

2020 CENSUS

WHY ARE TEXANS HARD TO COUNT?



August 2019





Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau carries out a constitutionally mandated count, or Census, of the nation's residents. The Census is supposed to count every person 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. **But not everyone gets counted.** Conducting the Census is difficult, and state like Texas are harder to count than others.

Who is hard-to-count and why?

Regions and populations with low self-response rates in past Census counts are considered "hard-to-count." Hard-to-count populations include very young children, immigrants, people of color, rural residents, people with disabilities, and low-income individuals.

Communities that are not counted accurately could lose out on political representation and critical public and private resources.

The Census often misses people if they are:

-  hard to **contact**, such as people who are homeless, move frequently, or lack a permanent address;
-  hard to **locate**, such as people who live in colonias,¹ in another person's home, or in informal housing without an address;
-  hard to **survey**, such as people with language barriers, limited literacy, or no internet access; or
-  hard to **engage**, such as people who are afraid, distrust the government, or lack the time to complete the form.

The Challenge for Texas

In Texas, approximately **25 percent** of the current population (representing over 6 million people) lives in hard-to-count neighborhoods.²

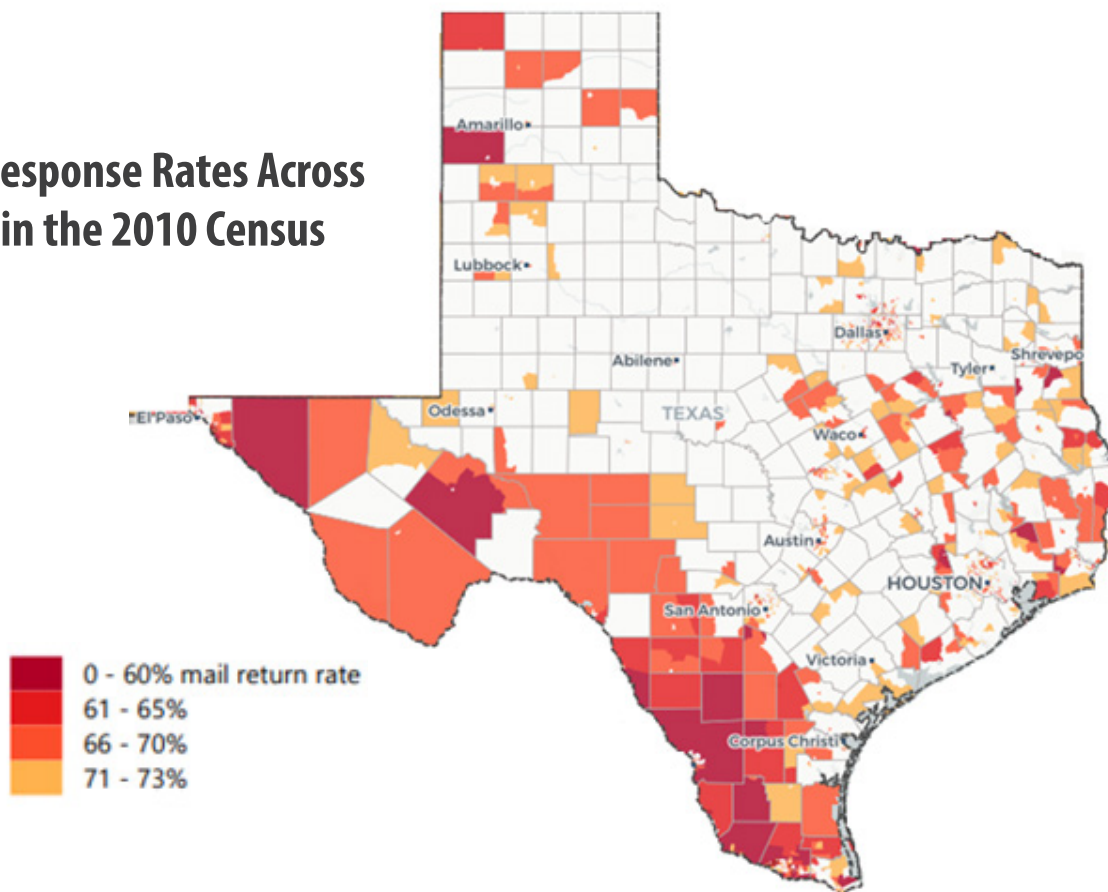
Texas is young, diverse, and living across a vast geographic area. An estimated **30 percent** of young children in the state (about 582,000 children) live in hard-to-count neighborhoods, making them at high risk of being missed.³ Additionally, the Census Bureau will invite most Texans to respond online for the first time, but about **1 in 4** rural Texans lack access to broadband internet at home.⁴ Finally, Texas is home to the second largest population of immigrants in the nation, with **17 percent** of its residents born outside the U.S.⁵ That means lingering fears around the recently-defeated efforts to add a citizenship status question will especially suppress participation in states like ours.

To put that all in perspective, an undercount of even **one percent** in Texas could result in a \$300 million loss in federal funding each year over the next decade.⁶ Experts also estimate that the state stands to gain **three** new Congressional seats, but only if everyone is counted.

This Census will be more challenging than the last. With limited funding, the Census Bureau has not adequately prepared or tested its methods for the 2020 count, including its online response form, and it will have fewer resources for outreach compared to previous years. That means Texans at the local, county, and state levels must step up to make sure our residents are counted.

Why are Texans Hard to Count?

Self-Response Rates Across Texas in the 2010 Census



What can we do to reach hard-to-count Texans?

Texas needs an accurate count to secure the representation and resources its residents deserve. Fortunately, there are many things you can do to help reach our hard-to-count communities:

- Identify hard-to-count populations: This tool shows the response rate in each Census tract, along with data on internet access and the percentage of hard-to-count groups >> censushardtocommunitymaps2020.us
- Create or participate in a [Local Complete Count Committee \(CCC\)](#): CCC's help to increase awareness and motivate residents to respond to the 2020 Census. Government, education, faith-based, media, nonprofits, philanthropy, and business leaders can work together to develop a robust 2020 Census plan that includes targeted outreach to hard-to-count populations.
- Get Out the Count: Engage hard-to-count residents through the local institutions they trust, such as places of worship, grocery stores, ethnic media, health clinics, schools, or libraries. Coordinate with these institutions to educate people about the importance of the Census and how to participate in it.

- 1 Colonias are residential communities along the U.S.-Mexico border that often lack the basic necessities for living (potable water, sewer systems, electricity, paved roads, safe housing, etc.)
- 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 Annie E. Casey Foundation. 2018 Kids Count Data Book. <https://www.aecf.org/m/resource/oc/aecf-2018kidscountdatabook-2018.pdf>
- 4 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
- 5 U.S. Census Bureau. American Community Survey 2017 1-Year Estimates, Table S0501.
- 6 Reamer, A. (2018). Counting for Dollars 2020 Report #5. GW Institute of Public Policy. <https://bit.ly/2NdRQSS>

Authored by Cassie Davis & Cindy Ji | For more information, contact Cassie Davis at davis@cphp.org or 512.823.2876.

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](https://cphp.org).