DATE: August 28, 2020
TO: Census Stakeholders in Minnesota
FROM: Minnesota State Demographer Susan Brower
SUBJECT: Update to August 26, 2020 Memo

This is an update to the memo dated August 26, 2020: Census Field Operations in Hennepin County. We are striving to provide timely information that will help ensure a thorough and accurate 2020 Census count in Minnesota. Our original concerns about the quality of the count in Hennepin County and Minnesota remain and are detailed below.

- The Census Bureau has confirmed that field operations in Hennepin County are on track to be completed within the next two weeks, a full two weeks earlier than the current deadline of September 30, 2020. The Census Bureau reports that a large share of the completed responses has come directly from household members.
- The Census Bureau has confirmed that the Minneapolis Area Census Office, serving Hennepin County, will not close until its field operations are fully complete.
- The low rate of NRFU completions reported by the Census Bureau for the state overall appears to be stemming from field operations based in the Duluth and Rochester Area Census Offices (ACOs). These two offices serve all counties in Minnesota except Hennepin County. NRFU is 82% complete in the Minneapolis ACO, 49% complete in the Duluth ACO, and 53% complete in the Rochester ACO as of August 28, 2020. Note that these are not census response rates; they are indicators of the field work that remains.
- We have not yet received information from the Census Bureau addressing our reports of households that have not been visited by enumerators even once. Our concerns about the count of residents living in apartments also remain. These issues continue to be worrisome, and could impact the accuracy of the Census count significantly, which, in turn, would affect funding and representation for the next decade.

We ask the Census Bureau to extend its field operations to October 31, 2020 to ensure enough time to complete field operations statewide, and to add additional strategies that would improve the quality of the count, especially for residents living in multiunit housing.

Our original requests from our August 26, 2020 memo remain. We continue to ask the Census Bureau to:

1. Provide the Minnesota State Demographic Center with additional information to demonstrate that the 2020 Census has been thoroughly and accurately completed in Hennepin County;
2. Continue field operations in all three Minnesota offices, including Hennepin County, to the end of the NRFU period;
3. Add additional visits to addresses that have not resulted in an interview with a household member;
4. Revisit apartment buildings that include large numbers of units that have neither responded to the census on their own nor been successfully interviewed by a census taker; and
5. Expand the use of Mobile Questionnaire Assistance Centers to include more tracts in Minnesota that have high non-response rates.

As we receive new information from the Census Bureau and from Minnesota residents, we will continue to update our stakeholders with our best assessment of the current picture.