



I am feeling helpless. What can I do to help my country and my community? Our nation currently faces grave and serious consequences from the pandemic and blatant racism that plague our communities.

I struggle with how to answer this question. The one action I have taken -- I completed the 2020 Census. This may sound like a small and inconsequential act, but I have learned that the Census is much more than a population count.

The United States of America has counted its population since 1790. The Census is mandated by the US Constitution. It is the principal determinant for a State's congressional representation and for federal funding disbursement.

Representation. The Census determines the number of seats appropriated to each state in the House of Representatives. Each state gains or loses congressional seats based on census data. The number of Electoral College votes is allocated based on the number of congressional seats held by each state.

Federal funding. The federal government distributes nearly 1 trillion dollars annually based on information gathered from Census. Federal funding is designed to improve infrastructure like public transportation, public housing, and road construction. Census determines locations for our libraries, our senior centers, our hospitals, and our fire departments to name a few. Federal funding also supports public health programs like Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs (SNAP), Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), school breakfast and lunch programs for low-income students. Federal funding in the form of block grants support our mental health and substance abuse treatment and mitigation programs.

In the last 10 years North Carolina has suffered numerous natural disasters -- hurricanes, tornados, and devastating floods. We can be certain that the effects the COVID-19 on our communities and local economy will be with us for the long-term. The Census is more important than ever.

The [**Make North Carolina Count**](#) website offers educational resources and materials to raise awareness of the importance of the Census. There is also a link to the many free Wi-Fi hotspots across North Carolina. The deadline for completing the Census is August 14, 2020. The 2020 Census can be completed online (<https://my2020census.gov/>) or by phone at 844-330-2020. Assistance is also available in 13 different languages <https://2020census.gov/en/ways-to-respond.html>). Resources are also available for American Sign Language and braille. **Census data is confidential.** It does not require a Social Security numbers, bank account or credit card information. It is independent of political party affiliation or citizenship.

The results of the Census data **WILL** impact all of us in so many ways over the coming decade. Encourage friends and neighbors to [**Make North Carolina Count**](#).