

LUCA: Improving Census Data. Here's How, Starting Now

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National Association of Counties | International City/County Management Association





2020 LUCA SUCCESS STORIES

Low Visibility Housing or “Hidden” Units

- Their presence across the nation runs the geographic gamut, from more isolated rural communities to the densely populated neighborhoods of big cities.
- The very existence of these irregular housing arrangements may not be known to all but the most astute local observers.
- Given the absence of affordable housing in many communities, due to housing shortages and increasing costs, these alternative housing arrangements will likely continue to emerge and evolve.

Fresno, California

- ❑ Farm workers repurpose garages and other accessory buildings as residences, which lack any standard postal addresses.
- ❑ Address canvassing by grassroots community organizations in concert with state and local government acted to reduce census undercounts by identifying low-visibility housing units in hard-to-count neighborhoods.



Clue to Occupied Housing: Fresno, CA. Swamp Cooler
Photo Credit: Cindy Quezada

Fresno, California

- ❑ These accessory buildings, sheds, “back houses,” and other residential conversions by landowners added about 4 percent to the total 2020 Census housing unit count in the study area.
- ❑ These units were home to the most vulnerable populations, and likely averted a much more serious population undercount.



Observing Hidden Housing Unit
Photo Credit: Preston Gannaway

The Bronx, New York

- ❑ Field canvassing in a twenty-block segment of the *Castle Hill* neighborhood revealed numerous basement apartments, converted garages, subdivided units, and other residences, which were absent from the census address list.
- ❑ Multiple mailboxes and a basement entrance visible.



Source: left, Cyclomedia 2024 - right, NYC Dept. of City Planning 2016

The Bronx, New York

- ❑ Converted garages turn single family homes into multiple-family dwellings.
- ❑ All told, about 250 housing units were counted in the 2020 Census as a result of LUCA in this neighborhood, which accounted for 10 percent of the area's housing stock.



Source: left, Cyclomedia 2024 - right, NYC Dept. of City Planning 2016

Housing Units May Be Missed in the Wake of Catastrophic Events

- Given increases in these catastrophic events, it is important for local officials to find ways of working hand-in-hand with the Census Bureau to ensure what the Bureau “sees” matches the reality on-the-ground.
- In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, New Orleans, Louisiana experienced a severe loss of housing, which took more than a decade to recover and in a form that was very different from the original housing configuration.
- In areas devastated by disasters, regular Census Bureau updates through the Postal Service need to be supplemented by local information, in order to obtain a complete list for use in the census.

New Orleans, Louisiana

- ❑ Six large public housing projects were largely destroyed as a result of Hurricane Katrina in 2005, with a loss of about 7,000 housing units.
- ❑ After more than a decade of planning and delays in construction, these complexes were rebuilt as part of a citywide effort to create private, mixed income housing.



Public Housing Flooded, following Hurricane Katrina, 2005
Source: <https://www.studiooutside.us/columbia-parc-senior-center>

New Orleans, Louisiana

- ❑ When rebuilt, the devastated areas saw major changes in the number of housing units and their “footprint,” half the number of original units, with new streets and byways.
- ❑ All told, for a study area consisting of two of the rebuilt projects, the New Orleans LUCA effort resulted in the addition of more than 500 housing units or 23 percent of all units counted in 2020.



