

Townships count! A simple advocate for an accurate

From roads to health clinics to restaurants, the services many residents look for in their communities lead back to one big event that happens every decade: the decennial census.

Every 10 years, the federal government undertakes a full count of the population as mandated by the U.S. Constitution. The count is used not only to accurately know the number of people residing in the country, but also to allocate resources. The population of townships, counties and states found in the 2020 Census will determine their political representation, federal funding and growth opportunities for the following decade.

But despite nation-wide efforts, experts at the Census Bureau predict that 965,000 Minnesotans may not self-respond to the 2020 Census. Almost a million of our neighbors could be left invisible! That's where townships and other local governments come in.

There are many ways to help ensure a complete and accurate community count of the 2020 Census. It begins with knowing exactly what an accurate count means and what an undercount puts at risk.

The guide to understand and accurate 2020 Census



we count mn

CENSUS • 2020

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How does an undercount affect our resources?

The 2020 Census is an opportunity for communities of all sizes and demographics to claim their fair share of representation and resources. Simply put, an undercount will only create deeper inequities.

Many federal programs use decennial census data to determine how much funding to give for a fiscal year. That number remains the same until the next census. These are just some of the programs that use census data:

- Community facility loans and grants
- Rural water and waste disposal
- Health care centers
- Very low to moderate housing loans
- Business and industry loans

Funding for local schools is also determined by census data. For example, Otter Tail County is home to 62 townships and received \$1,316,679 for local schools in 2017. St. Louis County, which covers 73 townships, received \$5,592,972. While many counties may not receive as high a dollar amount, the allocation is significant for every area in the state.

How can it affect political representation?

Census numbers are used to distribute electoral college votes, draw congressional maps and shape state legislative districts. Minnesotans received an eye-opening demonstration of how close these determinations can be following the 2010 Census. The state came within 8,739 residents of losing the 8th Congressional district. Imagine whole townships

being missed or an area a little bigger than Big Lake township not being counted. The Census Bureau predicts a similar narrow margin with the 2020 Census.

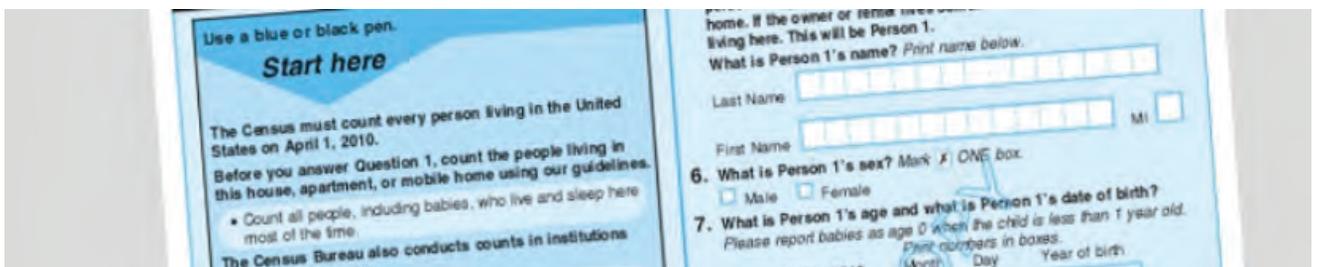
An undercount of people in your community could result in the loss of a U.S. House seat or fewer electoral college votes in presidential elections.

*April 1, 2020 is Census Day!
When completing the census,
you will include everyone living
in your home on April 1. Cen-
sus Day is also celebrated with
events across Minnesota and the
U.S.*

What else does the census impact?

Census data has an impact far beyond federal money and politics, too. The information gathered by the Census is among the most important data sets in the country: researchers, businesses and nonprofit organizations consult census information in the course of making a great variety of decisions.

Do your residents ask about more nursing homes, grocery stores or medical clinics? Businesses use census data to predict growth and decide where to open new locations. Local governments also need it to predict and plan for growth in their communities.



