

The LUCA Operation: The Foundation for an Accurate 2030 Census

Local
Update of
Census
Addresses

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PREPARING FOR

LUCA

A Resource Guide for Stakeholders

Developed by: The 2030 Census
National LUCA Working Group



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Introduction

Summary

The foundation of every census is a comprehensive address list. **If a housing unit isn't on the Census Bureau's list, the people living there are likely to be left out of the census altogether.** That's why the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) operation is the first to occur in every decennial census cycle. LUCA gives tribal, state, and local governments their only opportunity to directly help ensure an accurate enumeration by reviewing and submitting updates or corrections to the confidential address list before the census starts. LUCA enables local governments to improve the Census Bureau's address list by applying local knowledge to identify missing or inaccurate residential addresses. The Census Bureau strives to count all people living in the United States as of Census Day, but historically the census has missed children, urban and rural low-income households, and people of color at disproportionately high rates. Part of the reason for these undercounts can be traced to missing or inaccurate address information.

The 2000 Census was the first to include the LUCA operation after Congress passed the [Census Address List Improvement Act](#) in 1994.

Census Day

Census Day is the official reference date used by the Census Bureau to determine where people should be counted and what information should be reported. In decennial censuses, Census Day is April 1 of the census year (*e.g.*, April 1, 2030).

Without strong local engagement, communities with hard-to-identify housing such as rural homes, informal units, or multifamily residences

are at greater risk of being missed. Participation in LUCA is voluntary, but it requires local knowledge, technical expertise, and funding—none of which are provided by the Census Bureau. However, by participating in LUCA, local governments and community partners can fill critical data gaps, improve the accuracy of the count, and ensure the census reflects the true makeup of their communities—laying the groundwork for informed funding allocations, fair representation, and effective services over the next decade.

What is the 2030 Census National LUCA Working Group?

The LUCA Working Group brings together experts from tribal, national, state, and local governments, along with community-based organizations and specialists in census policy and outreach. The group's goal is to help jurisdictions recognize the critical role of LUCA in achieving an accurate count in 2030. It also supports efforts to leverage local knowledge and collaborate with community experts to identify neighborhoods where housing units may be missing from the Census Bureau's address list, which is used to deliver decennial census and American Community Survey questionnaires. For more information, please contact info@luca-census.org



Objectives of this Resource Guide

1 Raise Awareness of LUCA's Impact on Community Resources

- Help local officials, community stakeholders, and funders understand the basic steps of the LUCA operation and how an accurate address list affects census data, which in turn influences funding, representation, and services for their communities.

2 Empower Stakeholders to Support Local Address Update Efforts

- Provide guidance on how community-based organizations can assist local governments—such as identifying hidden housing or advocating for participation in hard-to-count areas.
- Deepen understanding of LUCA among tribal, state county, and local governments by providing information about the key elements of approaches that have been successfully used in the past.
- Help government policymakers and funders understand what work might require additional funding.

3 Foster Collaboration and Trust in the Census Process

- Provide actionable information about how to begin now to prepare for the LUCA operation, which begins in 2027.
- Build partnerships between state and local officials, community groups, and philanthropic organizations to improve outreach, share local knowledge, and promote confidence in the confidentiality and importance of the LUCA process.

This resource guide serves as a starting point to help community stakeholders prepare for LUCA. The main objective is to help community stakeholders understand the basics of the LUCA operation so that they can educate local officials on the importance of LUCA and why participation in the program is critical. The information can also be used by local governments to deepen their understanding of LUCA and begin preparing for the operation when it formally begins in 2027. As more information becomes available, the LUCA Working Group will update this guide to reflect the most up-to-date information from the Census Bureau.

Why LUCA?

Everyone has a role to play. Successful LUCA participation depends on collaboration among local governments, tribal nations, demographers, community-based organizations, philanthropy, and other stakeholders. Communities achieve the strongest results when they combine technical expertise with local knowledge to identify housing that might otherwise be overlooked.

Case studies from the 2020 Census demonstrate how collaboration improved address list quality in a variety of settings. In New York City, planners identified missing and incorrectly located housing units in dense urban neighborhoods. In rural Hidalgo County, Texas, local officials partnered with community-based organizations to update addresses that otherwise may have been missed. In New Mexico, state and tribal governments worked together to identify overlooked housing in tribal communities, helping address long-standing undercount challenges. Nevada's co-ordinated statewide approach supported successful LUCA efforts in both rapidly growing Clark County and rural Pershing County. In suburban Issaquah, Washington, locally developed GIS data helped identify nearly 600 missing housing units.

Together, these examples show that successful LUCA participation relies on partnerships that combine local expertise, reliable data, and technical capacity. The case studies presented later in this guide illustrate practical approaches that jurisdictions can adapt to improve the completeness and accuracy of the Census Bureau's address list.

The Five Pillars of Success

Recommendations from the National LUCA Working Group

Based on 2020 Census experience, the LUCA Working Group identified five pillars that consistently contribute to successful LUCA participation. These pillars are based on collective stakeholder experience from the 2020 Census and elevate recommended practices that can enhance LUCA efforts across the country for the 2030 Census cycle. The case studies and strategies that follow are meant to serve as a resource for governmental units and knowledgeable stakeholders preparing for the 2030 Census LUCA program.

- 1 Local Address Data Capacity:** The capacity to leverage and compile local address databases and information that can be used to document existing housing.
- 2 Local Knowledge of High-Priority Areas:** On-the-ground knowledge that permits the identification of areas with particular types of housing units, such as an abundance of low-visibility accessory buildings, which the Census Bureau can easily overlook.
- 3 Partnerships with Trusted Voices:** The ability to create and maintain partnerships with local “trusted voices” who have the best source of knowledge about what is happening on the ground with respect to nontraditional housing situations.
- 4 Assessment of Housing and Group Quarters:** The capacity to evaluate the number and geographic location of residential housing units and group living facilities—in the office and in the field.
- 5 Understanding Geographic Gaps:** The ability to identify deficits in the Census Bureau’s address list—not only addresses that are completely omitted, but those with missing or incomplete geographic information. (A housing unit may be known to the Census Bureau but deemed “missing” because they don’t have the correct geographic co-ordinates to know where it belongs.)

