Tribes and the Census

LUCA: The Where of the 2020 Census

The deadline is only a month away for tribes to sign up as equal partners with the Census Bureau for one of the most important ways to insure an accurate count of the American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) population in the 2020 Census.

Like all major Census Bureau operations, this one is known by an obscure acronym -- "LUCA." It stands for "Local Update of Census Addresses."

When most people think about Census counts it's about who -- people counts. However, Census counts are first of all about where -- where the people live. Every person is counted in a specific location. Unless the Census Bureau can reach and has received a response from the people living in a specific location, they aren't counted.

As the Census Bureau's infographic on the last page of this newsletter shows, there are four major operations in the 2020 Census. The where, "Establish Where to Count," is the first one. The Bureau's mantra for 2020, shown on the infographic, is "Count everyone once, only once, and in the right place."

LUCA is the where of the 2020 Census. It enables tribal and local governments to work with the Census Bureau to finalize the address lists used in the enumeration.

This summer every tribal government with reservation or tribal trust land and every Alaska Native Regional Corporation was invited by the Bureau to participate in LUCA. Reminder letters were sent out in the fall.

To participate, tribal governments and ANRCs must register by this December 15th. Registration information was provided in the invitation letters.

Participation enables tribes and ANRCs to review the address lists that the Census enumerators will use to deliver questionnaires in many rural areas and to contact households across the country that don't respond to the questionnaires.

LUCA involves pinpointing the actual physical locations where people live. Those are the locations where people are counted, not at their P. O. Box addresses.

The review of these address lists is particularly important in rural reservation areas. It's essential to identify the location non-traditional housing units, like trailers that may be parked in a grove of trees off a side road where some of the hardest-to-count Native people may be living.
To date, a limited number of tribes have signed up for LUCA. For example, only one tribe with reservation land in the three Northern Plains states of Montana, North Dakota and South Dakota has registered. In the Southwestern states of Arizona and New Mexico, with a total of 43 tribes with reservation land, only four are registered. Those tribal and other governments that have registered are shown on a map on the LUCA page of the Census Bureau's Web site: https://www.census.gov/geo/partnerships/luca.html. Click on the link on the lower portion of the page labeled "Registered LUCA Participants" map.

Tribes that agree to participate in LUCA are given access to the lists that the Census Bureau has developed of the location of all the housing units on the reservation. Tribes then get to review the lists, comparing them with information that the tribe has. Any differences can then be resolved before the 2020 enumeration starts.

Tribes may use whatever information they have on the location of the housing units in their records. Tribes with reservation areas that have addresses indicated in an E-911 system of the type used by emergency service personnel are in a particularly good position to verify or question the addresses the Census Bureau has. Current enrollment and per capita distribution lists will be useful if they have the physical location of reservation households. Any post office box addresses will need to be converted to physical locations for comparison with the Census Bureau lists.

All the address information the Census Bureau has is strictly confidential. Any tribal leaders or staff checking those Census lists against tribal lists will have to sign confidentiality agreements to work with the Census data.

It will not be possible for any tribe, or any other government, to protest the people counts after the 2020 Census is over. The Census Bureau will use a procedure called the Count Question Resolution process to handle all protests. Under this procedure any government challenging the 2020 people counts can only provide evidence that the housing unit was not contacted or that the count of people in a housing unit was assigned to the wrong geographic area. Again, the where comes before the who.

With the reduced funding for 2020 Census outreach efforts, the burden of insuring an accurate count of Native people falls more heavily on tribes and Native organizations. Participation in LUCA is one of the most important ways to insure that count.

Also note the infographic on the next page.

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November 9, 2017

Redistribution of this information is encouraged.
Infographic Describing the Four Major Steps in the Design of the 2020 Census

The 2020 Census: A New Design for the 21st Century

**Motivate People to Respond**
- Conduct a nationwide communications and partnership campaign
- Maximize outreach using traditional and new media
- Target ads to specific audiences
- Work with trusted sources to inspire participation

**Establish Where to Count**
- Identify all addresses where people could live

**Count the Population**
- Collect data from all households, including group and unique living arrangements
- Make it easy for people to respond anytime, anywhere
- Encourage people to use the new online response option
- Use the most cost-effective strategy to contact and count nonrespondents
- Knock on doors only when necessary
- Streamline in-field census-taking

**Release Census Results**
- Process and provide census data
- Deliver apportionment counts to the President by December 31, 2020
- Release counts for redistricting by April 1, 2021
- Make it easier for the public to get data

Count everyone once, only once, and in the right place.