Census Update and Call to Action
NASS Conference (Santa Fe, New Mexico)

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Overview

- Why the Census matters
  - Federal funding
  - Reapportionment and redistricting
- The 2020 Census is in trouble in many areas
- A call to action to Secretaries of State and Lt. Governors to address the shortcomings
- Work with CBOs and non-profits!
The Census begins in Indian Country

- The Census Bureau’s remote Alaska operation begins in January 2020, about 2 ½ months earlier than “Census Day” on April 1st

- First enumeration location: at one of NARF’s Alaska Native client villages, Toksook Bay

- The Census Bureau selected Toksook Bay because it is in a region with one of the highest concentrations of Alaska Native villages

- Census reports that “census takers may need to use a bush plane, dogsled or snowmobile to access these areas”
Toksook Bay, Alaska
Toksook Bay, Alaska
The U.S. Constitution requires that Census data be used for reapportionment and redistricting.

Reapportionment is not redistricting.

- Reapportionment: the process by which the number of U.S. Representatives are apportioned to each state based on decennial population data.
- Redistricting: the process of drawing new Congressional, state, and local districts.

Reapportionment and redistricting decisions last for the next decade.
Congressional Reapportionment

**States Gaining/Losing Seats based upon 2010 Apportionment**

Based upon 2010 Apportionment Population (including overseas population)
Dec. 21, 2010 Release from Bureau of the Census

States shown with changes from the previous apportionment:
- **Gaining 4 seats (1):** Texas (TX)
- **Gaining 3 seats (0):** None
- **Gaining 2 seats (1):** Arizona (AZ)
- **Gaining 1 seat (6):** Idaho (ID), Indiana (IN), Maine (ME), Montana (MT), North Dakota (ND), South Dakota (SD)
- **No change (33):** All other states
- **Losing 1 seat (8):** California (CA), Georgia (GA), Illinois (IL), Michigan (MI), New Jersey (NJ), New York (NY), Ohio (OH), Pennsylvania (PA)
- **Losing 2+ seats (2):** Arizona (AZ), Texas (TX)
Redistricting: Why Census data matters

- Equal population (one person, one vote) applicable to all voting districts used in non-tribal public elections
- Voting Rights Act compliance
- State and local governments commonly use districts to elect officials
The redistricting process at the state level

**Redistricting Data**
- Available by April 2021

**State Redistricting Entity**
- Draws maps based on new data, state criteria, public input and federal law

**New District Maps**
- States may have specific criteria for districts
- Maps must be in compliance with the Voting Rights Act
- Failure to do so can result in a lawsuit

**Public Hearings**
- The public provides testimony and comment on maps before they are adopted

- The redistricting entity and process varies from state to state
Federal Funding from Census Surveys

- Between **$600 and $900 billion** in federal funding is distributed *annually* based on population counts obtained by federal agencies.

- In Fiscal Year 2016, $493 billion was disbursed based upon Census surveys including:
  - $361 billion for Medicaid
  - $40 billion for highway roads and construction
  - $17 billion for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
  - $14 billion for the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
  - $6 billion for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
Federal Funding from Census Surveys

How much does the Census count in dollars per person?

A 2000 PricewaterhouseCoopers study determined that undercounting the largest counties in the 2000 Census cost state and local governments nearly $3,000 per person.
Focus on Native Americans in 2020: 
Top Five States, by Percentage of Population

- Alaska (19.9 percent)
- Oklahoma (13.7 percent)
- New Mexico (11.9 percent)
- South Dakota (10.4 percent)
- Montana (8.4 percent)

* Arizona (5.2 percent; about 335,000)

* California (1.9 percent; between 730,000 and one million)
Focus on Native Americans in 2020: Top Three States with Natives in Hard-To-Count Census Tracts

- New Mexico (78.6 percent)
- Arizona (68.1 percent)
- Alaska (65.6 percent)
Focus on Native Americans in 2020: The 2020 Census Faces Difficulties in Indian Country

- Census reports that the undercount of those living in Tribal lands in the 2010 Census was **4.9 percent**
  - This is the *highest undercount of any population group*
  - Our experience suggests that the undercount was likely much higher

- Because of problems in the operational plans and limitations of the outreach the Census Bureau is doing in Indian Country, *we fear the undercount will be even higher in the 2020 Census*
Other Challenges to a Complete Count in 2020

