

OUR PEOPLE.  
OUR NATIONS.  
OUR FUTURE.

2020 CENSUS TOOLKIT  
Updated December 2019



National  
Congress of  
American  
Indians

## Dear Census Allies,

Thank you for your partnership with the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) to ensure a complete count for Indian Country in the 2020 Census!

We hope you find the enclosed toolkit useful in your work to ensure that every American Indian and Alaska Native is counted in the upcoming 2020 Census. As you may know, the U.S. Census Bureau will begin its count in Alaska in January, and everyone household in the lower 48 states will start to receive information in March 2020 on how they can complete the census form. That's why your efforts to help create awareness and educate your community are critical right now to make sure Indian Country is ready for the 2020 Census.

The census only happens every 10 years, and the results can impact our people, our nations, and our future.

### Our People.

In the 2020 Census, individuals and households will have the opportunity to self-identify as American Indian or Alaska Native. They also will be able to now write in up to six tribal affiliations on the form. Filling out these questions on the census form will help ensure that the 2020 Census is accurate and reflects the true diversity in Indian Country. Your work to educate your community about how to fill out the form and self-identify as American Indian or Alaska Native is critical to make sure that our people are visible and heard.

### Our Nations.

The 2020 Census data will be used to determine the allocation of congressional seats, redistricting for voting, and may impact the distribution of almost \$1 billion in annual federal resources for Indian Country. American Indian and Alaska Native communities are considered a "Hard-to-Count" population, and were undercounted by almost five percent in the 2010 Census. The census count needs to be accurate to ensure our votes matter and when resources are on the line. This is why we need you, more than ever to ensure every child, elder, veteran, and person in your community is counted.

### Our Future.

Your efforts to educate your community and to encourage everyone to participate in the census can make sure that we are counted now and for future generations. Our prior generations were counted, and we must be counted now to ensure a bright future for our communities. Census data is used by federal agencies for policy decisions and funding formulas. Accurate data is essential for policymaking and funding for roads, housing, education, healthcare, elder programs, childcare programs, and economic development. The impact of these programs, facilities, and initiatives can make a difference for the next generation and those yet to come. Now is the time to encourage family, friends, and neighbors to spread the word and participate in the 2020 Census.

The 2020 Census is our chance to be visible, to be heard, and for our tribal nations to be recognized. Being counted means standing up for yourself, your family, and your tribal community. Our people, our nations, and our future depend on each one of us to complete the census form. This is our opportunity to make a difference - the time is now. Let us join together and make 2020 the year that Indian Country Counts!

Thank you in advance for all of your efforts towards a complete and accurate count in your community! If you have any questions, please contact the National Congress of American Indians civic engagement team at [census@ncai.org](mailto:census@ncai.org).

Sincerely,



Kevin J. Allis  
Chief Executive Officer  
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 U.S. 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

Make sure to be counted as an American Indian or Alaska Native on the 2020 Census form. Checking the box to indicate that you are 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). Make sure to write in your enrolled or principal tribe(s) if applicable.

## Helpful Tips for American Indian and Alaska Native individuals and households

### Householder Question

For many reasons, it is important that American Indian and Alaska Native households be counted in the 2020 Census. This depends on the race of “Person 1” or 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 U.S. Census Bureau implemented a 1997 U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) policy that allowed anyone filling out a census form (or other federal form) to check off more than one box for the question where they can identify their race. This option to check off multiple races means that an individual can identify as American Indian or Alaska Native and also can identify as a member of another race, such as white, Black or Asian.

If you check the box for American Indian or Alaska Native, and do not check other boxes on the race question, you will be counted in the American Indian Alone category in analyses of census data. If you check the box for American Indian or Alaska Native and check one or more races, you will be counted in the American Indian Alone or in Combination category in analyses of census data.

NCAI is encouraging the U.S. Census Bureau and other federal agencies to use data from both the American Indian Alone and American Indian Alone or in Combination categories, since tribal citizens are included in both those categories. Given the increasing diversity of the American Indian and Alaska Native population, it is no longer accurate to make assumptions about the individuals in these two categories. Every individual has the right to determine how they want to be counted.



# WHY THE 2020 CENSUS IS IMPORTANT TO INDIAN COUNTRY

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

**Visibility:** It is time for American Indians and Alaska Natives 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, which will impact the vote for state and federal representatives. The Native Vote has increasingly become a “swing vote” in several states, and answering the 2020 Census ensures that your vote may make a difference.