Successful LUCA outcomes can be accomplished through collaboration among tribal, state and local government officials, demographic and geographic specialists, philanthropy, and community-based stakeholders all working together to incorporate local knowledge into the process. Planning ahead—and identifying and assessing areas where addresses are most likely missing before receiving the formal LUCA invitation in 2027—will make LUCA participation more cost-effective and worthwhile.

LUCA Overview

Background

Census enumerators are allowed to add housing units to the census address list if their door-to-door follow-up visits they identify a living quarter not on the address list. This process, however, is not an ideal way to ensure that missing addresses are included in the census universe, as enumerators may not be adequately trained or have sufficient time to look for housing units that have been overlooked.

The Census Bureau invites only households whose residences are on the census address list to participate in the decennial census. Throughout the decade, the Census Bureau maintains and updates this list using information from the U.S. Postal Service, Census Bureau field operations (including the American Community Survey), and administrative records from federal, tribal, state, and local partners.

The census address list and its associated TIGER maps form the foundation of an accurate census by identifying the location of every housing unit and group quarters facility. If a housing unit is missing or incorrectly located, the people living there are at risk of being left out of the census altogether. Housing that is difficult to identify — including converted commercial buildings, accessory dwelling units, garage apartments, informally subdivided homes, multiple households sharing a structure, and residences in rapidly growing, disaster-affected, or nontraditional addressing areas — can be overlooked.

Local officials, tribal governments, and community-based organizations often have the best understanding of local housing patterns and are uniquely positioned to identify gaps in the Census Bureau's address list. Their knowledge is especially valuable in rural, low-income, and tribal communities, where unconventional or difficult-to-identify housing is more common.

The Master Address File

The MAF is a Census Bureau file intended to contain an accurate, up-to-date inventory of all known living quarters in the United States, Puerto Rico, and associated island areas. The MAF is used to support the decennial census and many surveys that the Census Bureau conducts, including the American Community Survey and ongoing demographic surveys. The content of the MAF includes address information and Census Bureau geographic location codes, as well as source and history data.



The LUCA Process

The LUCA operation gives local leaders, with appropriate assistance from community stakeholders, a one-time opportunity to review and improve the census address list, ensuring all housing units—and the people in them—are counted.

By law, the Census Bureau must offer this opportunity to tribal, state, and local governments three years before the census. The Census Bureau invites the highest elected official in every jurisdiction (e.g., Tribal Nation leader, governor, mayor) to participate and provides a limited window—just a few months in past decades—to review and submit corrections under strict confidentiality protocols.

Smaller jurisdictions can opt to have their county or state conduct the review on their behalf. Planning departments, GIS offices, emergency management agencies, and state demographers typically lead LUCA submissions.

Address list reviews should focus on areas where new, nontraditional, or hard-to-identify housing is most likely to be missing from the census address list, particularly residences without direct U.S. Postal Service delivery or that are difficult to detect using satellite imagery. These include:

- Internally subdivided homes or informal units
- Converted garages, sheds, campers, or back houses
- Buildings with shared mail delivery
- Buildings without a civic address (i.e., number + street name)
- Entrances in alleyways or other non-standard locations

LUCA improves census accuracy by identifying missing housing, removing obsolete addresses, and correcting geographic errors, helping Census Bureau staff focus resources where they are needed most.

In the 2020 Census, only 29% of eligible governments participated in LUCA—yet their efforts collectively added 3.2 million unique addresses that the Census Bureau did not previously have on the census address list. Many of these hidden or overlooked living quarters are home to historically undercounted populations, including low-income households and residents in both overcrowded and remote areas. Identifying them requires the insight of trusted local service providers and community advocates working directly in these neighborhoods who can advise local governments who plan to participate in LUCA, all in accordance with strict statutory confidentiality protections.

Who is eligible to participate in LUCA?

- ☞ Federally recognized Tribal Nations with a reservation and/or off-reservation trust lands
- ☞ States, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico
- ☞ Counties and Puerto Rican municipios
- ☞ Cities (incorporated places)
- ☞ Townships (minor civil divisions)

Highest elected/appointed officials from active, functioning, legal governments can designate the person who will represent their jurisdiction. This may include direct employees, interns, contractors, or designating alternate reviewers, such as county, state data center, or regional planning agency.

For more information, see [Local Update of Census Addresses \(LUCA\) Operation](#) or contact info@luca-census.org.

Confidentiality Protections

Under [Title 13 of the U.S. Code](#), the LUCA operation is protected by the same strict confidentiality requirements that govern all Census Bureau censuses, surveys, and statistical programs. Participating governments must ensure that all staff and community partners assisting with LUCA understand and follow these legal safeguards to maintain public trust.

Once an address is submitted to the Census Bureau, it becomes confidential and may be used only for statistical purposes. It cannot be disclosed outside of the Census Bureau or used in legal, administrative, immigration, or law enforcement proceedings. Before accessing the confidential census address list, all LUCA participants must take the same lifetime confidentiality oath required of Census Bureau employees, with violations subject to substantial fines and imprisonment.

Government staff and community partners should apply these confidentiality standards throughout LUCA planning and outreach. Governments can further strengthen these protections by designating knowledgeable community canvassers as official LUCA team members, making them subject to the same Title 13 confidentiality oath.