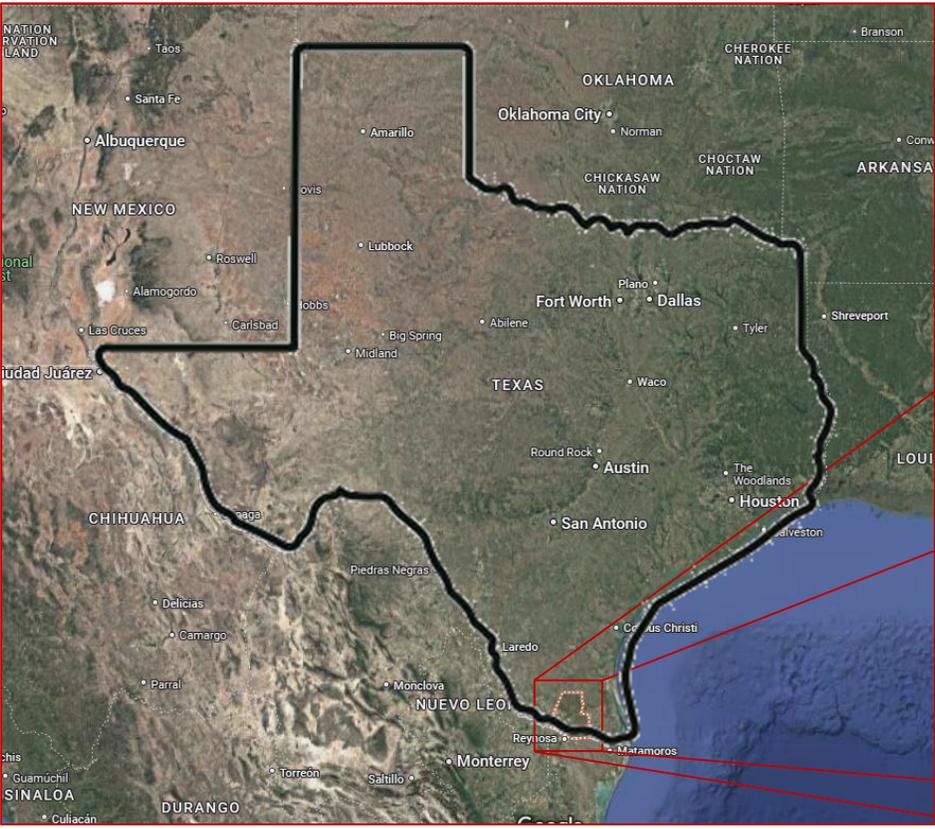
2 Oaks Apartments construction nearing completion in 2017
(Source: Google Streetview imagery)

Small Communities May Be Missed in Their Entirety, Were it Not for LUCA

- The housing situations in many very small communities are unique and the sharing of information by local community-based organizations with those responsible for LUCA submissions is essential for complete enumerations.
- Cooperative agreements between those on the ground in local communities and the state or county officials making submissions was instrumental in literally putting communities “on the map” in the 2020 Census.
- The lessons learned from these places will go a long way in helping to create relationships for 2030 that lead to more complete counts.

PUEBLO DE PALMAS, HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS

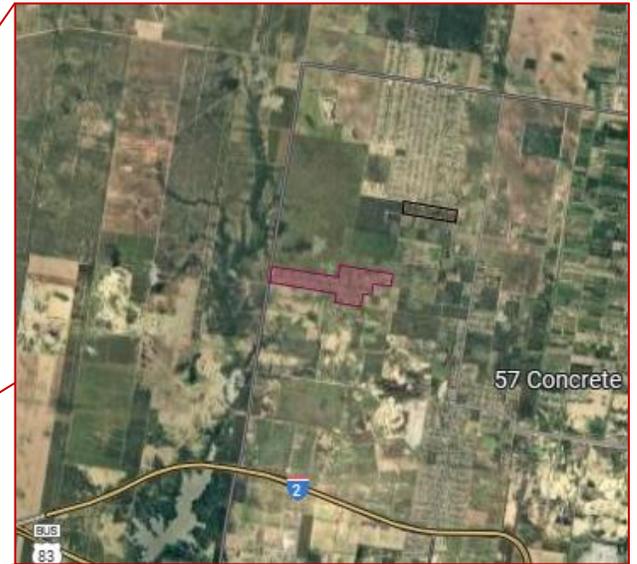
Texas



Hidalgo County



Pueblo de Palmas
(219 Housing Units)



Source: [Hidalgo County \(2018\)](#), and [U.S. Census Bureau \(2020\)](#).

Hidalgo County, Texas

- ❑ In largely rural Hidalgo County, Texas near the border with Mexico, there are communities without standard postal addresses, where mail delivery is either nonexistent or haphazard at best.
- ❑ *Pueblo de Palmas* is one of them.



