

# CENSUS: 2020 - STAND UP AND BE COUNTED!

**B**y now, everyone has heard about the upcoming census, right? Maybe you have heard, but there are some that haven't, and of those who have, many don't understand its full importance.

The United States Census is conducted every ten years, as directed by the Constitution of the United States. In Article I, Section II, the government was obligated to complete an enumeration within three years of the first meeting of Congress and then every ten years thereafter. So the first census was conducted in 1790, which asked for:

1. The name of the head of the household and the number of persons in the household.
2. The number of free, white males 16 years old and older.
3. The number of free, white males under 16 years of age.
4. The number of free, white females.
5. The number or all other free persons.
6. The number of slaves.

The primary purpose of the census was and continues to be to determine equal representation of the citizens in U.S. House of Representatives. The questions about 16 year-olds was intended to provide information about nation's military defense capacity.

Today, the reasons for a complete and accurate census go much further. Besides helping determine how many congressional seats our state and the other 49 will get, the census will be used to determine where the lines between the congressional districts in each state will be drawn by the state legislature. The amount of tax dollars returned to the states to fund health, education, transportation, agriculture and water and wastewater supply projects will be influenced by the populations of the states and the numbers of subgroups such as youth, elderly, etc. In case you are wondering, preliminary projections based on population estimates show that New York will lose two seats and seven other states east of the Mississippi River will lose one seat. Either Minnesota or California will lose the last seat in the House that will go to a state growing in population. Probable winners in the census count will likely be Texas with three new seats and Florida with two. Kansas should be safe in keeping its four seats.

Next year's census survey will be relatively simple to complete. Based on the information reported to Congress, the 2020 Census will ask:

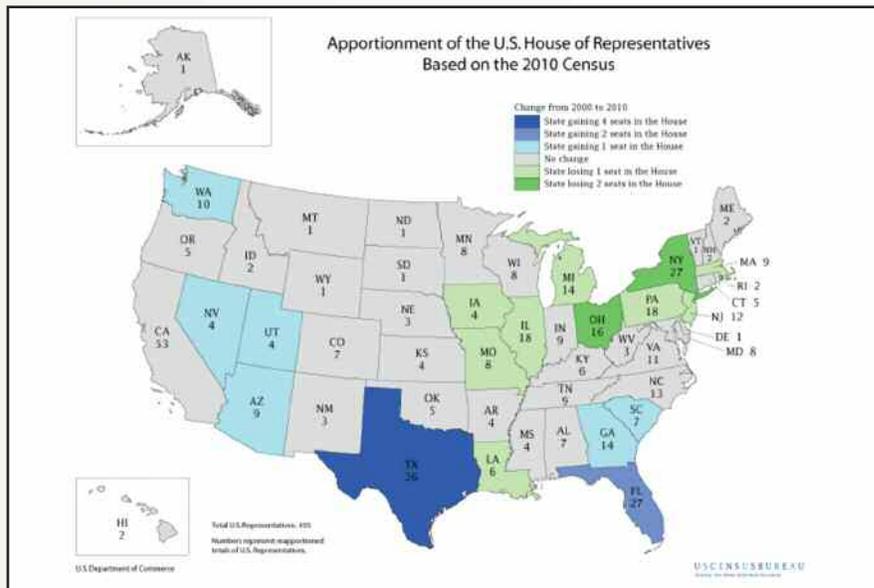
1. How many people were living or staying in your home on April 1, 2020?
2. Is your home owned by you or rented?
3. What is the sex of each person in your home?
4. What is the age of each person in your home?
5. What is the race of each person in your home?
6. Is there a Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin for anyone in the home?
7. What is the relationship of each person in the home?

That's it. Nothing more. The 2020 Census will not ask for information about citizenship, finances, number of cars or bathrooms in your home, religious, social or political affiliations and no one from the Census Bureau will ask for donations, payments, credit card or bank account numbers or Social Security numbers. Federal law requires that everyone participate, but answers are limited to the seven questions above.

Federal law also requires that the answers given be kept confidential by the Census Bureau. The answers are used to compile non-identifiable statistics, and answers provided by participants cannot be used against them by any government agency or court of law.