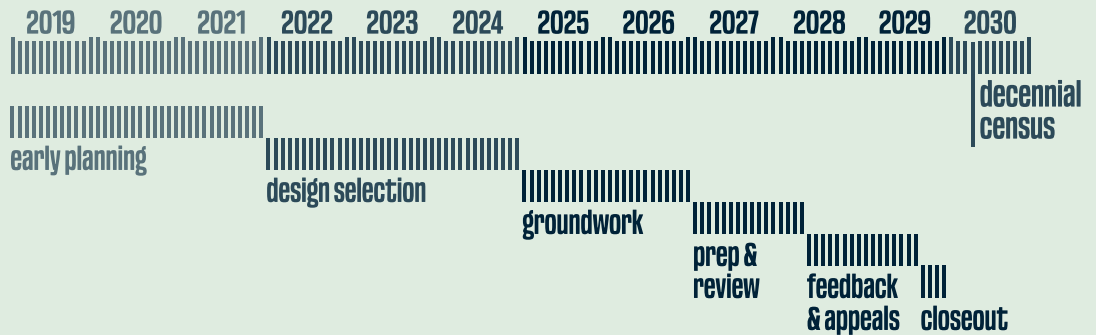
What is Title 13?

Title 13 of the United States Code provides strong [confidentiality protections](#) for all data collected by the U.S. Census Bureau, strictly prohibiting the sharing of personally identifiable information with any other federal agency, including law enforcement or immigration authorities. It ensures that census responses are used solely for statistical purposes and cannot be used against individuals in any way. Violations of these protections carry severe penalties, including fines and imprisonment, reinforcing the bureau's legal obligation to safeguard respondent privacy.

Check out the [Roadmap to 2030](#) website for a broader timeline for the 2030 Census and how to gear up for the count.

The LUCA Timeline

Preparations for the [2030 Census](#) are well underway, with operational milestones such as the LUCA operation on the horizon. The timeline below shows the LUCA operation as part of the decade-long 2030 Census planning cycle, with updates and more detail expected from the Census Bureau in the coming months and years.



now to
May 2027

Groundwork & stakeholder education

- Community-based organizations, tribal/state/local governments, and funders assess capacity, identify funding and staffing needs, and begin preparing for LUCA.
- Eligible governments can organize their address databases and identify areas where LUCA Review (see below) would be most helpful, using the resources available on the [Census Bureau's LUCA page](#).

May to
Aug 2027

Prepare to participate in LUCA

- The highest elected official responds to the Census Bureau invitation to participate in LUCA and/or names someone who will represent the jurisdiction in the LUCA program.
- Option to simulate conducting an address-level LUCA Participant Review, with opportunities for training and hands-on practice. After signing a confidentiality agreement, participating governments can access their address list using the Census Bureau's Geographic Update Partnership Software (GUPS) interface, for comparison with local address information.
- No submissions will be accepted during this phase. Instead, use this time to prepare and validate address additions, deletions, and revisions with local geographic information before formal submissions begin in October 2027.

Oct 2027
to
Mar 2028

Review address list and submit changes

- ▶ Continue learning about LUCA, set up accounts, and register to participate.
- ▶ Conduct a review of the Census Bureau address list using local address information. Be sure to include all residential structures, including group facilities and those that are considered temporary housing (such as motels and marinas), by consulting the Census Bureau's list of living quarters definitions and codes.
- ▶ Make a formal submission to the Census Bureau of address additions, deletions, and corrections to the address list.
- ▶ Provide updated geographic information on the exact locations of addresses.
- ▶ Provide updated geographic information on the location of addresses known to the Census Bureau but where such information was incorrect.
- ▶ Participants have six months to complete their reviews and submissions (compared to four months in previous censuses).
- ▶ LUCA submissions have a firm deadline of **March 31, 2028**, to give the Census Bureau sufficient time to process submissions and ensure all eligible addresses are included in the 2030 Census address file.

Mar 2029

Feedback on submissions; option to submit appeals

- ▶ Participants should receive detailed, address-level feedback on how their submissions will be incorporated into the Census Bureau's address list by March 2029.
- ▶ The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) will provide an independent option to appeal address changes as required by law.
- ▶ Local governments have 60 days from receipt of their feedback file to submit an appeal.

Late 2029

Closeout

- ▶ Participants' access to confidential address files and related confidential LUCA materials ends. Participants must destroy all feedback materials, except for a summary page of actions the Census Bureau took based on their submissions.

Decennial census and beyond

- ▶ Census Bureau leverages updated census address list for a complete count in 2030.
- ▶ Assessment and evaluation phase of LUCA operation.



Preparing for LUCA: The Time is Now!

For more information about LUCA and access to tools to facilitate LUCA preparation, visit the Census Bureau's [LUCA page](#).

Preparing for LUCA should begin well before the program formally launches in 2027. Early planning gives governments and their partners time to assess capacity, build partnerships, identify funding needs, and focus resources on the areas where participation can have the greatest impact.

- 1 Assess Past Participation.** Review the Census Bureau's 2020 LUCA Respondents List to determine which tribal, state, and local governments participated in the previous LUCA operation. Identify experienced jurisdictions that can share lessons learned, as well as governments that did not participate and may benefit from targeted outreach to understand and address barriers to participation.
- 2 Build Knowledge and Evaluate Readiness.** Participate in trainings offered by the 2030 Census National LUCA Working Group, the Census Bureau, Census Counts, and other partners, and consider organizing state or local briefings. Use Census Bureau tools and local data to assess whether LUCA participation would improve address coverage in your community and identify where additional planning is needed.
- 3 Develop a LUCA Plan.** Convene tribal, state, and local governments, community-based organizations, and philanthropic partners to develop a preliminary LUCA plan. Identify priority geographic areas with the greatest potential for missing or inaccurate addresses, determine opportunities for intergovernmental collaboration, and outline roles and responsibilities for participating partners.
- 4 Build the Case for LUCA Participation.** Assess whether LUCA is a worthwhile investment by using Census Bureau tools and local data to identify potential address gaps. If participation would benefit your community, develop materials to help local and state leaders make the case for investing in the effort. Assess whether the agencies responsible for LUCA have the staff, technical capacity, and funding needed to participate effectively, and work with municipal and state leaders to secure the necessary resources.

