

*Melanie Antinoro*

# COVID 19 and the Census

United States®  
**Census**  
**2020**



**CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)**

# *College Towns and the Census*

\*With COVID-19 sending home the majority of college students, college towns still depend on an accurate count of students living in the area for their community's future funding.

\*A large amount of college students in college housing are counted through records provided by the university.

\*A lot of students may not understand that they're supposed to fill out the Census forms based on where they're living at the time, but colleges still want students to fill it out as if they were living on campus regardless of where they may be living during the pandemic.

## *"Home" can look different for all students*

\*Some live on campus in student housing, some share an off-campus house with roommates, some may commute from their family home, and some live solo in an off-campus apartment.

\*College students should be counted where they live and sleep the majority of the time as of April 1, 2020.

\*With colleges being closed due to COVID-19, students who have an inconsistent place of residence may be unaccounted for, and college towns/cities may have difficulties receiving future funding based on their altered population during this pandemic.



## *How Students Are Being Counted*

\*Students who are still living on campus during COVID-19 pandemic may counted by the university, and for students who are home, they should be counted according to the residence where they live and sleep most of the time.

### **2020 CENSUS FOR STUDENTS**

#### **If you live ON-CAMPUS:**

The university will count all students in university owned housing and report the data to the U.S. Census Bureau

#### **If you live OFF-CAMPUS:**

You should be counted at the off-campus residence where you were living even if you have returned home while the university is closed. All you need is your address to fill it out online at [my2020census.gov](https://my2020census.gov)!

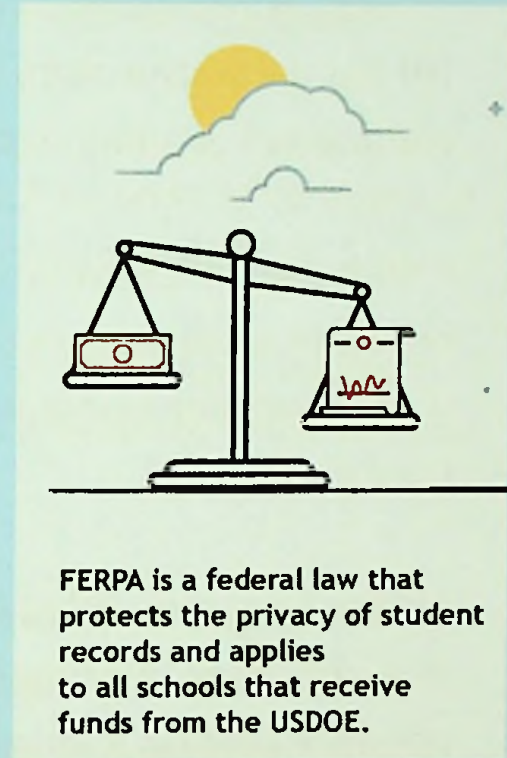
\*Data will always be more accurate if the Census is filled out individually, rather than done by university representatives.

## *Legal Issue :*

### *Student Privacy Laws and the Census*

\*FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) laws restrict schools from disclosing students' personal information regarding the sex, race or Hispanic origin of a student without written consent.

\*The Census asks multiple questions regarding this protected information.



FERPA is a federal law that protects the privacy of student records and applies to all schools that receive funds from the USDOE.

## *Legal Issue cont. : Inaccurate Representation*

\*Colleges representatives have the option to fill out the census form for students on campus using administrative records.

\*With these FERPA laws in place, this prevents accurate data from being collected without written consent (that not all students may give).

\*If the Census is filled out by universities, this important information will go unknown, possibly leading to errors in counting and representation of students, also leading to lack of resources for college towns.

## *Call To Action*

\*The Census Bureau gives universities 3 ways to fill out the forms:

- 1)The forms will be distributed to students, letting students fill them out themselves.
- 2)A census taker can knock on doors of the dorms or house and personally interview residents.
- 3)Colleges can fill it out for all students, **but** the information can't include information about sex, race or Hispanic origin.

\*Under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, students must provide written consent before information from their records can be shared.

\*In order to ensure that specific groups are represented and college towns receive the resources they need, students should try to fill out the Census individually, or waive the information needed by the Census.





## *References*

**College Towns Depend on Accurate Count of Students Living in Area - Census.gov**

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**FERPA and the Coronavirus Disease - U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

<https://studentprivacy.ed.gov/resources/ferpa-and-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>