



A new decade, a new count: the 2020 U.S. Census

What is the U.S. census, and why is it important?

As mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the United States must count its population once a decade. The results are used to adjust or redraw electoral districts, based on where populations have increased or decreased. The 2020 Census will provide a snapshot of our nation—who we are, where we live, and so much more. The results of this once-a-decade count determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. They are also used to draw congressional and state legislative districts. **Missouri lost one U.S. House seat after the 2010 census. It is important that all Missouri residents are counted so that our population has accurate representation at the state and federal levels.** State legislatures or independent bipartisan commissions are responsible for redrawing congressional districts. The U.S. Census Bureau provides states with population counts for this purpose. In this issue of *Good News*, we have provided information about the U.S. census that we hope will make you more comfortable and informed about the process as Census Day approaches. Read through this guide to find out how to respond, who to count, and how your response will help inform important federal and state decisions.

How Can I Respond to the Census?

Only one person per household should respond for all those who live there.

In mid-March, households will begin receiving official Census Bureau mail with detailed information on how to respond to the 2020 Census. Every home will receive this material by April 1. There are three ways to respond:

- **Online**
- **By phone**
- **By mail**

Who Is Required To Respond?

Everyone living in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands) is required by law to be counted in the 2020 Census.

Who to Count

Tally everyone who is living in your home as of April 1, 2020, including friends or family who are living and sleeping there most of the time. If someone is staying in your home on April 1, and has no usual home elsewhere, you should count them in your response to the 2020 Census. Be sure to count roommates, young children, newborns, and anyone who is renting a space in your home. These people are often missed in the census.

Federal Funding

The results of each census inform decisions about the distribution of hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding to communities across the country. Hospitals, fire departments, school lunch programs, and other critical programs and services depend on this funding to operate fully and effectively.

Representation in Congress

The 2020 U.S. Census will determine each state's representation in U.S. Congress. The U.S. House of Representatives is fixed at 435 members, and after every census, results are used to determine which states gain and lose seats based on population. After the 2010 census, Missouri lost one seat, bringing our count to eight seats. There is a risk of losing yet another seat after this census, further stating the importance of a complete and accurate count—without an accurate count, Missouri's voice will not be accurately represented at the federal level.

Impact at Home

The census count not only has an impact at the federal level, but even more so in our local communities. Local and state governments depend on census data to determine which areas of the state are growing or changing, and use this information to create public safety and policy plans, used in situations such as natural disasters. This data is also used to identify economic, social, and political trends, which influence public policy decisions.



For more detailed information about the 2020 U.S. Census, visit the website of the U.S. Census Bureau at www.2020census.gov

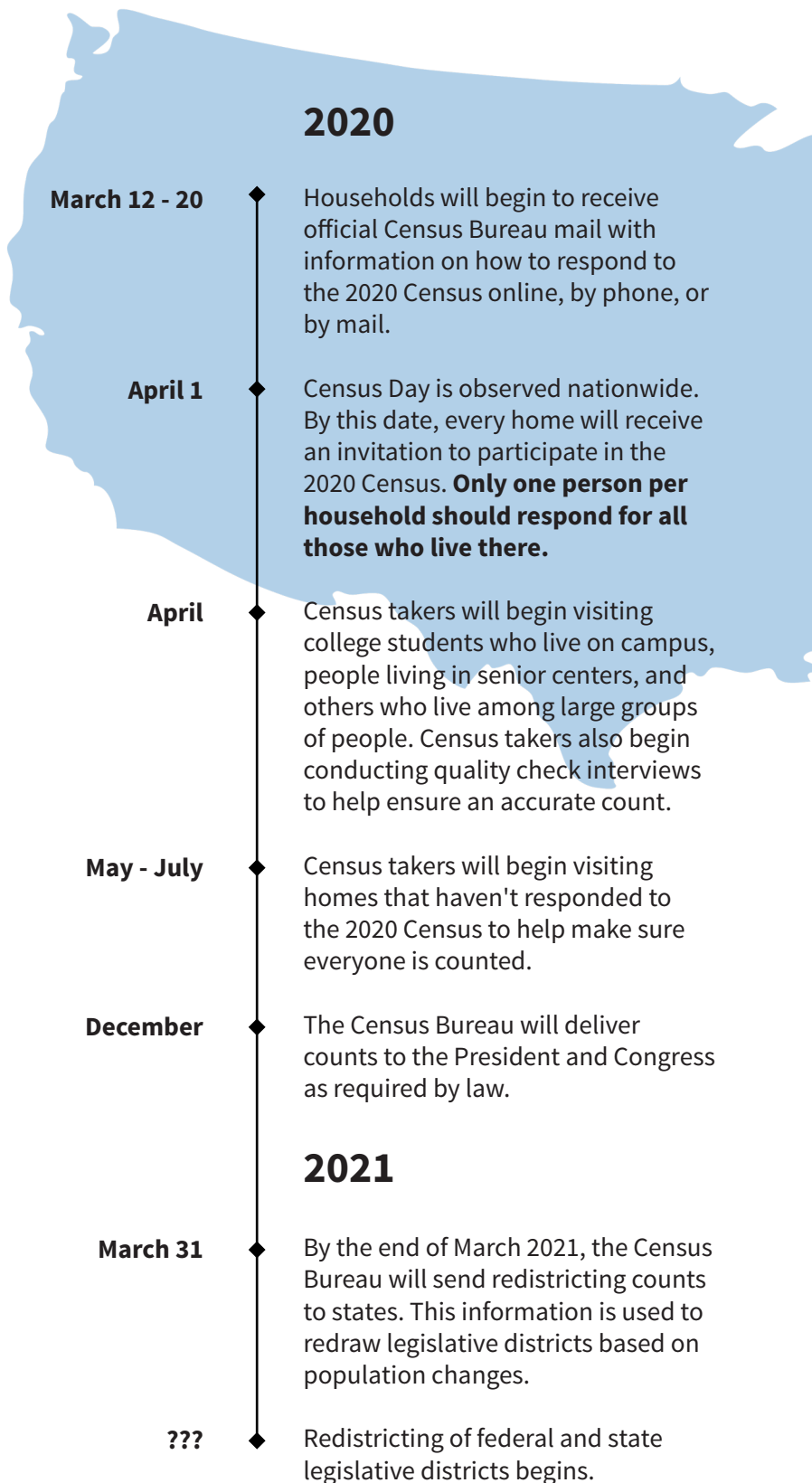
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Catholic teaching & the U.S. Census

