KEY MESSAGES

Montana 2020 Census: Make it Count

- Responding to the Census is quick, easy and safe.
- Counting everyone in Montana is critical because it determines the state’s share of federal funding for the next decade, and it determines whether Montana will get another representative in Congress.

TALKING POINTS

- If Montana residents don’t respond to the Census, then we end up with an undercount. And an undercount means other states with a more complete count will end up getting some of our fair share of federal funding. It also means our state’s voting districts are misaligned, and Montanans don’t have accurate data for making important business, community and governing decisions.
- An inaccurate Census count doesn’t just hurt Montana short-term – it hurts for the next 10 years! We don’t want that to happen!
  - The 2020 Census counting runs from February to June.
- For every Montana resident counted, a Census study estimates the state will receive almost $2,000 each year for ten years. That is $20,000 per person over the decade flowing across Montana counties for highway planning, medical assistance, educational programs, need-based support, and infrastructure.
  - In 2017, more than $2 billion from 300 federal programs was allocated back to Montana based on Census counts and information. Missing only one resident means that a community misses $20,000 of its fair share.
  - Folks living on American Indian Reservations and in rural communities; are areas that are traditionally difficult to count due to remoteness, challenges in delivery -- since Census forms can’t be mailed to a P.O. or Rural Box location, and more limited broadband coverage.
- The Census count also serves as the keystone for our representative government in two ways. First, it determines the number of representatives each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives under Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. Secondly, decennial Census data is used in redistricting to draw the lines that link representatives to their constituents for the next ten years.
• The actual Census count is a federally-run effort. The State of Montana does not participate in any of the actual counting activities. The State’s role is promoting why it is so important for Montanans to fill out the form - which is very easy to do taking less than 10 minutes to complete.
  
  o The Legislature approved $100,000 for Montana’s Census outreach effort in HB 2.
  o This represents 9 cents a person – which is the same amount funded by the legislature for the 2010 Census. Other states are spending much more – California has a budget of $100 million, with another $54 million proposed! With more limited resources, it is imperative that Montanans work together to achieve a complete count.

• To date, 97 local Complete Count Committees have formed across the state to get the word out about the Census. A map of those CCCs is available at CENSUS.MT.GOV.

• The Census Bureau is hiring thousands of employees in Montana to help execute the 2020 Census. A variety of temporary jobs are available. Census jobs pay competitive wages based on current pay rates in your area. For information about census jobs, visit 2020censusjobs.gov.
  
  o The Census Bureau is raising Montana field workers’ wages in December to between $17-$19.50 an hour.

BACKGROUND

Resource: census.mt.gov

The complete count committee (CCC) is a group of volunteers established across the state whose purpose will be to increase awareness about the Census and motivate residents in their communities to respond.

Leonard Smith, Executive Director of the Native American Development Corporation in Billings and Kathie Bailey, Executive Director of the Snowy Mountain Development Corporation in Lewistown have agreed to serve as Co-chairs of the CCC. Leonard Smith and Kathie Bailey were recruited to serve as CCC co-chairs because of their understanding of tribes and rural communities; areas that are both traditionally difficult to count due to remoteness, challenges in delivery since Census forms can’t be mailed to a P.O. or Rural Box location, more limited broadband coverage and other factors. We are confident that their leadership will help the Montana CCC effectively support the US Census Bureau counting effort for Census 2020.
The Census and Economic Information Center (CEIC) is located in the Montana Office of Tourism and Business Development of the Department of Commerce and is designated under MCA 90-1-109 as the state census and economic information repository for the state. It is the US Census Bureau’s designated State Data Center (SDC) for disseminating Census Bureau data for Montana, which it has done since 1978. Since the 1980s, CEIC has supported the U.S. Census Bureau’s decennial census efforts and will do that again in 2020.

In 2000, the state did not fund a Census promotion effort. That year, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated 14,390 Montanans were missed – and that meant state did not receive $22 to $49 million in federal funding. And, the gaps in the data because of the undercount meant a lack of good information for making important planning decisions in communities statewide.