

## Census 2020 – Making Idaho Count

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Across Idaho, county commissioners, mayors, tribal leaders, nonprofit representatives and other civic leaders are urging Idahoans to stand up and be counted in the 2020 Census. They are well aware of the importance of ensuring that every member in their communities. A lot depends on it.

### WHY ANSWER THE CENSUS?

Political clout.

A main purpose of the census is to count how many people live in each state, which determines how many members of the U.S. House of Representatives that state has. In the neighboring state of Montana, leaders are especially concerned about counting their total population this year, because the results could give Montana a second member of the House. If Idaho's population continues to grow at its current strong rate, it's very likely to get a third House member 10 years from now based on the 2030 Census.

The Census numbers also are used to determine the size of legislative districts within the state. It makes sure that areas get a fair share of political representation relative to population size.

Millions of dollars are at stake.

More than \$675 billion in federal funding is allocated each year based on population counts. According to a George Washington University study, there are around 320 census-guided federal programs that distribute funding each year to state and local governments, nonprofits, schools, businesses and households. Among them are funding for first responders, school meals, libraries and community centers, special education, water and waste disposal systems for rural communities, Head Start, substance abuse prevention and treatment, Medicare and Medicaid, adoption assistance and food assistance programs.

The George Washington University study estimated that in fiscal year 2017 those programs provided nearly \$6.8 million in funding to Idaho programs. According to Treasure Valley Complete Count, a website put together by The Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho, an organization dedicated to counting every Idahoan in the 2020 census, Idaho is expected to receive about \$1,473 per person counted, per year in federal funding. Every person not counted reduces federal funding going to their communities. U.S. Senator Jim Risch recently said the Census Bureau estimated that 31,000 Idahoans were not counted in the 2010 census, making the state miss out on about \$67 million in federal funding over the past decade.

Constitutional duty.

Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution requires a census be conducted every 10 years. By participating in the census, citizens show a commitment to the constitution. Enshrining the census in the constitution marked a turning point in world history. Before 1790, kings and emperors had used censuses mainly to tax or confiscate property or to conscript youth into military service. America's founders turned a tool of oppression into a tool of political empowerment for citizens, ensuring they received equal representation in their government. In 1790, the first census counted 3,929,214 people living in the United States. The census conducted in 2010 found 308,745,538.

Guides decisions by government and businesses.

Census data provides vital information about communities that inform thousands of decisions made by community leaders, businesses and nonprofit organizations. Businesses use census data to identify potential markets and to determine where to build stores, offices and manufacturing plants. Health care providers rely on statistics about the size, growth and age of local populations to plan for hospitals, clinics and other services. School districts use census data to look at information about an area's children and make decisions about how best to serve them now and in the future.

Provides the basis for other essential statistics.

The decennial census (the total count of population every 10 years) provides key data points for other data that governments, communities and businesses need. The data plays a role in statistics provided by the Bureau of Economic Analysis and Bureau of Labor Statistics, as

well as other data series provided by the Census Bureau. The 10-year counts help keep other statistics accurate and up-to-date.

Proud family tradition.

People researching their family genealogies rely on historic census information to find where their family members lived, who they lived with, their occupations and their ages. Someday, descendants of today's Idahoans may learn about us that way. By law, personally identifiable information collected for a decennial census is released to the public after 72 years.

## ABOUT ANSWERING THE CENSUS

It's easy.

The census survey includes 10 questions — name, age, sex, Hispanic status and race of everyone living in the household and their relation (family or not family) and whether they own or rent their home. It normally takes 10 to 20 minutes to answer the survey. The 2020 Census will ask no questions about citizenship. The Census Bureau will never ask for Social Security numbers, bank or credit card account numbers. A household member can choose whether to answer online, by phone or by mail.

It's highly confidential.

Strict federal law prohibits any Census Bureau employee to disclose or publish any census information that identifies an individual or business, imposing a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment for up to five years. No other parties, including law enforcement and immigration agencies, are allowed to see personal information for 72 years.

## CENSUS SCHEDULE

The official Census Day is April 1, but households will have earlier opportunities to respond. Most households will receive a letter inviting them to respond to the 2020 census online between March 12 and March 20. Between March 16 and 24, households that have not responded yet will receive a reminder letter. After another reminder, the Census will send paper questionnaire to households that have not responded starting March 26. From April

20-27, a final reminder will go out to any households that have not responded. This will be the last paper reminder before a Census worker comes to households that haven't responded.

## PREVENTING AN UNDERCOUNT

Census officials and community leaders are making special efforts to count elements of the population that traditionally have been hard to count. These include college students, seasonal residents such as snowbirds, Native Americans, the homeless, people living in institutions, such as prisons and nursing homes, noncitizens and people who want to "live off the grid" and have no recognized address.

Children under age 5 are often missed, especially if they live in large, extended families or with multiple families living under one roof. Foster children also can be missed. When newborn babies and children are not counted, support for schools, early childhood development childcare, hospitals, food assistance and health insurance is impacted

To make sure you and your community are counted, learn more about the 2020 Census by visiting [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov).