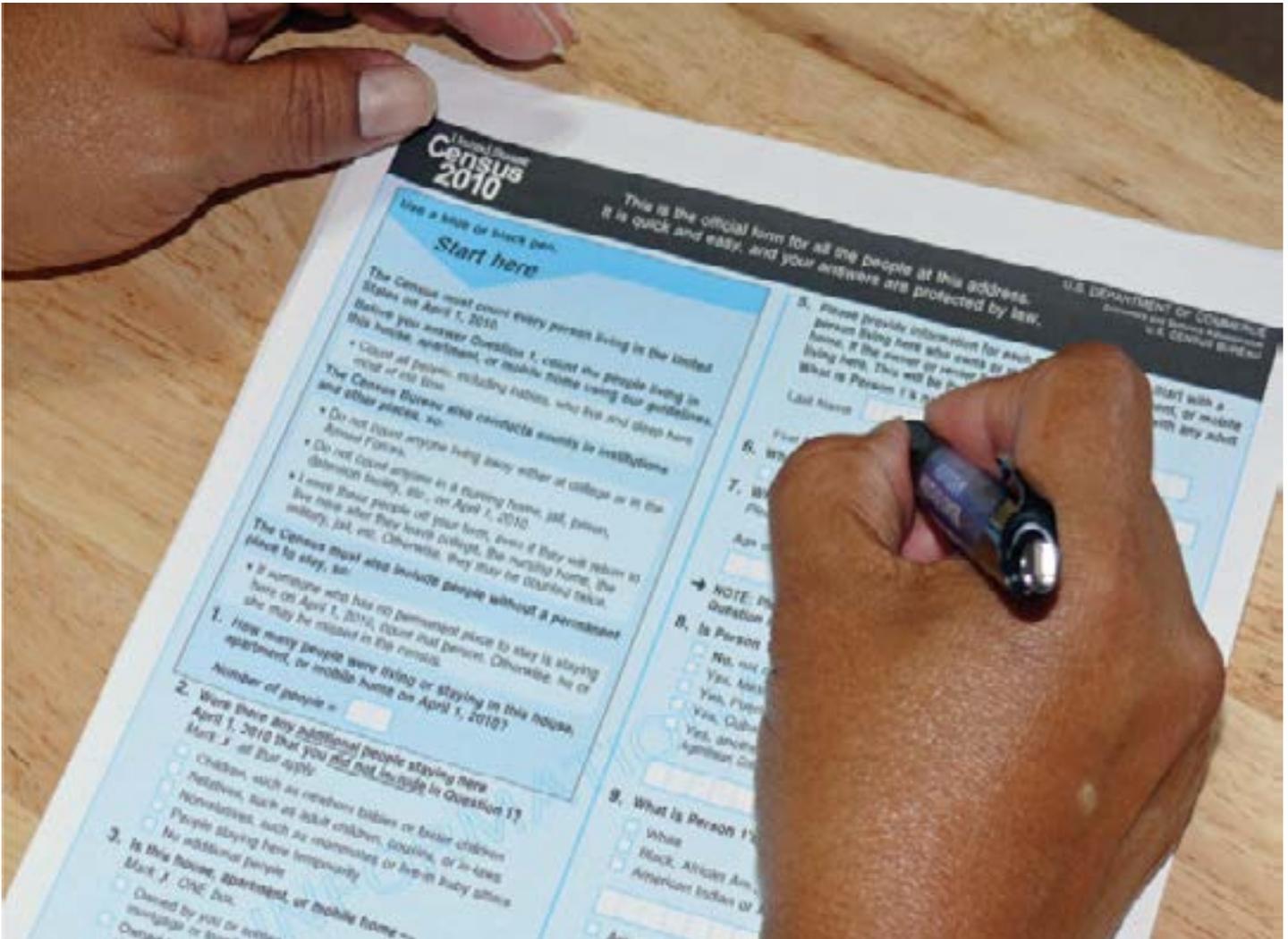
**Funding and Community Resources:** Being counted as Native will directly benefit you, your family and your tribal community.

