

WASHINGTON STATE

HIGHER  
EDUCATION  
TOOLKIT

FOR ADMINISTRATORS



Census 2020

You  
count.  
Be  
counted.



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

# About this toolkit

Census Day – April 1, 2020 – is fast approaching! This once-in-a-decade count of the entire population residing in the country will affect political and economic resources until 2031.

You know your campus community best, you are uniquely positioned to break down barriers and ensure students in your community get counted and urge their families and friends to be counted. We need you and your networks to advocate for a Complete Count in Washington state – and this toolkit will help explain why the census is important and how it will work. It will also give you ideas about how to engage your students and encourage census participation.

The US Census Bureau has identified students as among those populations that are historically undercounted. Therefore, the Higher Education Subcommittee of the WA Counts 2020 Complete Count Committee created together this toolkit with feedback form institutions and students to ensure students are counted.

Any questions? Feel free to contact us.



Paul Francis  
Executive Director  
[pfrancis@councilofpresidents.org](mailto:pfrancis@councilofpresidents.org)  
360-292-4101



Terri Standish-Kuon, Ph.D.  
President & CEO  
[terri@icwashington.org](mailto:terri@icwashington.org)  
206-6923-4494



Joe Holliday  
Director, Student Services  
[jholliday@sbctc.edu](mailto:jholliday@sbctc.edu)  
360-704-4334



Guillermo Rogel  
Executive Director  
[ed@wastudents.org](mailto:ed@wastudents.org)  
951-750-2520



Libby Watson  
Colleges & Community Engagement Coordinator  
[libby@washingtonbus.org](mailto:libby@washingtonbus.org)



Lisa McLean  
2020 Census Coordinator  
Office of Financial Management  
[Lisa.McLean@ofm.wa.gov](mailto:Lisa.McLean@ofm.wa.gov)  
360-902-0584

# How to use this toolkit:

## Step 1: What is the Census and Why Does it Matter

Understand why the census is important to students, to higher education in general, to the community to which you belong, to Washington state, and to the nation.

## Step 2: How to Get Counted and Timeline

Review the process for getting counted and the timeline.

## Step 3: Understanding the Challenge of Counting Students

Understand your student population and consider what might make them harder to count and where and how to overcome those challenges.

## Step 4: Student Outreach

Review a checklist of ideas for student organizations to consider.

## Step 5: Widen the Network

Identify organizations serving members of the student body who can be enlisted to help out.

## Step 6: Create an Outreach and Engagement Plan

Create a strategic engagement plan for reaching out to those on your campus to create awareness of the importance of the census and encourage participation in the census.

# Step 1: What is the Census and Why Does it Matter



**\$16.7**  
BILLION  
IN FY 2016



The U.S. Constitution requires a count of the United States' population every 10 years. This exercise is called the Census, and it serves as the basis for planning and distributing political power and economic resources for the next 10 years, including

- Federal student loan programs
- Federal research grants
- Campus funding
- Campus improvements, such as labs, buildings, and classrooms
- Health and social services
- Federal legislation
- Students' future careers, i.e., many professions rely on Federal funding for research, planning, or other support.

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.

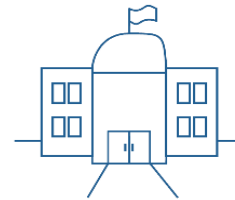
The census also determines the number of representatives each state has in Congress, which can make a difference when it comes to issues important to Washingtonians. In 2010, due to the state's population growth, it gained a seat in the US House of Representatives.

# Decennial Census Data is Baseline for Planning Purposes

The Census Bureau's mission is to serve as the leading source of quality data about the nation's people and economy. The Census Bureau conducts many surveys, and the decennial census is the basis for most other surveys. Federal funds, grants, and support to states, counties, academia and communities are based on population totals and breakdowns by sex, age, race and other factors.