Hidalgo County, Texas
Source: Google Street View, 2023

Hidalgo County, Texas

- ❑ In Pueblo de Palmas, more than **70 percent of the 219** housing units counted in the 2020 Census were likely the result of the Hidalgo County LUCA submission.
- ❑ Most were known to the Bureau, but geographic information on their exact location was incomplete, preventing their inclusion in the census. LUCA supplied that information.



Hidalgo County, Texas
Source: Google Street View, 2023

Hidalgo County, Texas

Participation in LUCA

On-the-ground work

By Community Based Organizations

CBOs validated and updated addresses of the **911 addresses database for the areas regional council of governments.**



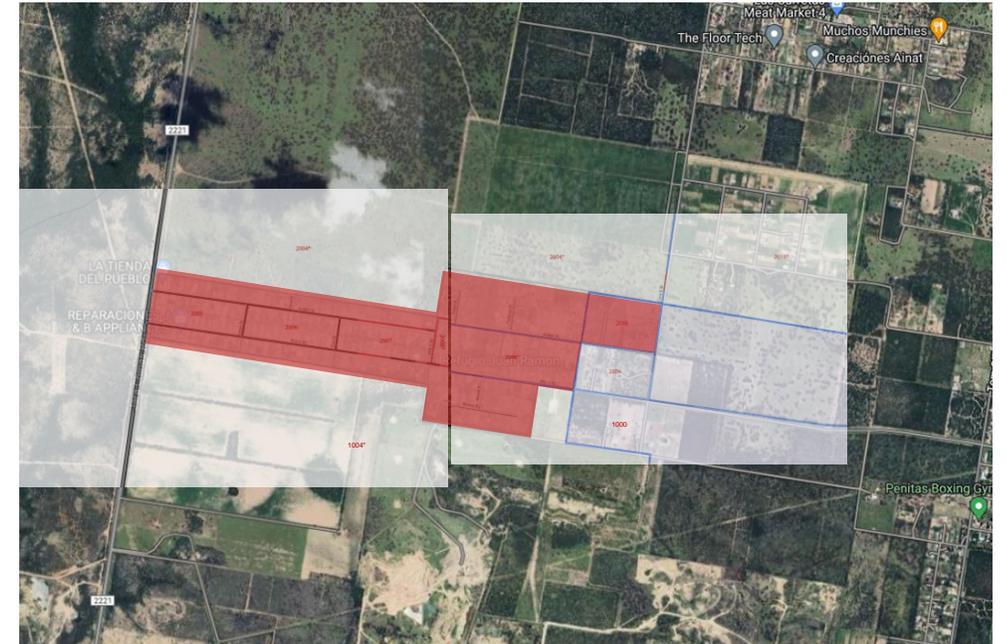
In-Office work

By Hidalgo County, TX Planning Department

Hidalgo County compared:
Appraisal District GIS data
911 addresses database
LUCA addresses data

Hidalgo County - Return on Investment for Texas

- ✓ Updating activities in preparation for LUCA improved **911 addresses** for emergency response.
- ✓ Estimated average of **\$4,500*** of census-directed funding per household for Texas.
- ✓ Due to added households, LUCA efforts in *Pueblo de Palmas* may have received **over \$741,000** that it wouldn't have otherwise been allocated, just for properly counting a **6 square mile area**.
- ✓ With an average of 2.93 people per household across Hidalgo County, this may have resulted in just under **\$60,000,000** in census-directed funds coming to Texas because of Hidalgo County's LUCA efforts.



Source: Texas Census Institute (2024) and U.S. Census Bureau (2020).

*Does not including Federal Medical Assistance Percentage-driven funding (such as Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP, and adoption assistance) and COVID-related funding

New Mexico Tribal Areas

- ❑ In the Pueblo Tribal Areas of New Mexico, whole swaths would not have been counted in the 2020 Census, were it not for the efforts of the state, working in concert with locally-informed tribal members.

- ❑ Tribal Areas have a long history of undercount for reasons that include
 - Non-standard addressing
 - Field work limitations
 - Language and cultural barriers
 - Distrust of federal government



Acoma Pueblo, New Mexico

Source: https://www.flickr.com/photos/rock_creek/2965844074/in/photostream/

New Mexico Tribal Areas

- ❑ Funding was provided from a collection of New Mexico Foundations and from the State Legislature.



