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APRIL 1ST IS 2020 CENSUS DAY

Census is simple, safe, and important

Racine – While the outbreak of COVID-19 has caused uncertainty, cancellations, closures and postponements, the 2020 U.S. Census is still ongoing and crucial to the future of Racine County and all of our communities.

“It’s easy to ignore the Census 2020 invitation when we are worried about our jobs, our kids’ education, our family’s health and paying our bills,” said M.T. Boyle, chair of the Racine County Complete Count Committee. “But it’s more important than ever that we have all our residents respond to the Census and be counted. Federal funding allocations and political representation for the next 10 years depends on accurate Census data.”

Almost all local programs and services, such as schools, free and reduced lunches, hospitals, health care, parks, roads and economic support programs receive money through federal spending programs guided by Census data.

“Each resident counted equals \$1,600 in federal funding to our communities. This makes it absolutely critical that everyone is counted in Racine County so our communities receive their fair share of funding,” Boyle said.

Although April 1st is considered Census Day, efforts to encourage residents to self-respond to the Census online at 2020Census.gov, by phone at 844-330-2020 or by paper will continue through mid-August.

“When you are calling your neighbors, church members, family and friends to check on their well-being during this COVID-19 crisis, consider asking them if they have responded to the Census and help them by giving the website or phone number to call,” added Boyle.

The Census is mobile-friendly and takes only 10 minutes. Census questions include the names, ages, and nationalities of all the members of your household who are living at your address on April 1st. You do not need to have your Census ID to complete the Census.

“We absolutely understand that some of our residents are hesitant to answer the Census questions due to fears about safety and confidentiality,” Boyle said. “It is illegal for your answers to be shared with any other person or government agency, including the IRS, ICE or law enforcement. The Census is safe to take.”

The 2020 Census Response Rate Map is already tracking nationwide response rates (<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>). As of March 30, Wisconsin had the No. 1 response rate in the country at 42.7%. In Racine County, the overall response rate was 45.1%, with some Western Racine County census tracts with over 50% response rates, while the 3 lowest-counted tracts in the City of Racine hovered just over 22%.

“This means that traditionally under-counted populations in the hard-to-count census tracts will stay that way unless we can encourage higher participation in 2020,” says Boyle. “We need everyone to please respond to the Census. You all matter to the future of our community.”

Reminder letters and postcards will be sent throughout April and early May before U.S. Census workers begin following up in person at our doorsteps. Our residents can respond to the Census questionnaire online or by phone in English as well in 12 additional languages – ensuring over 99 percent of U.S. households can respond online in their preferred language.

To respond to the Census online or to get more information on the Census, please visit My2020census.gov or 2020Census.gov. To respond by phone, call 844-330-2020. For more information on Racine County’s local efforts, visit www.racinecountycounts.org and follow on Facebook at Facebook.com/RacineCountyCounts.

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