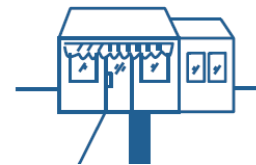
**College students** benefit from Federal student loans, legislation, campus funding and improvements, and health and social services.



**Local government officials** use the Census to ensure public safety, provide health care, and improve schools and hospital facilities.



**Your data is confidential and protected by strong federal laws.** Your responses cannot be used against you and can only be used to produce statistics. Responses cannot be shared with other government agencies or your landlord!



**Businesses** use Census data to decide where to build factories, offices and stores that create jobs and serve local communities.



**City planners and real estate developers** use the Census to improve transportation and infrastructure, including affordable housing.

# Step 2: How to be Counted and Timeline

## **U.S. Census Day is April 1, 2020.**

For the first time, you will be able to complete the form online using a computer, a tablet or a smartphone!  
Or you can phone or mail in your answers.

Every 10 years, the Census Bureau conducts a count of all residents of the United States **at the place where they live most of the time as of Census Day**. Thus, students attending college should count themselves at the address where they are residing on April 1, 2020. Here are several known scenarios of where students live – and therefore, how they should be counted.

- If you live away from the family home in **off-campus housing**, you (and your roommates) will receive an invitation in the mail to respond by “household” – and one (or all of you) should go online or call to provide information of who resides at the address.
- If you live away from the family home in **on-campus housing**, you count too! Campus housing officials will organize the counting process in cooperation with the Census Bureau. So contact your Resident Assistant to find out what the plan is for being counted in your residence hall or other school-sponsored housing.
- If you **live with your family** and attend college, the household will receive an invitation in the mail, and the person who pays the rent or mortgage should go online or call to provide information on all residents at the address.
- Students that find themselves **without a permanent place to live** on Census Day should be counted in the household where they are staying April 1, 2020.
- **Foreign students** attending college in the United States are counted at the place where they reside on Census Day.
- If you are **studying abroad** on Census Day, you will not be counted in the 2020 Census as you are not residing in the United States as of April 1, 2020.



# Important dates for the 2020 census

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<b>March 12–20</b>	Mailing 1 sent to homes
<b>March 16–24</b>	Mailing 2 (reminder) sent to homes
<b>March 26–April 3</b>	Mailing 3 (reminder postcard) sent to those who do not respond
<b>March</b>	Counting begins in locations such as recreational vehicle parks, campgrounds, marinas, hotels
<b>March</b>	Counting begins for those living in group quarters such as university-owned housing, nursing homes and homeless shelters
<b>April 1</b>	Census Day
<b>April 9</b>	Early Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU) for colleges begins, meaning that Census Bureau employees will visit homes that have not yet responded in college towns/neighborhoods
<b>April 8–16</b>	Mailing 4, letter AND paper questionnaire sent to those who have not yet responded
<b>April 20–27</b>	Mailing 5, "It's not too late!" postcard
<b>Early May</b>	Regular Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU) begins, meaning that Census Bureau employees will visit all homes that have not yet responded
<b>End of July</b>	Census count ends
<b>Dec. 31</b>	Census Bureau transmits state population totals and congressional apportionment to the president

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# Step 3: Understanding the Challenge of Students

Over the years, the US Census Bureau has discovered that there are a number of factors that can lead to an undercount of certain populations. The Bureau identifies students as one of those populations that are historically undercounted – and, as a demographic, students often share other characteristics common to historically undercounted populations. Consider the intersection of the college student in your midst and the factors below.