- ❑ State Demographer conducted in-office evaluation of address data and aerial imagery
- ❑ Tribal representatives worked hand-in-hand with the state demographer to provide invaluable information on difficult to identify and locate housing.

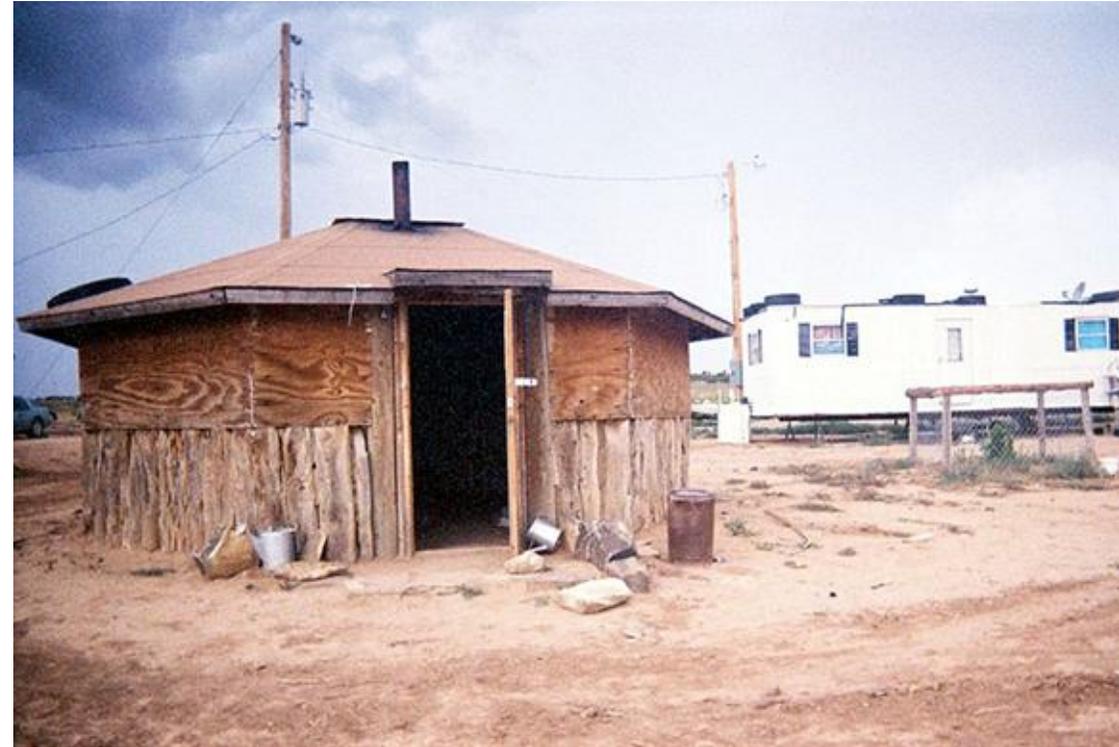
Taos Pueblo
Source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/edgnerre/2853819318>

New Mexico Tribal Areas

In one community, more than one-in-ten housing units counted in the 2020 Census were the result of the state's LUCA submission, a success that was impossible for any group to achieve on their own.

Recipe for LUCA Success:

Funding from the state and local foundations
+ **Local knowledge** from Tribal Representatives
+ **Technical Expertise** from State Demographer
= **Impactful LUCA submission** for several tribal areas.



Navajo Hogan

Source:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Navajo_Nation,_Az_Hwy_160_8-2008_%285946900627%29.jpg

Even Relatively New Communities with Uniform Housing Can Be Missed

- Fast growing and recently-developed communities are frequently the epitome of uniform development and standardized address systems.
- While many of these new and fast-growing areas of the nation have good addressing systems, they are not immune to address list problems, such as errors in geographic location of structures, duplication of addresses, and missing apartments.
- Thus, it is important that state, tribal, and local governments not assume address completeness but, instead, evaluate their component areas for address list problems that may be need to be rectified through a LUCA submission.