The census taken every ten years is the only uniform count of the U.S. population, producing figures for the nation as a

whole and for every geographic area within it down to the smallest American Indian reservation and Alaska Native village. The census is the only source of this kind of data, with thousands of uses that benefit all American Indians and Alaska Natives. Just a few of the potential uses of census data include:

- **Analyzing the need for Head Start services in each area of a reservation.** The census provides counts of American Indian and Alaska Native children for every community within an American Indian or Alaska Native area.
- **Planning the development of facilities for tribal elders.** By showing the distribution of American Indian and Alaska Native people by age, census figures can help to determine appropriate locations for community facilities in Native areas.
- **Strengthening programs for tribal members living in the big cities.** Census numbers provide the only detailed profiles available of off-reservation American Indian and Alaska Native people, profiles used by the urban Native centers that serve them.
- **Helping tribal government agencies and tribally-based nonprofits, such as Boys and Girls Clubs, to raise money.** Census data is used in countless proposals to federal, state and local agencies, as well as to private foundations, to create and expand programs for Native people.
- **Building political clout.** Census numbers are used not only to determine how many seats each state gets in Congress, but to draw boundary lines for Congressional, state and local legislative districts.
- **Supporting reservation economic development.** Tribal entrepreneurs and prospective investors use statistics about the size of the potential market for local services, along with the size of the potential labor force needed to produce the goods and services a business might offer.

# WHY CENSUS IS IMPORTANT TO INDIAN COUNTRY



If you, members of your family, friends and neighbors refuse to be counted or are missed:

- This denies your community money to which it is entitled on the basis of its population size.
- This reduces the political representation of your community in the Congress, as well as state and local legislative bodies.
- This leads to poor judgments in planning community services and facilities and in locating new business enterprises.

Participating in the census by completing your household's questionnaire is easy. The form is short and simple, asking only basic questions about each person's sex, age and race and whether the house, apartment or mobile home is owned or rented. It should take the average household only about ten minutes to complete the form.

*Being counted means standing up for yourself, your family and your tribal community as an American Indian or Alaska Native.*

# HOW TO BE COUNTED AS AN AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE

**Come Census time**, it's very important that every American Indian and Alaska Native person is counted and counted as an American Indian or Alaska Native. The way a person is counted as American Indian or Alaska Native is simply by checking off the box that says "American Indian or Alaska Native" on the Census form. The box is under the question about the person's race.

The question looks like this:

**What is this person's race?**  
Mark  one or more boxes **AND** print origins.

White – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc.

Black or African Am. – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc.

American Indian or Alaska Native – Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.

<input type="checkbox"/> Chinese	<input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese	<input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian
<input type="checkbox"/> Filipino	<input type="checkbox"/> Korean	<input type="checkbox"/> Samoan
<input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian	<input type="checkbox"/> Japanese	<input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian – Print, for example, Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc. <input type="text"/>		<input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander – Print, for example, Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc. <input type="text"/>

Some other race – Print race or origin.

Saying that you're American Indian or Alaska Native on the 2020 Census form is a matter of self-identification. No proof is required. No one will ask you to show a tribal enrollment card or a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB).

# HOW TO BE COUNTED AS AN AMERICAN INDIAN OR ALASKA NATIVE

## Helpful Tips for Tribal People and Tribal Households:

### *Householder Question:*

Whether a household is counted as an American Indian or Alaska Native household depends entirely on the race of “Person 1” -- the first person listed on the census form. If that person says he or she is American Indian or Alaska Native, then the household will be counted as one with an American Indian or Alaska Native “householder.”

### *Census Definition of American Indian/Alaska Native:*

The Census Bureau uses the definition of American Indian or Alaska Native published by the US Office of Management and Budget (OMB): “A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America), and who maintains tribal affiliation or community attachment.”

This definition of who’s Indian is quite different than the one in federal law that says an Indian person is a member of an Indian tribe. What gives American Indian and Alaska Native people special status in law is a political relationship -- as a member of a Native governmental entity -- not who one’s ancestors are. Simply saying that one is Indian on a census form does not convey any special relationship or privileges.

### *Option to Check Multiple Race Boxes:*

In 2000, the Census Bureau introduced a big wrinkle in the data for the Native population. Following a policy laid out by OMB in 1997, anyone filling out a census form (or other federal form) can check off more than one box on the race question. This option to check off multiple races means that an American Indian and Alaska Native person can identify as both Native and as a member of another race, such as white, Black or Asian.