<b>Historically Undercounted Student Demographic</b>	<b>College Student Profile (Number or Percent of Students)</b>
College students between the ages of 17 and 24	
College students from low-income backgrounds	
College students from recently immigrated families	
First generation college students	
College students from homes that have limited English proficiency	
College students belonging to communities of color	
College students who are experiencing homelessness or lack stable housing	
College students living off campus and renting	
College students living off campus with their families	
College students living on campus	

# Identify best outreach methods

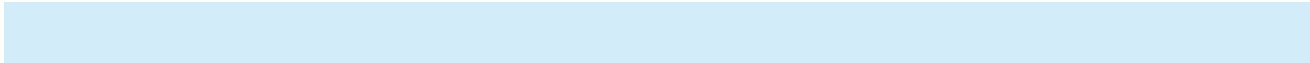
Washington’s college campuses are made up of diverse student populations. Think about each of the different populations and consider how best to reach each group. Below are several examples:

Student populations	Best means for reaching them
<b>Where they live</b>	
Live on campus	
Live nearby, but off campus	
Commute to campus by car or public transport	
Lack stable housing	
<b>Possessing additional characteristics of historically undercounted</b>	
International students	
LGBTQIA	
LatinX, Hispanics, Dreamers	
Student veterans, ROTC	
Parenting students	
Racial or ethnic minorities	
<b>Educational Purposes</b>	
Undergraduate	
Graduate or professional school students	
Adult or continuing education	
e-learning or distance education	

## Step 4: Student outreach

The following pages contain checklists of ideas to consider for your own campus when developing your outreach plan.

Identify which of these ideas might work well for your college milieu or adapt these ideas to fit the unique characteristics of your college and its student population.



**REMEMBER:** Students living away from home on April 1, 2020 should inform their parents that they have completed the survey using their current residence address. While our focus is on preventing an undercount of populations, we also don't want to have an overcount. We want everyone to be counted once – and only once – and in the right place!

# Promoting the Census on campus

Promoting the Census on campus is a great way to reach the entire college community, including staff, faculty, employees, visitors – AND students.

- Ask the student government organization to:
  - Adopt resolutions about the importance of the 2020 Census
  - Form a Student Census Subcommittee to develop and implement a student outreach plan
- Arrange for the student newspaper and other student media outlets to report on the Census
- Set up informational tables or booths on campus about the Census
- Reach out to classmates and other students on campus – make personal appeals
- Identify other student organizations who might be interested in participating in Census outreach
- Create friendly competitions among student organizations – offer small prizes to the winners
- Integrate 2020 Census outreach into existing campus events
- Hang 2020 Census posters in prominent locations on campus
- Make Census information available when students:
  - Attend student orientations
  - Register for classes
  - Borrow books from the library
  - Make purchases at the bookstore
  - Sign up for clubs
- Tap into student groups to regularly conduct peer-to-peer outreach
- Encourage students to educate their parents and others in their community about the importance of the 2020 Census

# Suggested campus locations for promoting the Census

Consider the path of students through campus during the day and in the evenings. Where are the high traffic areas and who needs to be contacted to provide permits for promotional events?

Types of Facilities	Campus Location/Contact Person
Facilities, classrooms, labs, auditoriums	
Libraries	
Student unions, clubs & organizations	
Book stores	
Campus cafes, cafeterias, dining halls	
Departmental offices	
Registrar's Office & Office of Financial Aid	
Residence halls and other college-owned housing	
Faith-based organizations	
Gyms, locker rooms	
Museums, galleries	
Parking facilities and public transit stops/hubs	
Athletic buildings/services	
Student forums with booths and tables	
Other	

# Promoting the Census Off Campus

When thinking of students living in areas surrounding the campus (off campus) or commuting to college, identify locations for displaying Census posters and promotional materials and setting up information booths in advance of the Census – or Questionnaire Assistance Centers once the portal is opened. Ask businesses to sponsor your events or to participate in the promotion or conduct of the Census in some way.

