

What the Choctaw Nation is Doing to Get a Complete Count

In 2010 tribal members of the Choctaw Nation, nationwide, appeared to have an undercount of around 80% of their membership. This resulted in a major loss for the Nation, including \$1 million on a single grant. With members spread across the state and the U.S., the Choctaw Nation faces unique challenges when working to get a complete count for the census. The data from the 2020 Census will inform the state and federal grant funding the Nation receives for the next 10 years, accounting for approximately one-quarter of the Nation's operating budget.

In the summer of 2019, Choctaw Nation Chief Gary Batton, asked tribal leaders to organize a Complete Count Committee to begin preparing a marketing and communications strategy designed to reach all tribal members at the appropriate time. The committee includes representation from all major departments within the Choctaw Nation, including Marketing and Communication, Membership, Education, Housing, Outreach Services, Geographic Information Systems, Health Services, Tribal Research and others. They are also working with local cities and communities in their service area, helping to provide ideas on how to organize and coordinating strategies.

After extensive planning, the committee began marketing efforts at the end of January, including TV and radio commercials, newspaper ads, paid boosts on social media, billboards, live events and a direct mail campaign. These efforts will continue through the launch and conclusion of the 2020 US Census.



In 2010, the counties that fall within the Nation's historical boundaries were all considered "low-response areas." The majority of their members are hard-to-reach since the area is so rural. Utilizing GIS technology, they performed an analysis with all the tribal boundary members in mind when trying to locate the best areas to focus on, so that they would have something available within at least 25 miles of all members' homes. Once Census results begin rolling in, they will utilize that information, as well as the maps their GIS department have created, to know where to continue targeting their efforts.

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