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FAQs on Census 2020 Department of Business, Economic Development & Tourism

Q1. Why is there a census?

The census is required by the U.S. Constitution, and its main purpose is the apportionment of the U.S. House of Representatives. According to Article 1, Section 2,

“The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of 10 years, in such manner as they shall by law direct.”

Q2. What kind of data does the census collect?

The decennial census is a population count. The Census Bureau also collects data on the demographic, social, economic, and housing characteristics of our population.

Q3. How are census data used at the national level?

The data are used for determining each state’s political representation in Congress and the amount of money each state receives from the federal government. Decennial census data are the basis for 138 surveys Census Bureau conduct in the U.S. every year, including the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Current Population Survey (CPS). The ACS is part of the 10-year census program that is sent to a small percentage of US households monthly.

Q4. How are census data used in Hawaii?

The data are used to forecast our population and economic growth, estimate the residential housing need, utility demand, and analyze the demographic changes in our economy. The data are widely used by policy makers, government agencies and businesses in health care, education, employment, transportation planning. The data help to determine where to build new schools, roads, health care facilities, child-care and senior centers, shopping malls, and homes.

Q5. What state programs are impacted by census data?

According to a study done by the George Washington University, Hawaii received \$5.8 billion in FY 2017 based on population count. The Medicare and Medicaid programs accounted for over 60% of the State’s allocation.

Q6. What have Hawaii's self-response rates for the decennial census been in the past?

Hawaii's response rates have been low in the past censuses. In the 2000 Census, Hawaii's response rate was 66%, lower than the national average of 74%; in the 2010 Census, Hawaii's response rate was 68%, still lower than the national average of 74%. The neighbor island response rate was only at about 54% in 2010.

Q7. Was Hawaii population undercounted in the past?

According to U.S. Census Bureau studies, Hawaii's population was undercounted by 2.16% in 2000 and had a very slight overcount of 0.44% in 2010.

Q8. What are the challenges in getting an accurate count in Hawaii?

The challenges include:

- *Largest proportion of multi-race population (Hawaii ranked 1st in the nation, 23.3% vs.3.3%)*
- *Large proportion of foreign-born population (Hawaii ranked 6th in the nation, 18.6% vs.13.7%)*
- *A large proportion of non-English speaking population (Hawaii ranked the 9th in the nation, 25.8% vs.21.8%)*
- *Multi-generation living (Hawaii ranked 1st in the nation, 11.1% vs. 5.9%)*
- *Large percentage of homeless population (Hawaii ranked 3rd in the nation, 46 per 10,000 population vs.17)*
- *Special housing arrangements such CPR (Condominium Property Regime) and ADU (Accessory Dwelling Units)*