

2020 CENSUS

STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

TEXAS

August 2021

Census data determines the allocation of federal and other funds to vital social programs, guides redistricting, and informs research. Therefore, an accurate census that captures historically undercounted populations¹ is crucial for our democracy. Since 2016, a collaborative of philanthropic funders has worked to align and pool funding to build and strengthen the infrastructure needed to support a fair and accurate count.

The Democracy Funders Collaborative's Census Subgroup, which is the steering committee for the census funder collaborative, engaged ORS Impact as a partner to develop state-level reports that provide an overview of philanthropic efforts to promote the 2020 Census within and across the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. This report provides a summary of census efforts for the State of Texas based on review of secondary data, and interviews with key actors involved (n=3).

¹We have opted to use the term "historically undercounted populations" in our narrative, but the term is interchangeable with "hard to count," which we use when our informants opted to do so



OVERVIEW GOING INTO 2020 CENSUS

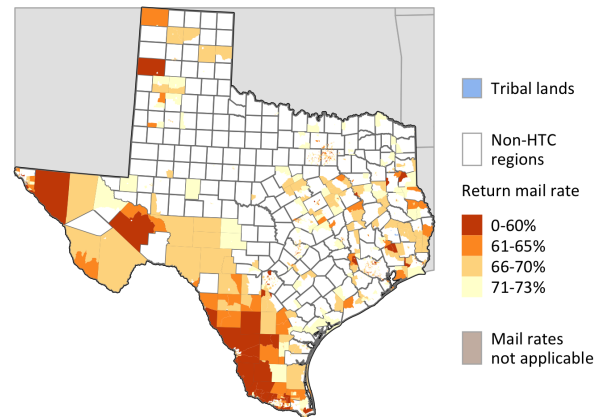
27,885,195

TOTAL POPULATION

7,145,678

TOTAL POPULATION LIVING IN HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED CENSUS TRACTS

HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED TRACTS BY COUNTY



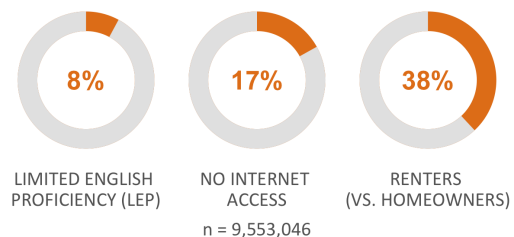
Special update/enumerate method used for counting as mail return rates are not applicable

Population

Past analyses of Census data have consistently shown differences in self-response rates based on household or individual characteristics, indicating that certain populations are at higher risk of being undercounted. The following graphs show the distribution of selected populations within the state that have historically been more likely to be undercounted. Data for all maps and graphs provided by CUNY Graduate Center via the Census 2020 Hard to Count/Response Rate map at www.CensusHardToCountMaps2020.us.

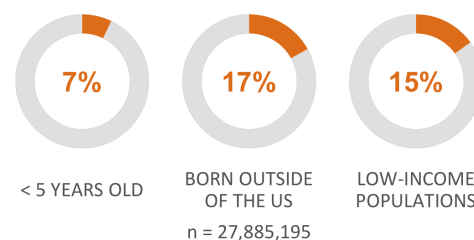
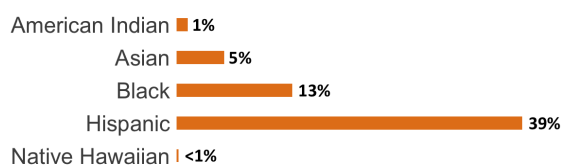
HOUSEHOLDS

Percent of total number of households in the state that have the following characteristics:



INDIVIDUALS

Percent of total number of individuals in the state that have characteristics of historically undercounted populations:

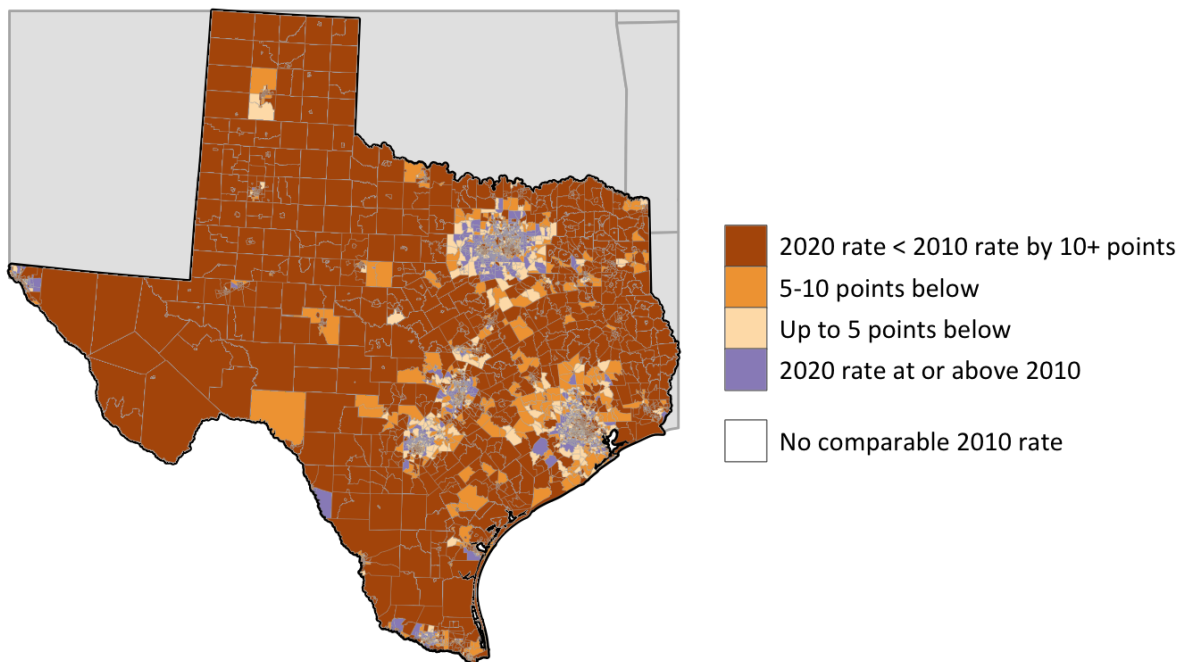




OVERVIEW OF CENSUS SELF-RESPONSE RATES

YEAR	SELF RESPONSE	CHANGE
2020	62.8%	-1.6
2010	64.4%	

CENSUS TRACTS WHERE 2020 CENSUS RETURN RATE WAS LOWER THAN 2010



STRUCTURE OF CENSUS OUTREACH

Texas is a large and diverse state with a significant number of historically undercounted populations. In the years leading up to the 2020 Census many organizations across the state were active in advocating to the legislature to form a State Complete Count Committee and allocate funding to ensure an accurate census. In contrast to many other states, the state government of Texas chose not to form a State Complete Count Committee to organize census efforts on behalf of the state. The state also chose not to allocate funding to support census outreach efforts. Recognizing the gap caused by the lack of state government involvement, coupled with the importance of the census count for the flow of federal resources, nonprofit and philanthropic groups across the state stepped in to organize census efforts.

The Communities Foundation of Texas and other partners such as Every Texan (formerly the Center for Public Policy Priorities) were among the many organizations that stepped up to develop a statewide response to the 2020 Census when the state government chose not to take action. Early on, the Communities Foundation of Texas undertook a landscape analysis to assess data from the 2010 Census to understand the distribution of historically undercounted populations. This analysis was important for planning for 2020 Census efforts and helped make the case to funders and nonprofit partners to become involved in the effort. Over time, efforts coalesced into Texas Counts, an informal statewide complete count committee consisting of the Texas Counts Campaign, a cross-sector organization supporting census outreach across Texas by providing resources, strategy, and information to Census Champions, and the Texas Counts Pooled Fund, which awarded grants to local organizations conducting census outreach in their hard-to-count communities. Texas Counts was led in partnership by the Communities Foundation of Texas and Every Texan.

Texas Counts organized its efforts regionally, creating a pooled fund to disburse resources to groups on the ground to undertake a wide range of census outreach activities. The allocation of resources by region was largely determined by the proportion of historically undercounted populations. For example, the campaign had initiatives in West Texas and the Rio Grande Valley, among many other areas. To avoid duplication of effort, the campaign tried their best to collaborate closely with other groups working on the census across the state.

Particularly in large metro areas such as Houston, Dallas, and San Antonio, local complete count committees and initiatives played vital roles in promoting the 2020 Census. For example, in the Houston area and its surrounding counties, the collective impact initiative Houston in Action was very active in promoting the census. Building on the initiative's existing infrastructure, and with support from the Houston Endowment, which was the main funder, Houston in Action became the regional hub for census activity, supporting a wide range of communications and on-the-ground activities related to the census and coordinating closely with county and city governments. The Houston Endowment also made separate investments to support work in Harris County and in the neighboring Fort Bend, Montgomery, and Galveston counties.

Although the state government was not heavily involved in census efforts, they did eventually earmark \$15 million of the funding the state received as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act to conduct census outreach. However, as this funding was not allocated until the last two weeks of the 2020 Census window, there was only very limited time for the funding to be disbursed to fund census-related efforts.

