

Pritzker Administration To Spend Additional \$1 Million In Final Weeks Of Census Outreach

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CHICAGO – The Pritzker administration today announced an additional \$1 million in spending for census-related media outreach in communities of color across the state. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) will continue to promote

participation in the 2020 Census following a federal court's ruling extending the deadline to October 31, 2020. Illinois is one of the few states in the country that allocated funding for census outreach efforts in its 2021 fiscal year budget.

“Every ten years in this country we count the number of people who live in this state, and based upon that number the federal government gives states and cities funding for schools and hospitals and roads and childcare and more. And the higher the count, the more of your federal tax money comes back to Illinois instead of going to other states — and the more representatives we get in Congress. Just a one percent undercount could result in the state losing hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funds at a time when we need it most,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “No matter who you are, I’d like you to join this effort to get counted. Call your friends and neighbors or send them a text or email and urge them all to do their part: just like voting, filling out the Census is an act of civic engagement – a demand to be fully heard and fully counted.”

“Illinois is committed to a complete and accurate Census count,” said Illinois IDHS Secretary Grace Hou. “We have already surpassed our 2010 response rate despite the challenges of COVID-19, and IDHS will continue working with nonprofits, community-based organizations, and local governments through the month of October to concentrate on areas, like communities of color, that have lagging response rates.”

The Pritzker administration recently advocated against efforts by the U.S. Department of Census to shorten the census extension deadline originally granted due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Over the next three weeks, IDHS will use the additional funding to promote a full and accurate count of all Illinoisans in every corner of the state.

“In these final weeks, we need to do everything we can to make sure Illinois residents are counted no matter what,” said IDHS Census Co-Director Marishonta Wilkerson. “There’s a lot happening in the world, but I hope everyone understands that the Census will impact their representation in Congress and funding for core government services like healthcare, schooling, and human services. We just need to make sure people know there’s still time.”

Illinois’s current self-response rate is above 71%, placing it seventh in the nation and the most populous state in the top ten. However, many underserved and marginalized neighborhoods and cities are hovering between a 40-50% participation rate.

“We are committed to our goal of reaching traditionally hard to count communities and ensuring they know the importance of the Census and that participation is completely safe,” said Census Co-Director Oswaldo Alvarez. “These final weeks will be crucial to make sure we reach everyone who has yet to fill out their Census.”

To complete the 2020 Census, Illinoisans can visit [My2020Census.gov](https://my2020census.gov) or call 844-330-2020 to get started on their confidential, 10-minute questionnaire.