- 5 Build Capacity and Secure Resources.** Hire and train the staff needed to support LUCA, including personnel with GIS, data management, and community engagement expertise. Work with municipal and state leaders to secure the funding necessary to build the capacity required before the formal LUCA review begins.

Learn about Census Counts!

Census Counts is a national coalition helping communities prepare for the 2030 Census through trainings, webinars, strategy sessions, and practical resources. Learn more at censuscounts.org and join the [States Count Action Network \(S-CAN\)](#) to receive the latest census news, resources, and engagement opportunities.



The Role of Stakeholders

The LUCA program is voluntary, and only 29% of eligible tribal, state, and local governments participated in the 2020 Census. Community-based organizations can encourage local leaders to participate in the 2030 LUCA program, dedicate resources to reviewing address and map information, and help identify hard-to-find or overlooked housing while following Title 13's [strict confidentiality procedures](#).

Effective LUCA participation begins well before the Census Bureau issues its formal invitation in 2027. By planning early, building partnerships, and identifying areas where addresses are most likely to be missing, stakeholders can help ensure their communities are prepared to participate effectively.

Community-Based and Nongovernmental Organizations

Basic Steps for State and Local Census Stakeholders

1 Landscape Analysis

- a Review the [2020 LUCA Respondents List](#) to identify which state, tribal, and local governments participated in the previous LUCA operation. Contact your Census Bureau [Regional Office](#) for updates on LUCA liai-

son appointments, and identify historically undercounted communities where address gaps may exist and whether they participated in LUCA directly or through another level of government.

- b Identify the agencies, officials, and staff responsible for maintaining local address databases, including those who participated in the 2020 LUCA program or have the expertise to support the 2030 effort.
 - **State Level:** At the state level, start with your state demographer who may be part of the Census Bureau's [Federal State Cooperative for Population Estimates](#) (FSCPE). You may also contact your state's [State Data Center Program](#) (SDC) and/or [Census Information Centers](#) (CIC).
 - **County or Municipal Level:** At the county or municipal level, check agencies such as a Land Bank or a housing, planning, land management, or tax department. Keep in mind that your jurisdiction may not have participated in LUCA previously.
 - **Tribal Level:** Many tribes have their own housing authority or a regional housing authority, which may have vital data for LUCA participation.
- c Connect key agencies with LUCA trainings and technical assistance offered by the Census Bureau and encourage participation in briefings hosted by [Census Counts](#) and other census partners to stay informed on best practices, emerging guidance, and preparation strategies.

2 Education and Advocacy

- a Educate your state and local jurisdictions' top elected officials and their support staff about the direct link between a complete address list for the census and the accuracy of the population count.
- b Assess whether the appropriate state and local agencies have the staff, technical expertise, and resources needed to participate in LUCA. Identify funding gaps and develop a strategy to build the capacity needed for a successful review. The 2020 case studies in this guide demonstrate how collaboration among governments, universities, and community partners can strengthen LUCA efforts.

3 Coalition and Capacity Building

- a Build relationships with local leaders to raise awareness of the importance of the decennial census and the role LUCA plays in achieving an accurate count.
- b Encourage state and local officials to develop a co-ordinated LUCA plan to reduce duplication and maximize resources. A state-led submission that incorporates local and tribal address updates may be the most efficient approach, although local technical expertise and funding may still be needed. Where statewide co-ordination is not feasible, local or tribal governments should pursue their own LUCA strategy.

Checking the Census Bureau's [LUCA information page](#) frequently to stay aware of updates on the 2030 LUCA operation.

- c Consult government officials to understand how your state and local jurisdictions approached the 2020 LUCA program, and identify the neighborhoods and communities that would benefit most from 2030 LUCA participation.

Tribal, State, and Local Governments

Governments at all levels play a crucial role in the LUCA process. The Census Bureau depends on local expertise from government officials to help update the census address list and get ready for census engagement and enumeration. Here are some ways that state and local governments can prepare in advance:

1 Review and Understand Past LUCA Participation

- a Use the 2020 LUCA [Respondents List](#) to identify which governments participated in the previous LUCA operation and which did not. Understand the factors that contributed to participation—or nonparticipation—and apply those lessons to strengthen planning for 2030.
- b Review 2020 LUCA evaluations to identify opportunities for improvement and inform planning for 2030. Work with tribal, state, and local partners to address unique addressing challenges—particularly in tribal, rural, and off-reservation communities—and incorporate lessons from past address canvassing efforts.

2 Build and/or Leverage Local Address Data

- a Review available local data that are used to deliver services, such as information for emergency and disaster response.
- b Assess the availability of local planning and taxation information and data on the location and use of buildings, such as certificates of occupancy.
- c Explore the availability of lists to help evaluate the presence of group quarters facilities, such as state licensing data (e.g., nursing homes), lists of correctional facilities, university dormitory authorities, and agencies and organizations providing services to special populations (e.g., group homes).
- d Evaluate the use of local commercial databases for business purposes.
- e Identify areas where natural or other disasters may have eliminated housing and altered roads to focus attention on these problematic areas during the formal LUCA Review.
- f Identify areas where residents receive mail only at P.O. Boxes and/or lack traditional street addresses (also called city-style addresses). Determine if there are alternative markers for physical housing units, such as data employed by 911 systems.