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There are many different reasons you or your neighbors may care about accurate census data. Some may want to ensure an accurate count so their grandchildren have well-funded schools, and others may want to make sure their vote counts and U.S. House districts don't have to expand if a seat is lost. Talk to your colleagues and community members about what they care about. Chances are that they can have a big impact by simply filling out their census form and encouraging others to do the same.

Who counts and who is often undercounted?

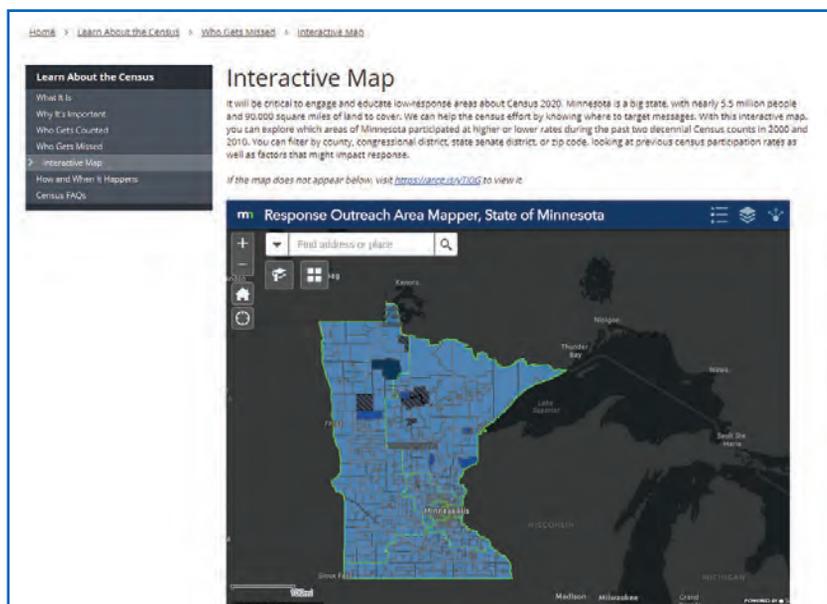
This first question is simple. Who will be counted in the 2020 Census? **Everyone living in the United States.** However, just because everyone is eligible, doesn't mean they will ultimately be counted.

U.S. Census Bureau statisticians, state officials, advocates and academics all agree: individuals who are renters are the single group most likely to be missed in Minnesota during the 2020 Census. Racial and ethnic minorities, non-native English speakers and children under five are also likely to be missed. Collectively, these demographic groups are known as "historically undercounted communities."

See which parts of Minnesota are hardest to count with an interactive map at www.censushardtocompmaps2020.us.

How can you help prevent an undercount of your community?

Partnerships among local stakeholders are critical to obtaining a complete and accurate count in Minnesota. As the federal government has not increased funds for 2020 Census operations beyond



2010 levels, it is essential that states, counties, cities and townships work together to make sure residents are not missed. Townships can help insure a complete count by publicizing the census and encouraging residents to fill out their forms. Here are some ways to spread the word among residents:

- Put census information on your township website.
- Include information in an area online or print newsletter.

On Social Media?
Help Minnesota be counted on Twitter, Facebook or Instagram

@MN2020Census.

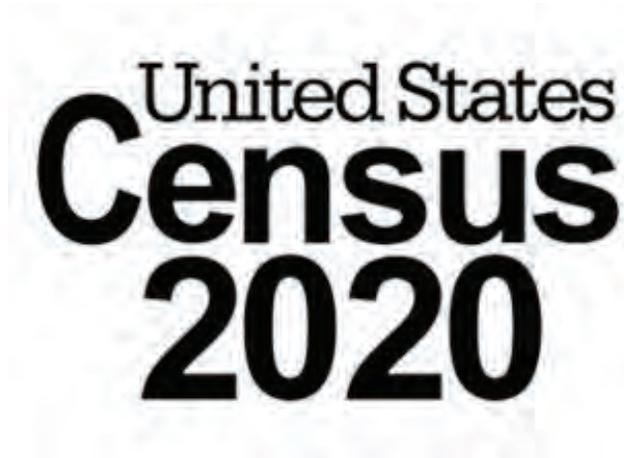
Use the hashtag #WeCount2020.



