

Immediate Release

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Census Deadline Closes on September 30th

Washtenaw County, MI – The 2020 Decennial Census Count began the same week the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners declared a state of emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As the community adjusted and responded to stay at home orders and the economic and social ramifications of the pandemic, households were also receiving information on taking the Census online or over the phone for the first time in its history.

The government’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic is a prime example of the importance of an accurate census count. The Decennial Census determines how federal funding flows in times of emergency, meaning that the amount of support our community received from the CARES Act was directly linked to the 2010 census. This money has been used to keep people housed, support small businesses, and provide people with food and other emergency assistance

The Washtenaw Complete Counts Commission had an informal goal to beat the previous Census self-response rate of 73%, while also increasing completion by traditionally undercounted communities. Currently 76.6% of Washtenaw County households have self-responded, which is higher than state (70.8%) and national averages (66.1%). Looking at the response rate across the county, we are seeing lower participation east of US-23 in several apartment complexes, as well as in other communities including parts of Northfield and Pittsfield Townships.

While our goal has been met and we have high response rates compared to other counties, there is still an opportunity for improvement. For every Washtenaw County resident who completes the census before September 30th, there will be an additional \$30,000 over the next 10 years coming to our community to fix roads, assist seniors, support schools, and more

“We’re looking for one last push.” said Teresa Gillotti, Director of the Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development. “Please call your friends, talk to your neighbors, ask your landlord to send a reminder to every tenant. Anything we can do to increase the number of people who respond to the census will result in community benefits moving forward.”

Households can respond to the census by going to my2020census.gov or by calling 844-330-2020. Non-English speakers can go to [this website](#) to find phone numbers to complete the Census in their preferred language. **The final deadline to respond is September 30th at 11:59pm.**

The Decennial Census is a short questionnaire asking for basic information about yourself and everyone living with you including race, sex, age, ethnicity and whether you are a renter or homeowner. It is also completely safe and confidential to complete.

“The Census Bureau and all of its employees are required by law to protect our personal information by keeping it confidential for life.” said Ricky Jefferson, Vice-Chair of the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners. “Federal laws, including Title 13, prevent the Census from sharing information with any person, government agency, or court, which means your responses cannot be used against you in any way, including for law enforcement purposes or to determine your personal eligibility for government benefits.”

The Washtenaw County Office of Community and Economic Development (OCED) is a government agency committed to stepping out of traditional government roles to drive long-term system changes that increase equity and opportunity for all residents. OCED has led the Washtenaw Complete Counts Commission, which has organized the community to promote the 2020 Census through coordinating local outreach and educational efforts. You can learn more by visiting washtenaw.org/oced or by following @washtenawOCED on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter