



2020 Census - What's Important to Wisconsin Cities & Villages (and everyone else too)?

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As the decade draws to a close, preparations for the 2020 Census are beginning to ramp up. The census is a critical effort for Wisconsin and its local governments and it is vital to ensure that Wisconsin's population count is complete and accurate. The Census Bureau's 2020 Census's primary goal is to ensure that every person in Wisconsin is counted.

Why Is the Census Important?

The results of the census are used in several significant ways. The first and perhaps the most immediately important to local government officials is redrawing of new election districts, forming the basis for representative government on a local, statewide, and national basis. At the local level, the 2020 census data will be used to draw new wards for cities, villages, and towns.

The new population counts will also be used for future state and federal funding and resource allocation. According to the Tax Policy Center, \$880 billion is allocated annually using census-generated data. Annually, Wisconsin Federal aid is about \$77.6 billion, \$61.6 billion of which came from direct payments to seniors, veterans, and other entities.

Census data also assists local governments in planning, helps to allocate resources for the provision of services, serves as a foundational basis for economic development, and helps guide emergency management efforts in times of crisis. Business and research use census data to develop their markets. A complete and accurate census count is critical to all Wisconsin communities and their local governments.

How Does the Census Work?

To try to get a complete and accurate enumeration of the population, the 2020 Census uses a three-step process.

1. Make an accurate list of every address in the U.S. and five U.S. territories – including houses, apartments, dormitories, military barracks, and more. Much of this work occurred in 2018 and some is still ongoing.

2. Get everyone to respond to the census online, by phone, or by mail in March and April of 2020.
3. Follow up in person with households that have not responded.

How to Get to a Complete Census Count

How can a local government assist with census outreach and promotion to encourage their community members to respond to the census? There are specific populations in Wisconsin who are often less likely to respond and are “hard to count.” These groups may include young adults, farmworkers, people with disabilities, people living in poverty, immigrants, renters, and senior citizens. Other “hard-to-count” groups include people in transitory living situations like RV parks, campgrounds, marinas, and hotels.

There are several other considerations when encouraging participation and complete counts in Wisconsin communities. For example, this is the first census that will allow people to respond online. It is an essential part of the Census Bureau's operational plan. The online goal is for 60 percent of the population to return the census form online. Lack of access to the internet and broadband may pose some challenges. To improve internet access, special efforts to provide internet “kiosks” at libraries or community centers or even at municipal government buildings might be a strategy to increase local response rates. It should be noted that everyone will always have the option of responding to the census using a paper form or over the telephone.

Some residents of Wisconsin communities may also have concerns about the confidentiality of their information. The government emphasizes privacy and security in data collection and ensures that all data gathered are kept confidential. According to Public Law 95-416, the government cannot release any detailed information for 72 years after a census is taken. Considering the new online method of Census data collection, community members may have heightened concerns about their data being secure. To combat this fear,

the Census Bureau is taking extensive cybersecurity measures to ensure that respondent data are being protected and kept confidential. The Census Bureau has a firm commitment to confidentiality. It will not release any identifiable information about individuals, households, or businesses to anyone, not even to law enforcement agencies.

Initially, encouraging community residents to participate may seem daunting. However, local governments, tribes, and other local entities can use several techniques to engage people to achieve a complete and accurate census count. One of the best is to create and organize a community Complete Count Committee (CCC).

How to Form a Complete Count Committee (CCC) and What It Should Do?

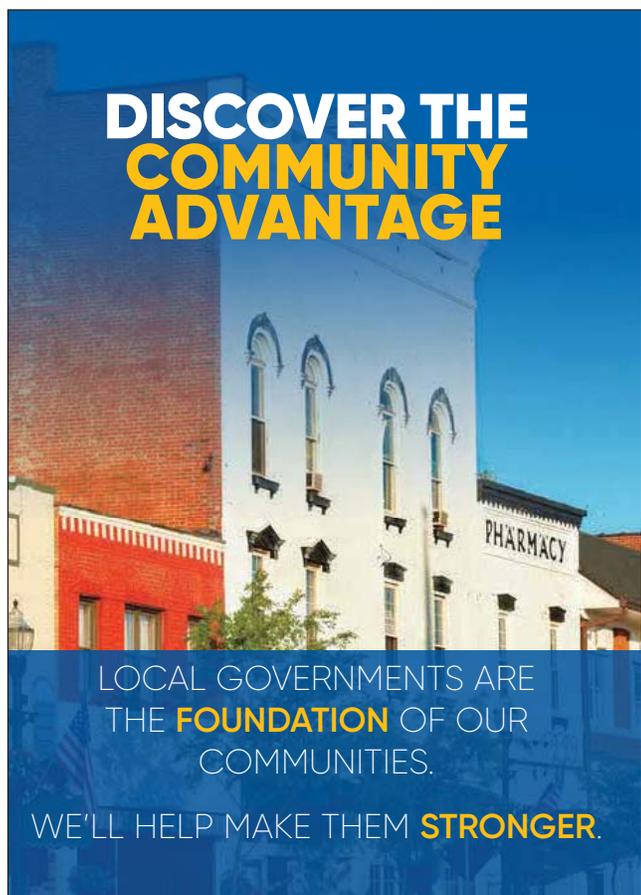
The Census Bureau suggests using a local CCC to bring together stakeholders, including representatives of local governments and other key constituencies (such as faith-based organizations, nonprofits, businesses, schools, etc.). A diverse CCC serves to amplify and extend the message about the census's importance to Wisconsin communities, especially those "hard-to-count" populations.

