



COUNTING EVERYONE

The Ramifications of Getting it Wrong

—Chelsea Fibert, Legislative & Projects Coordinator, Wisconsin Counties Association

Once every decade, the nation comes together to participate in the decennial census. The U.S. Census Bureau undertakes the enormous task of counting everyone in the nation. This provides the basis for reapportioning congressional seats, redistricting, and distributing billions of dollars in federal funding that will support county government.

Constitutionally mandated, the first census was conducted in 1790 and there has been a census every decade since. Today, the census survey takes less than ten minutes to complete, but not completing it can cost your county. In Wisconsin, over \$1,300 in federal funding is lost for every person not counted in the census (see table to the right).

This tally includes people of all ages, races, and ethnic groups, including both citizens and non-citizens. Census data provides the basis for distributing more than \$675 billion in federal funds annually to communities across the country that support vital programs, which impacts housing,

education, transportation, employment, health care, and public policy. The data is used to redraw the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts to accurately determine the number of congressional seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Responding to the census is not only a civic duty; it affects the amount of funding your community receives, how your community plans for the future, and your representation in government. Specifically, 2020 census data are used to:

- Allocate public funds that go to building hospitals, schools, fire departments, etc.
- Plan new homes and businesses, as well as improve neighborhoods.
- Determine how many seats your state is allocated in the U.S. House of Representatives.

GETTING THE WORD OUT

Tribal, state, and local governments, community-based organizations, faith-based groups, schools,



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businesses, and the media all play a key role in developing partners to educate and motivate residents to participate in the 2020 census.

When community members are informed, they are more likely to respond to the census. One way be proactive for the 2020 census is forming a Complete Count Committee (CCC). A CCC is comprised of a broad spectrum of government and community leaders from education, business, healthcare, and other community organizations. To encourage responses, these trusted community voices develop and implement a 2020 census awareness campaign based on their local knowledge of the community.

Some examples of activities to raise awareness include:

- Holding CCC kickoff meetings with media briefings.
- Participating in census rallies or parades.
- Coordinating census unity youth forums.
- Hosting interfaith breakfasts and weekend events.
- Encouraging the use of statistics in classroom resources.
- Incorporating census information in newsletters, social media posts, podcasts, mailings, and websites.
- Helping recruit census workers when jobs become available.
- Informing the public that their responses are safe, secure, and confidential.

The primary goal of the 2020 census is to count everyone once, only once, and in the place they reside. Through the CCCs and collaborative partnerships, Wisconsin can reach the shared goal of counting EVERYONE in 2020. ♦

For additional information regarding the census or the Complete Count Committees Program, please contact Chelsea Fibert at fibert@wicounties.org or visit the <https://www.census.gov/partners/complete-count.html>.

FY2015 Fiscal Loss in Programs Per Person Missed in 2010 Census by State

Vermont	\$2,309	Montana	\$941
Pennsylvania	\$1,746	Indiana	\$929
Maine	\$1,642	Arkansas	\$909
Delaware	\$1,567	Arizona	\$887
Louisiana	\$1,372	South Carolina	\$809
Wisconsin	\$1,338	Alabama	\$755
Missouri	\$1,272	Idaho	\$721
Iowa	\$1,268	Georgia	\$708
Colorado	\$1,262	Nevada	\$628
Ohio	\$1,206	Utah	\$533
Hawaii	\$1,189	Washington*	\$39
South Dakota	\$1,179	Alaska	\$0
Oregon	\$1,169	California	\$0
Texas	\$1,161	Connecticut	\$0
Oklahoma	\$1,123	District of Columbia	\$0
New Mexico	\$1,121	Maryland	\$0
Nebraska	\$1,109	Massachusetts	\$0
Tennessee	\$1,091	Minnesota	\$0
Kansas	\$1,020	New Hampshire	\$0
West Virginia	\$1,017	New Jersey	\$0
Mississippi	\$1,014	New York	\$0
North Carolina	\$988	North Dakota	\$0
Kentucky	\$972	Rhode Island	\$0
Michigan	\$954	Virginia	\$0
Illinois*	\$953	Wyoming	\$0
Florida	\$946	* States that would reach FMAP floor of 50 with undercount.	
Note: Based on the state experiencing an additional 1% undercount in the 2010 Census. An undercount of a different magnitude would result in a slightly different loss per person missed, on the order of +/- 1-2%.			

From 'Counting for Dollars 2020' Report #2, p. 4, by Andrew Reamer, Research Professor, March 19, 2018, George Washington University Institute of Public Policy