**Notes from Hillary Coleman’s presentation on the 2020 Census 5-20-20**

The census is important because…

* When we’re all counted, it shows the government where money is needed – for things like housing, hospitals, schools, transportation
* It also determines how many representatives Washington state will have in Congress
* COVID-19 reminds us just how valuable completing the census is during these urgent times, because a more accurate count can bring the resources our community needs.
* In 2015 Washington received $14 billion for census-guided programs

Biggest takeaway from today is:

* **What we recommend is that staff help every individual complete the census form – especially while people are in shelter 24/7 now, it is a good time to check with them about completing the census.**
* **Census can be completed until October 31, 2020**

Because there is going to be some way of systematically gathering information from people in shelters or people who are unsheltered, people might be concerned about helping people fill out and not be double counted.

This is not the official Census message, but our Coalition’s message is that

**It is far more likely for there to be an undercount of people experiencing homelessness and housing instability than a duplicate count. There are ways to deduplicate so help people get counted!**

**People can complete the Census by:**

* [https://2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov/)
  + Households would have had a Census ID mailed to them, but if someone does not have one because they don’t have a residential location or they no longer have the code, they can say that they don’t have a Census ID and still fill out the census
  + Box for “I do not have a street address”
  + It will ask if someone was experiencing homelessness on April 1, 2020
* **Phone**: 844-330-2020 – language support available in other languages – help someone find their language number to call by going to 2020census.gov and clicking How to Respond, or go to <https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond/responding-by-phone.html>
* **Mail** – for households who didn’t respond by mid-April, people should have received a paper form in the mail. Other than that, we have not had confirmation that people can use paper forms unless a Census worker comes to a site and helps them fill it out. So, it is best to help people fill out the census online or via the phone.
  + In-person non-response follow-up is currently scheduled for August 11 – October 31
* **Count everyone based on April 1**

Reminders:

* There is no citizenship question
* Census will not share information with ICE or other agencies, or anyone
  + IT is illegal for the bureau to share your information with any other agency, including ICE, public assistance programs, and other law enforcement

**Tips**

* Trusted messengers (you) are helpful to help people understand the importance of filling out census
* Share images on social media
* Lots of toolkits available with information and visuals to share
  + Washington Census Alliance <https://www.wacensusalliance.org/>
  + We Count King County <https://wecountkingcounty.org/>

Response rate map: <https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>