



SCHOLARS
STRATEGY NETWORK

The Pandemic Threw a Wrench in the 2020 Census. Advocates Are Trying to Limit the Damage.

Elissa S Lee, University of Southern California

Given the unrelenting crush of news ushered in by the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide protests, it can be hard to remember this is a census year, or why that matters. But the 2020 Census will have a huge influence on the next decade in the U.S., on everything from how many state representatives will sit in the House of Representatives, to where hospitals and schools are built, to even how we respond to the next outbreak or pandemic.

Field operations around the nation have been delayed and the deadline to fill out the census has been postponed. Census officials around the country have been forced to rethink how they can ensure everyone is counted. As of June 8, [field operations have already resumed in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas](#), under newly issued guidelines to observe social distancing protocols and wear protective equipment. (The U.S. Census Bureau has a [map](#) of what regions have resumed operations.)