North Las Vegas, Nevada

- ❑ This study area in Clark County is part of the City of North Las Vegas, focusing on a block with no housing units in 2010 that was completely built out by 2020, requiring it to be subdivided into a series of new blocks.
- ❑ This example of addresses confirmed to be in the 2020 Census were part of an overall State of Nevada submission of some 33,000 addresses, which were either totally unknown to the Bureau or known but with incomplete geographic information that was supplied in the LUCA process.



Center of North Las Vegas Study Area looking North
Source: Google Maps Accessed March 1, 2025

North Las Vegas, Nevada

- ❑ The 2010 block in Clark County had been subdivided with new construction and a new street network.
- ❑ Of the 427 housing units enumerated in 2020, almost one-quarter or 110 units were added as a result of LUCA.
- ❑ These added units were unknown to the Census Bureau and required the creation of new records in the Census Bureau's Master Address File.



Center of North Las Vegas Study Area looking South: Note new construction continuing across the way.

Source: Google Maps Accessed March 1, 2025

Issaquah, Washington

- ❑ Issaquah is a dynamic and thriving community in the Pacific Northwest, with a dozen distinct neighborhoods.
- ❑ *Issaquah Highlands*, one such neighborhood, is an Urban Village, with the first residents moving into their homes in 1998.
- ❑ Local city government staff leveraged their GIS resources and local planning data to identify address list issues.



Photo Credit: City of Issaquah Communications

Issaquah, Washington

- ❑ Close to 600 additional housing units were enumerated in the 2020 Census as a result of LUCA in *Issaquah Highlands*. This amounted to almost 17 percent of the approximately 4,000 housing units counted there in the 2020 Census.
- ❑ Most of the housing units omitted from the Census Bureau's initial LUCA list were known to the Bureau, but lacked adequate geographic detail for inclusion in the census.



Photo Credit: City of Issaquah Communications

Additional Information

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2030 Census Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA)

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LUCA PROJECT MANAGER
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

2030 Census Concept of Operations Overview



**ESTABLISH
WHERE TO
COUNT**

*Identify all addresses
where people could live*



**COUNT
THE
POPULATION**



**PROVIDE
CENSUS
RESULTS**

Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Operation

The Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) operation is a partnership program established by Congress through the enactment of [Public Law 103-430](#) (The Census Address List Improvement Act of 1994).

[2030](#) [2020](#)

2030

- [2030 Census LUCA](#)
- [What is LUCA?](#)
- [Why Participate](#)
- [What's New](#)
- [How To Prepare](#)
- [Important Dates](#)
- [Resources to Prepare](#)
- [Have Questions?](#)

Related Information

[LUCA Operational Assessment Report](#)

[2030 Census](#)

[2020 Census](#)

