

Census 2020 Talking Points – Counting American Indian Populations



The 2020 Census is vital to the tribal nations, tribal community members, and native residents living throughout Montana.

- Key reasons the Census matters to tribes:
 - A complete count means Montana gets its fair share of federal funding. More than \$2 billion allocated back to the state each year based on Census counts and information. For every Montana resident counted, the state receives an estimated \$2,000 each year for ten years. That is \$20,000 per person over the decade.
 - Census data is used in distributing millions of dollars that serve tribes and native residents across our state. This includes funding for schools and education programs that serve native children, dollars for Indian health services and nutrition, and infrastructure funds for housing, water and sewage projects, roads, and economic development.
 - A good Census count ensures accurate data which will guide funding and planning decisions for the tribes and native communities for a decade.
 - The Census count affects Montana’s representation in the U.S. Congress and at the state and local level. An accurate Census means the native voice is represented in elected offices statewide.
 - Several projections show a good count could mean a second U.S. House member for Montana.

Native and reservation populations are a key focus for 2020

Here are a few facts:

- American Indian residents in Montana are at risk for an undercount. In 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated nearly 5 percent of American Indians and Alaska Natives living on reservations or in Native villages were undercounted. Nearly half of the Native resident population in Montana live in Census tracts that are considered hard-to-count areas.
- The 2020 Census will be the first time residents can respond on-line or by phone along with the paper form. However, many reservation areas in Montana have lower levels of wireless and internet connectivity. This makes it even more important to get the message out early and assist tribal nations in establishing “Get Counted” locations where native residents can go to complete the 2020 Census form.

For the upcoming Census., the state and tribes are partnering in Census efforts as members of State, Tribal and Local Complete Count Committees and through joint promotional activities.

Montana's Tribal Leaders Can Take Actions to Ensure a Good 2020 Census Count for Native Residents



You can play an important role in making the 2020 Census successful by encouraging people in your community to take part in the count. You can:

- Become involved in forming and participating in a local Tribal Complete Count Committee (CCC). A CCC is an organized group of other influential leaders in your area who are committed to increasing participation in the census. The Blackfeet and Fort Peck Tribal CCCs are already formed and the U.S. Census Tribal Partnership Specialist for Montana is working to form CCCs in the other reservation areas.
- Each of the Montana reservations has a U.S. Census Bureau Tribal Liaison. You can work with these liaisons to strengthen the Census messaging in your communities and implement a strategy to get every reservation resident to self-respond.
- You can suggest having your tribal governing body issue a proclamation or other public endorsement of the 2020 Census.
- You can help recruit census applicants for 2020 Census positions for native community areas. The follow-up for those who haven't completed a Census form is best done by trusted members from the local community. This is especially true in tribal communities.
- Be a trusted voice among your friends and neighbors. You can answer questions and help people overcome misconceptions about the 2020 Census.
- Before the Census begins, you can work to educate residents on the benefits of being counted and reassure tribal members and reservation residents that their questionnaire responses are confidential.
- When the Census count starts, you can encourage tribal members to use the tribe's preferred name when responding to the 'enrolled or principal tribe' question on the 2020 questionnaire
- Once the counting begins, work with your Tribal Liaison and CCC to provide space for "Be Counted" and Questionnaire Assistance Centers.
- You can encourage the inclusion of census information in newsletters, mailings and online. The State Website www.census.gov already has messaging available and new points targeted to various population groups are added all the time.
- You can hold an event or have a meeting of tribal leadership to educate tribal leaders on the census and encourage their participation in the outreach efforts.

MT U.S. Census Bureau Tribal Liaisons are:

Blackfeet: George Kipp (State CCC member)

Crow: A.J. Not Afraid

Flathead: Ronald Trahan

Fort Belknap: Delina Cuts the Rope (State CCC member)

Fort Peck: Lonnie Headdress (State CCC member)

Little Shell: Michael Grey (State CCC member)

Northern Cheyenne: Wallace Bear Chum (State CCC member)

Rocky Boys: Javon Wing (State CCC member)