

Service-Based Enumeration

The Service-Based Enumeration operation ensures that people without conventional housing and people who may be experiencing homelessness are counted in the census.

Through the Service-Based Enumeration operation, people who are not included in counts of traditional household-type living arrangements or other group quarters, are enumerated where they stay or receive services at service-based facilities or at pre-identified outdoor locations.

For the 2020 Census, the Service-Based Enumeration operation will be conducted across the United States, including in Puerto Rico, from March 30, 2020, to April 1, 2020.

Where Is Service-Based Enumeration Conducted?

In the Service-Based Enumeration operation, the Census Bureau counts people who receive services or stay at the following types of locations:

- **Emergency and transitional shelters** (with sleeping facilities) where people who may be experiencing homelessness stay overnight. These include shelters that operate on a first-come, first-serve basis, where people must leave in the morning and have no guaranteed bed for the next night; shelters where people know that they have a bed for a specified period, even if they leave the building every day; and shelters that provide temporary shelter during extremely cold weather. Examples include churches, missions, hotels and motels used to shelter people experiencing homelessness, and shelters for children who are runaways, neglected, or experiencing homelessness.
- **Soup kitchens** that provide meals, organized as food service lines or bag or box lunches, primarily to people who may be experiencing homelessness.
- **Regularly scheduled mobile food van stops** that provide meals at regularly scheduled stops that primarily serve people who may be experiencing homelessness.
- **Pre-identified non-sheltered outdoor locations** where people experiencing homelessness live without paying to stay at pre-identified outdoor locations.

How Does Service-Based Enumeration Work?

In Service-Based Enumeration, a Census Bureau representative conducts an in-person interview with each person who is served or staying at a given service-based location on Census Day. Each interview takes approximately 10 minutes.

Shelters may also choose paper response data collection as their enumeration method. In this case, a Census Bureau representative meets with the group quarters administrator to obtain a paper listing of census response data for each person who is served or staying at the facility on Census Day.