

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 4, 2019

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## Statewide Initiative Launches to Educate Alaskans before Historic 2020 Census

**ANCHORAGE, AK** -- Over 50 Alaskan leaders have launched a statewide initiative to educate Alaskans about the importance of the US Census before it kicks off in Toksook Bay on January 21, 2020. As the country's largest and least densely populated state, Alaska has one of the hardest populations to count.

"It's critical that Alaskans understand the connection between being counted and the state receiving funding for local community services. That includes resources for hospitals, roads, infrastructure, and public services for children, veterans, and seniors," said Tim Dillon, Alaska Census Working Group Member and Executive Director of the Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District.

The Decennial Census affects how more than \$800 billion in federal funding goes to states annually, including \$3.2 billion flowing to Alaska. This once-a-decade population count determines how much funding Alaska receives for local public services, provides data that inform businesses that grow our economy, and helps determine our state's legislative districts.

"When Alaskans go uncounted, we all lose out. That's why we've created an online hub with tools for businesses and organizations around the state to use to spread the word across Alaska. We're also distributing educational mail pieces and investing in translation of key materials ahead of the census," said Laurie Wolf, founder of the Alaska Census Working Group and President and CEO of The Foraker Group.

Alaska Counts invites partners to start planning now for awareness activities about the 2020 Census and the importance of a full and accurate count. Resources for organizations and local Complete Count Committees are now available for use at <http://alaskacounts.org/>. Sample tools from the website are attached for reference.

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*Alaska Counts is a nonpartisan education initiative to inform public, private, nonprofit, and Native entities representing the interests of people around the state about the 2020 Census. The campaign is organized by the Alaska Census Working Group, whose members and partners are displayed online at <http://alaskacounts.org/>.*