



Maine
Philanthropy
Center

A Fair and Accurate Count of the 2020 Census

The Issue

- Advocating for a fair and accurate census count is an important equity strategy. Historically, the census has missed disproportionate numbers of racial minorities, immigrants, young children and the poor, leading to inequality in political power and in access to public funding and private investment for these communities.
- The data gathered through the census is used to determine how many seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives, informs decision makers in all sectors, is utilized in vast amount of research, and is a key factor in the distribution of billions of federal dollars.
- The participation in the 2020 Census is expected to be significantly lower for a number of reasons including: relying on the internet, concerns with cybersecurity, decreased funding to encourage participation, and the inclusion of a citizenship question. Decreased participation can lead to an unfair, inaccurate, and incomplete count.
- Many of Maine's nonprofits rely on federal funds and an under counted Maine population could negatively impact the distribution of federal funds in Maine.

What are the legal requirements of the census?

- The U.S. Constitution requires the country's population to be counted every ten years.
- Every person must be counted.

Programs Potentially Disadvantaged:

- National School Lunch program,
- Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)
- Medicaid
- Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG)
- Head Start
- Early Head Start

Background

- Maine lost \$1,642/person in FMAP (Federal Medical Assistance Percentage)-Guided program in the 2010 Census and Maine has a projected loss of \$21,809,261 in FMAP-based program funds for FY2015 due to an additional 1% undercount in the 2010 Census.
GW Institute of Public Policy, Counting for Dollars 2020, March 2018.
- Rural populations and communities of color have historically been undercounted. The 2020 Census effort started late and the Census Bureau is lacking adequate funding to conduct outreach and promotion activities. There are multiple factors creating a chilling effect in participation including cybersecurity threats, fear of government authorities, disengagement from civic life in communities hit by drug epidemics, and a last minute proposal to add an unnecessary and untested citizenship question to the 2020 Census form.

Significant Consequences

- The Census “is a critical component of a functioning and a just society. “
- Bad data will lead to inequitable distribution of the \$600 billion in federal resources that are distributed for critical needs such as education, food and income security, health care, housing, transportation, and much more. Much of this funding is complimented by foundation investments. Grantees may receive less funding negatively impacting their capacity and external influence. Future planning and decision making will be based on inaccurate data.

2020 Census Funder Tool Kit, Funders’ Committee for Civic Participation.

Opportunities for Engagement

- Communities across the country are partnering across sectors to encourage participation in the census.
- Specific communities which are at risk of being undercounted are being targeted.
- Funders are getting educated so they can better assess who among their grantees might be affected and how they might help.
- Some funders are collaborating to create joint funds to support the work.

What Can Philanthropy Do?

- Talk about the census with your staff and board and let MPC know if you are interested in getting further involved. Contact: Jenn Gray jgray@nonprofitmaine.org
- MPC is working to get a better handle on who is administering Census 2020 in Maine and learn about the budget allocated and issues at hand.
- Join the national Funders Census Initiative Working Group.
- Connect with the Participate, Convene, Invest campaign - focused on encouraging funders to engage in the 2020 Census effort.
- Share information about the census with your grantees and encourage them to get involved.
- Enlist others in your network and community to help educate the public about the importance of participating in the count.
- Use your convener power to help build momentum.

Additional Resources

- 11-26-18 Maine Philanthropy Center Webinar: [Census 2020 – Why Philanthropy Should Care?](#)
- [2020 Census Funder Tool Kit](#), Funders’ Committee for Civic Participation, May 22, 2018.
- [Funders' Committee for Civic Participation](#)
- Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR) is a membership network for the philanthropic community. GCIR offers a resource page with links to infographics, analyses, and other information relevant to to their Census 2020 initiative. [Click here to learn more.](#)
- Funders’ Committee For Civic Participation’s Funders Census Initiative works to build strong support within philanthropy for ensuring a fair and accurate decennial census count in 2020. [Click here to learn more.](#)
- Chronicle of Philanthropy, <https://www.philanthropy.com/article/Foundations-Push-Census/243356>, May 7, 2018
- Indiana Philanthropy Alliance, [Commonly Asked Questions About the New Census Citizenship Question](#), April 9, 2018