Off Campus Locales	Neighborhood/Contact Details/Other Notes
Apartment complexes and student housing	
Public transit stops	
Restaurants, cafes & coffee shops	
Bars, clubs and music venues	
Public libraries (may be providing computers to fill out the Census and may need volunteers to assist those who come in to complete the form)	
Shops frequented by students	
Off-campus sports arenas and venues	
Recreation centers (e.g., gyms, yoga studios)	
Religious Institutions	
Other	

# Using social media to reach students

- The goals of a social media campaign related to the 2020 Census are to:
  - Raise awareness of the census
  - Educate about the process and its importance to each and everyone one of us
  - Encourage maximum participation, especially self-response
- The state's message focuses on three simple principles: easy, secure, and important. One simple tagline the state and others are using is: **It takes 10 minutes to answer 10 questions that will shape investments in your community in the next 10 years.**
- Other important themes to emphasize include:
  - Distribution of money and resources for your community
  - Data confidentiality
  - Standing up to be counted because you deserve a voice in our democracy
- Use social media platforms that are most widely used by students and on campus
- Involve art or design students to:
  - Develop creative messaging and artwork that resonates with students
  - Share messaging through social media
- Involve theater, music and media arts students to:
  - Develop short productions (e.g., Public Service Announcements) that resonate with students
  - Here's a great example of a [YouTube video produced by students of Western Washington University](#)
  - Share through social media
- Post Census information and links on student organizations' web pages
- Share your campus Census activities by tagging #WACounts2020 or other Census hashtags associated with other affinity groups close to your group



# Promote Census job opportunities

The U.S. Census Bureau needs to hire 500,000 people across the nation to engage in the door-to-door work of following up with those who do not respond to the initial mailings. This operation is called Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU), which is conducted by trained enumerators.

- Census Bureau jobs offer flexible hours and competitive rates. Consider inviting the Census Bureau to table at career and job fairs on campus.
- Candidates for Census jobs need to pass a background check, which can take a while – so encourage interested people to apply early and to be patient.
- The [WA Counts 2020 website](#) provides more information about the pay rates in your area, the minimum qualifications, and a toolkit on how to apply.

## **Census Volunteers and Community Service**

State and local governments and philanthropies in Washington state are actively involved in supporting the efforts of community organizations to promote the Census.

