

GROUP QUARTERS OPERATION

2020 CENSUS FACT SHEET



CENTER ON POVERTY and INEQUALITY
GEORGETOWN LAW



ECONOMIC SECURITY and
OPPORTUNITY INITIATIVE

COUNTING PEOPLE IN COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- People living in college- and university-run housing will be counted in the 2020 Census as part of the Group Quarters enumeration (GQ)—a special operation to count people in group living situations.
- Residents of group quarters are counted using several methods. College and university administrators and 2020 Census enumerators will decide jointly which method to use for each institution.
- Students who do not live in college- or university-run housing or other group quarters will be counted at their usual residence—typically as part of the regular household enumeration. Most households will receive an invitation to respond in the mail.

COUNTING PEOPLE LIVING IN COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY HOUSING

Students living in dorms, other types of residence halls, or off-campus, college-run group quarters will not be contacted directly by the Census Bureau. Instead, these students will be contacted by college or university housing administrators, if necessary. Most people who do not live in [group quarters](#) (GQ) will receive a mailed invitation (one per address) to self-respond to the census. This includes students who do not live in group quarters.

In February 2020, the Census Bureau will contact (either by phone or in person) college or university housing administrators during an operation called Group Quarters Advance Contact (GQAC) to confirm the location of facilities to be enumerated, explain the enumeration process, request an expected Census Day population count (for each facility), and determine a preferred date, time, and method for enumeration.

Group Quarters will be enumerated during April 2020. College and university administrators can choose from the following enumeration methods:

- **Electronic Data Transfer:** Facility administrators can directly transfer census data about the people living in college or university housing to the Census Bureau through the Electronic Response Data Transfer ([eResponse](#)) system if the facility's data are sufficiently high quality and complete [according to Census Bureau guidelines](#).
- **Paper Response Data Collection:** An administrator will fill out a paper listing (a roster of residents and their demographic data, such as name, age, date of birth, and sex) on behalf of the people residing at the facility, and a census enumerator will pick it up. The Paper Response Data Files are reviewed by Area Census Office staff and then shipped to the Census Bureau's National Processing Center (NPC).
- **Drop Off/Pick Up of Questionnaires:** A census enumerator will drop off modified paper forms called Individual Census Questionnaires (ICQs) with the college and university housing administrator. After students complete their questionnaires and return them to the administrator, the enumerator will return to pick them up.

- **In-person Interviews:** In some cases, census enumerators will conduct in-person interviews with residents of college or university housing using ICQs. The bureau will conduct follow-up interviews with any residents of college or university housing who did not respond during the initial enumeration before the 2020 spring semester concludes in mid-May to ensure that all students and faculty whose [usual residence](#) is at the college or university are counted.

WHAT DO STAKEHOLDERS, STUDENTS, & ADMINISTRATORS NEED TO KNOW?

- **Where will students who do not live in college or university housing be counted?** Students who do not live in college or university housing will be counted as part of the regular household enumeration and should make sure their household self-responds when census materials arrive in the mail.
- **Can colleges & universities request census forms to facilitate 2020 Census participation for students living in college/university-run housing?** Yes, this method will be one option for college and university administrators, who will work with local Census Bureau staff to choose the best way to count these students. If this is the preferred method, a census enumerator will drop off modified paper forms, called Individual Census Questionnaires (ICQs), with the college and university housing administrator. The university will distribute the forms to students in dorms or residence halls and collect them when completed; the census enumerator then will return to pick up the ICQs.
- **Should students be counted at a parent's address?** Students should be counted at a parent's home address only if they live and sleep there most of the time. For example, if a student lives with their parent(s) and commutes to classes or takes classes online, they should be counted at a parent's home. On the other hand, if a student lives in college dorms most of the year but with their parent(s) only during school breaks, they should be counted at the college.
- **Do students who are studying abroad need to respond to the census?** College students who are

United States citizens but are [living outside the U.S.](#) on Census Day, possibly for a study abroad program, are not counted in the census.

- **Should students who are foreign nationals respond to the census?** Students who are [foreign nationals](#) and live in the U.S. are counted in the census. This includes undocumented students. The census form will be available online in [12 non-English languages](#) and language guides will be made available in [59 non-English languages](#).
- **Should students living in college- or university-run housing complete the census online or by telephone?** No. Students will be contacted by college or university housing administrators, if necessary, during the GQ operation. Students who live on their own, off-campus (usually), will self-respond as part of the regular "household" enumeration. Students who live at home with their parents should be included on the questionnaire for their parent(s) households.
- **What if I have a question or problem?** Call Census Questionnaire Assistance (844-330-2020 for assistance in English) toll-free for answers to questions or to provide census responses by phone (if relevant). The numbers for assistance in other languages are available at http://census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/planning-management/memo-series/2020-memo-2019_18.html. They can also visit the Census Bureau's [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Support a fair and accurate census by joining or supporting the work of a local [Complete Count Committee](#). More resources about the 2020 Census can be found on the [Georgetown Center on Poverty & Inequality website](#) and at [censuscounts.org](#).

Colleges and universities can prepare for the 2020 Census by ensuring that their student directory information is accurate, designating someone to be responsible for coordinating with the Census Bureau, and creating education and communications campaigns to inform staff and students about the census. The [2020 Census Integrated Communications Plan](#) offers some suggestions for how colleges and universities can work with the Census Bureau.

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