



2020 Census: Ensuring a Complete & Accurate Count in Missouri

Why Should the Census Matter to You?

The Constitution requires the federal government to collect census data every 10 years. The census provides an official count of the United States' population and information about important demographic changes over a 10-year period. Population amounts are used to ensure states are being fairly represented, both in the allotment of federal dollars and in the number of congressional districts. The data collected helps to determine the distribution of federal funding to states for numerous programs aimed at helping underserved communities. These federal funds make up large portions of state budgets, with the majority of the dollars going toward programs such as Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and the Highway Planning and Construction Program. The census is also used to guide decision making by federal, state, and local governments, philanthropy, and businesses in determining where resources should be directed and how efforts should be evaluated.



This information adapted from Counting for Dollars®, and does not include all federal program dollars.

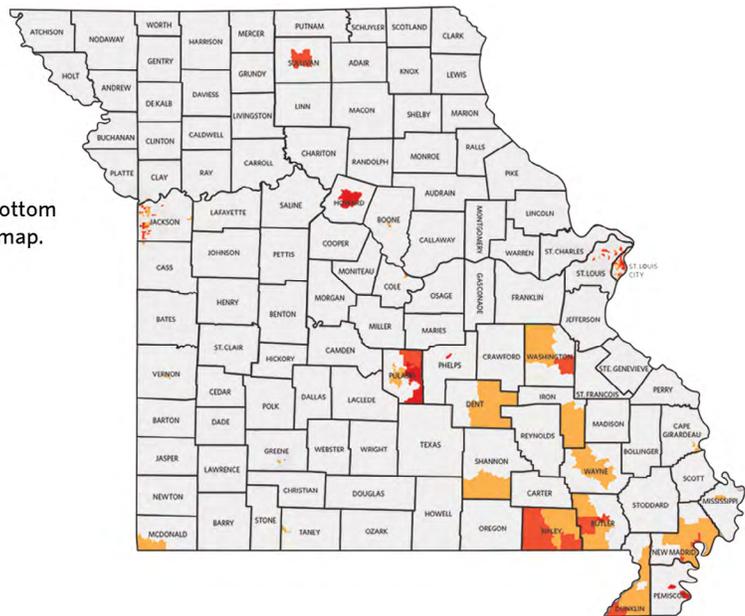
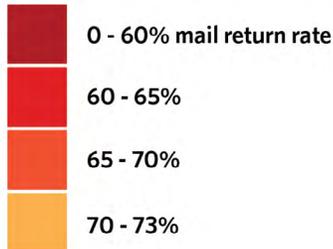
New Challenges in 2020

The 2020 Census faces several challenges that could prevent an accurate and complete count. This will be the first time the Census Bureau will use the internet as a primary response method. This transition creates significant barriers for already hard-to-count populations, including both rural and low-income communities that do not have access to broadband or internet services. Moreover, federal funding for Census Bureau activities is far lower than recommended for a successful count.ⁱ Without an adequate budget, the Census Bureau is unable to appropriately plan, develop outreach strategies, or complete sufficient testing to support a comprehensive count. Lack of funding has resulted in the cancellation of website testing in three locations, leaving only one completed site test in Providence, Rhode Island before the Census 2020 launch.ⁱⁱ Another issue impacting the success of the 2020 Census is the possible addition of the citizenship question on the census form. The inclusion of this question has sparked much debate, but experts are concerned that it will ultimately lead to reluctance and reduced participation from communities who are fearful of how this information could be used.



Missouri's Hard-to-Count (HTC) Map^v

Tracts with 2010 mail return rates of 73% or less (in the bottom 20 percent of return rates nationwide) are shaded on the map. Tracts with >73% return rate are not displayed.



Impact on Missouri

Low participation in the 2020 Census could have substantial negative consequences for Missouri. The 2010 census showed Missouri’s population was not keeping pace with that of other states. As a result, Missouri lost a congressional seat and hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding. Missouri receives approximately \$11.2 billion annually in federal funds, which are directly calculated from census data.ⁱⁱⁱ In fact, for every person undercounted, Missouri forfeits an estimated \$1,272 in federal dollars.^{iv} Achieving a complete count will already be a challenge for many areas across Missouri, with 9 percent of the population living in hard-to-count communities during the 2010 census. Households most at risk of being undercounted include those who are low-income, renters, people of color, young children, and immigrants. The new online platform also presents hardships for the roughly 20 percent of Missouri households that lack access to broadband and may face issues with submitting an online census form.^v A complete count in the 2020 Census will be imperative to ensuring that Missouri gets its fair share of resources. While the 2020 Census seems like a future concern, private and public entities must now prioritize efforts to get out the count.

If you are interested in learning more about the Census and how to get involved, please contact us at (314) 345-5571.

Endnotes

ⁱ Shapiro. (2017). “The 2020 Census may be wildly inaccurate – and it matters more than you think”, Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2017/08/31/the-2020-census-may-be-wildly-inaccurate-and-it-matters-more-than-you-think/>.

ⁱⁱ O’Hare. (2017). “2020 Census Faces Challenges in Rural America.” University of New Hampshire Carsey Research, National Issue Brief #131. <https://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1329&context=carsey>. <https://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1329&context=carsey>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Reamer, et al. (2017). “Counting for Dollars 2020: Missouri.” George Washington Institute of Public Policy <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/Missouri%20CFD%2008-18-17.pdf>

^{iv} Reamer. (2018). “Counting for Dollars 2020: The role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds. Report #2 Estimating Fiscal Costs of a Census Undercount to States.”, George Washington Institute of Public Policy. <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/GWIPP%20Reamer%20Fiscal%20Impacts%20of%20Census%20Undercount%20on%20FMAP-based%20Programs%2003-19-18.pdf>

^v Census Hard to Count Maps 2020, Missouri, <https://www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us/>.