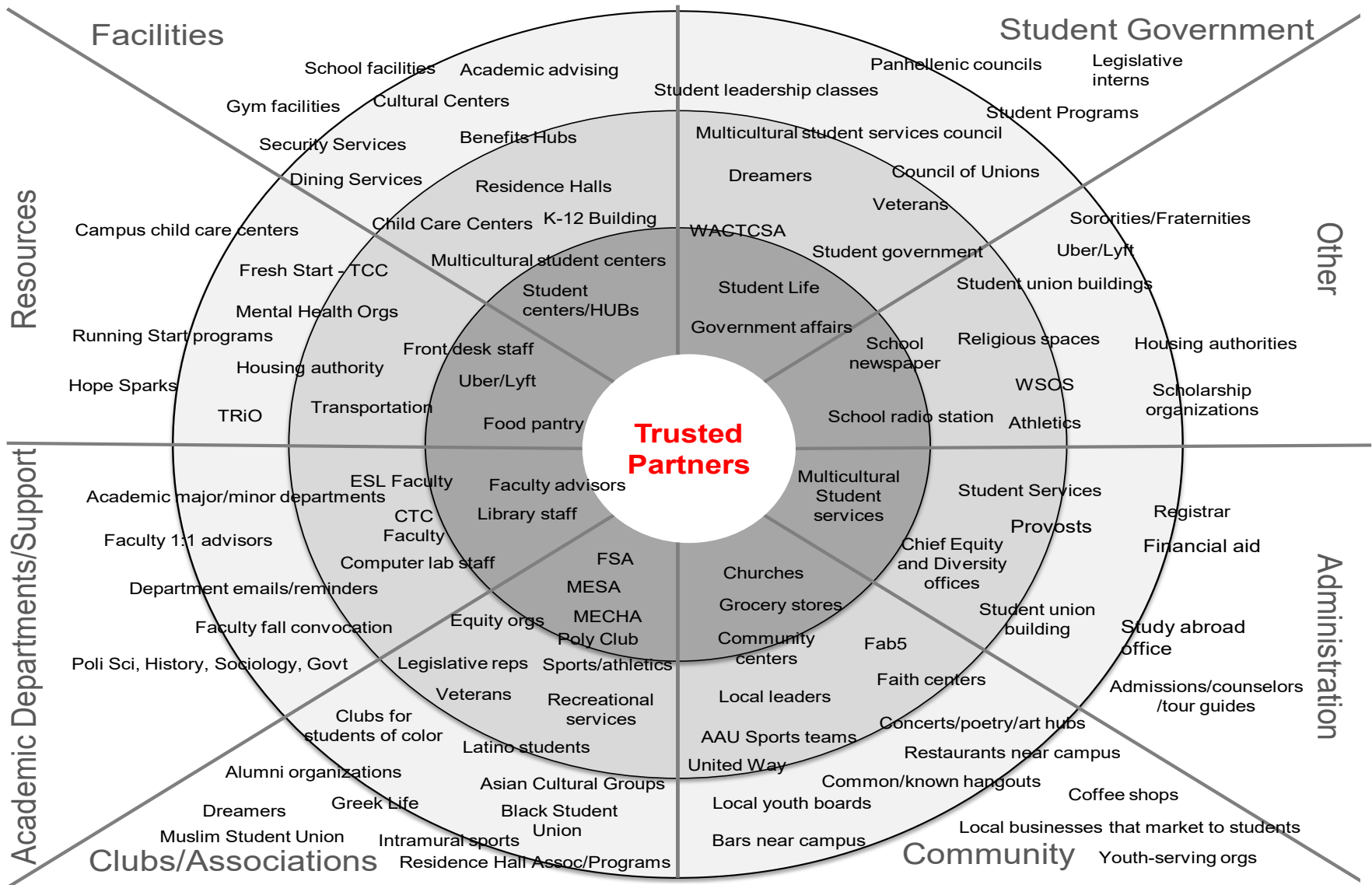
- Explore opportunities for students who participate in community-based Census-related activities to earn extra credit hours, community service hours, or internship credit for volunteer hours
- Contact any of the following organizations (or check their websites) to find out which organizations in Washington have received money for Census promotional activities. Then, contact those organizations to see what you can do to educate, spread awareness and encourage participation in your neighborhood or among your community
  - [WA Counts 2020](#)
  - [Washington Census Equity Fund](#)
  - [Seattle Foundation](#)
  - [Greater Tacoma Community Foundation](#)
  - [Innovia Foundation](#)
  - [Kitsap Community Foundation](#)

# Step 5: Widen the Network

Now that you are engaged and hopefully interested in helping to ensure a complete count, one of the most effective things you can do is engage more student organizations on your campus in the Census campaign. Spread the word that the upcoming Census is vital to our communities and that we all need to be counted. Use the worksheet below to identify student organizations that can promote the Census among students. Share this toolkit with those organizations and develop ideas together for outreach.

Types of Student Organizations	Student Organization/Contact Person
Student Government	
Student newspapers	
Student clubs	
Community service groups	
Commuter student organizations	
Ethnic affinity organizations	
Faith-based organizations	
Housing/residence hall boards	
Panhellenic organizations	
Political action/civil liberties groups	
Sports clubs	
Social clubs	
Other	

# Think Big! Consider all aspects of your Universe



# Step 6: Create an Outreach & Engagement Plan

Now that you have done the basic work to understand your college community and to catalog the challenges that individual groups may face in understanding and completing the census, you are ready to build your plan for engaging with them to expand awareness and encourage maximum self-response. Remember to reflect on the checklist below as you build your plan.

## **Know your audience**

- What students do I want to reach? Why might they not participate in the Census?
- What is the action I want students to take?
- What student organizations are most apt to participate?