If the person checks off only the American Indian or Alaska Native box on the form, the person counts as American Indian or Alaska Native “Alone,” meaning that this is the person’s only race. If the person checks the American Indian or Alaska Native box and one or more boxes for another race, the person is included in the count as American Indian or Alaska Native “in combination” with one or more other races. Persons recorded as American Indian or Alaska Native “in combination” are included in counts of American Indian/Alaska Native persons “alone or in combination,” in effect the sum of the “alone” count and the “in combination” count.

The Census Bureau does publish information on the “Alone or in Combination” population. However, many standard profiles of the population lump those who check American Indian or Alaska Native and another racial group into a single category as “Two or More Races,” along with all non-Indians who also report multiple races.

The only way to ensure that you are included in all the counts as American Indian or Alaska Native is to check just that one box on the form.

# IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND NCAI RESOURCES



The goal in designing the 2020 Census was to keep it simple.

There are only a few straight-forward questions. The wording of all but one of these questions was thoroughly tested to be sure that everyone understands them the same way. Only 10 minutes is required for the average household to fill out the census form.

But sometimes even the simplest questions can be complicated. Every household's situation is different. Individual circumstances may not fit the questions. For example, the instructions on the form say not to count those who are living away at college. What about younger students in boarding school?

Other things can happen. Maybe you misplaced your questionnaire. Maybe your grandmother never got one. When issues like these arise, where can you go for help?

To begin with, there are probably people nearby or available on the phone that can help.

- **Questionnaire Assistance Centers will be available.** These are centers that people can call for information on the questionnaire and can provide the answers to the questionnaire while on the phone. They are scheduled to open in February of 2020.

- **The Census Bureau has invited every tribal government to appoint a Census Tribal Liaison.** That person serves as the official connection between the tribe and the Census Bureau. He or she has received special training in what the census is about and how it's conducted. Checking with that person at the tribal offices may

get you the help you need or at least point you in the right direction. Tribal Liaisons are on the job now.

- **It's possible that a friend or relative may have a job as a temporary census worker.** If so, you can ask them to explain anything you don't understand. They will have received special training on the census form and census procedures.

**The Census Bureau and NCAI can help in a number of ways.**

- The Census Bureau is opening local offices to help take the count. Check the phone listings in your area under U.S. government to see if there's an Area Census Office nearby.

- In the more remote rural areas, census workers will come to the door to deliver the questionnaire. You can ask them questions at that time. Census workers will also do door-to-door follow up visits to households that don't return the census form.

- Online: One of the most important sources of help directly from the Census Bureau is the agency's Web site: [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov). This will tell you more than you ever thought there was to know about the 2020 Census.

There are lots of ways to get help concerning the census. Some, like the Questionnaire Assistance Center and [www.IndianCountryCounts.org](http://www.IndianCountryCounts.org) and [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov), don't even require you to leave your house. Don't let an unanswered question keep you from being counted in the 2020 Census.

## Other Census Resources:

Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights: [www.civilrights.org](http://www.civilrights.org) -- NCAI is part of the Leadership Conference, a major resource in fighting for a fair count of American Indians and Alaska Natives and other undercounted groups in the 2020 Census. Their website provides a comprehensive 2020 Census toolkit with a civil rights focus on being counted in 2020. The Web site includes an excellent Fact Sheet on American Indians and Alaska Natives in the 2020 Census.

The Census Project: <https://thecensusproject.org/> -- A collaboration of a number of census stakeholders representing a broad range of organizations and issue areas. The Census Project website includes daily news updates, fact sheets about hard-to-count communities, podcasts with census experts, and contact information for national organizations who are working to ensure an accurate count.

# IS YOUR COMMUNITY HARD-TO-COUNT?



**The Census Bureau** and its partners have devoted a lot of energy to identifying areas where people are more likely to be undercounted without special effort. That research is being used to shape the Census Bureau's decisions about where to advertise and hire temporary staff. Their analysis can also help local organizations and activists decide where outreach and communications strategies should be targeted. Solid evidence shows that targeted outreach can make a difference.

A variety of characteristics are considered in designating areas, usually census tracts, as Hard-to-Count (HTC) areas. These include areas with high rates of poverty, lower levels of educational attainment, renters or others likely to have trouble meeting housing costs, and age, with a high percentage of young children likely to be undercounted. Reservation areas tend to have large percentages of their American Indian/Alaska Native population in these categories.

