Everybody in Our Community Really and Truly Counts

Each decade, the U.S. Census Bureau follows special processes to count people without conventional housing arrangements.

In 2020, the Census Bureau will devote three days to counting people who are experiencing homelessness across the country, with checks in place to ensure people aren’t counted more than once. These dates are confidential and follow months of outreach and coordination with local census offices, partners, shelter directors, and service providers.

**Day 1:** Counting people who are in shelters.

**Day 2:** Counting people at soup kitchens and mobile food vans.

**Day 3:** Counting people in non-sheltered, outdoor locations, such as tent encampments and on the streets.

The results of these efforts, across the country, are critical. Census data helps inform decisions about billions of dollars in federal funding for services such as shelters and soup kitchens, as well as for programs that assist with housing, nutrition, and transitioning from homelessness. From the Emergency Shelter Grants Program to the Special Milk Program for children, these programs depend on a complete and accurate count.