



Missouri Counts

A Closer Look: 2020 Census Participation in Rural Missouri

Missouri Foundation for Health conducted a statewide survey of Missourians living in rural communities to inform 2020 Census messaging and outreach. For a full report of findings, visit mffh.org/census.

4-in-5 rural Missourians say they are "very likely" to participate in the 2020 Census.

Still, the lack of certainty among the remaining 1-in-5 raises concerns about an undercount. Young adults (18-34), men under 50, renters, and parents are less likely to respond.



Rural Missourians are much less likely to respond to the census question asking for your telephone number.

Only 45% are likely to respond to this census question—much lower than the likelihood of responding to other census questions such as age, race, and sex (83%, 89%, 92% respectively).



Rural Missourians want to know that "the census will always keep your information private."

This language is more motivating than messages about "confidentiality" being "required by law," or the message that it is "illegal" for the census "to share your personal information with other government agencies, such as the IRS or the FBI." Privacy concerns may be due to confusion over the proposed citizenship question (which will not be included in the census) or because the census is now available online.



The census being available online for the first time could increase participation among those less likely to respond.

But the mail-in form will be important for older populations.



Prefer mail

53% of those age 50-64
64% of those age 65+



Prefer online

59% of those age 18-34
59% of those age 35-49
53% of parents
50% of renters



Prefer in-person

Only 9% of rural Missourians



Prefer phone

Only 7% of rural Missourians

TOP TESTING REASONS TO RESPOND TO THE CENSUS

91% "...to ensure rural communities get the funding they need."

89% "...to ensure Missouri gets enough funding to rebuild its highways and bridges."

87% "...so we can ensure that the hard-earned tax dollars we sent to Washington D.C. come back to Missouri."

87% "...because it's a part of the constitution and my civic duty."

86% "...to keep Missouri from losing another seat in Congress."

86% "...to ensure Missouri hospitals get enough funding to stay open..."

83% "...to ensure that our schools will be better funded..."

KEY POINT:

For every adult and every child that is not counted, Missouri loses \$1,300 in federal dollars every year.

