



Missouri Counts: 2020 Census

What is the Census?

The census provides an official count of the United States' population and information about important demographic changes over a 10-year period. The Constitution requires the federal government to collect census data every 10 years. Population amounts are used to ensure states are being fairly represented, both in the allotment of federal dollars and in the number of congressional districts. The data collected helps to determine the distribution of federal funding to states for numerous programs aimed at helping underserved communities.

Why Should the Census Matter to You?

The 2020 Census is our chance to make sure the hard-earned tax dollars we send to Washington, D.C., make their way back to Missouri. When every adult and every child in Missouri is counted, we get more money for roads and bridges, hospitals, and schools.

The census is also used to guide decision making by federal, state, and local governments, philanthropy, and businesses in determining where resources should be directed and how efforts should be evaluated. Federal funding derived from census data make up large portions of our state budget, with the majority of the dollars going toward programs such as Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), and the Highway Planning and Construction Program. Missouri received approximately \$16.5 billion in federal funds in FY2016, which were directly calculated from census data.ⁱⁱⁱ



This information adapted from Counting for Dollars[®], and does not include all federal program dollars.

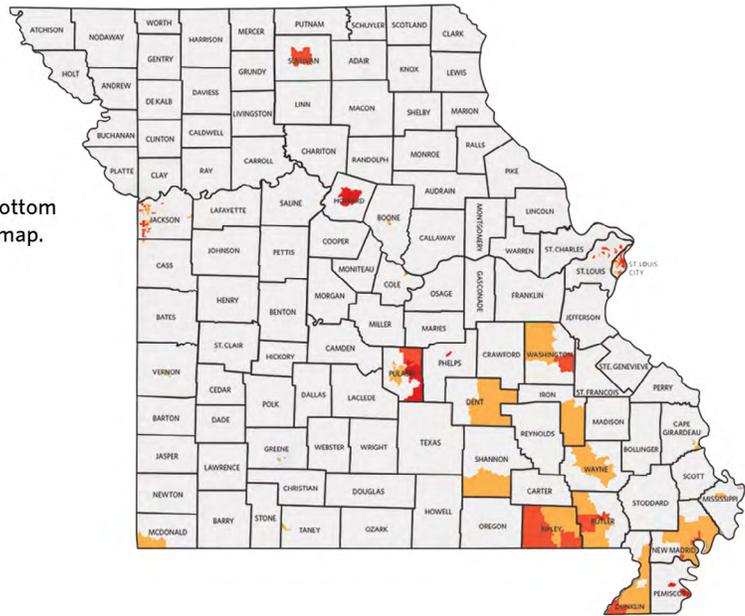
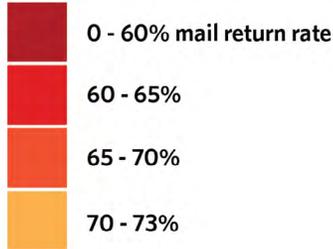
New Challenges in 2020

The 2020 Census faces several challenges that could prevent an accurate and complete count. This will be the first time the Census Bureau will use the internet as a primary response method. This transition creates significant barriers for both rural and low-income communities who do not have access to broadband or internet services and are traditionally harder-to-count. Moreover, federal funding for Census Bureau activities is far lower than recommended for a successful count.ⁱ Without an adequate budget, the Census Bureau is unable to appropriately plan, develop outreach strategies, or complete sufficient testing to support a comprehensive count. Another issue that may impact the success of the 2020 Census is the public controversy over the citizenship question. Although the question will not be added to the census form, there is still fear and reluctance from certain communities. Census advocates must work to overcome misinformation and reinforce that census participation is confidential and safe.



Missouri's Hard-to-Count (HTC) Map^v

Tracts with 2010 mail return rates of 73% or less (in the bottom 20 percent of return rates nationwide) are shaded on the map. Tracts with >73% return rate are not displayed.



Impact on Missouri

Low participation in the 2020 Census could have substantial negative consequences for Missouri. The 2010 Census showed Missouri's population was declining relative to other states. As a result, Missouri lost a congressional seat and hundreds of millions of dollars in federal funding. In fact, for every adult and every child that is not counted in the census, Missouri will lose an estimated \$1,300 in federal dollars every year.^{iv} Achieving a complete count will already be a challenge for many areas across Missouri, with 9% of the population living in hard-to-count communities during the 2010 Census. Households most at risk of being undercounted include those who are low income, renters, people of color, young children, and immigrants. The new online platform also presents hardships for the roughly 20% of Missouri households that lack access to broadband and may face issues with submitting an online census form.^v

Responding to the Census

The U.S. Census Bureau will mail postcards with instructions to every household in early March 2020. Everyone will be able to respond online at 2020Census.gov or by phone. Some households will receive a paper questionnaire with census questions by mail. This is because they may have limited internet access or older adults living in the home. The census will be available online and by phone in 13 languages, including Spanish, French, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Arabic. The paper version for mailing will be available in English and Spanish.

If you are interested in learning more about the Census and how to get involved, please contact us at (314) 345-5571.

Endnotes

ⁱ Shapiro. (2017). "The 2020 Census may be wildly inaccurate – and it matters more than you think", Brookings Institute. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/fixgov/2017/08/31/the-2020-census-may-be-wildly-inaccurate-and-it-matters-more-than-you-think/>.

ⁱⁱ O'Hare. (2017). "2020 Census Faces Challenges in Rural America." University of New Hampshire Carsey Research, National Issue Brief #131. <https://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1329&context=carsey>. <https://scholars.unh.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1329&context=carsey>.

ⁱⁱⁱ Reamer (2019). "Counting for Dollars 2020: Missouri." George Washington Institute of Public Policy. https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/IPP-1819-3%20CountingforDollars_MO.pdf.

^{iv} Reamer. (2018). "Counting for Dollars 2020: The role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds. Report #2 Estimating Fiscal Costs of a Census Undercount to States.", George Washington Institute of Public Policy. <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/GWIPP%20Reamer%20Fiscal%20Impacts%20of%20Census%20Undercount%20on%20FMAP-based%20Programs%202003-19-18.pdf>.

^v Census Hard to Count Maps 2020, Missouri, <https://www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us/>.