

2020 Census: 10 Things Every City Official Should Know

Please help your residents, businesses and visitors better understand the upcoming 2020 Census. You can be the catalyst for fewer rumors and misinformation to create a better census response rate for the Sunshine State! If your city is undercounted, that percentage can equate to lost revenue for a decade: 10-plus years of fewer dollars for your essential services and programs.

Here are the top 10 things you should know:

The census is confidential. No information from it can be shared with other agencies. Some respondents fear they will be reported if they are not U.S. citizens or have lost pertinent documentation. Information reported individually or taken by a census employee cannot be shared.

No citizenship question will be on the 2020 Census. There was a discussion and a presidential request to include a citizenship question, but it was dropped from consideration. There is a question related to ethnicity but not citizenship.

Florida has been undercounted substantially in the past two censuses. This is a generation of lower-than-expected figures for the third-most-populous state. It is estimated that there is a 5-10 percent undercount each decade, which means up to 20 percent of Floridians could have been missed over 20 years.

Notifications will start going out in February 2020. Plan your city promotions to begin around the same time. Include census information on the city website, utility bill material and newsletters, and via your city speaker's bureau.

Having most responses collected by April 1 is the goal. That goal date allows the Census Bureau to focus the remaining four to six weeks on hard-to-count areas that will include expensive and labor-intensive door-to-door responses.

In 2020, respondents can answer the questions online or by phone. No forms are needed! These options should greatly increase responses and should be

emphasized when you promote the census. The website will be activated for responses in early 2020.

Seasonal visitors should be counted where they claim permanent residency. If you have visitors who are split 50/50 between Florida and another home, then the Census Bureau asks that they reply from their address on April 1. It is important that these visitors are not double-counted. Cities can work with retirement community boards, homeowners associations and other groups to help residents understand this requirement.

For neighborhoods with post office boxes rather than street addresses, the flyers direct respondents to answer online or by phone. No one should be missed simply because they don't have a street address.

Each county has formed or is forming a complete count committee. Cities are encouraged to work closely with the county and neighboring cities to reach as many people as possible. Tribal complete count committees are also formed within Florida's tribal governments.

The U.S. government will use your city's Census 2020 number until 2030 for every formula, statistic and report. Florida is growing by more 900 persons per day. Every new resident *should* be counted!

Visit [census.gov](https://www.census.gov) for the latest resources and to learn more.