California's Census 2020 Update Leave Clarification for P.O. Boxes and Rural Routes

May 12, 2020

The California Complete Count – Census 2020 Office (Census Office) is providing the following clarifying guidance in response to questions from partners regarding Update Leave for households with P.O. Boxes and Rural Routes, also known as "non-city style" addresses.

Households counted through Update Leave are generally more difficult to locate because they do not have a city-style address or do not receive mail at their household. In light of this, and the U.S. Census Bureau (USCB) Update Leave process, partners and the Census Office remain concerned that some housing units in Update Leave could be missed. This is amplified by not knowing what other USCB operational changes may occur between now and the start of Update Leave due to COVID-19 health and safety precautions or other external factors.

Please note, this guidance does not:

- Include households with a city-style address (123 Main Street) that already completed the questionnaire without providing a 12-digit Census ID number.
- Include Tribal lands, which is being addressed in collaboration with the Census Office, Tribal Government leaders and Native American partners.

Clarification for Outreach Partners Serving Update Leave Areas

Households with a P.O. Box or Rural Route number (also known as a "non-city style address") are part of the Update Leave process.

- This means that they did not receive a mailed invitation in March 2020 from USCB to either go online or call to complete the 2020 Census questionnaire with a Census ID number.
- The USCB process to count Update Leave households involves a USCB employee leaving a paper questionnaire and then updating the records

with the physical location/address of the housing unit in order to assign that household's paper questionnaire a unique Census ID number.

- Households then complete the questionnaire and mail it back to the USCB. They can also use the Census ID they receive with the paper questionnaire to go online or call to complete the questionnaire.

If households that do not have a city-style address have already chosen, or will choose, to submit a questionnaire without a Census ID, additional steps may be required for the household and the USCB. This because the USCB must verify a non-ID response with the address record (known as the Master Address File). This is a list of all known households, updated and verified through numerous sources including state and local government administrative records (such as property taxes) and satellite imagery. Verification can become complicated when a questionnaire is submitted without a Census ID or without a sufficient location description.

If the USCB is unable to match and confirm the housing unit location indicated on the submitted Census questionnaire, a household will receive a paper questionnaire during Update Leave. Currently, the USCB advises anyone without a city-style address to wait until they receive their paper questionnaire with Census ID numbers. They do not advise households to go online or call the USCB phone line until then.

In consideration of the USCB direction, the Census Office suggests the following for outreach partners, based on the situation in their local communities and activities that may have already occurred.

For Partners Telling Households to Wait for Update Leave

The current USCB schedule will have paper questionnaires delivered to households beginning in mid-June. They are to be completed by the household and mailed back to the USCB. Households may also use their Census ID number – that they will receive along with the paper questionnaire -- to complete the questionnaire online or by phone. In-person enumeration by the USCB will not take place during this this time. Enumerators will only engage households that

have not yet completed a questionnaire. This will begin in mid-August based on the current USCB operations schedule.

Suggested Messaging:

- Your household may be part of the USCB's Update Leave counting process, which means you have not received information from the USCB to complete your Census questionnaire.

- Instead of sending you an invitation to complete your census questionnaire online or by phone, the USCB will hand-deliver a paper questionnaire with a unique Census ID and leave it at your housing unit for you to complete and submit. The USCB is not counting households in-person during this time.

- If you do not complete and submit your questionnaire (by mail, online, or phone), a Census taker will visit your home to complete the questionnaire in-person, as part of the Nonresponse Follow-Up process.

- No matter how your information is submitted, it is private, safe, and helps your community for the next 10 years.

<u>For Partners That Tell Households to Complete Their Questionnaire without a Census ID/before Update Leave</u>

If outreach partners have already told households (or plan to tell households) to complete their questionnaire online or by phone, before they receive a Census ID, the Census Office suggests the following:

A) Provide households with instructions on how to go online as a non-ID response and provide steps for households to meet Master Address File needs.

Physical Location: It will ask if you are experiencing homelessness. It will then invite you to share your city, state, ZIP Code, and description of the physical place where you live. (Color, size, unique descriptors of housing unit, such as a brown house, one-story with detached garage.)

For Rural Routes: A rural route address includes a rural route descriptor, rural route number, rural route box ID number, city and state or ZIP Code.

B) Provide households with instructions to use the USCB phone line and provide verbal description for a housing unit to best meet Master Address File needs.

Physical Location: USCB representative may first ask if you are experiencing homelessness. Then, share your city, state, ZIP Code, and description of the physical place where you live. (Color, size, unique descriptors of housing unit such as a brown house, one-story with detached garage.)

For Rural Routes: A rural route address includes a rural route descriptor, rural route number, rural route box ID number, city and state or ZIP Code.

Note: In order to accept the response, the USCB must match the location to the Master Address File. If they cannot, this household **may also receive a paper questionnaire** that will need to be completed.

Individuals may receive a confirmation number after submitting their census questionnaire online. This only indicates a questionnaire has been submitted. It does not confirm the location is validated/verified.

Suggested Messaging:

- You may have already completed the questionnaire online or by phone, but if you still get a paper questionnaire please fill that out as well. (Or, using your Census ID number, go back online or call in to complete the questionnaire).

- If you receive a paper questionnaire, it means the Census Bureau was unable to match the household information you submitted to your

address. Your household information will not be captured and will need to be resubmitted by mail, online, or phone.

- If you have not completed a census questionnaire, a Census taker may visit your home to fill out the questionnaire in-person.

- No matter how information is submitted, it is private, safe, and helps your community for the next 10 years.

Background: Why is this clarification being offered?

- The original operations plan was for the USCB to begin Update Leave in March 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and shelter-in-place health and safety precautions, the USCB paused this operation. On April 13, the USCB announced that they would conduct Update Leave operations from June 13 to July 9*.

- Prior to the timeline change, outreach partners may have already advised households to complete the questionnaire by phone or online without having received their Census ID number, also known as a "non-ID" response.

- For some partners, it stemmed from concerns that some housing units would be especially difficult to access and/or leave a paper questionnaire behind. Since the USCB was not mailing the questionnaires to the P.O. Boxes, some partners messaged that the households should complete their questionnaire online early even without a Census ID number.

Additional Resource

USCB Non-ID Response Fact Sheet:
https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2020-01/Responding_Without_Census_ID_FAQ.pdf

Please direct any questions about these guidelines to the Outreach Team by sending an email to Outreach@census.ca.gov

* Subject to change pending USCB operational announcements