The Catholic Church recognizes the importance of an accurate census count, and encourages all persons to participate. In 2019, the USCCB issued a statement voicing this belief.

“Our country conducts a Census every ten years to count the number of men, women and children residing in the United States. Census data helps direct more than \$800 billion annually to key programs designed to advance the common good, strengthen families and reduce poverty. The Catholic Church and other service providers rely on the national Census to provide an accurate count in order to effectively serve those in need,” said Bishop Dewane. “We urge for all people to be counted in the Census, regardless of their citizenship...Our society, rooted in the strength of the family, cannot risk missing this opportunity to give children and parents the tools they need to succeed.”

2020 Census Timeline



**All census data and information in this Good News sourced from the United States Census Bureau*

How the Census Bureau Protects Your Information

The Census Bureau is bound by Title 13 of the U.S. Code to keep your information confidential. The Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about you, your home, or your business, even to law enforcement agencies. The law ensures that your private data is protected and that your answers cannot be used against you by any government agency or court. **Your answers are used only to produce statistics. You are kept anonymous.**

It is important to know that the Census Bureau will not send unsolicited emails to request your participation in the 2020 Census. Further, during the 2020 Census, **the Census Bureau will never ask for:**

- Your Social Security number.
- Your bank account or credit card numbers.
- Money or donations.
- In addition, the Census Bureau will not contact you on behalf of a political party.

If someone visits your home to collect a response for the 2020 Census, you can do the following to verify their identity:

First, check to make sure that they have a valid ID badge, with their photograph, a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date.

If you still have questions about their identity, you can call 800-923-8282 to speak with a local Census Bureau representative.

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Coronavirus: What you need to know



Coronavirus (COVID-19) has made headlines for the past month after the virus has spread across the globe. It's easy for fears to escalate as cases rise in the United States, **but there is no need to panic.** In a hearing held at the MO State Capitol during the first week of March, Missouri health experts addressed concerns and presented advice on how we can combat the disease.

The most valuable thing you can do to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, experts say, is to wash your hands at regular intervals throughout the day with soap and water for 20 seconds at a time. Though it might seem like a safety barrier, wearing masks is not an

effective defense. "Those things do not particularly protect the wearer," Dr. Stevan Whitt, an infectious disease specialist at MU Health Care said. "They mostly protect people who are infected from transmitting the virus. They don't really filter air, they trap particles." Department of Health and Senior Services Director Randall Williams echoed his remarks. "To wear masks (when you're not sick), that's just a false sense of security," he said. "If you have (the virus) and you wear a mask, that's helpful." Health officials urged those who are feeling unwell to stay home unless they are seeking medical care at a hospital or clinic.

The coronavirus presents with similar symptoms as the common cold, with an added fever 100.4 and higher, along with respiratory distress. People who are not short of breath, not light headed and still able to eat and drink can likely ride out the coronavirus like they would with any other virus, health officials said. Out of an abundance of caution, officials say to decide whether or not to visit the doctor using this method: "If your grandma would send you to the doctor, you should go." For more information on the Coronavirus, visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/