



# — The U.S. — CENSUS TOOLKIT

*FOR WASHINGTON STATE AGENCIES*

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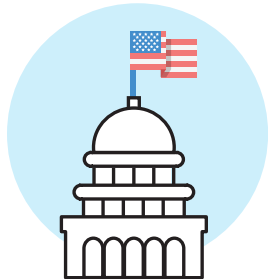
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To download this document and find other toolkits online, visit [ofm.wa.gov/census2020](https://ofm.wa.gov/census2020).

# Introduction



**\$16.7  
BILLION**  
IN FY 2016



The U.S. Constitution requires a count of the United States' population every 10 years. The goal is to tally every resident.

Collecting accurate information on everyone who lives in Washington is important to the future of our state, ensuring we receive our fair share of federal dollars for vital community programs. In 2016 alone, Washington received [\\$16.7 billion in federal assistance](#), based on data collected during the 2010 census.

The census also determines the number of representatives each state has in Congress, which can make a difference when it comes to issues important to Washingtonians.

Beginning in March 2020, all households will receive a mailing from the U.S. Census Bureau asking them to take the census online or by phone. Each household will be asked to provide details about people who reside in the household "most of the time" as of April 1, 2020, the official "Census Day."

Despite its importance, some individuals are reluctant to take the census. That's where you come in. State agencies serve millions of people, giving us opportunities to encourage people to take the census, to answer questions and to break down barriers to participation.

# How to use this toolkit

[The governor has asked all state agencies to promote the census](#) to their employees and to the public. This 2020 U.S. Census Toolkit for Washington state agencies provides resources to help you do that.

We hope that you will find the information and resources in this document useful as you develop strategies to reach out to your employees and clients about the importance of taking the census.

## 5 communication phases

Education Phase	Awareness Phase	Motivation Phase	Reminder Phase	Thank you Phase
through Fall 2019	late 2019 – April 2020	March – May 2020	May – July 2020	starts July 2020

## Contact

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# About the 2020 U.S. Census

## When does the census begin?

Starting in March 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will begin to contact households through a series of mailings. You can find other key dates in the information that follows.

## How does the census gather data?

2020 will be the first year the census form may be completed online, using a computer, tablet or smartphone. People also may respond by phone or by using a paper form they return through the mail.

Federal law protects the confidentiality of the data that is collected.

## How long does it take to complete the census and who fills it out?

It takes about 10 minutes to answer the 10 questions, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. One person living in the household fills it out for everyone.

## What happens when the count isn't accurate?

With every census, some individuals are hard to locate, contact and/or interview. Avoiding an undercount requires extensive outreach to people deemed hardest to count. The Census Bureau explains that among these individuals are those who may be suspicious of the government and/or the census; racial and ethnic minorities; people with limited English proficiency; immigrants; people who are low income or homeless; people who move often; and small children.

Undercounting these individuals who can be among the state's most vulnerable means they will not be adequately factored into decision making on resource distribution and congressional representation.

## Who uses census data?

- Federal grantors, such as the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.
- Organizations that draw voter boundaries for everything from local elections to the state legislature to Congress.
- Businesses deciding where to build factories, offices and stores.
- Citizens and citizen organizations identifying community needs, requesting funding for programs and putting forth community initiatives involving legislation, quality-of-life issues and consumer advocacy.
- Developers when deciding where to undertake housing projects.
- Local governments for public safety and emergency preparedness.
- Transportation planners when determining public transit routes.

The data the census collects will influence decision making for the next 10 years. Our state has a vested interest in ensuring everyone is counted.

## 2020 census challenges

Among some populations, there is a growing fear and mistrust of government. They:

- Lack confidence in the privacy guarantees related to individual responses.
- Are suspicious that information could be used against them.
- Are fearful that information could be shared with other federal or state agencies.

There is a lack of awareness of the impact of the census on the distribution of political power and economic resources.

There is a digital divide for those with less access to or less versatility and comfort with the internet.

There is concern that federal funds and planning for the 2020 census are inadequate to guarantee an accurate count of the whole population.