## **Have an objective**

- What do we want our students and student organizations to do?
- Do our student campus organizations have an incentive to take that action?

## **Make it relevant**

- Why should students care?
- Where can we add a personal touch?
- Who do our students and student organizations identify with or admire?
- What incentives will students respond to?

## **Make it action-oriented**

- Is all the information in our message immediately useful?  
Are we using simple language?
- What pictures could we use to convey our message?
- Have we communicated the steps our student organizations and students should take?

## **Plan the outreach campaign**

- Who will our students listen to?
- What are our students' schedules like?
- When will our message be most relevant?
- Where do our students spend time?
- Where will our message be most relevant?
- What kinds of communication channels do our students like and already use?

# Campus Outreach Action Plan

	Action Step	Who will make it happen?	Timeline	Target Student Population	Number of students to be reached
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					

# Appendix 1: Frequently asked questions

*Your family, friends, classmates and professors 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. [This 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. It is against the law to share information with other government agencies, including the FBI and ICE, and with anyone else, including your landlord. 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.

- [How to identify a Census Field Representative](#)
- [How to identify a call from an interviewer](#)
- [How to detect and report phishing and scams](#)

Download and post [this helpful flyer](#) in English or [12 other languages](#) on detecting scams prepared by the Washington State Attorney General's Office.

**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. Having said that, 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.

**I am not a U.S. citizen. Do I have to respond?**

Yes. The 2020 Census will count all those living in the United States – regardless of their citizenship or residency status. Foreign students should respond. “Dreamers” should respond. Undocumented immigrants should respond. Documented immigrants should respond. You count, be counted!

**I currently do not have a permanent residence. How will I be counted?**

If you are temporarily living at someone’s house or apartment on April 1, 2020, that household should include you in the count. If you are living in a location without an address, you can go online and, when filling out the form, describe the place where you are living (e.g., “under the 4<sup>th</sup> Street bridge”). You can visit a library and use that as the address. As a resident of the United States, you count, be counted!

**My roommate is studying abroad this semester/quarter. Should I include them in my household count?**

No. The goal is to count those living in the United States as of April 1, 2020. Students studying abroad are not counted in the census.



### **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 (see important dates on page 6).

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 English and 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 English and 12 additional 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 English and 12 additional 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 2: Sample social media timeline & content

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

1. Awareness phase (late 2019–April 2020)
2. Motivation phase (March–May 2020)
3. Reminder phase (May–July 2020)

## **Here's some sample language:**

You count! Be counted! #WACounts2020

Join us in spreading the word about the 2020 Census! #WACounts2020

It takes 10 minutes to answer 10 questions that will affect investments in your community for the next 10 years.  
#WACounts2020

Census 2020 is just around the corner! Census data will affect your voice in Congress and shape the future of your community for the next 10 years. #WACounts2020

