



**City of Lawton
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LAWTON – To ensure adequate funding for the Lawton community, as determined by the Census count every 10 years, the City of Lawton and partner agencies will be hosting Lawton Census Week Aug. 30 through Sept. 5.

During this week, there will be multiple community stations set up for in-person Census taking. After completing the Census, individuals can enter a drawing for a chance to win prizes, such as grocery cards, gift cards, gas cards, gift baskets, a flat screen TV and more. Locations include City Hall, Shoemaker Center, United Way of Southwest Oklahoma and the UPS Store. See a full schedule here:

lawtonok.gov/sites/default/files/publications/2020-08/COL%20Census%20Week%20Schedule%20-%20Poster.pdf

To wrap up the week, citizens can enjoy a free Census Celebration from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sept. 5 at the Owens Multipurpose Center, 1405 SW 11th. The celebration will include a hot dog cookout, friendly competitions, prizes and meet and greets from public safety departments.

The Census determines levels of funding for more than 125 federal programs in communities each year. Some of these programs include student pell grants, highway projects, nutritional programs, child welfare services, mental health services, domestic violence assistance, housing and adult care services. According to the City of Lawton's Community Relations Director Tiffany Martinez Vrska, without an accurate count, the Lawton community may be well underfunded for the next 10 years.

"It is vital to our community that everyone be counted during the 2020 Census," Vrska said. "Many of our citizens rely on services that are funded based on Census data. Incoming businesses also view this data in determining whether or not they would like to set up shop in our community. If we want to see Lawton grow and if we want to take care of our citizens, then everyone must be counted."

Vrska added that the Lawton Census Week will not only provide citizens with multiple opportunities to complete their 2020 Census, but also the opportunity to change the future of their community.

"Your neighbors need you now more than ever," Vrska said. "Completing your 2020 Census is the easiest way to lend a helping hand to not only benefit our community now, but for the next decade."

Citizens are advised to self-respond by Sept. 30. All information given is confidential. As of Aug. 19, Lawton had a 54.5 percent response rate, lagging behind the State (58.5 percent), County (55.9 percent) and National (64 percent) response rates.

Visit lawtonok.gov/programs/lawton-census-week-aug-30-sept-5-2020 or call 580-581-3301 to learn more.

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