# Important dates for the 2020 census

March 12–20	Mailing 1 sent to homes
March 16–24	Mailing 2 sent to those who do not respond
March 26–April 3	Mailing 3 (reminder postcard) sent to those who do not respond
March	Counting begins in locations such as recreational vehicle parks, campgrounds, marinas, hotels
March	Counting begins for those living in group quarters such as dormitories, nursing homes and homeless shelters
April 1	Census Day
Early April–late July	Nonresponse follow-up
April 8–16	Mailing 4, letter and paper questionnaire sent to those who have not yet responded
April 20–27	Mailing 5, “It’s not too late!” postcard
Early May	U.S. Census Bureau will send its representatives, called enumerators, to households that have not yet responded
End of July	Census count ends
Dec. 31	Census Bureau transmits state population totals and congressional apportionment to the president

# How your agency can help

## Develop a work plan

Use the [state agency work plan template](#) to fill in details and develop a timeline for your agency's 2020 census activities.

Your work plan should address internal and external efforts to promote the census, with special consideration given to addressing historically undercounted populations. [Developing an Outreach Plan for the 2020 Census](#) is a useful document to help you with your agency's outreach planning.

**Please be sure your plan covers all five phases:**

- education phase (through fall 2019)
- awareness phase (late 2019–April 2020)
- motivation phase (March–May 2020)
- reminder phase (May–July 2020)
- thank you phase (starts July 2020)

You already have on hand many of the tools you need: websites, social media, newsletters, reader boards, conferences, staff meetings, community outreach events and the like.

The No. 1 thing state employees can do is complete the census for their households. They also can educate themselves about the census, so they can be “census ambassadors” in their communities.

## Follow through on your work plan

Be sure your employees, especially your front-line staff, promote the census.

Your staff who have regular contact with the public should be prepared to answer FAQs about the census. Please see the [frequently asked questions section of this document](#).

# Resources and statistics

## Federal Government

[U.S. Census Bureau](#)

[2020 census outreach materials](#) from the U.S. Census Bureau

## Washington State

[2020 Census Website](#) Washington State Office of Financial Management

Statistics on census-driven federal funding for Washington state:

- [Washington's revenue from 55 federal spending programs in 2016](#)
- [Distribution by state in 2016 of six rural assistance programs](#)
- [Washington's revenues from 16 of the largest federal assistance programs in 2015](#)
- [65 federally funded projects in Washington state](#)

[County demographics and internet availability](#)

[Complete Count committees](#) at the state, county, city and tribal levels bring together community leaders to encourage Washington state's diverse communities to participate in the census to ensure a complete count of residents in a specific area.

# Frequently asked questions

*Your family, friends, neighbors and coworkers may have questions about the census. Here are answers to some of those most frequently asked.*

## Why does the U.S. Census Bureau ask these questions?

The U.S. Census Bureau uses the information that it collects for federal programs. [The Census Bureau fact sheet](#) explains the importance of each question that will appear on the 2020 census form.

## Are my answers safe and secure?

The Census Bureau collects data only for statistical purposes. It combines your responses with information from other households to produce statistics, which never identify your household or any person in your household. Federal law makes it clear your information is confidential and that the Census Bureau will never identify you individually. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both. Here is more information about [confidentiality in English](#) and [in Spanish](#).

## How do I distinguish between an authentic U.S. Census Bureau contact and fraudulent activity or scams?

The U.S. Census Bureau will never ask for:

- your Social Security number
- your mother's maiden name
- money or donations
- credit card or bank account information
- your personal information through email

A field representative will always have official census ID if they come to your house.

## What does “residence” mean and how do I count the “residents” in my house?

The U.S. Census Bureau defines residence as the place where people live and sleep most of the time, but sometimes that simple definition is not enough. [2020 Census Residence Criteria and Residence Situations](#) answers many questions about how and where to count.

## Do I have to respond to the census?

Yes. If you are living in the United States, you are legally required to respond to the U.S. census. Failure to respond or providing false answers could result in a fine.

Census Bureau staff work to achieve cooperation and high response rates by helping the public understand that responding to the census is a matter of civic responsibility and that data from the census has benefits that span across government, industry and profession — and has a direct impact on everyone’s life.

