

# 2020 CENSUS:

## Counting People Experiencing Homelessness during the COVID-19 Pandemic

### Census Background

Every 10 years, the U.S. counts every person living in the country through a national census. The results inform how federal funding and political representation will be allocated for the next decade. In particular, census data will determine the funding available for affordable housing, Section 8 vouchers, SNAP/WIC, medical assistance programs, education and food programs for youth, and TANF funds, among many others.

### There are two ways to count people experiencing homelessness:

#### 1. Through the formal Census Bureau enumeration process (Service-Based / Group Quarters):

The Census Bureau collaborates with service providers at group facilities, soup kitchens, shelters, and regularly scheduled food vans to count the people they serve. Specially trained census takers will also count people at previously identified locations where people are known to sleep outdoors or frequent all-night businesses.

This count is currently scheduled for September 22nd – 24th. Service providers should expect to be contacted by the Census Bureau beginning in July with logistics finalized during the week prior to the start of the count. These dates and procedures may change based on COVID-19 guidelines. Check [www.2020census.gov](https://www.2020census.gov) for updates.

The Census Bureau can enumerate using several different methods, and will work with service providers to utilize the most appropriate method for each facility. Possible methods include:

- E-submitting data on residents/clients (not available in all circumstances)
- Census Bureau employees meeting with a representative from the facility in person to obtain a paper listing of census response data for each person who is served or staying at the facility
- The Census Bureau dropping off Individual Census Questionnaires to be completed by or for each person who is staying at the facility, and returning to pick them up later.

If you want to be sure that your facility is on the Census Bureau's list to be enumerated, contact your local Census Bureau office or Partnership Specialist. In King County, send an email to Micaella Verro at United Way of King County ([mverro@uwkc.org](mailto:mverro@uwkc.org)), who is compiling a list to be shared with the Bureau.

**Have questions or need resources about the 2020 Census?  
Check out [www.WeCountWashington.org](https://www.WeCountWashington.org) for FAQs and materials.**

## 2. Online (or over the phone) on their own, or with the help of a case manager:

While the Census Bureau, ideally, would ask that people experiencing homelessness are counted through the processes listed above, service providers should feel encouraged to help clients fill out the 2020 Census as soon as possible. The COVID-19 pandemic has delayed the formal Census Bureau process and it could be delayed further if there is a second wave in the fall. Increased mobility and drastic changes in shelter operations and locations could also complicate 2020 Census operations.

Encouraging a client to be counted individually is especially important for clients who are unlikely to return to the service location between September 22nd and 24th. Verify that the client has not already responded to the 2020 Census on their own, but **WHEN IN DOUBT, COUNT**. The Census Bureau has a sophisticated process that can identify and

de-duplicate repeat census responses, as long as a sufficient amount of information is provided on the form.

If you are assisting someone with the census, the following are imperative to protect data confidentiality:

- If possible, have the client fill out the survey on their own to protect privacy. Provide a laptop or phone and a space where they can complete the census confidentially.
- If a client needs assistance, always get verbal consent to help them with the census and treat their personal data with respect. Never suggest an answer for them. The census is designed for people to self-identify their race, sex, ethnicity, etc.

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## How to complete the 2020 Census without a home address:

### 1. Go to [www.my2020census.gov](http://www.my2020census.gov)

- Select the desired language and then click "Start Questionnaire"
- Most unsheltered clients will not have a 12-digit Census ID, but there is an option to continue without the code.

### 2. Select where client was living on April 1st

- If it is unknown where they were on April 1st, provide the best possible guess. Any data is better than no data.

#### Please Log In

Use the materials we mailed to you or left at your door. All the information that you provide will remain confidential.

#### [Where can I find my 12-digit Census ID?](#)

Please enter the 12-digit Census ID found in the materials we mailed to you or left at your door.

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Login

[If you do not have a Census ID, click here.](#)

In order to collect your address, we first need to know where you were living on April 1, 2020. ([Help](#))

Please select where you were living on April 1, 2020.

- A U.S. state or the District of Columbia
- Puerto Rico
- Somewhere else

**3. If client does not have a street address, check the “I do not have a street address” box**

Where were you living on April 1, 2020? [\(Help\)](#)

Please provide a complete street address for your residence. Provide the street address you would use to have a package delivered directly to your residence, not a rural route or P.O. Box address used for mailing purposes. A street address is the most helpful for processing your response.

Address Number <i>Ex: 101</i>	Street Name <i>Ex: N Main St</i>	Apt/Unit <i>Ex: Apt 23</i>
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
City	State	ZIP Code
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

I do not have a street address

**4. Select “No” for a Rural Route address, unless applicable**

Do you have a Rural Route address? [\(Help\)](#)

- Yes  
 No

**5. Select “Yes” if client was experiencing homelessness on April 1st, 2020**

Were you experiencing homelessness on April 1, 2020? [\(Help\)](#)

- Yes  
 No

**6. Provide the City, State, and Zip Code, and as complete a description as possible of where individual was on April 1st, 2020. There is space for 400 characters. Hit “Submit” on the next screen to confirm.**

Please provide a city and state, or ZIP Code where you were living on April 1, 2020. [\(Help\)](#)

Also, describe the physical location in the space provided.

City	State	ZIP Code
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Please provide as much information as possible.

For example:

- a location description such as “The apartment over the gas station” or “The brick house with the screened porch on the northeast corner of Farm Road and HC 46” or
- a name of a park, street intersection or shelter, if you were experiencing homelessness on April 1, 2020, as well as the name of the city and state. For example: “Friendship Park in Anywhere, PA.”

**7. Complete the rest of the census with questions about the household and client. If there is information that the client does not want to provide, most fields can be skipped if you hit ‘Next’ twice. The more complete the data, the better – especially if clients may need to be de-duplicated if they are being counted with a case manager and also during service-based enumeration.**

**8. The 2020 Census can also be completed over the phone. For English, call 844-330-2020. For phone numbers in 13 additional languages and TDD, go to [www.2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond-by-phone.html](http://www.2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond-by-phone.html)**