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OUR FUTURE.

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 estimates 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.*





# WHY THE 2020 CENSUS IS IMPORTANT TO INDIAN COUNTRY

## Did you know...

- Census data is the basis for the allocation of more than \$675 billion annually, of which \$1 billion is dedicated to Indian Country. These funds are used to build tribal housing and make improvements, maintain and construct roads, and provide employment and training programs.
- American Indian and Alaska Natives were not counted in the first six censuses from 1790 through 1850. Since that time, they have been at risk for undercounts for various reasons, including: miscategorizing mixed race American Indians, language barriers, resistance to federal government activities, and lack of culturally knowledgeable Census takers.<sup>1</sup>
- 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.
- In recent censuses, American Indians and Alaska Natives living on reservations have experienced some of the highest estimated net undercounts of any demographic group in the U.S., such as 4.88% in the 2010 Census.

## 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 general census outreach and formal Indian Country Counts efforts.

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

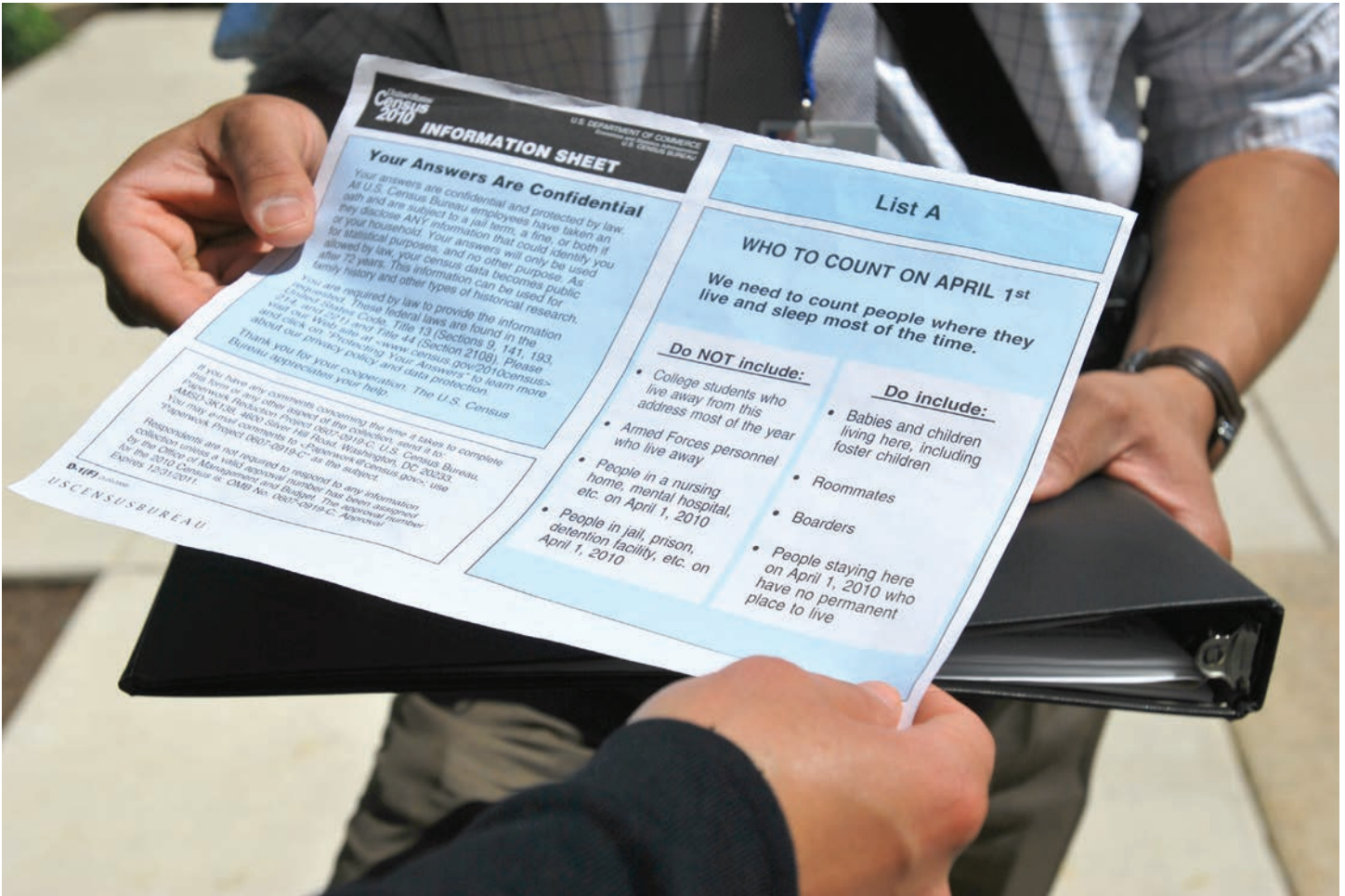
<sup>1</sup><https://www.census.gov/srd/papers/pdf/ev90-19.pdf>