## How will the U.S. Census Bureau contact me and how should I respond?

For the 2020 census, you may respond online, by mail, by phone or through an in-person interview. Starting in **March 2020**, the U.S. Census Bureau will begin to contact households through a series of mailings:

<b>March 12–20</b>	Mailing 1	Letter with information to take survey online sent to a majority of people, while about 20% to 25% of the population (with specific demographic characteristics and lower internet connectivity) will receive a letter and paper survey.
<b>March 16–24</b>	Mailing 2	Letter to those who do not respond
<b>March 26–April 3</b>	Mailing 3	Reminder postcard to those who do not respond
<b>April 8–16</b>	Mailing 4	Letter and paper survey to those who do not respond
<b>April 20–27</b>	Mailing 5	“It’s not too late” postcard to those who do not respond

Beginning in early May 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will send enumerators to knock on the doors of households that have not yet responded. This operation, called Nonresponse Follow-Up, will begin in early April for colleges and universities to capture student data before the spring term ends.



## I filled out a survey from the Census Bureau last year. Why have I been contacted again?

Between each 10-year census, the U.S. Census Bureau conducts more than 100 surveys of households and businesses across the nation each year.

One of the surveys that is often confused with the census is the American Community Survey, which reaches one of every 480 households each year and asks very detailed questions on topics such as employment, income, housing and place of birth.

State and local governments use data from both surveys to plan and fund such things as school construction, transportation systems, public housing, policy and fire precincts, and future utility needs. Federal law requires participation in both.

## What happens in communities in which residents may have limited English proficiency?

The U.S. Census Bureau will make the census questionnaire and other materials available in multiple languages. The questionnaire will be available in Spanish as a print version and on the tablets of those who go door to door in the nonresponse follow-up phase.

The Internet Self-Response Instrument will be available in 12 languages: Spanish, Chinese (simplified), Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polish, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese and Japanese.

The Census Bureau will provide assistance by phone in 12 languages: Spanish, Chinese (simplified), Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polish, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese and Japanese, as well as in American Sign Language.

The Census Bureau will produce video and print guides in the 59 languages listed below as well as a glossary of census terms and a card for enumerators to identify the language of the household:

Spanish	Urdu	Yoruba	Greek	Tigrinya
Italian	Hungarian	Arabic	Lao	Slovak
Khmer	Twi	Ukrainian	Indonesian	Portuguese
Tamil	Korean	Burmese	Marathi	Thai
Croatian	Armenian	Swahili	French	Turkish
Chinese	Romanian	Czech	Amharic	Ilocano
Farsi	Hebrew	Tagalog	Hmong	American Sign Language
Nepali	Lithuanian	Bengali	Serbian	Japanese
Navajo	Russian	Punjabi	Sinhala	Gujarati
Bulgarian	Hindi	Yiddish	Haitian Creole	Bosnian
Vietnamese	Telugu	Igbo	Somali	Dutch
German	Malayalam	Polish	Albanian	

For populations who speak languages beyond the 59 supported languages, the U.S. Census Bureau will create video shells and print templates for adaptation.

### What if I still have questions or concerns?

If you have questions, please [email Lisa McLean](#), Washington State 2020 census coordinator, or call her at 360-902-0584.

# Appendix 1:

## Sample social media timeline & content

As you plan your social media campaign, please keep these phases in mind:

1. education phase (spring/summer 2018–fall 2019)
2. awareness phase (late 2019–April 2020)
3. motivation phase (March–May 2020)
4. reminder phase (May–July 2020)
5. thank you phase (starts July 2020)

Here's some sample language:

Join us in spreading the word for the 2020 Census! #WAcunts2020

All communities must prepare for the 2020 Census. We have only one shot at a complete count. Take the pledge to get counted at [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www.____) or text CENSUS to 97779. #WAcunts2020

[INSERT GRAPHIC]

Census 2020 is less than one year away! Census data will affect your voice in Congress and shape the future of your community for the next 10 years. Take the pledge to get counted: [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www.____) or text "CENSUS" to 97779. #WAcunts2020

[INSERT GRAPHIC]

Census 2020 is an opportunity to capture a full portrait of all communities across our state. Do your part to get counted at [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www.____) or text "CENSUS" to 97779. #WAcunts2020

DYK the census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution? Every 10 years, every single person in the U.S. must be counted! Census data is used to apportion congressional seats and help draw district lines in all levels of government. Learn more at [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www.____). #WAcunts2020

For U.S. Census Bureau sample: [Social Media Images](#)

For U.S. Census Bureau sample: [Social Media Content](#)

## Appendix 2: Sample web banner language

Census 2020. Your count matters.