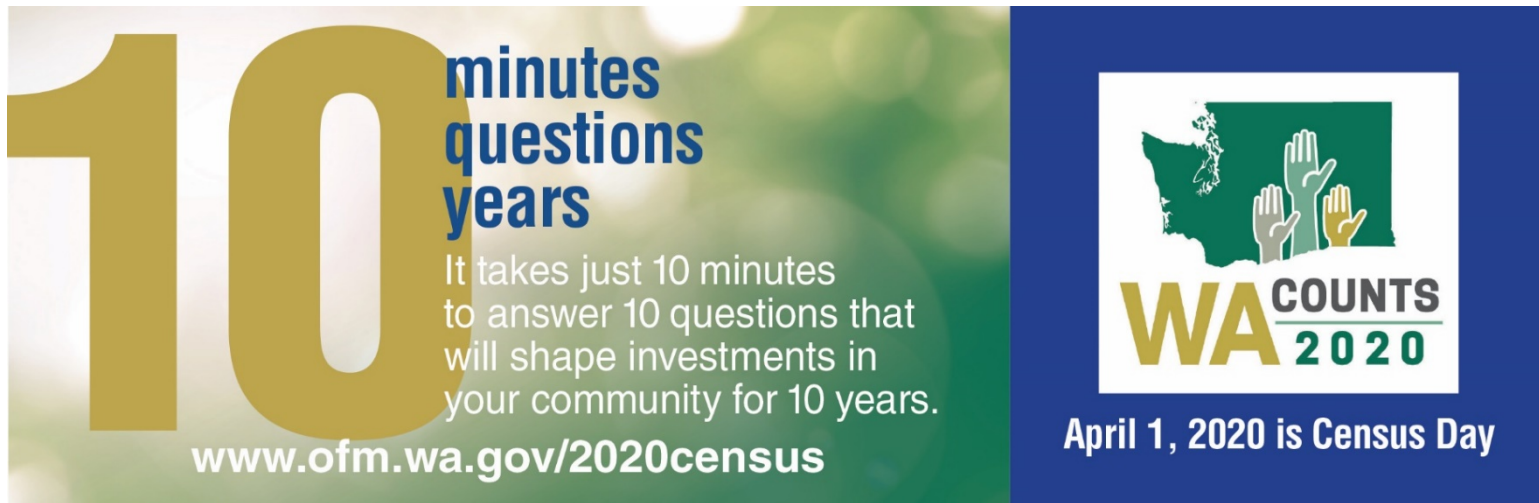
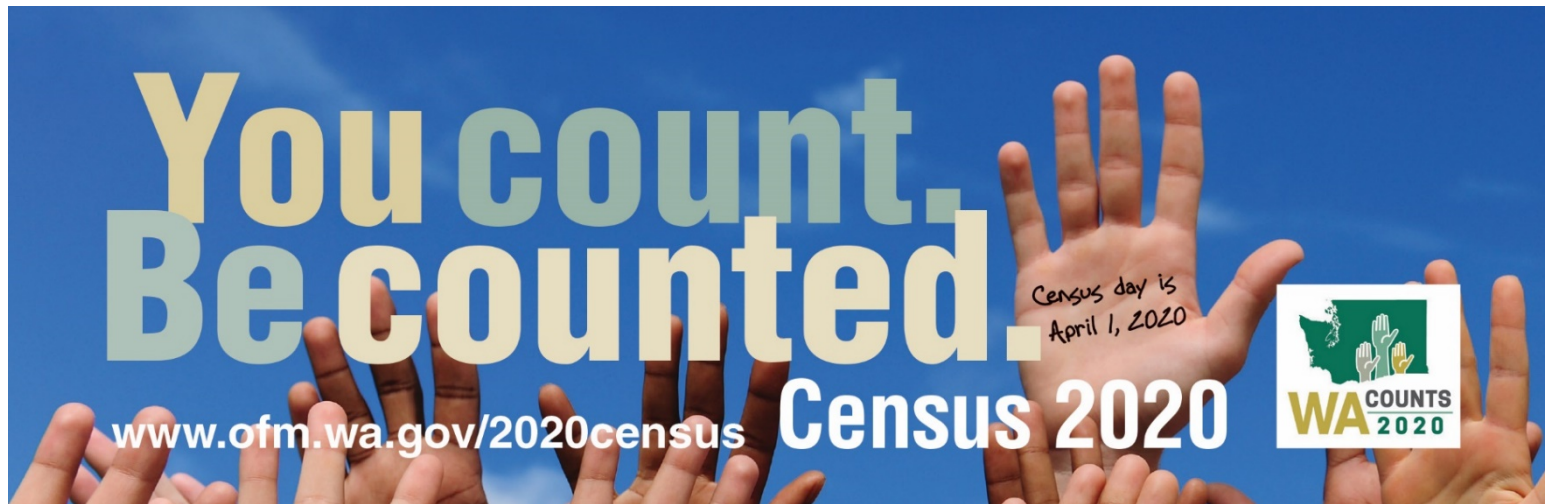
Census 2020 is an opportunity to capture a full portrait of all communities across our state. Do your part to be counted.  
#WACounts2020

Our community benefits from everyone being counted, and we have one chance every decade to get it right.

