

U.S. 2020 Census: Your Funding and Your Future

The U.S. Census is the foundation of our representative democracy, and the constitution requires every person to be counted. Census participation is a civic duty just like voting. However, unlike voting, Census participation only occurs once every 10 years and is not optional. The objective of the U.S. Census is to count everyone in the right place and only count them once.

The effects of poor participation in the Census will be felt for a full 10 years, and no opportunity to correct these effects exists until the next census occurs. For every one-percent of Missourians undercounted in the 2020 Census, \$1,000,000,000 in Federal funding to Missouri and its communities will be foregone over 10 years. **One-percent equals \$1,000,000,000.**

Funding from the Federal government is a pie and states take a slice of that pie during every Census. The size of the pie does not change based upon the Census count, but the size of the slice taken by each State does change based on the participation of States' residents in the Census. Four of the top five States with the highest participation rates in the country are in the Midwest Region. Missouri ranks 24th in the nation for participation. **We must change this.**

The information gathered from the Census shapes the distribution of Federal tax dollars to communities, determines States' representation in Congress, and is the foundation for creating laws, policies, and civic plans that serve the public. In many cases, Federal dollars are allotted to states based on the number of people counted in the Census. Medicaid funding is an example. In other cases, census numbers determine a community's eligibility for Federal programs such as disaster relief aid, Community Development Block Grants, and designations for Rural Electrification loans. Lackluster participation in the Census will constrict public budgets and hinder local communities like yours from thriving.

The U.S. Census Bureau goes to extraordinary lengths to ensure everyone in the U.S. and its territories are counted. Inevitably, when undertaking a task of this magnitude, mistakes will be made and certain groups of people will not be counted. The Census Bureau does not mass mail Census forms, it mails forms only to addresses believed to be residential. Because participation is not optional, the Bureau will track down every Census form that is not returned.

The reality may be that a form has been sent to a place of business, a demolished building, or a location where no "person" resides. Determining why a form was not returned is costly. That is why local communities need to be proactive in efforts to ensure the Bureau has an accurate mailing list. The Census Bureau takes a proactive approach to finding residents' addresses by developing and verifying a "residential" address list prior the Census. This list determines where Census forms should be mailed, and importantly, where forms should NOT be mailed.

In 2015, approximately \$1,851 was allocated per person within the State from the 16 largest Federal assistance programs. Census data tells us that 2.2 persons reside in an average home within Missouri. This means that on average, over \$40,000 in Federal funding comes back to Missouri over the decade for each home (address) counted. Imagine if a housing development of 200 new homes in your community was omitted from the Census Bureau's mailing list. Your community could potentially miss out on over \$8,000,000 in Federal dollars over ten years. Now

imagine these 200 omitted homes are sprinkled throughout your community and are far easier to be overlooked by the Census Bureau, the financial impact would still be the same.

Although the Census Bureau's mailing list has proved accurate for the nation as a whole, Missouri faces the unique challenge of a mix of urban and rural populations. Without the help of local entities during the development phase of the mailing list, the likelihood of a missing address being tagged as residential is low. That is why the Census Bureau provides local communities with an opportunity to update local residential addresses within their jurisdiction before the Census occurs. Through participation in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program, local governments can assist the Census Bureau with improving the accuracy of the mailing list.

Below is important information regarding LUCA:

- Invitations to participate in the LUCA program were mailed to the highest official in each local government in **July of 2017**. Training for the LUCA program begins in **October of 2017**. **Registration for the LUCA program must occur by December 15, 2017**.
- Beginning in **February of 2018**, participating governments will be mailed review materials. Review materials will consist of address counts by census block, maps showing the blocks, address lists, and address locations—or in some combination depending on participation format. Upon receipt of the review materials, participating governments will have **only 120 days** to complete the address review.
- The Census Bureau will be completely unaware of some addresses. Although confidentially laws prohibit anyone who has viewed the Census Bureau's records from discussing them specifically, your local government will be able to say whether it participated in LUCA and if the mailing list was as accurate as possible after completion of the review.
- **It is Not Too Late:** any local government can still participate. The Census Bureau's website provides an ongoing [map](#) showing which local governments have accepted the invitation to participate in LUCA. Governments that have formally declined can change their minds until the registration deadline has expired
- Local governments can work with their Council of Government or Regional Planning Commission to do this review on their behalf. Even if you are not the highest elected official, you can use this information to persuade that person to participate in LUCA
- The Census Bureau's mailing list is used to select homes for the American Community Survey. This survey provides the local, State, and Federal government with necessary information on income & poverty, educational attainment, employment, migration, marital status, living arrangements, housing values & costs, internet connectivity, and myriad other subjects. The results provide necessary information for competitive funding from the Federal government.