

## TRACKING 2020 CENSUS NRFU COMPLETION RATES

The Census Bureau is [publishing](#) daily, by state, Non-Response Follow-Up (NRFU) completion and “total response” rates through October 1, 2020.

The percentage of housing units “enumerated” in NRFU represents the share of total housing units resolved in the field during the NRFU Operation. Cases completed in the field for Update Enumerate and Remote Alaska Operations are included in this rate to ensure coverage of the full housing unit universe.

There are a number of ways the case could have been completed, including through in-person interviews or the imputation of an Administrative Record, so the published data do not tell us *how* these housing units have been “counted.” A certain percentage are vacant/nonexistent housing units and only need one visit to verify that status before becoming a completed case.<sup>1</sup> If a resolved case is the result of an in-person interview, we do not know how many visits the household received or if the census taker had to conduct a proxy interview with a neighbor or landlord instead. The Census Bureau estimates that 6.2 million (or more) households will be “enumerated” after one unsuccessful visit using federal Administrative Records, which may be incomplete.

When monitoring NRFU completion rates, keep in mind that there is likely a “bump” in self-response rates after NRFU starts in any given area, due to the Notice of Visit left at the door. The Census Bureau estimates, based on tests and prior censuses, that about 9.7% of households in the NRFU universe will subsequently self-respond.

The NRFU completion rate does not reflect:

- The progress within the NRFU operation, as it is relative to total housing units and not just the NRFU workload
- Significant variances within states
- Households that have self-responded

**Total response rates** only reflect enumeration of housing units or households through self-response and the NRFU operation. The progress of operations to count Group Quarters, transitory locations, and any other special living quarters is not reflected in the data.

**Self-response rates** reflect the percent of all residential housing units on the Census Bureau’s Master Address File (occupied, vacant, or possibly nonexistent) that responded to the census online, by phone, or using a paper questionnaire. Self-response rates do not represent the percent of *people* who have responded, which means we won’t know the percent of families with young children or Black households, for example, that have self-responded. However, we can look at the demographic characteristics of census tracts, based on American Community Survey estimates and even 2010 Census data, to understand the *types of communities* where response might be lagging, to inform GOTC efforts for those areas. Self-response rates will be updated Monday-Friday through September 30, 2020.

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<sup>1</sup> First identifying vacant or nonexistent units using the USPS Undeliverable As Addressed file, and then confirming status with only one field visit during NRFU, is new for the 2020 Census. If enumerators are not thorough, they can miss signs of occupancy that would shift a housing unit to the caseload for additional visits. In both the 2016 Census Test and the 2018 End-to-End Test, about a quarter of addresses on the USPS Undeliverable As Addressed file indicated were vacant turned out to be occupied. That identification is more problematic now, given pandemic-related displacement of households/families.