Make Washington Count — Census 2020

Make the 2020 census count for Washington

The census counts for Washington.  
[amount] in federal dollars paid for [what].

Join the Action and Make Census 2020 Count

Pledge to Make Census 2020 a Success

## Appendix 3:

### Sample newsletter article

Once every 10 years, the U.S. Constitution requires a full count of the population to reapportion seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. That exercise — the U.S. Census — begins in a little over a year (mid-March 2020). Washington is working hard to ensure the state's residents are fully counted.

For the first time, the primary method of response to the census will be electronic. The U.S. Census Bureau expects at least 70% of the population will complete census forms online.

We need your help to spread the word that the process is quick, easy and safe and to help people overcome internet access or digital literacy issues.

#### Why is the census important?

Census results drive decisions that will affect economic investments in our state and our representation in Congress until 2031.

Census results determine congressional representation and the number of our Electoral College votes and are used to draw boundaries for state and local election districts. In the last census, Washington gained one seat in Congress, bringing our total to 10.

The federal government also uses census numbers to distribute more than \$800 billion to states, counties and cities for education and health programs, highways, roads and bridges, water and sewage systems, and other projects vital to our health and well-being. Nonprofits and businesses use the data to help determine where to build health care 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, including:

- Nearly \$700 million in bridge and highway maintenance and construction
- \$8.5 billion for health programs
- \$2.4 billion for education
- \$1.2 billion for housing
- \$550 million for rural assistance programs

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

## How it works

Beginning in mid-March 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will send each household a postcard inviting residents to go online (or call) and provide information about the number of people residing at that address. The questionnaire will ask for the names, sex, age (including date of birth) and race/ethnicity of each person living at the residence, whether residents own or rent and for a phone number in case there is a need to follow up. Only one person should fill out the census for the entire household.

## What is the timeline?

The process begins in mid-March 2020 and ends at the end of September. Those who do not respond will receive reminders in the mail until the beginning of May, when Census Bureau staff will begin going door to door to contact those who do not respond. Results must be delivered to the president by Dec. 31, 2020.

## Is it safe?

By federal law, the information you provide is confidential. The U.S. Census Bureau uses the highest level of data security to safeguard the information it receives. In fact, census forms can be used ONLY to produce statistical information about the population, and penalties for violations are severe. For more information, refer to the [Fact sheet on Census and Confidentiality](#).

## How to help

- [Inform yourself and inform others.](#)
- Encourage qualified individuals to [apply for census jobs](#).
- Do a scan of your community
  - Who might have difficulty completing the census or be afraid to respond to it?
  - What solutions can you devise to help overcome these difficulties?
  - How can you allay the concerns of your community?
- Make a list of community leaders who could develop an understanding of the importance of the census and who engender public trust and educate them about the census.
- Develop a list of people who understand the importance of the census and are willing to assist in ensuring a complete count. When the time comes, contact them with reminders.
- Create an inventory of all mailing lists, newsletters and other recurrent communications that could be used to spread the word about the census.
- Identify places with internet access and computers/tablets that could host census assistance centers for those who need technology to complete the form online.
- Recruit and educate volunteers who could staff assistance centers.

## Appendix 4:

# Low-cost ways to promote the census

*For starters, here are some no-cost/low-cost ways to promote the census beginning in January 2020.*

1. Identify conferences and meetings in which [Washington Complete Count Committee](#) staff can publicize details and distribute census materials.
2. Communicate to your employees and customers the importance of participating in the census and assure them that their responses are confidential.
3. Publish an article about the census in your company newsletter.
4. While speaking at meetings, mention the importance of the census.
5. Email a census message to your employees, customers and partners.
6. Include a census message in employee newsletters and in email signatures.
7. Display promotional materials or logos in your offices.
8. Take census information to events you sponsor.
9. Provide computers, tablets and internet connectivity to allow employees and customers to complete the 2020 census form online.

## For more information

[Lisa C McLean](#)

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