



Jimmy H. Baker
Chancellor
P.O. Box 302130
Montgomery, AL 36130-2130
www.accs.edu

PRESS RELEASE

For more information, contact: Rachel Adams
Communications and Marketing Administrator
rachel.adams@accs.edu
(334) 293-4651

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2020 CENSUS EFFORTS KICK OFF AT ALABAMA'S COMMUNITY COLLEGES

MONTGOMERY – On Monday, Alabama's community colleges began their 2020 Census efforts with a kick off meeting and rally at the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) Office in Montgomery.

Representatives from Alabama's 24 community colleges, state officials, and U.S. Census Bureau staff joined together to launch the community college's Alabama Counts effort and coordinate ideas to get students, faculty, staff and community members involved with the 2020 Census. Last month, the ACCS was awarded an \$80,000 grant from the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) to establish help centers on ACCS colleges campuses and Adult Education sites where community members can come to fill out the census. In addition, Alabama's community colleges will conduct awareness events across the state.

"As trusted members of their communities and with locations throughout the state, Alabama's community colleges are perfect partners as we seek to make it as easy as possible for Alabamians to participate in the 2020 Census," said Kenneth Boswell, chairman of Alabama Counts! and director of ADECA. "We look forward to the success of their efforts as we seek maximum participation among all Alabamians this spring and summer."

With more than 130 locations across the state, Alabama's two-year colleges are well-positioned to assist the state with their efforts to obtain a full and accurate count in the 2020 census. Additionally, community colleges rely on federal funding to help support many of their student and community programs which are impacted by the census count. More than 60% of Alabama's community college students receive financial aid which includes Pell Grants, a federally supported aid program.

"Our colleges serve more than 174,000 students each year and when combined with our more than 9,000 employees in every corner of the state it is evident that the ACCS can have a significant impact on Alabama's 2020 census count," said ACCS Chancellor Jimmy H. Baker. "We are not only committed to ensuring that every student and employee at our colleges is counted – community is in our name and it's important that we help educate Alabamians in communities across the state on the importance of the census and provide avenues that assist with completion."

Every community college in Alabama has a designated census contact and will be rolling out plans in the coming months to help spread awareness and census completion in the communities they serve. To connect with a college near you about the 2020 Census visit accs.edu/census.

Alabama risks losing at least one congressional seat and billions of dollars in federal funding, including funding that supports education, if census participation is not at or above 80 percent.

Anyone living in Alabama on March 13 is asked to complete the census. For the first time, individuals will be able to respond online, by phone or by mail. Letters encouraging residents to complete the census should be mailed between March 12 and 20.

The official census opens for completion April 1, which is "Alabama Census Day." For more information visit census.alabama.gov. You can also sign-up to receive reminders and additional information on the Alabama 2020 Census via text message. To do so, text COUNT or CENSO to (205)304-5505.

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PHOTOS ATTACHED: (1) Alabama Possible Executive Director Kristina Scott and ACCS Executive Director of Research, Grants, and Development Dr. Vicky Ohlson encourage Alabamians to be counted at the ACCS 2020 kick-off on Monday in Montgomery. (2) Alabama community college employees join with state officials to kick-off the system's 2020 census efforts in Montgomery on Monday.

About ACCS

With 24 community colleges in more than 130 locations, the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) is Alabama's gateway to first-class, affordable education and technical training to compete in a constantly evolving workforce. More than 174,000 Alabamians benefit from the various certification, credential, dual enrollment and degree programs ACCS offers alongside leading industry partners. The System includes the Alabama Technology Network, which provides extensive training and service offerings directly to business and industry. ACCS is governed by the Alabama Community College System Board of Trustees.