



from your Associate Director

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The Importance of Illinois Townships Participating in the 2020 Census

THE RESULTS OF the 2020 CENSUS shape the future of your community in many ways. There are multiple ideas for townships to play a role—are you prepared to help? Participating in the count will show another example of how active and involved Township Government is at the local level.

Very soon, in Illinois, you will be inundated with information, news, and social media messages about the importance of the 2020 Census. In every **Illinois Township**, the 2020 Census will be on the minds of your constituents. Multiple mailings and informational items will be distributed widely, and people are—for the very first time—logging on to a website to complete the Census. There are some that will take a passive approach to compliance, and others that will actively participate. There will be some confusion and uncertainty of what the count is and what is actually being done with all the information produced by the questionnaire. That is where your township comes in—help Illinois get correctly counted from the local government spectrum forward.

“Counting for Dollars 2020,” a report by The George Washington Institute for Public Policy, estimates that the undercount of Illinoisans in the 2010 Census resulted in a loss of \$952 per person of federal funding. In 2015 alone, Illinois lost \$122 million for every 1 percent of the population not counted in the 2010 Census.

Mandated by the United States Constitution, the federal government is required every 10 years to count everyone who refers to our United States as home. Since 1790, this has been the approach to achieving an accurate count and Illinois has much at stake with an accurate count. Funding, demographic information, as well as seats in Congress are calculated using the information generated by this survey for the next 10 years.

- The 2020 process is not going to be different than any previous count, other than the online opportunity to gather the information. It is critical that your township board address the issue and adopt a public relations platform to ensure that every resident of your township is aware of the importance of the count and that they comply to the mandated dates. Here is a reference to the critical components

of the Census that you can read more about at www.Census.gov.

- The Census determines how many representatives each state has in Congress, and it is used to redraw district boundaries. Redistricting counts are sent to the states by March 31, 2021. With an estimated 13-15 percent of Illinois not counted in 2010 Illinois, could possibly lose representation in Congress.
- Communities rely on Census statistics for financial planning for a variety of services and programs. Without an accurate count multiple fund sources are jeopardized.
- The 2020 Census will impact Illinois township for the next 10 years in many ways.

TIMELINE for the 2020 CENSUS

The U.S. Census Bureau posts a calendar on its website breaking down its outreach plan for getting a full accurate count. We encourage you to visit TOI's website (www.toi.org) for links to the calendar, as well as many other references for 2020 Census information that can assist townships in developing their participation plan.

The process will be initiated with a mailed invitation asking Illinois residents to participate in the Census between **March 12 and March 20**. The majority of people will receive the information on how to comply ONLINE. This marks the first time that ONLINE forms are the primary preferred response method. Based on demographic characterizes and internet connectivity of a geographic area, roughly 20 to 25 percent of Illinois will initially receive the traditional paper form. There will also be a toll-free phone number available for compliance. The objective is simple—regardless of the form of complying—everyone needs to respond for an accurate count.

In Illinois, connectivity or broad band issues remain a major issue. Because of these issues, as well as residents not having connection abilities, Illinois residents are able to select their preferred method. A paper questionnaire and other scheduled reminders will be mailed

in April to all Illinois households that have not responded.

Illinois **CENSUS DAY is April 1, 2020**. We would encourage Illinois Townships to make this part of their LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK program in March. The Complete Count Commission in Illinois promotes the following in their publications:

EDUCATE your community about the 2020 Census and the importance of participation with Census takers when they visit local neighborhoods.

ENCOURAGE trusted community partners, such as churches and neighborhood organizations, to motivate their members to respond to the Census questionnaire.

ENGAGE grass roots organizations in your community to reach out to residents in hard-to-count groups and those who are not motivated to respond to the Census questionnaire.

All of the information collected is CONFIDENTIAL. Information is not shared with any other state or local government agencies.

Starting in May 2020, data collection employees of the 2020 Census will visit homes of Illinois residents that have not responded. Townships can become involved in the process by encouraging a complete count for their townships now and throughout the CENSUS compliance calendar. There is a very short time period to promote, collect, and acknowledge compliance with your township residents.

TOI encourages your townships to submit photos of your unique program design, community activities, and overall encouragement of your township residents to participate in the 2020 Census COUNT!

The weight of this count impacts local governments for the next 10 years. The association is encouraging involvement of each township regardless of your size; both rural and urban to ensure funding sources are secure and eligibility is made to every area of the local government component of Illinois government.

TOWNSHIP IMPACT

Many Illinois residents only focus on what they think the Census date is used for, that being legislative representation in Washington and Springfield. The message that TOWNSHIP OFFICIALS must get out there is that representation is only a fraction of that is determined



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— Red/Blue Strobe — Simulated camera flash

by Census results.

Census data proves federal money calculations that support, but is not limited, to the following:

- Building infrastructure and repair
- School funding
- Emergency care for residents
- Social Services and Programs
 - Senior Citizen Programs
 - Veterans Programs
- Business opportunities for both rural and urban communities
 - Multiple employment opportunities

The bottom line is that Illinois townships have to live with the data analysis and results for a decade. This is why it is vital that if an Illinois Townships want to be seen, we must have a strong Census response statewide. If we do not, the impact will last for the next 10 years.

GENERATIONAL VIEWS

We must encourage our older population to be include in the Census data collection!

The information is confidential and not distributed to third party companies for additional contacts. It is interesting to note that during the 2010 Census data collection, the age group that was missed most were children under the age of 5. Federal funding is impacted by these numbers and it is believed that since 2010 Illinois programs such as Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP), foster care, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) have negatively impacted because of lack of accurate census data. Parents simply may have forgotten to include them, they were newborn, or a split custody issue with a child sharing two households. To correct the child count problem occurring again in 2020, new plans are being implemented. Information from hospitals, daycare, and schools will be used.

College students are another shortage area. The data is based upon where individuals are living on April 1, 2020. This may cause some confusion for college students and their families. The data should be completed from the college campus not their home.

The aging population in Illinois Townships may not be aware of the **April 1, 2020 kick off date** or the importance of complying. TOI is encouraging townships to reach out to their older residents perhaps at the senior centers or libraries or local churches. Talking to them about the importance will help with eliminating worries or confusion that they may have about the new online method for response or sharing personal information over the internet.

TOI'S EFFORTS AROUND THE CENSUS

TOI started reviewing informational resources and options to help our members become aware of the importance of becoming involved in the count. We plan to provide information throughout the *Perspective* magazine and list references and informational links on our website at www.toi.org. We have created a navigational link on the right side of the page to keep all of the CENSUS 2020 information in one spot. TOI encourages you to visit the references and plan your townships involvement in the 2020 Census.

We are encouraging Township to make the CENSUS 2020 projects part of the annual event we already have in Illinois **LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK**. The first complete week in March annually is designated as local government week. This is a perfect opportunity to promote awareness of the 2020 CENSUS COUNT in your township. Some general ideas include, but are not limited to:

- Hold a CENSUS awareness meeting in your community. Invite the media to cover it.
- Participate in local events in your community.
- Host question and answer forums in your community on the Census
- Provide a newsletter or website information section on eliminative Census myths.

You know your township and community better than anyone. Your participation as an elected official is your first step in your drive of civic responsibility to make your community a better place. Get involved today.

References:

*The Michigan Township Association Focus, Vol.7 No. 8
2020 Census Toolkit for State and Local Officials, 2019*



Emails are sent to alert our officials on pending legislation that would help or harm township government. Please make sure that if you wish to receive these alerts, our office has your correct email address. Thank you for your help!