- g Conduct in-office address reviews using Google Street View and other commercially available aerial imagery.
- h For tribal areas, leverage land co-stewardship agreements with federal and state agencies and consult nongovernmental organizations that maintain strong GIS programs and expertise.
- i Promote research on the use of American Indian/Alaska Native (AIAN) administrative records in tribal reservation areas by requesting that the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Native American Programs (ONAP) develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Census Bureau for such research.

3 Train and Mobilize Personnel

- a Build local expertise by connecting government staff and partner organizations to LUCA [training offered by the Census Bureau](#) and the 2030 Census National LUCA Working Group.
 - Identify staff within government agencies who have access to data required for effective LUCA participation and who may have done work for the 2020 LUCA program or would be needed to do the work for the 2030 LUCA program.
 - Identify organizations that can recruit individuals to conduct fieldwork—such as community service agencies, local universities, and other knowledgeable nonprofits—to help with address list development.
- b Create a LUCA Steering Committee that can develop a common vision for the operation, convey a unified image for LUCA support staff, and reduce the need to review the Census Bureau's address list from scratch.
- c For tribal areas, promote technical assistance through the National American Indian Housing Council (NAIHC). NAIHC serves as the primary inter-tribal national organization on housing issues, with a core component of their work focused on training and technical assistance (TA).
 - Encourage the Census Bureau to collaborate with NAIHC to serve as the TA for the LUCA operation by providing hands-on guidance and instruction to tribal and regional housing authorities about how to complete LUCA forms and provide outreach and education materials on why LUCA is important.

4 Establish and Cultivate Partnerships

- a Foster working relationships with LUCA liaisons in [regional Census Bureau offices](#) and community-based organizations to help identify areas that may be prone to being undercounted due to missed living quarters.
- b For tribes, data sharing agreements following meaningful consultation

are needed between state and tribal leaders to collaborate on the LUCA process.

- Establish a working relationship between state/local officials and local tribal leaders and review any previous data sharing agreements.
- c Participating government officials should reach out to housing developers, group quarters managers and service providers, and local U.S. Postal Service management officials to discuss their understanding of housing unit designators.
- d In consultation with local officials, civic leaders, and stakeholders, begin to identify geographic areas that are likely subject to undercounts, such as those with unconventional housing units and new residential developments.

5 Leverage Technology and Resources

Participate in available training from the Census Bureau on its resources and tools as soon as they become available. These resources may include:

- Address-count lists and associated interactive map viewers.
- Geocoding tools.
- Examples of acceptable and unacceptable address formats
- Guidelines for submitting vernacular addresses (e.g., rural route, box number, or latitude-and-longitude) that will enable the Census Bureau to accurately locate a residence lacking a conventional postal address.
- Guidelines and examples of how to use these tools and resources to identify where entities have good coverage and where they may lack comprehensive coverage.
- The MAF/[TIGER](#) system, which helps to determine whether the placement of geographic features, such as roads and address ranges are consistent with local data (for example, the accuracy of address ranges on streets in a new development). Such geospatial information is essential for determining the precise location of housing units.
- Work with tribal, state, and local partners to gain early access to the census address list—by encouraging participation in the early 2027 pre-LUCA practice review—in order to better understand how hidden housing units might be identified and included in the census address list. (It is important to note, however, that any access to the census address list is provided directly from the Census Bureau to authorized governments. Confidentiality agreements prohibit the direct sharing of address lists between tribal, state, and local partners and community-based organizations.)

MAF (Master Address File) is a continually updated list of all known living quarters in the United States, including residential addresses, used to ensure everyone has a chance to be counted in the census.

TIGER (Topologically Integrated Geographic Encoding and Referencing) is a digital map database that includes geographic features like roads, rivers, boundaries, and census tracts. It links address data to physical locations and geographic areas.

6 Construct a LUCA Plan

- a Jurisdictions can begin prioritizing areas for a deeper look now using the periodic release of block-level housing unit counts from the census address list (i.e., the Address Count Listing Files available [here](#)).
- b Map comparisons between the Census Bureau's block-level housing counts and local data—such as tax records, parcel datasets, and field observations—can help jurisdictions identify priority areas for LUCA review and evaluate the reliability of their local data.
- c Be alert for apartments in buildings without standard mail delivery or address nomenclature and flag blocks with an abundance of these addresses.

The quality of submissions during LUCA is as important as the quantity of address records provided. This depends on local knowledge of communities and neighborhoods to understand geographic areas that are likely to be missed.

Approaches to LUCA: Case Studies from 2020

Seven case studies were developed by the 2030 Census National LUCA Working Group to showcase the approaches used to achieve success during the last census cycle. These “Success Stories” are summarized below, with the full case studies provided in the Appendix.

- [Bronx County, New York City](#)
- [Clark and Pershing Counties, Nevada](#)
- [Fresno, California](#)
- [Hidalgo County, Texas](#)
- [Issaquah, Washington](#)
- [New Mexico Tribal Areas](#)
- [New Orleans, Louisiana](#)

Bronx County, New York City

Improving the census address list using a combination of in-office and in-field canvassing of low-visibility units and those ‘hiding in plain sight’.

New York City's Department of City Planning used local data, field verification, and in-office review to identify nearly 550 missing or incorrectly located housing units in two Bronx neighborhoods. The effort uncovered hidden basement apartments, subdivided homes, and geocoding errors in large apartment complexes, enabling thousands of additional residents to be counted. The case demonstrates the value of combining local knowledge with dedicated technical resources in dense urban communities.

Clark and Pershing Counties, Nevada

How co-ordination at the state level can pay off in the form of added housing and population in areas of recent, rapid growth and in sparsely populated rural counties.

Co-ordinated by the State Demographer's Office, Nevada's LUCA effort improved census accuracy in both urban and rural communities. Reviews added 110 housing units in rapidly growing North Las Vegas and 76 housing units in rural Pershing County by identifying gaps, cross-referencing local assessor data with Census Bureau records, and validating local submissions. The effort demonstrates how state-level co-ordination can strengthen local capacity and improve address coverage across diverse communities.

