



A NALEO CAMPAIGN

# WASHINGTONIANS RELY UPON ACCURATE CENSUS DATA

**ACCURATE CENSUS DATA ARE KEY** for federal funding allocations to state and localities. Federal resources are divided up between jurisdictions according to what Census data tell us about various communities' demographic characteristics, needs, and assets. In order for Washington to receive its fair share, the Census Bureau must master the difficult task of accurately counting the state's dynamic, diverse population.

Historically, certain hard-to-reach populations are more difficult to count than others. Washington is home to disproportionate shares of populations that are most frequently undercounted, including Native Americans, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. The share of Washingtonians who are Native American, for example, is nearly twice the national average.



## Federal Census-directed programs that are particularly important to Washingtonians include:

### The Federal-Aid Highway Program

Washington's geographic size and rural spaces mean it has a significant number of miles of road to maintain. In FY16, thanks to Census data, Washington is expected to receive more than \$687 million in funding authorized by the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, the largest portion of it designated for maintenance of national highways and construction and repair of bridges and other highway facilities.

### Coastal Zone Management

Coastal communities accounted for 57% of the nation's economic output as of 2013, and Washington's coastal areas have also long been important to the state's economy and quality of life, providing myriad opportunities for commercial fishing and other marine trades, as well as critical habitat for wildlife and plants. Census data are used to calculate states' shares of federal Coastal Zone Management grants, which have played a significant role in Washington's efforts to manage development in ecologically vulnerable areas, preserve coastal wetlands, reduce debris in the ocean, and conduct other activities which safeguard its coastal zone.

### Housing Security for Native American Communities

Nationally, the poverty rate among Native Americans is higher than that of any other racial or ethnic group, and in Washington, the Native American poverty rate is nearly equal to the unacceptably-high national average. Census data inform the distribution of Indian Housing Block Grants, which support development of safe, affordable housing to alleviate poverty on reservations; in 2015, Washington tribes received nearly \$39 million through this program.

**When it is adequately funded, the Census Bureau produces highly accurate, detailed data that enable us to direct a total of over \$7 billion to the Washingtonian communities where those resources are most needed.**

But if the Census Bureau's hands are tied by declining appropriations or limitations that prevent it from conducting a sound decennial enumeration and accurate surveys, the quality of Census data similarly will decline, and many fewer Washingtonians will benefit from these and many other Census-directed federal programs.

We urge you to support the FY17 request of \$251.1 million for the American Community Survey and \$778 million for Census 2020 preparations. We also urge you to reject any measures that seek to make response to Census surveys voluntary instead of mandatory.