

WHY THE 2020 CENSUS MATTERS TO TEXANS



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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 each state 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 how many electoral votes we have in presidential elections. Experts say Texas could gain up to three new congressional seats after the 2020 Census.



OUR QUALITY OF LIFE

Much of the federal tax money we send to D.C. comes back to Texas based on Census numbers. Texas receives billions each year to support housing, transportation, and other services. If Texans are undercounted, the state may have to pick up the tab for critical programs or eliminate services altogether.



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. Without accurate data, businesses cannot make the best decisions for growth, which could stifle our economy.

What's at Stake?

An undercount could cost Texas the representation and resources we deserve. Even an undercount of one percent in 2020 could result in a **significant loss in federal funding for Texas — at least \$300 million a year over the next decade.**¹ This conservative estimate demonstrates the financial burden that could fall to our state over the next decade without a full and accurate count.

Texas communities have been historically undercounted.

In 2010, significant undercounts occurred across Texas, including in portions of:

- Large metropolitan areas
- College towns
- Rural counties
- Communities along the Texas/Mexico border

Texas is at risk of an even larger undercount in 2020.

Today, 25 percent of Texans (over 6 million people) live in hard-to-count neighborhoods, where past self-response rates have been relatively low.² Very young children, immigrants, people who live in rural areas, and people of color are often harder to count. To learn more, visit [censushardtocountmaps2020.us](https://www.census.gov/hardto-count-maps-2020). Read CPPP's latest brief, "Why are Texans Hard to Count?"

Challenges Facing the 2020 Census

The 2020 Census faces unique challenges, including the underfunding of the Census Bureau, the first-ever online version of the Census, and the chilling effect of the now defeated efforts to add a citizenship status question.

- Lack of funds forced the Census Bureau to cancel important tests meant to improve response rates, efficiency, and accuracy of the questionnaire.
- For the first time, the Census Bureau will invite nearly all Texas residents to respond online. But **1 in 4** rural residents lacks access to broadband internet at home,³ and fears of cybersecurity threats could amplify people's concerns about privacy. *Mail-in and phone response options will still be available, but the burden falls on residents to request them.*
- **The citizenship question will not be on the 2020 Census:** the Supreme Court rejected the rationale for its addition, and the Executive branch will no longer pursue it. But the damage has been done. The question has intensified a lingering climate of fear, one that may discourage immigrant households—even ones with mixed status or legal permanent residents—from participating in the Census. This will hit states like Texas particularly hard, where about **17 percent** of the population (4,622,395 people) is foreign-born.⁴

1 Reamer, A. (2018). Counting for Dollars 2020 Report #2. GW Institute of Public Policy. <https://bit.ly/2pJmgkr>

2 Romalewski, Steven & O'Hare, William. Center for Urban Research, CUNY Graduate Center, analysis of U.S. Census Bureau, 2012–16 American Community Survey.

3 Connected Nation. Rural Broadband: A Texas Tour. https://connectednation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/The-Future-of-Rural-Texas-2018_5-Rural-Broadband.pdf

4 U.S. Census Bureau. (2018) Quick Facts. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/TX>

5 Waxman, S. (2019). States Still Have Time to Support the 2020 Census. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. bit.ly/2OwOkHH

GETTING PEOPLE COUNTED



Establish or participate in a Complete Count Committee (CCC). A CCC is composed of government and community leaders from education, business, faith, health care, and other community organizations. These leaders help implement awareness campaigns to increase response rates for the 2020 Census.

- » **State level:** 37 states plus D.C. have established official state-wide CCCs.⁵ Texas is not among them. Governor Abbott could form a statewide CCC through an executive order.
- » **Local level:** Localities can establish their own CCCs to spearhead a complete count effort for their city, county, school district, or college. [Read "What Localities Can Do" >>](#)



Allocate funding for a robust outreach strategy to target hard-to-count populations. 16 states have allocated funding to increase Census participation.⁵



Connect with the Texas Counts Campaign. This unofficial campaign is working across the state to engage cross-sector leaders and organizations to leverage, amplify, and share resources to promote the 2020 Census. [Visit bit.ly/TexasCountsInfo >>](http://bit.ly/TexasCountsInfo)

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CPPP is an independent public policy organization that uses research, analysis and advocacy to promote solutions that enable Texans of all backgrounds to reach their full potential. Learn more at CPPP.org.