Fresno, California

Community organizing was the linchpin in efforts to identify low-visibility, non-traditional housing to better inform a state-run LUCA effort.

Led by the Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative, Fresno's LUCA effort used community canvassing, local knowledge, and digital mapping tools to identify hidden housing common in immigrant and low-income communities, including garage conversions, backyard units, and trailers. The effort increased the county's housing count by approximately 4%, with nearly three-quarters of the additions consisting of non-postal housing. Similar strategies adopted across six California counties added nearly 13,000 housing units before the 2020 Census, demonstrating the value of trusted community partnerships in identifying overlooked housing.

Hidalgo County, Texas

Information about the location of housing possessed by the county staff, combined with on-the-ground knowledge and access to local community organizations, made all the difference.

Hidalgo County's LUCA efforts focused on rural and border communities where missing addresses and incomplete geographic information threatened census accuracy. In Pueblo de Palmas, local officials and community partners updated emergency service address records and matched them with Census Bureau data, resulting in 73% of the community's 2020 housing count being added through LUCA. Countywide, Hidalgo submitted approximately 10,000 address updates,

helping ensure an accurate count of more than 20,000 residents. The effort demonstrates the importance of combining local data with community partnerships to improve address coverage in hard-to-count areas.

Issaquah, Washington

A fast-growing suburban community is a model for how methods to optimize the delivery of services aligns with the goals of LUCA.

Using a city-maintained GIS database originally developed for emergency response and planning, Issaquah identified and submitted nearly 600 missing housing units—primarily newly constructed homes and addresses lacking geographic co-ordinates. The additions accounted for 17% of the housing units enumerated in the Issaquah Highlands neighborhood. This case demonstrates how investing in local geospatial data can improve census accuracy while strengthening planning, emergency response, and access to future funding.

New Mexico Tribal Areas

Starting with state in-office evaluation, the local knowledge provided by tribal governments proved invaluable in the success of LUCA in 2020, an outcome that was impossible for either group to achieve on its own.

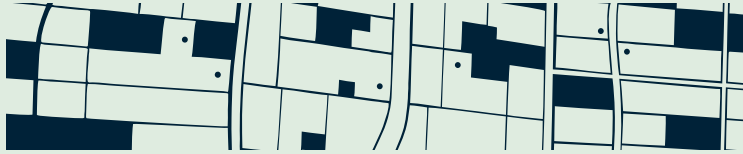
Tribal lands in New Mexico faced unique LUCA challenges due to unconventional housing, accessory dwelling units, and limited local GIS capacity. Through close collaboration, the state LUCA liaison provided technical assistance, GIS tools, aerial imagery, and shared workspace to support tribal data review. One tribal partnership alone identified more than 450 additional housing units—approximately 9% of the tribe's total housing. This case highlights how combining tribal knowledge with state technical support can improve address coverage in historically undercounted communities.

New Orleans, Louisiana

Local knowledge and fieldwork were critical to filling gaps in the address list in an area devastated by a natural disaster.

Using its citywide GIS system and Master Address Database (NOMAD), New Orleans identified major address gaps in neighborhoods rebuilt after Hurricane Katrina. By comparing local records with the Census Bureau's LUCA address list, the city identified omitted housing—

including two redeveloped public housing complexes—and added more than 500 housing units, representing 23% of the housing in the study area. This case demonstrates how maintaining accurate local address databases can significantly improve census coverage in rapidly changing communities.



Appendices

A. The Decennial Census

The U.S. Constitution requires a count of the nation's population—or census—every 10 years for the purpose of apportioning seats in the U.S. House of Representatives among the states. Responsibility for taking the census lies with Congress, which in turn has delegated authority to conduct the count to the U.S. Department of Commerce and its Census Bureau. A series of Supreme Court cases subsequently established that congressional districts must have roughly equal numbers of people (14th Amendment's equal representation clause), so census numbers also are used for drawing district lines (the redistricting process). Additionally, census data help direct more than \$2.8 trillion in federal funds (in FY 2021) to states for education, hospitals, roads, and other public goods annually*

* <https://www.census.gov/newsroom/press-releases/2023/decennial-census-federal-funds-distribution.html>

** <https://www.prb.org/resources/how-accurate-was-the-2020-census-and-why-should-you-care/>

*** <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/about/coverage-measurement/pes.2020.html>

[Results](#) from the 2020 Census echoed a historical pattern of disproportionately undercounting Black Americans (–3.30%), American Indians and Alaska Natives living on reservations (–5.64%), Hispanics (–4.99%), and those who reported being of Some Other Race (–4.34%), while overcounting White and some Asian populations. Moreover, the level of undercount for Hispanics more than tripled between the 2010 and 2020 Censuses. Children ages 0–4 continued to be the most undercounted age group with a net undercount of [5.4% nationwide](#).** In addition, renters were undercounted, while homeowners were overcounted, and there were widespread errors found in data for the [Group Quarters population](#).***

Important Uses of the Decennial Census

- 1 Political Representation:** Census data determine the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. States may gain or lose

congressional seats based on population shifts, which directly affects political power at the federal level, including the number of Electoral College votes assigned to each state for a decade.

- 2 Redistricting:** State and local governments use census data to redraw district boundaries for congressional, state legislative, and local elections, ensuring fair representation.
 - 3 Federal Funding:** Census data guide the allocation of more than \$2.8 trillion annually in federal funds to tribal nations, states, and local communities. This funding supports critical public services like education, health care, infrastructure, emergency preparedness, rural economic development, and social service programs.
- a **Policy and Planning:** Governments and nonprofits use census data to make decisions on where to locate schools, hospitals, roads and transit, and recreation areas, as well as where to provide social services.
 - b **Economic Planning and Research:** Businesses use census data to identify market trends, labor force demographics, and potential growth areas and where to locate retail and service establishments. Researchers and policy analysts use the data for demographic, economic, and health studies that inform prudent decision-making.