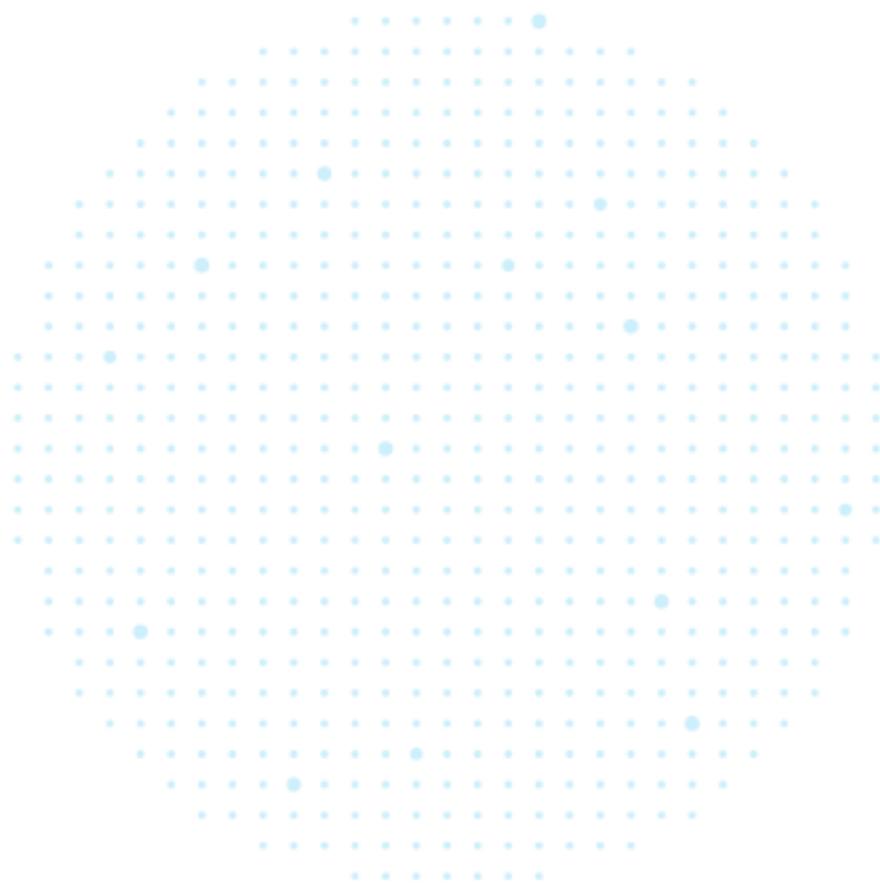
2030 LUCA Timeline

- **Prior to LUCA:** Develop and Share Address Inventory, Identify Resources
- **Early 2027 – Mid 2027:** LUCA Invitation and Training
- **Late 2027 – Early 2028:** LUCA Review
- **Early 2029:** Receive Feedback on LUCA Submissions and Option to Submit Appeals
- **Late 2029:** Closeout

Resources You Can Use to Prepare

Address Counts – map viewers and data tables

-  **Housing Unit Change Map Viewer (2020 to current)**
View address count changes between now and the 2020 Census.
-  **Current Address Counts**
Download current address counts.
-  **2020 Census Address Counts**
Download 2020 Census address counts.
-  **Current Map Viewer**
View current address counts within tabulation block boundaries.
-  **2020 Census Map Viewer**
View address counts from the 2020 Census within tabulation block boundaries.



Census Geographic Program	2030 Timeline and Description	Participants
Boundary and Annexation Survey (BAS)	Conducted annually to collect legal boundary updates, related road features, and census designated places.	Tribal, state, and general-purpose local governments
School District Review Program (SDRP)	Conducted annually to collect school district updates.	State education officials
Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA)	Conducted late 2027 – early 2028 for address review.	Tribal, state, and general-purpose local governments
Participant Statistical Areas Program (PSAP)	Conducted in 2029 to update tribal and statistical areas. Includes block groups, census tracts, census county divisions, census designated places, tribal block groups, tribal census tracts, and other tribal statistical areas.	Regional coordinating agencies or other available governments
New Construction (NC)	Conducted in late 2029 to collect additional addresses for inclusion in the 2030 Census.	Tribal, state, and general-purpose local governments
Boundary Validation Program (BVP)	Conducted early 2030 to confirm legal boundaries for reference for the 2030 Census.	Highest elected officials from tribal, state, and general-purpose local government
Redistricting Data Program (RDP)	Primarily conducted in 2026 – 2030 to collect input on and updates to the geographic areas needed for 2030 Census redistricting (e.g., census tabulation blocks, voting districts). Includes a continuous biennial collection of congressional and state legislative district boundaries.	State designated liaison
Federal State Cooperative Population Estimates (FSCPE) Address Review	Conducted in 2029 to review address data.	Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates (FSCPE) representatives

2030 LUCA Key Points

- LUCA is an opportunity to review and comment on the census address list prior to the 2030 Census.
- In advance of LUCA, governments can review address counts by block to determine if they meet expectations. This can inform what resources may be needed.
- Governments can continue to update address and parcel data and make it publicly available.
- During LUCA, reviews should focus on overall address coverage and use available data to make informed decisions regarding the need for address level reviews. This will help both Census Bureau and governments make most effective use of time and contribute to a complete and accurate address list.



Thank you for joining us today!

2030 Census National LUCA Working Group

United States Census Bureau

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International City/County Management Association



<https://www.census.gov/>



www.ncsl.org
www.nlc.org
www.naco.org
www.icma.org



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