DYK the census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution? Every 10 years, every person residing in the U.S. must be counted! Census data is used to apportion congressional seats and help draw district lines at all levels of government. Learn more at [www.ofm.wa.gov/2020Census](http://www.ofm.wa.gov/2020Census). #WACounts2020

DYK that Washington state got \$16.7 billion in federal funds in 2016 based on its population count. Ensure that our state gets its fair share of the resources. Get counted! #WACounts2020

Sample images and web banners:



For U.S. Census Bureau sample images, go to [Social Media Images](#)  
For U.S. Census Bureau sample content, go to [Social Media Content](#)

# Appendix 3: Common Student Concerns

Below are a list of concerns that some students might have, as well as some ideas for overcoming these concerns.

## **I don't think the Census has any impact on my life.**

Students who are not aware of what the Census is and how the data is used to affect important priorities in their life may express this concern. It will be important through simple infographics and visual aids to make the connection between an accurate census and the impact on their daily lives and their communities, especially in terms of public investments and their political power. To counteract this concern, students need to be informed about what's at stake. Educating trusted ambassadors to the many student communities, reinforced by written materials and events, can raise awareness about how the Census will have a huge impact on each of our lives over the next 10 years.

## **I don't feel comfortable sharing my information.**

Students expressing these concerns would likely benefit from knowing that the data is used for statistical purposes **only** and that individual responses will be kept confidential and are protected by the highest level of data privacy. They may also be reassured by knowing the legal prohibitions against sharing responses with any other Federal agency or individual (like a landlord). Additionally, those expressing this concern could benefit from clarity about what will be asked and what will not be asked (i.e., name, address, age, and race, but not social security, bank account numbers or citizenship). Recognize that it may take several conversations with someone to build their confidence in the Bureau's commitment to protecting the confidentiality of responses. Start the conversation early and have someone who can establish trust with those expressing this concern.

## **I don't have time to fill out the Census.**

Students expressing this concern will benefit from knowing that the whole exercise is quick and will ensure that they and their families are factored into planning, decision-making, and the distribution of economic resources and political power. Similar to the voting mantra: if you don't vote, you can't complain; if you don't get counted, you won't exist for the next 10 years. Busy students will need many reminders and may benefit from Questionnaire Assistance Kiosks or online pop-ups that make it easy for them to complete the task.

**I think my parents will do it for me.**

These students will benefit most from knowing that the decennial census is an exercise to count all residents in the United States **where they live and sleep most of the time as of April 1, 2020**. Thus, the student attending college away from the home where they grew up is to be counted not at the family home, but at the address where they are living on April 1. Both students and parents will benefit from this knowledge.

**I might have trouble completing a Census form.**

Students expressing this concern could include immigrants and non-native English speakers. It should be explained that the Census is for **all those residing in the United States** regardless of citizenship or residency status – and that questions related to residency status will not be asked. In fact, these individuals will benefit from knowing what questions are asked and why, as well as knowing that they can fill the form out in English or another 12 other languages. In addition, the Census Bureau will have a print and video guide available in a full 59 non-English languages. Finally, these students will likely be most receptive to learning about and getting help on the Census from members of their own community.

# Appendix 4: 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 50% 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 \$1 billion 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 an invitation for them 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. Those living in campus housing will be counted by the college administration.

## What is the timeline?

The process begins in mid-March 2020 and ends at the end of July. 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. In towns and neighborhoods with lots of college students, this door-to-door process will begin in early April to catch students before the spring term ends.

## 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 responses can be used ONLY to produce statistical information about the population, and penalties for violations are severe. For more

information, refer to the [Factsheet 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 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.