

October 31, 2019

The latest on our new initiatives



The 2020 census is counting on us!

It's not too early to start thinking about the 2020 census. This coming April 1—just five months from tomorrow—is Census Day, the reference point for questions on the 2020 count.

Census results play a large part in determining how government entities allocate hundreds of billions of dollars each year for services that communities rely on. But certain groups of people historically have been undercounted in the census. We want to make sure that the people NLS and its network libraries serve—people who are blind or visually impaired, or who have a disability that makes reading regular print difficult—are aware of, and participate in, the 2020 census.

A few dates to keep in mind: On March 12, the Census Bureau will mail households an invitation to respond to the census. For the first time, households will have three ways to respond: online, by calling a toll-free number, or by mail. The questionnaire takes less time to complete than drinking a cup of coffee. In mid-April, census workers will begin visiting homes that haven't responded to collect information in person.

Network libraries can play an important role in spreading the word about the census, answering patrons' questions and encouraging them to respond. Here are some resources you might find helpful:

- The [Census Bureau website](#) has oodles of stats, facts and trivia about the census.
- The Census Bureau creates guides in dozens of languages to help people complete the census. **Guides will also be available in braille and large print.** We're not sure when those guides will be ready, but when they are, network libraries should request copies from the Census Bureau to distribute to their patrons. And while the census questionnaire itself won't be available in braille, people who are blind or visually impaired can take advantage of the online and phone-in options. Here's a downloadable and printable Census Bureau [fact sheet on accessibility](#).
- The **American Library Association (ALA)** has many resources available at [ala.org/census](#), including [2020 Census: Key Facts for Libraries](#) (2 pages) and the [Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census](#) (20 pages). ALA's midwinter meeting in Philadelphia in January will include a program on libraries' role in the census.
- Network libraries might also consider [becoming a census partner](#) and **joining a Complete Count Committee**. Here's a link to help you find a [Complete Count Committee](#) in your community.

In the months ahead, NLS will be using its communications channels to help get the word out about the census. We also will send network libraries suggestions for census-related content you can share on your websites and social media and in your newsletters.

As required by the Constitution, the census has been conducted every 10 years since 1790. As of noon EDT on October 30, [the Census Bureau estimates](#) the U.S. population is 329,910,106.

Watch for the next issue of *On the Move* in your inbox on November 27!