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. Below are just a few of the potential uses of Census data:

- **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 tribal areas.
- **Strengthening programs for tribal citizens 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 non-profits, 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 secure funding 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



# WHY THE 2020 CENSUS IS IMPORTANT TO INDIAN COUNTRY



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

- produce the goods and services a business might offer.
- Denies your community money to which it is entitled on the basis of its population size.
- Reduces the political representation of your community in the Congress, as well as state and local legislative bodies.
- 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

The race question will remain the same for the American Indian and Alaska Native population. Census data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population and tribal affiliations are currently collected by a check box and write-in space under the race question, where they can write the name of their tribe.

A major innovation for the 2020 Census is the planned use of the internet as a mechanism for responding. However, the Census Bureau acknowledges that many American Indian and Alaska Native populations live in rural areas with Internet connectivity challenges and lower rates of computer usage compared to other areas.

**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, <i>Pakistani, Cambodian, Hmong, etc.</i> | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander - Print, for example, <i>Tongan, Fijian, Marshallese, etc.</i> |  |

Some other race - Print race or origin

The 2020 Race question will allow up to 200 characters to be captured on all modes of collection (paper, telephone, internet, or nonresponse followup enumeration). The Census Bureau will code and classify up to six identities per write-in line, which includes up to six tribal identities.

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. One of the most important ways for a person to be counted as American Indian or Alaska Native is by checking 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

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 include 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.

# IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND NCAI RESOURCES



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

There are only a few, straight-forward questions. The wording of these questions was thoroughly tested to be sure that everyone understands them the same way. While most households will only require 10-15 minutes to fill out the Census form, there are some households may require additional time. It is important for the Census Bureau to count everyone in the household.

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.

- Census Questionnaire Assistance Contact 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. For more information go to the [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov) website.

## 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 [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov) website for updated information.

- In 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



# IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND NCAI RESOURCES

help directly from the Census Bureau is the agency's website: [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov). This will tell you more than you ever thought there was to know about the 2020 Census.

- NCAI's Indian Country Counts initiative also offers a number of useful resources. If you need to contact NCAI, email us at [census@ncai.org](mailto:census@ncai.org) or call at (202) 466-7767.

There are lots of ways to get help concerning the Census. Some, like the Census Questionnaire Assistance Contact Center, [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. Its website provides a comprehensive Census 2020 toolkit with a civil rights focus on being counted in 2020. The website 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.



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# 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 unless focused attention is given. 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, and shows the number and percentage 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 HTC 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.

## Possible approaches include:

- 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.
- Messages inserted in notices of per capita distributions.

