

WHY THE 2020 CENSUS MATTERS TO TEXANS



What is the Census?

Every 10 years, the United States Census Bureau carries out a constitutionally mandated count, or Census, of the nation's residents. The Census is supposed to count *everyone* living in the United States to determine representation in Congress as well as the amount of federal dollars dispersed in any given location for health care, housing, education, transportation, and more.

Why should we care about an accurate Census?



OUR VOICE

The Census shows how many people live in an area, which determines the number of representatives Texans have in Congress and the number of electoral votes Texas has in presidential elections.



OUR SERVICES

Much of our federal tax money that we send to Washington comes back to Texas in accordance with Census calculations, and supports housing, transportation and other services we use.



OUR BUSINESSES

Companies use population and demographic data from the Census to determine where to set up shop and expand, creating jobs and generating opportunities for Texans.

There are some concerns about who doesn't get counted.

Every time there is a Census, it can be logistically challenging to count everyone. Very young children, immigrants, people who don't have a permanent address, people who live in rural areas, and people of color are often harder to count. Hard-to-count people may move residences more often and may face language barriers. Census surveys over the internet may also not pick up lower-income residents without internet access. It has always been a major challenge to get an accurate, full count of Texas' large and diverse population, and that challenge could be even larger in 2020 because of changes to the questionnaire and execution of the Census.

If we undercount Texas residents, then we could have:

1. Less representation in Washington than we deserve
2. Less federal funding for transportation, health care and other critical services
3. Businesses that can't rely on the best information about our communities

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Why the addition of a citizenship question could make the undercount in 2020 even worse.

In addition to the challenges that have always faced the decennial Census, the 2020 Census has been underfunded, leading to a lack of testing critical for accuracy, especially with the online Census option. The Census Bureau's decision for 2020 to add a question about people's U.S. citizenship status could worsen the undercount challenges that already exist, particularly for immigrants of all statuses and their families.

Texas is home to many families with mixed immigration statuses, and fears of discrimination might discourage even U.S. citizens in a mixed status household from responding to the Census. Even though information gathered in the Census cannot legally be shared with other government agencies, current anti-immigrant rhetoric and policies could lead immigrants and their families not to participate in the Census.

The controversial citizenship question has been described as a scare tactic aimed at Latino immigrants, but its effects could be more widespread, creating a much larger Census undercount. This would be especially disastrous for Texans. Communities would be deprived of critical information and funding necessary to respond to the needs of our growing state. The state could also lose out on representation in Washington, since the Census determines the number of seats in Congress.

How much money could Texas lose?

Billions of dollars in federal aid depend on the accuracy of the Census, including significant support for health care, housing, transportation, food and more. Being undercounted by even one percent could result in a significant loss in federal funding for Texas – \$300 million a year. That's how much less federal money Texas

could get, and how much more in state taxes would be needed to make up the difference, for Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, foster/adoption care, and child care.

Concerned Texans have filed many lawsuits to keep the citizenship question off the 2020 Census, and several Congressional bills would prohibit its inclusion. But regardless of whether those efforts are successful, community leaders are forging ahead with local outreach campaigns that explain why it's in the interest of all Texans to ensure a fair and accurate Census count.

What can Texans do to help ensure an accurate Census?

- Learn about Texas' "hard to count" communities and encourage state and local leaders to begin reaching out to them now. Visit www.censushardtocountmaps.us to find areas of Texas that are the hardest to count. Targeting outreach to these hard-to-count areas and populations could help ensure a fair and accurate Census.
- Encourage your city and county officials to work with library systems, schools, and other locations that might be helpful in encouraging residents to participate in the Census.
- Call your members of Congress and encourage them to maximize the Census Bureau's capacity. Federal lawmakers should fully fund the Census outreach effort, and the Administration needs to appoint a qualified and permanent director to lead the agency.
- Follow our work and that of [The Census Project](#) to keep up with the latest on the 2020 Census.