

# MAKE WASHINGTON COUNT

*How the 2020 Census will impact Washington's communities*

## WHAT IS THE CENSUS?

Once every ten years the U.S. government counts every person living in the country. Its goal is “to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place.” It is a significant task central to our country’s democracy and well-being, and the importance of an accurate population count – including accurate data about race, gender, age, and other demographics – cannot be overstated. The 2020 Census faces a set of unique challenges that can lead to an especially high undercount, including the possible addition of a citizenship question, insufficient funding, and a shift from paper surveys to an online platform, to name a few. The stakes are high for Washington state and we must work collectively to ensure every Washingtonian is counted.

## The 2020 Census results will be used to<sup>1</sup>



Determine Washington state’s representation in Congress.



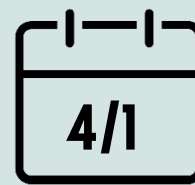
Allocate more than \$675 billion federal dollars for education, health care, housing support, and business services.



Inform economic development, housing, public safety, and other community planning efforts.



Define voting and school district boundaries.



Census Day is  
**April 1**  
2020

## Which Washingtonians are at risk of not being counted?

There are populations in Washington that are more vulnerable to an undercount, including:<sup>4</sup>

- » Communities of color
- » Kids under 5
- » Immigrants
- » People with low incomes
- » Households without internet access (since the survey will mostly be administered online)
- » Renters
- » Households with limited English proficiency
- » Single-parent households
- » Crowded households
- » People living in multi-family housing
- » Rural communities<sup>5</sup>
- » People experiencing homelessness<sup>6</sup>

## What could Washington lose?

# \$13.7 billion

Just counting 16 of the largest Census-guided federal programs, Washington state receives about \$13.7 billion a year in federal funding for programs like Medicaid, SNAP, Medicare, transportation projects, low-income housing, K-12 education, early learning, and more.<sup>2</sup> The 2020 Census is also the base for state population estimates that will determine the allocation of about \$200 million to counties and cities from the state general fund annually.<sup>3</sup>

## What can you do to make sure all our communities are being counted?



### Advocate for more resources in the state budget for Census outreach.

Census planning, preparation, and outreach are critical to ensuring all Washingtonians are counted. Help advocate for more funding in our state budget to ensure Washington's Census effort's are adequately funded.



**Encourage participation.** Spread the word about why full participation is critical for our state and communities – especially the impact it will have on our local schools, health care, emergency response, and other vital community services. For the first time in Census history, the questionnaire will be distributed online to the majority of the population instead of by paper survey.<sup>7</sup> Those who don't have online access will face an additional barrier. And while the questionnaire will be offered in multiple languages on the Census website, English proficiency is required to navigate the system or request assistance.<sup>8</sup> Reach out to historically undercounted racial and ethnic groups and other hard-to-count populations in the most appropriate channels and languages.



### Join a Complete Count Committee (CCC) to make sure everyone is counted.

CCCs, which can include government and community leaders from education, business, healthcare, and other community organizations, work to implement Census-awareness campaigns based upon their knowledge of their local communities.

*“There is too much at stake for Washington state. All indications are that the federal government’s 2020 Census efforts will not be as vigorous as previous counts, including reduced funding for outreach and community engagement efforts. **This makes it even more important that we step up at the state level.**”*

Governor Jay Inslee  
December 2017

## LEARN MORE

Washington State Office of Financial Management (OFM). OFM serves as a liaison between the state and the U.S. Census Bureau, acting as an advocate for census-related issues specific to Washington state: [ofm.wa.gov/census](http://ofm.wa.gov/census)

OFM maps of Washington state’s hard-to-count communities: <https://bit.ly/2yflLDa>

Community organizations working with OFM on reaching hard-to-count populations: <https://bit.ly/2Do3jxU>

The Census Project, a broad-based network of national, state, and local organizations that supports a fair and accurate 2020 Census: <https://thecensusproject.org/>

U.S. Census Bureau Complete Count Committees resource page: <https://bit.ly/2CN1kCr>

Washington Nonprofits video on why the census matters and what you can do to ensure an accurate count: <https://washingtonnonprofits.org/census-2020/>

Washington State Census 2020 Alliance, a statewide group of community organizations working to ensure the safe and fully informed participation of historically undercounted communities: [elsa@wacensusalliance.org](mailto:elsa@wacensusalliance.org)

Win/Win Action’s Census 2020 resource page: <http://www.winwinaction.org/programs/census/>

Each household missed in Washington state means approximately

**\$4,800**  
less

in annual per capita funding allotments to the state.<sup>9</sup>

### Sources:

<sup>1</sup> US Census Bureau. <sup>2</sup> George Washington Institute of Public Policy (2017). <sup>3</sup> Washington State Office of Financial Management (2018). <sup>4</sup> Hard-to-Count 2020. <sup>5</sup> William P. O’Hare (2017). <sup>6</sup> OFM. <sup>7</sup> Pew Research Center (2016). <sup>8</sup> The Leadership Conference Education Fund (2017). <sup>9</sup> Office of Governor Jay Inslee (2017).