The table on the next page is from the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, shows the number and percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives, by state, in Hard-to-Count (HTC) Census Tracts.

Special efforts need to be made to reach Native people in Hard-To-Count areas and persuade them to complete and return their 2020 Census forms. The first step is to identify where these populations are and what services they are likely to use.

Several possible approaches include:

- Messages inserted in notices of per capita distributions.
- Posters and flyers placed in health clinics.
- Take home materials left with children in local schools with high percentages of Native children.
- Special materials sent to off-reservation members not likely to attend events promoting census participation held on the reservation.

Reaching the hardest to count of the American Indian and Alaska Native population is perhaps the most difficult and, at the same time, most rewarding activity in promoting the 2020 Census.

# IS YOUR COMMUNITY HARD-TO-COUNT?

## States with Number and Percent of American Indian/Alaska Natives

(State alone or in combination) (Including Alaska Court of Claims; Census Tract 800)

State	Number of American Indian/Alaska Natives	Percent of Total Population	Percent of Total American Indian/Alaska Native Population
Alabama	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Alaska	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Arizona	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Arkansas	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
California	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Colorado	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Connecticut	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Delaware	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Florida	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Georgia	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Hawaii	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Idaho	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Illinois	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Indiana	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Iowa	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Kansas	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Kentucky	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Louisiana	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Maine	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Maryland	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Massachusetts	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Michigan	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Minnesota	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Mississippi	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Missouri	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Montana	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Nebraska	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Nevada	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
New Hampshire	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
New Jersey	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
New Mexico	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
New York	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
North Carolina	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
North Dakota	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Ohio	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Oklahoma	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Oregon	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Pennsylvania	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Rhode Island	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
South Carolina	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
South Dakota	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Tennessee	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Texas	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Utah	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Vermont	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Virginia	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Washington	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
West Virginia	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Wisconsin	1,000	0.00%	0.00%
Wyoming	1,000	0.00%	0.00%

# 2020 CENSUS TIMELINE & KEY DATES



**Although** the census does not take place until 2020, census operations (including recruitment, and address canvassing a partnership program) began in November 2018. Below is a timeline of major census operations leading up to Census Day - April 1, 2020 - and several follow-up operations.

## Preparation

- **January – March 2019:** The U.S. Census Bureau opens 39 Area Census Offices. These offices open early to support Address Canvassing.
- **June – September 2019:** The Census Bureau opens the remaining 209 Area Census Offices. The offices support and manage the census takers who work all over the country to conduct the census.
- **August 2019:** The Census Bureau conducts in-field address canvassing. Census workers go door to door to update address lists that could not be verified through an in-office canvassing operation. The Census Bureau updates the agency's Master Address File and maps to include areas that have added or lost housing in recent years, as well as shelters, soup kitchens, and mobile food vans for service-based enumeration and to ensure that the Census Bureau's address list is up to date.

## Filling Out the Census Form

- **January 2020:** The Census Bureau begins counting the population in remote Alaska, beginning in Toksook Bay, a Yupik Alaska Native village in southwest Alaska.
- **Mid-March 2020:** Households will receive mail inviting them to respond to the census on-line, by using a paper form or by phone.
- **April 1, 2020:** Census Day is observed nationwide.

## Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU)

- **May – July 2020:** Census workers visit all addresses that did not return a questionnaire online or mail back a paper census questionnaire and collect information at the door. The Census Bureau estimates that more than a third of addresses will not return a form.
- **Late April – August 2020:** Coverage follow-up – Questionnaire Assistance Centers contact households with more than six occupants and those whose forms indicate that someone may have been included or excluded erroneously to collect missing information, clarify information, and ensure that hard-to-count households are accurately counted.

## Wrap-up of 2020 Census

- **August – October 2020:** Census Coverage Measurement survey will estimate how many people were missed or counted twice during the direct counting operations. Estimates of accuracy will be published in 2022.
- **December 2020:** The Census Bureau delivers apportionment counts to the president.
- **March 2021:** Census Bureau completes delivery of redistricting data to states.
- **Summer 2021:** Tables with the full results of the 2020 Census are issued.

This “timeline and key dates” information is also available at [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov) and at [IndianCountryCounts.org](https://IndianCountryCounts.org).



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