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

(race alone or in combination\*) living in Hard-to-Count (HTC) Census Tracts\*\*

| State                | American Indian/Alaska Native population (alone or in combination with other races) | American Indian/Alaska Native population (alone or in combination with other races) living in HTC tracts** | Percent of American Indian/Alaska Native population (alone or in combination with other races) living in HTC tracts** |
|----------------------|---|--|---|
| Alabama              | 58,251  | 9,711  | 16.7  |
| Alaska               | 141,686   | 92,990   | 65.6  |
| Arizona              | 360,878   | 245,636  | 68.1  |
| Arkansas             | 49,291  | 6,109  | 12.4  |
| California           | 719,301   | 199,314  | 27.7  |
| Colorado             | 111,240   | 26,977   | 24.3  |
| Connecticut          | 33,311  | 10,974   | 32.9  |
| Delaware             | 8,840   | 1,572  | 17.8  |
| District of Columbia | 6,122   | 1,143  | 18.7  |
| Florida              | 156,000   | 26,471   | 17  |
| Georgia              | 80,271  | 21,262   | 26.5  |
| Hawaii               | 32,989  | 13,684   | 41.5  |
| Idaho                | 37,946  | 8,030  | 21.2  |
| Illinois             | 92,173  | 17,690   | 19.2  |
| Indiana              | 54,186  | 6,000  | 11.1  |
| Iowa                 | 26,907  | 2,027  | 7.5   |
| Kansas               | 61,363  | 6,386  | 10.4  |
| Kentucky             | 32,682  | 4,098  | 12.5  |
| Louisiana            | 59,279  | 21,079   | 35.6  |
| Maine                | 22,021  | 3,586  | 16.3  |
| Maryland             | 58,236  | 7,301  | 12.5  |
| Massachusetts        | 45,803  | 15,129   | 33  |
| Michigan             | 144,952   | 11,997   | 8.3   |
| Minnesota            | 103,666   | 10,253   | 9.9   |
| Mississippi          | 23,962  | 10,858   | 45.3  |
| Missouri             | 78,508  | 8,291  | 10.6  |
| Montana              | 81,695  | 40,779   | 49.9  |
| Nebraska             | 30,206  | 6,925  | 22.9  |
| Nevada               | 55,498  | 16,765   | 30.2  |
| New Hampshire        | 10,823  | 1,685  | 15.6  |
| New Jersey           | 61,264  | 17,087   | 27.9  |
| New Mexico           | 215,596   | 169,384  | 78.6  |
| New York             | 193,357   | 89,119   | 46.1  |
| North Carolina       | 190,209   | 44,277   | 23.3  |
| North Dakota         | 47,287  | 19,237   | 40.7  |
| Ohio                 | 96,544  | 19,174   | 19.9  |
| Oklahoma             | 512,490   | 228,055  | 44.5  |
| Oregon               | 117,337   | 18,109   | 15.4  |
| Pennsylvania         | 88,782  | 19,141   | 21.6  |
| Rhode Island         | 13,132  | 5,212  | 39.7  |
| South Carolina       | 43,007  | 4,346  | 10.1  |
| South Dakota         | 86,811  | 45,492   | 52.4  |
| Tennessee            | 62,985  | 8,184  | 13  |
| Texas                | 321,654   | 76,520   | 23.8  |
| Utah                 | 50,536  | 15,587   | 30.8  |
| Vermont              | 7,935   | 946  | 11.9  |
| Virginia             | 81,614  | 13,795   | 16.9  |
| Washington           | 206,860   | 39,598   | 19.1  |
| West Virginia        | 19,768  | 4,962  | 25.1  |
| Wisconsin            | 92,606  | 27,893   | 30.1  |
| Wyoming              | 21,235  | 9,250  | 43.6  |
| Total                | 5,309,095   | 1,730,090  | 32.6  |

\* Anyone who marked American Indian/Alaska Native is included in this table even if they marked another race in addition to American Indian/Alaska Native. Also anyone who marked Hispanic in addition to American Indian/Alaska Native is included in this table.

\*\* In this table, Hard-to-Count Census Tracts are those in the bottom 20 percent of 2010 Census Mail Return Rates (i.e. Mail Return Rates of 73 percent or less) or tracts for which a mail return rate is not applicable because they were enumerated in 2010 using the special Update/Enumerate method."

Source: Population totals in this table are from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2011-2015 American Community Survey estimates.

# 2020 CENSUS TIMELINE & KEY DATES

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

## 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 online, through 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 [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov) and at [www.IndianCountryCounts.org](http://www.IndianCountryCounts.org).





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