**Family and Future Generations:** Just like past generations, it is important for you to be counted to represent yourself and your family in the 2020 Census now and for future generations.

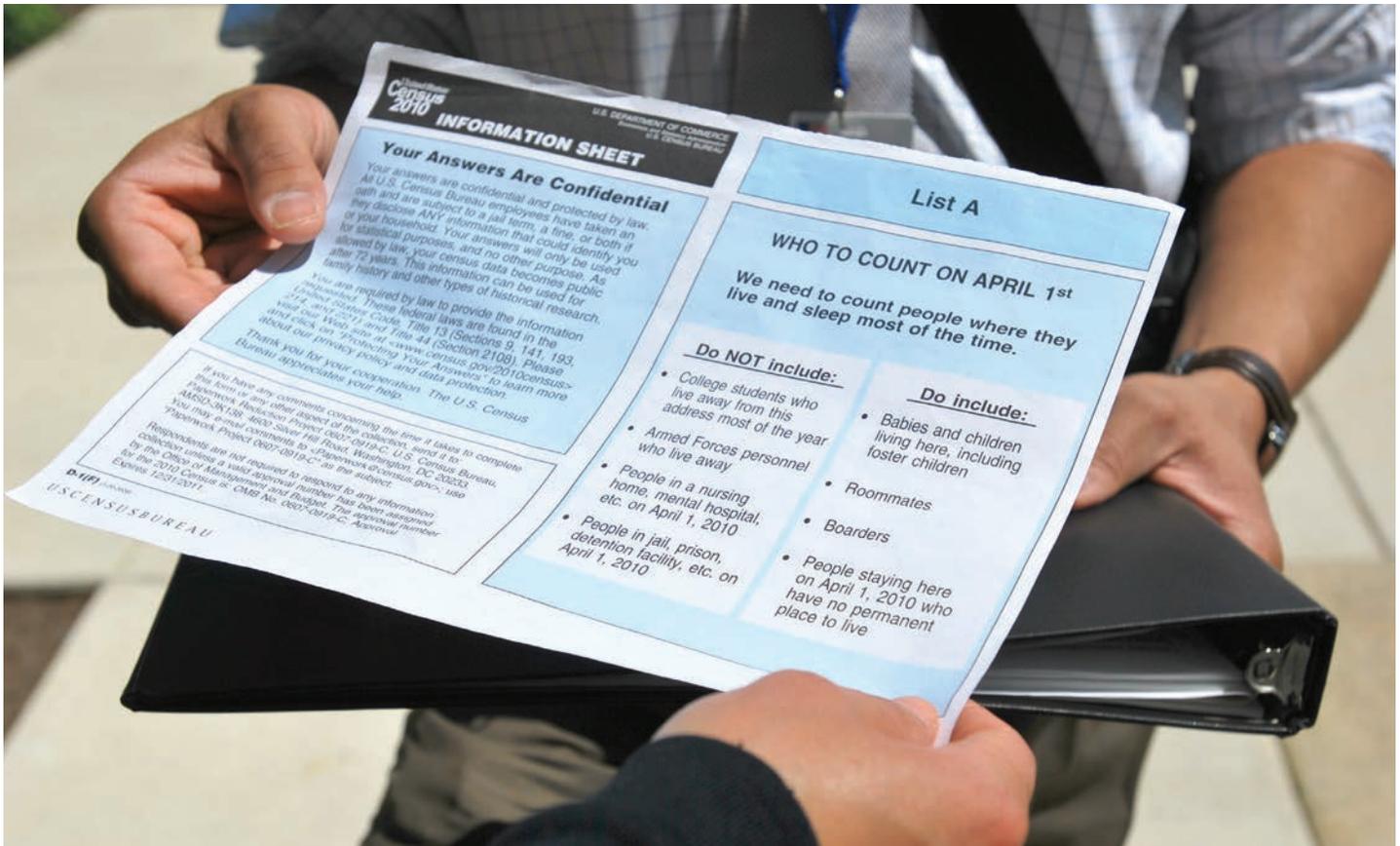
**Resources:** Census data is used for federal funding allocations, policymaking, and decisions. Make sure you complete the 2020 Census to be counted and help make the data more accurate when funding and resources are on the line for you and your community.

