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Tighter Census Bureau Deadline Delivers Blow to Communities with Hard-to-Count Populations

**With Changes and Action,
We Are Capable of Getting a Complete Census Count**

Statement by Dr. Bricio Vasquez, IDRA demographer and education data scientist. Dr. Vasquez serves as the Texas Counts education subcommittee co-chair.

(San Antonio * August 19, 2020) - The U.S. Census Bureau's sudden decision to cut short its population counting window jeopardizes the future of millions of youth. The Census Bureau has always had a problem with undercounting marginalized populations, which impacts distribution of critical education dollars and political representation. The 2020 Census had the added burden of operating in the midst of a pandemic.



By eliminating a whole month of counting as schools reopen, an undercount of crisis levels is practically certain.

The census has counted only 63.8% of U.S. households. The count rate has stagnated this summer. In mid-May the national rate was 59.5%.

This year, the census is complicated by COVID-19 and the Department of Commerce's racist questions and timelines.

Prior to COVID-19, the Census Bureau planned to complete counting by July 31, 2020. It then extended the deadline to October 31 due to COVID-19. Now, the Department of Commerce (the federal agency overseeing that houses the Census Bureau) asserts it can achieve a complete count by September 30 and must stop by then to deliver the counts to President Trump by the end of the year as required. The White House contends an extra month will not make a difference.

Trend data, however, show that even more time is needed coupled with expanded strategies, particularly to reach underserved areas.

Census undercounts affect marginalized populations most. These populations include young children; highly-mobile persons; Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC); non-English speakers; individuals and families with limited economic means; persons experiencing homelessness or who do not live in traditional housing; unauthorized immigrants; LGBTQ persons; and people with mental or physical disabilities.

The places across the United States with most need for funding and resources are the places with the most challenges in getting an accurate and complete census. For example, in Catron County, New Mexico 23.3% of the population lives at or below the poverty line and only 18.4% of households completed the census form. Similarly, Hidalgo County, Texas, has a poverty rate of 30.0% and a census response rate of 49.6%. And McDowell County in West Virginia has a poverty rate of 35.4% and a census response rate of 23.7%

The Stakes Are High

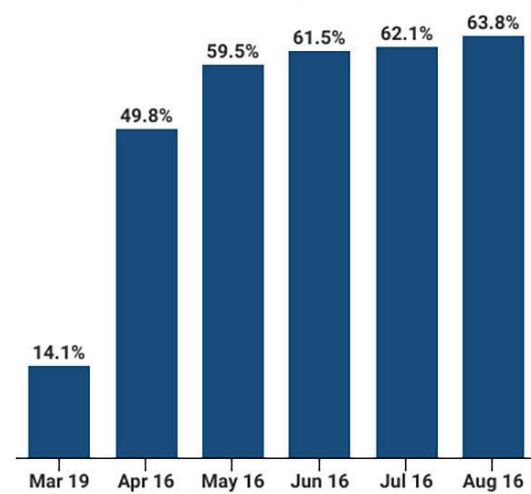
This is about more than just a number. Census data determine \$675 billion in funding for public schools and universities as well as hospitals, roads, childcare centers, senior centers and other services for families. Businesses, community leaders and local governments use census data to create jobs, ensure public safety preparedness and support community initiatives.

An undercount of children and families will not only disproportionately impact communities of color, it will also hurt the broader communities in which they live.

IDRA urges the Census Bureau to keep the deadline of October 31, 2020, to get us closer to a complete and accurate count of all people living in the United States. Congress can extend the legal deadline to deliver the results of the census past December 31.

We encourage individuals and local communities to get counted and to remind your family, friends and neighbors to complete their census at my2020census.gov or by calling **844-330-2020. You can shape the future for yourself, your family and your community for the next 10 years and beyond.**

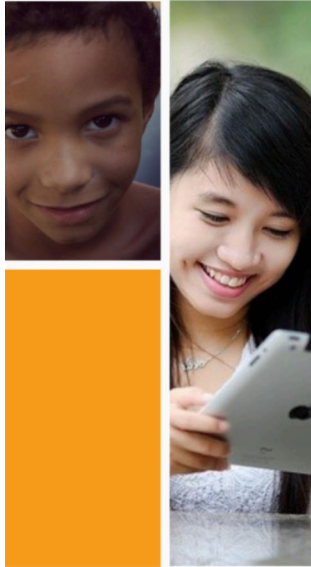
U.S. Census Response Rates



Data source: U.S. Census Bureau, August 2020
<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>

We encourage schools to launch a campaign right away to increase count rates in your communities by September 30.

Below, we provide a list of actions schools can take right away ([See PDF version](#)). [Register](#) for IDRA's webinar on August 27 for more ideas (details below).



2020Census

Show your school spirit by making sure your families are counted!

As we face this public health crisis, participating in the U.S. Census now helps secure future funding for our communities for schools, hospitals and other education and health programs we need for strong families.

Time is running out! The new deadline is September 30!

- 🎯 Post information about the new census deadline on the homepages of the school website and virtual learning platforms.
- 🎯 Ensure family support specialists are equipped with 2020 Census explainers when they do outreach to families.
- 🎯 Encourage local non-profit organizations that work with the school district to provide materials and explainers when they communicate with families.
- 🎯 Provide stickers or fliers with instructional packets, meals and other materials the school distributes to families.
- 🎯 Share information on social media to encourage families to complete the census.
- 🎯 Send reminders to families via robo-calls or text messages.
- 🎯 Talk about the census during your school orientation and meet-the-teacher events (whether in person or online).
- 🎯 Look up the data for your service area and track response rates (<https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>). Compare with others near you.
- 🎯 Ask students and families to complete an assignment together, such as watching a presentation about the census and filling it out together.
- 🎯 Offer extra credit to students who speak with their families or create materials, presentations, art, or essays about the importance of the census.
- 🎯 Organize a class phone tree for students and families to remind each other to complete the census (and to encourage continued communication throughout the school year).
- 🎯 Host a Zoom or Google Hangout to encourage families to fill out the 2020Census.
- 🎯 Organize a census caravan where residents decorate their cars with census messages and drive in procession through the community to raise awareness about the census.

See IDRA's webinar, "The Power Schools Bring to the Last Days of the 2020 Census – How Schools Can Help their Communities Get Counted," for more ideas <https://idra.news/Census>

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Free Webinar

The Power Schools Bring to the Last Days of the 2020 Census - How Schools Can Help their Communities Get Counted

Thursday, August 27, 2:00-3:00 pm CST

Due to COVID-19, the U.S. Census Bureau extended operations to October 31, 2020. But the Census Bureau suddenly announced it was rolling back operations to September 30, cutting a month of much-needed time to achieve a complete and accurate census. In this webinar, we will contextualize the 2020 Census and its timeline, discuss efforts over the past year, review completion data, and provide a toolkit for effective census outreach in the last month of operations.

[REGISTER NOW](#)

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We are committed to the IDRA valuing philosophy, respecting the knowledge and skills of the individuals we work with and build on the strengths of the students and parents in their schools.