



**MAKE NC
COUNT**
CENSUS 2020

Let's Talk 2020 Census: Counting All of Rural NC

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Rural North Carolina Must Be Counted

At the Rural Center, we've had the privilege to work in communities all across rural North Carolina, and we've seen firsthand that it's not the size or location of a town that makes it a great place to live and raise a family; it's the people who make it a community. We also know how much our work and the communities we serve have changed—and will change—because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As we move through this year with more uncertainty than ever before, there is one thing we can do to ensure the future health of our communities—and that's getting counted in the 2020 census. However, we can't stop at counting ourselves and our household, we have to ensure that every household in our communities and state are accurately counted. And, in light of the recent [decision to push up the census deadline](#) from October to September 30, 2020—a decision that will disproportionately affect our state's rural communities and people of color—it is now more crucial than ever that we take immediate action to count our communities.

Census data helps determine funding for federal programs that address community and public health, education, economic development resources, housing—all of which have taken on even more importance in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. The U.S. Census has tremendous power to influence what a community can become, but an accurate count depends on full participation.

According to [census.nc.gov](https://www.census.gov), a 3 percent undercount in North Carolina would ultimately cost our state more than \$4 billion in funding. That means that we would lose \$1.8 billion in funding for our rural communities, \$930 million in funding for our Black and African American communities, \$545 million for Hispanic and Latino communities, \$50 million for North Carolina's Native Americans, and more than \$1.6 billion for veterans, children under five, and North Carolinians over 65.

What's more, the census only happens every 10 years. This means that if we are undercounted today, we will be underfunded tomorrow and every year until the next census, which will happen in 2030.

In addition, if North Carolina receives an accurate count in the 2020 census, we could gain another seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. This increase in our state's representation at the federal level could be a crucial step in ensuring a more vibrant future for North Carolina as we recover and rebuild in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is extremely important in North Carolina — where 80 percent of our counties are rural and where geography and representation matter greatly. The census will also determine how many rural legislators will represent rural communities.

Please visit the State Library of North Carolina YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/statelibrarync> for the recorded webinar Q&A related to this article.

The Let's Talk 2020 Census webinar series is sponsored by the State Library of North Carolina with content provided by the North Carolina Complete Count Commission and other statewide partners.





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There is a shared fate between rural, urban and suburban communities in North Carolina, and this is demonstrated all too well by the economic impact of an accurate census count. The foods we buy, the roads we drive on, the schools we send our children to and the quality of the education they receive, the jobs we create or retain — all of these things depend on an accurate count, and all of these things transcend party, geographic and demographic lines.

Simply put, the costs of an undercount are just too great to ignore—especially now.

For the first time ever, you can complete the census online at my2020census.gov. If you do not have broadband access, you can also complete the census by phone and by mail. If you need assistance, you can contact the 2020 census hotline at 844.330.2020 (English) or 844.468.2020 (Spanish). The census deadline has been amended to September 30. Households who have not yet responded will receive a visit from an official census taker beginning August 11.

Count yourself in the 2020 census and encourage others to do the same. North Carolina's future depends on it.

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