The Census that is conducted every ten years is the only complete count of the U.S. population, and results in data 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 may impact American Indians and Alaska Natives. Below are just a few of the potential uses of Census data:

- **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 urban areas.** Census numbers provide the only detailed profiles available of off-reservation American Indian and Alaska Native people, and these profiles are 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 grant proposals to federal, state, and local agencies, as well as to private foundations, to secure funding to create and expand programs for American Indians and Alaska Natives.
- **Building political clout.** Census numbers are used not only to determine how many seats each state gets in the House of Representatives in Congress, but also 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.
- **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.

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

# WHY THE 2020 CENSUS IS IMPORTANT TO INDIAN COUNTRY



If you, members of your family, friends, or neighbors do not fill out the 2020 Census form —

- Federal funding decisions for your community that use Census data based on population size may result in less funding and services to your community
- The political representation for your community in the Congress, as well as state and local legislative bodies, may be less if numbers are lower than reality.
- Decisions about planning community services, facilities, and on locating new business enterprises may not be accurate if everyone is not counted.

Participating in the 2020 Census is simple. The Census form is short and asks a few basic questions about each person's sex, age, and race, and whether the house, apartment, or mobile home is owned or rented.

The average time it should take a household to complete the form is **only about ten minutes**. Being counted means standing up and being visible for yourself, your family, and your tribal community.

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

## 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 →

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).

## <<<The question on the Census form looks like this

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

The U.S. Census Bureau uses the definition for "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 self identifies as American Indian or Alaska Native on a federal form is quite different than the definition of who is "Indian" in federal law. American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments that are federally recognized have a special political status and relationship with the federal government, and are eligible for certain federal services. Tribal nations determine the criteria for their members or citizens. Stating that someone is American Indian or Alaska Native on a census form is different and does not convey any special privileges or relationship with the federal government. The issue of whether an individual is a tribal citizen and/or is eligible for federal services is not related to how they answer the race question on a census form.

A major innovation for the 2020 Census is the planned use of the internet as a mechanism for responding. However, the U.S. 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. There are other methods of collection including on paper or by telephone.

It is very important that every American Indian and Alaska Native person is counted. Make sure to check the box that says American Indian or Alaska Native and write in your tribe if applicable.

# 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 on the 2020 Census form. The wording of these questions was thoroughly tested to be sure that everyone understands them the same way. It is important for the U.S. Census Bureau to count everyone in the household. While most households will only require 10 – 15 minutes to fill out the Census form, some households may require additional time.

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. But what about younger family members who are living away 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?

## People are nearby or available on the phone that can help answer your questions.

Census Questionnaire Assistance Contact Centers will be available to call for information on the Census form and can provide the answers to your questions while you are on the phone. They are scheduled to open in February of 2020.

The U.S. 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 U.S. Census Bureau. He or she has received special training in what the Census is about and how it is 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 is 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 U.S. Census Bureau and NCAI can help in a number of ways.

The Census Bureau is opening local offices to help complete 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 have you complete the form in person. You can ask them questions at that time. Census workers will also conduct door-to-door follow up visits to households that do not return the Census form.

Online: One of the most important sources of help is the U.S. Census Bureau's website:

[www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov).

# IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND NCAI RESOURCES

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. For more information and resources, visit [www.indiancountrycounts.org](http://www.indiancountrycounts.org)

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/> is 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.



National  
Congress of  
American  
Indians



# IS YOUR COMMUNITY HARD-TO-COUNT?

The U.S. Census Bureau and its partners have devoted a lot of energy to research to identifying areas where people are more likely to be undercounted that may need focused attention. That research is being used to shape the U.S. 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.

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 to increase the count in your community 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.

# 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 opened 39 Area Census Offices. These offices open early to support address canvassing.
- **June – September 2019:** The U.S. Census Bureau opened 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 U.S. Census Bureau conducted 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 U.S. 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 U.S. Census Bureau's address list is up to date.

## Filling Out the Census Form

- **January 2020:** The U.S. 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 will visit all addresses that did not return a questionnaire online or mail back a paper Census form and collect information at the door. The U.S. 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 will 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:** U.S. 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).



National  
Congress of  
American  
Indians

National Congress of American Indians  
Embassy of Tribal Nations  
1516 P Street NW, Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: (202) 466-7767  
Fax: (202) 466-7797

[INDIANCOUNTRYCOUNTS.ORG](http://INDIANCOUNTRYCOUNTS.ORG)