

COUNTY EXTENSION COMPUTER PROTOCOL FOR US CENSUS ASSISTANCE

There will be many rural residents that do not have access to an appropriate computer link to respond to the US Census. As a Census Partner, OCES has agreed in some rural counties to make a dedicated computer available. What follows is the official protocol developed by the DASNR IT Manager.

Dr. Sanders is leading an Extension effort to educate rural Oklahomans about the importance of completing the US census survey. One obstacle for rural Oklahoma is the availability of technology, including a computer with an internet connection. County extension offices may be able to remediate this problem by providing an internet-connected computer for use as a public terminal. Before this happens, a protocol and environment should be developed in the county office to minimize potential issues:

- ∨ The computer should be in an open area. While protecting the confidentiality of the survey taker, the computer should not be placed in an area where staff cannot see the computer and monitor its use.
- ∨ It is advised to use a wired keyboard and mouse to prevent a user from taking the hardware.
- ∨ A printed sheet (notebook) may be needed that allows for a log of who used the computer along with the date and time (check in and check out). A time limit may help to keep people from overusing the computer.
- ∨ USB thumb drives are not needed for the census survey and should not be inserted to the computer.
- ∨ A user account should be created on the computer with minimal permissions; specifically, the account must not have the ability to install programs.
- ∨ Remove and uninstall all unnecessary software including Microsoft Office. Only use desktop icons and startup icons of necessary applications; remove all other icons and shortcuts.
- ∨ Install and make available only one internet browser (Microsoft Edge, Google Chrome, or Firefox).
- ∨ Change the browser's settings to automatically delete activity and browsing history upon exit.
- ∨ If a printer is needed, directly connect a printer to the machine; if possible, do not use a network printer.

When the project is completed and the computer is placed back into circulation for use with another project or by extension personnel, the computer's operating system (Windows 10) should be refreshed to delete all previous instances and profiles. This is best accomplished by an Extension Technology Specialist.

If census employees are using their own equipment from within the county office, a couple items to consider:

- ∨ Use of wireless internet should be restricted to the "OSUGuest" or a similar WiFi network. This helps to secure the network which is also used by county extension personnel.
- ∨ Printing to a network printer is discouraged.
- ∨ Do not allow a USB thumb drive, CD, or DVD to be inserted into an extension employee's computer that was previously used in the census surveyor's computer.

If you have questions about any of these items, please contact an [Extension Technology Specialist](#) in DASNR Information Technology or Dwayne Hunter at dwayne.hunter@okstate.edu.