The trusted voices of a CCC can develop and implement a 2020 Census awareness campaign based upon their knowledge of the local community, helping to determine how to reach the "hard-to-count" populations. The CCC can help provide targeted outreach to people like seniors, Latinos, millennials, Amish or other faith groups, remote rural populations, and communities with limited or no internet access. Because this census is relying heavily on self-response via the internet, the CCC could identify those locations that have limited computer and internet access. We encourage cities and villages to work with their respective counties, adjacent towns, key stakeholders and constituencies when forming a Complete Count Committee.

Now Is the Time to Start a CCC

The time to start is now! Communities should begin forming CCCs and planning activities and strategies now. CCCs should start their outreach and promotion as soon as possible to encourage community members to be aware of the census. Emphasis should be on making sure that "hard-to-count" populations are identified and targeted for outreach so they are counted in the 2020 Census.

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Wisconsin can accomplish the goal of making sure every citizen is counted and represented. Local governments play an essential role in shaping the 2020 Census into a smooth and engaging process; one that helps set the stage for complete and accurate information about Wisconsin communities going into the next decade.

Census Bureau Local Government Specialists In Wisconsin

Now is the time to get involved. There are lots of promotional resources and materials that are easy to access online that can help guide involvement. Also, census guides and resources will assist community members in engaging and encouraging participation through partnership programs and other ideas for encouraging everyone to respond to the 2020 Census.

As part of the ramp-up to the 2020 Census, the Census Bureau has hired partnership specialists to “blanket” the state to help local governments and tribal communities set up Complete Count Committees. There are currently 17 census partnership specialists working in Wisconsin. It is quite likely that your community has been contacted about forming a CCC. Please contact Daniel Foth (608-265-2852) at the UW Madison Extension Local Government Center or Dan Veroff (608-265-9545) at the UW-Madison Applied Population Laboratory to find your local partnership specialist. 2020 Census Resources are available at census.gov

About the Authors:

Hannah Katz is a student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison majoring in Journalism and Political Science and a student intern at UW-Extension’s Local Government Center.

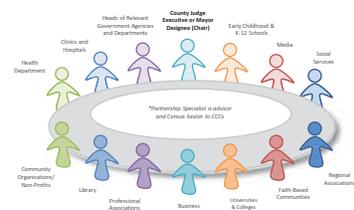
Dan Foth is a Local Government Specialist with the University of Wisconsin Madison Local Government Center. His focus areas include open meetings and records, effective meetings, boards of review, parliamentary procedure, transportation, and the next generation of local government elected officials.

Dan Veroff is a Demographic Specialist with the Applied Population Laboratory at the University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension. Dan provides demographic data and analysis to Extension’s community development programs and does research on the demographics of diversity and the impact of immigration on rural Wisconsin communities.

Why is census data useful to communities?

- **Helps tailor/target effective programs, strategies, and resource provision**
 - Trends analysis and issue identification
 - Uncover hidden characteristics, assets, or deficits
- **Helps with evaluations or assessments that provide the basis for planning and decision making**
- **Grant writing and other “making the case” activities**
- **Helps contextualize people in places of any size (nation to neighborhood)**
- **Can provide a framework for community input and participation**

2020 Census Who Should be Included on a CCC



2020 Census

Sample Topics for the CCCs

- How to reach **specific audiences**, such as Millennials, students, Seniors, businesses, and faith-based communities
- How to help **recruit** for Census Jobs
- How to use and engage with **Media & Social Media**
- How to **share, reinforce, and localize** the Census message



The Local Complete Count Committee (CCC)

- Organized at the county, municipal, or community level
- Formed by local, official proclamation or passage of ordinance <https://lwm-info.org/1566/10801/2020-Census>
- Members appointed by the highest elected official
- Committee organizes local outreach efforts
- Provides leadership/support for participation