Townships count! A simple way to reach out and advocate for an accurate count

- Write a letter to the editor to your local newspaper.
- Reach out to news outlets in your area and let them know the census matters.
- Post information on your social media accounts.
- Hang up posters about the census on community boards.

Another effective way to ensure a complete and accurate count in your county is to create a Complete Count Committee (CCC).



What is a Complete Count Committee?

A CCC is a team of volunteers, often representing local governments, schools, non-profits, businesses, and houses of worship, that works together to

develop and implement a plan that targets outreach efforts to fit the unique characteristics of their area. Oftentimes, CCCs are made up of local government officials, but can include anyone passionate about the 2020 Census. CCCs can cover a range of areas, from an entire country to a single neighborhood. They can also focus on specific demographic groups, like the elderly or renters.

The census will be available online for the first time in 2020! People can respond in three ways: online, by phone or by mail.

Members should be trusted local stakeholders so the committee is in the best position to mobilize community resources. Community members who learn about the census from a trusted partner, whether a township leader or area nonprofit, are more likely to fill out their forms, and to encourage their friends and neighbors to do the same.

Currently, there are more than 160 committees in Minnesota. Find your closest CCC, or create one at www.mn.gov/2020census.

The screenshot shows the '2020 CENSUS' website navigation menu with options: LEARN ABOUT THE CENSUS, WORK FOR THE CENSUS, GRANT OPPORTUNITIES, GET INVOLVED, FIND TOOLS AND RESOURCES, and CONTACT US. The 'GET INVOLVED' dropdown menu is open, showing options: How You Can Help, Subscribe for Updates, Events, Complete Count Committees, and Statewide CCC. The main content area is titled 'Complete Count Committees' and includes a 'Get Involved' sidebar with links for 'Start a CCC', 'Find a CCC', and 'Statewide CCC'. Below the title, there is a paragraph explaining that CCCs are volunteer committees established by tribal, state, and local governments, or community leaders, to increase awareness about the census. It also states that CCCs lead their communities in promoting the 2020 Census at the local level. Three columns provide further information: 'Start a CCC' (Want to establish a Complete Count Committee (CCC) in your community? We've got your playbook.), 'Find a CCC' (Want to see if there's a committee near your community to join or support? Explore our roster of existing CCCs.), and 'Statewide CCC' (Minnesota's Complete Count Committee is working to plan and implement statewide strategies for promoting the 2020 Census.).

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What type of support does a Complete Count Committee receive?

In Minnesota, all CCCs are eligible for a grant of \$750 from the State of Minnesota. CCCs also receive specialized training from staff at the Minnesota State Demographic Center. These trainings highlight a broad menu of outreach tools that committees can use. Trainings emphasize outreach to historically undercounted communities.

Where can you learn more about the 2020 Census?

There's a lot to say and learn about the census, but you don't have to know it all to help your community be counted in 2020.

Find more information at 2020census.gov and 2020censusruralmn.org. Take next steps at mn.gov/2020census.

This article was submitted by request from the Minnesota State Demographer Office. Susan Brower will be at the MAT Annual Conference on Saturday November 23rd to discuss the Census and how it could affect Rural Representation at the legislative level and how Townships can help count everyone to ensure an accurate representation.

Important dates for the 2020 Census

By April 1, 2020: Everyone home with receive an invitation to participate in the count.

April 2020: Census takers visit college dormitories, senior living facilities and other large group housing to conduct quality check interviews for an accurate count.

May 2020: Census takers visit homes that haven't responded to the 2020 Census. They will visit up to three times to try to count the home.

Late July to Early August: Counting wraps up and census takers no longer go out in the field.

December 2020: The Census Bureau delivers apportionment count to the President and Congress as required by law.

March 31, 2021: The Census Bureau will send redistricting counts to states so states can redraw legislative districts in the case of population changes.

Minnesota Association of Townships 2019 Educational Conference & Annual Meeting



Rural Representation at Risk

November 22-23, 2019 | Mankato Civic Center, Mankato