2030 Census Operational Plan

The [2030 Census Operational Plan](#) is a high-level document that explains the operational design for the 2030 Census. It is the key way that the Census Bureau communicates the 2030 Census design to staff and external stakeholders which outlines the full scope of the 2030 Census Program. Since the Census Bureau is in the early stage of the operational design, some areas described in the plan have more detail than others, this is common for areas already tested in the 2020 Census and earlier. This gradual approach helps the bureau gather more information through testing and research, allowing the bureau to refine and improve 2030 Census operations.

B. 2020 Census LUCA Case Studies

Group quarters, places where people live or stay in a group living arrangement, and that are owned or managed by entities or organizations providing housing and/or services for the residents, were not part of the case studies.

About the Case Studies

To better understand what makes LUCA participation successful, the 2030 Census National LUCA Working Group partnered with experts from tribal, state, county, and local governments who helped prepare 2020 Census LUCA submissions.

While these practitioners know which of their submitted addresses were accepted by the Census Bureau through the 2019 LUCA feedback process, they do not know how many ultimately increased the housing unit count because the Census Bureau's address list remains con-

fidential outside the LUCA operation. To evaluate the impact of LUCA, Working Group members identified a small sample of geographic areas from their 2020 submissions for additional Census Bureau review.

The selected areas represented a range of challenges that commonly contribute to address omissions, including low-visibility housing, residences without standard postal addresses, unconventional housing arrangements, apartment complexes with geocoding issues, rapidly developing neighborhoods, tribal lands, rural communities, and areas recovering from natural disasters. Together, these communities reflect many of the places and populations that have historically been undercounted.

The Working Group submitted more than a dozen geographic areas across seven states for review. In every case, the Census Bureau found evidence that the LUCA submissions improved the housing unit count, contributing to more accurate population counts. This is the ultimate measure of success—local knowledge leading to a better count of housing units. The Working Group then documented the strategies that led to these successful outcomes.

These case studies have two objectives:

- a Demonstrate how LUCA participation can improve the accuracy of housing and population counts.
- b Share practical strategies, data sources, and partnerships that can help tribal, state, and local governments prepare for the 2030 LUCA operation.

As preparations for the 2030 Census continue, meaningful LUCA participation should focus on identifying addresses that are unlikely to be captured through the Census Bureau's routine update sources, such as the U.S. Postal Service. Targeting these hard-to-identify housing units helps governments use their resources more efficiently while improving the completeness of the Census Bureau's address list. The case studies that follow illustrate approaches that other jurisdictions can adapt for their own LUCA efforts.

LUCA Success Stories

- [Bronx County, New York City](#)
- [Clark and Pershing Counties, Nevada](#)
- [Fresno, California](#)
- [Hidalgo County, Texas](#)
- [Issaquah, Washington](#)
- [New Mexico Tribal Areas](#)
- [New Orleans, Louisiana](#)

C. Companion resource: The Details

Participating effectively in the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program requires more than awareness—it requires early planning, co-ordination, and adequate resources. While the principles of successful LUCA participation are straightforward, implementing them requires a clear understanding of the tasks, expertise, and resources involved.

This companion resource, [**The Details: Tasks, Required Skills, and Costs of a LUCA Plan**](#), translates the Five Pillars of LUCA Success into a practical planning framework. It helps local governments, tribal nations, community-based organizations, and funders understand what is needed to prepare for the 2027 LUCA program, with planning beginning as early as 2026.

The guide outlines the key tasks, staffing and technical expertise, partnerships, and potential costs associated with developing a LUCA plan. While every jurisdiction's approach will differ based on its size, capacity, and data infrastructure, the core elements of successful LUCA participation—and the value of collaboration—remain consistent.

Within the guide:

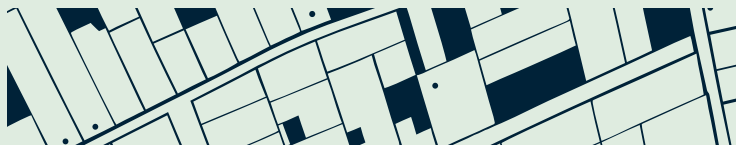
Part I outlines the primary LUCA tasks and the objectives associated with each.

Part II examines staffing considerations and key cost drivers that shape how LUCA activities can be implemented.

Part III provides model examples and estimated cost ranges for LUCA work across different types of jurisdictions.

Together, these sections provide a framework for organizations developing LUCA plans, as well as for philanthropic partners and funders seeking to support this critical step in ensuring a fair and accurate 2030 Census.

These [model spread-sheets](#) can be customized by individual stakeholders to help project the costs of participating in LUCA.



Resource Index

Updated July 2026. This index compiles the external resources referenced in the LUCA Resource Guide, plus additional tools, organized by topic for census stakeholders.

Census Bureau and Official Resources

1 LUCA Program

[Local Update of Census Addresses \(LUCA\) Operation](#) – The Census Bureau’s overview of the LUCA operation, including a “How to Prepare” section for prospective participants.

[2030 LUCA Federal Register Notice \(FRN\)](#) – The 60-Day FRN provided the public with an opportunity to review and comment on the plans for 2030 LUCA.

[Getting Ready for 2030 LUCA Presentation](#) – Slide deck providing an overview of LUCA with a focus on what governments can do to prepare.

[Getting Ready for 2030 LUCA Presentation Script](#) – Script accompanying the Getting Ready for 2030 LUCA presentation.

[2020 LUCA Participants Viewer](#) – Interactive map displaying registered 2020 LUCA participant entities.