Table 1: Key actors involved in Census Efforts²:

Actor	Role
Texas Counts	Texas Counts Campaign and Texas Counts Pooled Fund organized by the Communities Foundation of Texas and Every Texan
Regional and local coalitions and initiatives	Numerous regional and local governments and coalitions that were active in supporting the census, particularly in major metro areas, including complete count committees and civic engagement initiatives such as Houston in Action

²Data reflects the Census Bureau's last update of self-response data (published in January 2021), which differs from the CUNY maps that use data from October 2020

FUNDING FOR CENSUS OUTREACH

Overall, at least \$10.8 million of funding supported census efforts in Texas.

Table 2: Funding for 2020 Census Outreach³

Funding Source and Amount	Funding Purpose
Philanthropy: \$8,245,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Communities Foundation of Texas received funding of around \$2 million from 22 philanthropic organizations to support the Texas Counts Pooled Fund. Of this, \$1.8 million went toward organizations to conduct outreach to historically undercounted groups. The national funders group the Census Equity Fund provided \$650,000 of the total funding, while the remainder came from other funders within the state. • The Houston Endowment contributed an estimated \$2,582,000 to support the census efforts of Houston in Action, as well as work in neighboring counties. • The Hogg Foundation awarded \$2.1 million to a total of 28 organizations, in amounts of between \$7,000 and \$125,000 each, to support census outreach activities that aimed to reach traditionally undercounted groups statewide. • Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation awarded \$450,000 to various organizations across the Rio Grande Valley in support of census outreach activities. • Beyond their contribution to the Texas Counts Pooled Fund, the national Census Equity Fund also contributed a total of \$1,745,000 in funding to other organizations in the state working on the census.
State Government: n/a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state eventually earmarked \$15 million of the funding Texas received as part of the CARES Act to conduct census outreach. However, as this funding was not allocated until the last two weeks of the 2020 Census window, there was only very limited time for the funding to be disbursed to fund census-related efforts.

³Funding data should be taken as estimates. We included data from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and Census Equity Fund (CEF) grants where applicable; other figures are estimates provided by key informants

County Government: \$2,582,500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some county governments contributed funds towards 2020 Census outreach efforts.
In-kind contributions: Unknown	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many organizations provided in-kind contributions of staff time to support census-related efforts.

DESCRIPTION OF 2020 CENSUS OUTREACH

While there was high-level coordination among some of the major nonprofit, local government, and philanthropic actors involved, census efforts were generally organized regionally. Around the major metro areas, regional actors such as complete count committees or other local initiatives often took the lead on census efforts. The Texas Counts Campaign and The Texas Counts Pooled Fund organized their efforts by region and sought to fill gaps and focus resources on geographic areas not being addressed by other actors in the state. Coordination among the various actors involved helped ensure there was limited duplication of effort.

Identifying organizational partners to engage with various groups across the state was key to census efforts. For example, the Texas Counts Pooled Fund identified regional partners as a means to get resources to various areas to conduct census outreach. The types of partners differed depending on the region and the infrastructure available. In some cases they partnered with local nonprofit organizations, while in others they worked with county governments, public libraries, or other local institutions that would be well positioned to engage with the community.

Groups involved in efforts in the state provided grants to local partners to undertake census work. For example, the Texas Counts Pooled Fund conducted an RFP process for groups to apply to reach historically undercounted populations in various areas of the state. Houston in Action, a collective impact initiative, also conducted a process with community involvement to decide on who should receive resources to reach various historically undercounted populations in the community.

Efforts shifted in response to COVID-19. Many of those involved had originally planned to engage via in-person events, canvassing, or other face-to-face strategies. Due to the pandemic, efforts shifted to alternative means, including social media campaigns, texting, phone banking, and many others.

LESSONS LEARNED

- The lack of involvement by the state government hampered efforts. State leadership and funding could have enhanced efforts in Texas.
- Lack of documentation from the previous census made planning difficult. Actors noted that there was limited information related to the 2010 census available, which made it hard to conduct planning. In particular, a lack of information on what the state had spent in 2010 made it hard to advocate to the legislature in 2020.
- Broad participation can enhance efforts. For example, actors involved in census efforts in Houston noted the value of cross-sector partnerships between philanthropy, local and county government, and nonprofits in running a good census campaign.

LOOKING FORWARD

Actors in the state hope that they will be able to build on the relationships established during the 2020 census to enhance future civic engagement efforts.



DATA SOURCES

Representatives from the following organizations participated in interviews and/or contributed information for this report:

- Houston Endowment
- Communities Foundation of Texas
- Educate Texas