• The citizenship question and the 2020 Census
  ✓ Successful challenges to the question in California, Maryland and New York federal cases
  ✓ U.S. Supreme Court issued 5-4 decision that keeps question off for now
  ✓ Will require a lot of outreach and messaging to address groups who may be discouraged from participating because of the citizenship question
    ▪ The Census Bureau’s outreach identified populations expressing concern about giving any information to the federal government
    ▪ Levels of distrust of the federal government are higher among certain groups
    ▪ All indications are that fears still need to be addressed through proper messaging delivered by trusted messengers even though the question will likely no longer be on the 2020 Census questionnaire
Other Challenges to a Complete Count in 2020

- **Elimination of only field tests in Indian Country:** Census cancelled scheduled field tests in 2017 on two reservations
  - Colville Reservation and Trust Lands in Washington State
  - Standing Rock Reservation in South Dakota and North Dakota

- **Census Bureau has done no testing for non-traditional mailing addresses in Indian Country and rural areas for the 2020 Census:** Much of Indian Country and rural America do not have standard numbered street addresses (such as “123 Elm Street”)
  - Rural route addresses
  - Addresses described by geography
  - Post office boxes shared by multiple families
Other Challenges to a Complete Count in 2020

- The Census Bureau is not providing language assistance for Native languages
  - The Census form will not be available in any Native languages
  - No Alaska Native languages are being supported
  - No telephone assistance will be available in Native languages
  - The Census Bureau is providing only very limited assistance in Navajo, which is the only Native language of the 59 languages in which support is being offered

 ✓ Tribes must engage in self-help to get Elders instructions and assistance in Alaska Native and American Indian languages
Other Challenges to a Complete Count in 2020

• **The Census Bureau’s communications plan will not reach most of Indian Country**
  
  ✓ Messaging has been designed by a Madison Avenue advertising firm that has done a poor job reaching Indian Country
  
  ✓ Ad campaign will rely heavily on video, audio, print and Internet media resources unavailable in much of Indian Country
  
  ✓ No language coverage except very limited support in Navajo

• **Will require self-help by Tribes on the Census:**
  
  ✓ Adjust messaging to be culturally appropriate and effective
  
  ✓ Translate for Elders
  
  ✓ Use Tribal resources to disseminate
Other Challenges to a Complete Count in 2020

- Currently, the Census Bureau does not have a plan in place for Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs) throughout Indian Country

  ✓ QACs are needed to provide someone in each Tribal community who is available for in-person assistance filling out the form

  ✓ The Bureau is considering a “mobile team” approach to provide assistance that will not work in much of Indian Country due to:

    ▪ Lack of accessible roads

    ▪ Language barriers

    ▪ District of federal officials

  ✓ Tribes will need to provide their own “trusted messengers” to provide the in-person assistance that will not be available from the Census Bureau
Other Challenges to a Complete Count in 2020

- **This will be the first decennial Census conducted primarily through the Internet, which is not available in much of Indian Country**
  - The 2018 dress rehearsal, which was in an urban area (Providence County, Rhode Island) confirmed that Natives prefer the paper form
  - Natives had the lowest Internet response rate of any population group, 44 percent, compared to 68 percent for single-race Whites
  - Natives also had one of the lowest self-response rates through any method of completing the Census questionnaire
  - We are concerned the Census Bureau will not have enough of the paper questionnaires that Natives prefer

- **Tribes will have to engage in self-help to provide Natives with access to the Census form, whether online or otherwise**
Other Challenges to a Complete Count in 2020

• Commerce Department’s Inspector General has identified many problems from last year’s “dress rehearsal” in Providence County, Rhode Island:
  ✓ Serious errors in its address canvassing, which the IG said could lead to many households not receiving a Census questionnaire
  ✓ Some alerts “for situations that required management attention,” including those indicating the potential for low quality, were not addressed in a timely manner or were not addressed at all
  ✓ Training documentation was lacking, raising the possibility that unqualified employees are performing the address canvassing
  ✓ Given the absence of testing in Indian Country, we are concerned these problems will be even worse there
What you can do for the Census

▪ Start a Complete Count Committee (if you do not have one yet)

▪ If you have a CCC, make sure you include HTC representatives who will be effective reaching the hardest to count populations

▪ Coordinate with state, regional, and local CBOs, housing authorities, social service agencies, and other advocates

▪ Coordinate with our Census working group (e-mail me)

▪ Explore funding opportunities
  ▪ State funding
  ▪ Private funding

▪ Lobby Congress to fully fund 2020 Census
Let’s Have a Complete Count in 2020!

1491 Census:
Population
100%
Native American

HELP US GET THOSE NUMBERS BACK UP!
census.narf.org; 2020census.gov/jobs
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Questions and Discussion

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