This confidentiality lasts for 72 years. It takes a lawyer to figure out how the law passed in 1978 referencing a pair of letters written in 1952 between two agency heads established the "72 Years Rule". Suffice it to say that a person won't see their own name in a census document until they reach at least 72 years of age, unless a person asks and receives permission from the Census Bureau to view the records relating to only them. The most recent census available for viewing by the public is the 1940 Census, which was released in 2012. In a few years, the 1950 Census will be released.

The responsibility to be included in the 2020 Census falls on our shoulders. For nearly all Americans, we will be counted on April 1, 2020. How will this happen? In August 2019, address canvassing commenced, to confirm that the Census Bureau has everyone's address, especially in areas of new residential development. Every



After the 2010 Census, the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives were reapportioned as shown in the map above. Texas gained 4 seats from 2000 to 2010. Estimates show that Texas may gain another three seats after the 2020 Census.

household will receive an invitation in its mailbox just before April 1. This invitation will explain the need for everyone in America to participate and highlight the different ways to be counted. It will give instructions showing how to reply on-line (for the first time ever), by mail or by telephone. In May of 2020, canvassers will visit the addresses that show no return of the requested census data.

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**JOIN THE  
2020 CENSUS  
TEAM**

**APPLY ONLINE!  
2020census.gov/jobs**


  
The U.S. Census Bureau is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Many local, flexible, part-time jobs will be available after April 1, 2020. Eligible applicants must be 18 years old, be a U.S. Citizen, have a Social Security number and an e-mail address, and be able to pass a background check.

At this point, many may be asking, what else is there to know? Plenty, is the answer. While we are individually confident in our ability and possess a sense of responsibility to be counted, your water system, your community, your state and federal legislative districts, Kansas as a whole and your country needs local leadership to help everyone be counted.

**Candidates will also be paid for their time while training. Successful candidates will make \$13.50 per hour.**

**Help getting the word out**

One way to help get the word out is to have local city offices or RWD offices promote Census 2020. At the website: <https://www.census.gov/partners/join.html>, anyone can register. With registration, the Census Bureau will provide updates to the availability of information, and provide tools to organize a comprehensive outreach. Toolkits are already available to guide volunteers. There may already be a group in your county that is active. Check with your local county clerk, the Kansas League of Municipalities (<https://www.lkm.org/page/census>) or the Kansas Department of Commerce (<http://kansascounts.org>) to find out more.

The biggest impact we can make is promote the availability of part-time canvasser jobs starting in May. These jobs will only last for a few months, and will allow persons to work evenings and weekends. Compensation for mileage is provided. Candidates will also be paid for their time while training. Successful candidates will make \$13.50 per hour. Census workers in Johnson, Leavenworth, Sedgwick and Wyandotte Counties will make more. Potential hires will need to submit fingerprints and allow a

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Population data for the purpose of justifying additional appropriations of water have been relatively easy to obtain by the Kansas Department of Agriculture and water right consultants at Kansas Rural Water Association. The data for rural water districts has been lacking however. The technique that is used has been to find the number of people in a county and divide that number by the number of households. With the average of the number of people per household for the main county of the rural water district, multiplied by the number of non-pasture meters the district had 20 years earlier and the number of meters in the previous year, two populations can be estimated. This provides the rate of previous "population" growth to apply to the current population, and a projection for the next 20 years.

Because the Census Bureau does not generate statistics for rural water districts, KRWA proposes that rural water systems, in their attempts to promote the 2020 Census, do their own mini-census. The water bills mailed to the

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customers in April could have a short statement requesting that the number of persons served by that account be placed on that portion of the water bill that is returned with the payment. Nothing more needs to be requested. If only 50 percent of the customers respond, the number of persons per meter determined thorough the districts' surveys should be more accurate than the number of persons per household over the whole county. Explanations to use this data to project future water demand and necessary system improvements should be viewed favorably by the customers. Don't forget that the months leading up to

April can promote the mini-census.

The 2020 Census is a great tool to show how proud we are to live where we do, in Kansas! Be sure to stand up, and if your neighbor needs a hand or extra encouragement to be counted, be there to lend a hand, starting now.

*Douglas S. Helmke has been the Water Rights Tech at KRWA since June 2000, and also a Wellhead / Sourcewater Protection Tech since 2003. He holds professional geologist certification in Kansas and Missouri. Doug received a bachelor degree in geology from Kansas State University.*



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