[2020 LUCA Respondents List](#) – Governments that submitted a response for 2020 LUCA, including the 2020 LUCA Liaison’s title and department name.

[2020 LUCA Operational Assessment Report](#) – The Census Bureau’s evaluation of the 2020 LUCA operation.

2 Address List Development & Comparison Tools

[Participant Address List Template](#) – Template demonstrating how to organize address information when developing an address list; this format is required by the Census Geocoder and recommended for LUCA preparation.

[Address Geocoder](#) – Identifies current census tabulation blocks for provided addresses.

[LUCA Geocoder and Block Count List](#) – User guide for using the Address Geocoder and Address Count Listing Files (Block Count Lists) to verify and geocode address lists and generate block count lists.

[Guide to Comparing Address Counts by Block](#) – Examples for making your own comparison against Census Address Count Listing Files using spreadsheets or spatial data.

[Current Address Count Listing Files \(time series\)](#) – Total housing unit and group quarters counts by census tabulation block, downloadable by state.

[Address Count Listing Files \(2025 vintage\)](#) – The 2025 release of the Address Count Listing Files.

[Current Address Count Listing Files Viewer](#) – Interactive viewer supplementing the Address Count Listing Files; zoom in and click a census block to see its characteristics.

[Data Gem: Discover Your Neighborhood with the Address Count Listing Files Viewer](#) – Video demonstration of using the viewer to zoom to a census block, search an area, and look up current housing totals.

[Housing Unit Change Viewer](#) – Interactive map showing the change in housing units from the 2020 Census to present for states, counties, tracts, and blocks.

[Data Gem: Tracking Housing Trends with the Housing Unit Change Viewer](#) – Video demonstration of using the Housing Unit Change Viewer to spot trends and see where communities are growing.

[Baseline 2030 Census Living Quarters Definitions and Code Lists](#) – Specifies how the Census Bureau categorizes and assigns code values to different types of living quarters.

[Address Maintenance Strategy](#) – Overview of methods and sources used to maintain the coverage and accuracy of the Census address list.

[Response Outreach Area Mapper \(ROAM\)](#) – Map to identify hard-to-survey areas and to provide socioeconomic and demographic characteristic profiles using ACS data.

[TIGER Geodatabase](#) – Geographic mapping files and resources.

3 2030 Census Planning

[2030 Census Main Page](#) – Overall 2030 Census planning.

[2030 Census Operational Plan](#) – Operational design for the 2030 Census.

[2020 Post-Enumeration Survey](#) – Official coverage measurement resources for the 2020 Census.

[2030 Census: Census Bureau Needs Additional Data to Inform Design Decisions](#) – Report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) assessing 2030 Census readiness, including the 2026 Census Test and emerging operational risks.

[Federal Funds Distribution](#) – How decennial census data guide the distribution of federal funding.

4 Confidentiality & Legal Protections (Title 13)

[Title 13 Overview](#) – Overview of Census confidentiality protections under Title 13 of the U.S. Code.

[Title 13 \(PDF\)](#) – Full statutory text of U.S. Code Title 13.

[Census Bureau Privacy Protections](#) – How the Census Bureau protects respondent information.

[2020 Census Confidentiality](#) – Factsheet on Title 13 protections.

5 Training & Technical Assistance

[Census Academy](#) – Census Bureau training courses and webinars.

[Census Bureau Regional Offices](#) – Regional Census Bureau contacts.

[Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates \(FSCPE\)](#) – State-level contacts for population estimates co-ordination.

[State Data Center Program](#) – Access to and education on Census Bureau data and products as well as other statistical resources to millions of data users.

[Census Information Centers](#) – Efficient access to Census Bureau data products through a wide data dissemination network of organizations.

LUCA Working Group Resources

[Google Drive folder](#)

- [LUCA Case Studies](#) – Seven case studies highlighting successful 2020 LUCA strategies that improved housing unit counts and provide practical lessons for stronger 2030 Census preparation.
- [The Details: Tasks, Required Skills, and Costs of a LUCA Plan](#) – Outlines the estimated local costs of a LUCA plan.
- [LUCA Planning Spreadsheet Template \(Google Sheets\)](#) – Budget and staffing template.
- [2020 LUCA Respondents List \(Google Sheets\)](#) – Spreadsheet conversion of the 2020 LUCA respondents list provided by the Census Bureau.

Additional Tools

1 The Leadership Conference Education Fund & Census Counts

[Census Counts](#) – Coalition resource hub with census advocacy tools, trainings, and planning resources to support preparation for the 2030 Census.

[Roadmap to the 2030 Census](#) – Year-by-year guide to 2030 Census milestones, recommended actions, and resources for stakeholders.

[Census Factsheets](#) – Census-in-action factsheets showing how the census impacts business, education, veterans, criminal justice, rural communities, and labor.

[LUCA factsheet](#) – 2-page factsheet summarizing the LUCA operation and key figures.

[2030 LUCA Federal Register Notice \(FRN\) Comment Letter](#) – The Leadership Conference response urging the Census Bureau to strengthen the 2030 LUCA operation.

[Title 13: Census Confidentiality Protections](#) – This memo explains the Census Bureau's privacy safeguards, and how they differ from other federal privacy laws.

2 Partner Resources

[National League of Cities: The LUCA Process](#) – Local government's guide to the census address review.

[National League of Cities: LUCA webinar](#) – Learn how local governments can prepare now for the LUCA operation.

[Project On Government Oversight: Census Matters](#) – State-by-state factsheets analyzing distribution of federal resources.

[CUNY Mapping Service, Center for Urban Planning: 2030 Census Outreach Planning Map](#) – This interactive map identifies communities at greatest risk of census undercounts and helps target outreach.

Key Contacts

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Census Information Centers – clmso.dub.office.group.list@census.gov



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