

## **Initial Information on Census Outreach to College Students**

July 26, 2019

Please note: This is an *informal response* to questions raised on the first Students Learn Students Vote Census Working Group call on 7/24. Advocates should check with their school administrators and local census office/local partnership specialist to confirm this information.

### Questions and Answers

Q: Will students studying abroad be counted in the census?

People should be counted where they sleep most of the time. This means that if someone is in the U.S. for the majority of the year (more than 6 mos.) then they should be counted here.

If a student is studying abroad for a full year, then they should not be counted here. [This needs further confirmation from the Census Bureau.]

Q: Are colleges/universities responsible for ensuring their students (in dorms) are counted in the census?

College and universities work with the Census Bureau to count people who live in group housing, such as dorms and co-ops. The Census Bureau has a special operation called “Group Quarters” to count folks in dorms, nursing homes, and institutions. The Group Quarters operation involves the Census Bureau coordinating with a point person who runs the group housing. The Bureau works with the point person to come up with an enumeration plan for the group housing: it can involve having everyone complete forms in paper, having the entity put together a roster of residents, or having people complete an online form. The type of counting method depends on the group housing and the agreement between the Bureau and the point person who runs the group housing. The Bureau and college / university are responsible for coordinating.

➔ If students want to be really proactive, they can ask to meet with the administration and find out what the plan is for different types of group housing. Many schools do not have concrete plans yet, but some schools are starting to think about it now.

Q: Can colleges request that students in dorms receive paper forms so that the college can track the percentage of return for students on their campus?

As noted above, there are a range of methods the Bureau and dorm administrators might decide to use. The Bureau can have its Group Quarters enumeration use paper forms, but it does not have to do it this way. Dorm administrators are part of the counting process, so tracking return rates is likely already built into the process. But, note that the Bureau will *not* report back who has and has not submitted a form. This is a policy to protect confidentiality.

## Other Information

Possible things to do to promote GOTC on college campuses:

- Ask your residence hall administrators what they plan to do, in conjunction with the Census Bureau (CB), to count students in college housing.
- Ask to be part of the meetings, or to get updates from the meetings, between residence hall administrators and the CB to give the student perspective. [Early 2020.]
  - Offer to help with flyers or throwing a party, in conjunction with the planned dorm enumeration by the CB, to help the CB reach all people in the dorm.
  - (Note: If your school is just providing a roster of all dorm residents, this might be unnecessary.)
- Help with GOTC for non-dorm housing!
  - It's likely that people living in off-campus housing---who are not covered by the CB Group Quarters process---will be missed.
  - People living off campus will receive the mailers telling them to go online and complete the census in mid-March 2020. The Bureau starts sending door-knockers to non-responding households in college areas in early April.
  - Remind people that EVERY person at an address should be counted on the form, not just the person who fills out the form.
  - Do raffles, "I was counted" stickers, fun activities to promote census response.
  - Remind people that they shouldn't assume they will be counted at their parent's home. Residence guidelines are copied below.
- Talk to friends and family back home about importance of being counted. Promote on social media.

Where to count students, per Census Bureau guidance:

(b) College students living at their parental home while attending college—Counted at their parental home.

(c) College students living away from their parental home while attending college in the U.S. (living either on-campus or off-campus)—Counted at the on-campus or off-campus residence where they live and sleep most of the time.

(d) College students living away from their parental home while attending college in the U.S. (living either on-campus or off-campus) but staying at their parental home while on break or vacation—Counted at the on-campus or off-campus residence where they live and sleep most of the time.