



### **What is the Census and how often is it done?**

Every 10 years, through the U.S. Census, the United States is constitutionally required to count every single person living in this country. The next Census is on April 1, 2020 – and it is critical that we get it right because we will live with the consequences for the next 10 years.

### **Who is counted in the Census?**

Everyone – all adults, all children, all immigrants – must be counted.

### **Why is it important, particularly for communities of color, to participate in the 2020 Census?**

#### *1. Federal Funding for Essential Programs that Empower our Communities Rely on Census Data.*

The Census is used to determine how much federal funding we receive for essential programs. New Jersey receives more than \$17.5 billion from the federal government.<sup>1</sup> This federal funding supports school breakfast and lunches; pre-school, after-school/child care, and summer programs; WIC, immunizations, and Maternal & Child Health; and construction of better roads and safer bridges.

New Jersey has one of the worst racial wealth gaps in the country. The median net worth for New Jersey's white families is \$309,396—the highest in America.<sup>2</sup> By stark contrast, it was only \$5,900 and \$7,020 for Black and Latino families in 2018.

This racial wealth gap will only widen if these programs are not adequately funded.

#### *2. Census Data Determine Power.*

The 2020 Census count will determine how many representatives New Jersey sends to Congress, and the number of votes we have in the Electoral College. They are also used to draw state and federal legislative districts. We now have two fewer representatives and two fewer electoral votes than we had in 1990.

#### *3. Census Data Are Used to Enforce and Protect our Civil Rights.*

Census data help to enforce civil rights laws like the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Civil Rights Act of 1964. They are used to determine whether or not an election district affords Black voters and other voters of color an equal opportunity to elect their candidates of choice.

### **So, what's the problem?**

#### *1. There is a Significant Risk of Undercounting People in "Hard to Count" Communities.*

The 2010 Census missed an estimated 16 million people, disproportionately people of color, from "hard-to-count" (HTC) areas.<sup>3</sup> HTC communities are areas where fewer than 73% of the residents returned their Census forms in 2010. Almost a quarter of New Jersey's population lives in HTC areas. People of color, low-income individuals, young children, immigrants, transient people,

and those with severe fear or distrust of the government are most likely to go uncounted. At the same time, the 2010 Census counted 36,000 people more than once, a disproportionate number of whom were white.<sup>4</sup>

New Jersey has HTC areas in 18 out of its 21 counties. There's a good chance that if we don't act now, New Jersey will be undercounted.

In the 2010 Census count, Black people were the second largest racial or ethnic group undercounted, only behind the American Indian and Alaskan Native population. As a result of undercounting, Black communities were denied access to critical resources. New Jersey is eighth in the nation for its number of African-Americans living in HTC tracts (670,018)<sup>5</sup>; and fifth in the nation for its percentage of African-Americans living in HTC tracts (51%).<sup>6</sup>

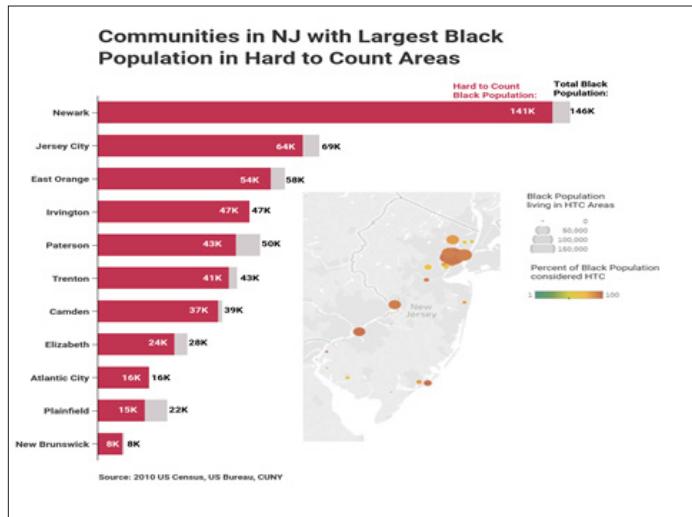
This list describes the full and final response rate of the top Black/African-American hard-to-count New Jersey cities in 2010.<sup>7</sup> The undercount was severe in certain areas.

TOP BLACK HTC MUNICIPALITIES 2010 RESPONSE RATE	
Newark	55%
Jersey City	60%
East Orange	56%
Irvington	50%
Paterson	60%
Trenton	59%
Camden	61%
Elizabeth	64%
Atlantic City	55%
Plainfield	63%
New Brunswick	56%

**Newark and Jersey City, New Jersey's two largest cities, rank first and second in the nation for their percentages of African-Americans living in HTC tracts (Newark – 96.1%, Jersey City – 92.9%), and rank third and second in the nation for their percentages of Hispanics living in HTC tracts (Newark – 93.1%, Jersey City – 93.3%).<sup>8</sup>**

These same communities often have the highest poverty rates and are most in need of essential services. Without special, intentional, and targeted outreach efforts, hundreds of thousands of our residents in communities most in need of resources will go uncounted in 2020 and for the next 10 years.

This chart shows the New Jersey cities with the highest numbers of Black residents living in HTC areas.<sup>9</sup>



## 2. There Are Two Additional Challenges: A Potential Citizenship Question and Digitization

**Citizenship Question:** Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced that, for the first time in over 50 years, the 2020 Census would ask the citizenship status of every person living in the country. This controversial citizenship question has caused a lot of concern, especially among immigrants. While federal law prohibits your personal information from being shared, even with another government agency, many are understandably still worried.

**Digitization:** 80% of households will receive postcards urging residents to complete the Census online. While this may be convenient for some people, it will present challenges to many who have limited or no Internet access, or who are uncomfortable with providing information online.

## How is the Census taken?

The Census count is based on the answers provided in the Census form sent to all residences in the United States. A postcard will be distributed and should be received by most households in March 2020 with a unique link to complete the Census form online. Residents may complete the Census on any device with Internet access. Alternatively, the Census may also be completed over the telephone, by mail, or in person by an enumerator (a Census Bureau employee who collects census information by visiting households during Census field operations). The Census will be translated into 59 languages. Participants should submit the Census form to the Census Bureau by April 1, 2020.

## Should someone who can't vote still participate in the Census?

Yes. Everyone counts and everyone's count makes a difference. Every person's participation helps their community and its children by



determining the median income level of the community. Those numbers will bring needed assistance through federal dollars back to the community in the form of public health, construction of federal roads, and school aid.

### **Are non-citizens, both documented and undocumented, counted?**

Yes. The Census counts both citizens and non-citizens, including undocumented immigrants. Historically, undocumented immigrants have been undercounted. Difficulties with the English language affect the ability of many individuals to understand and answer the Census. The potential inclusion of a controversial citizenship question also threatens to result in a significant Census undercount. Moreover, many non-citizens may be suspicious of government agencies and fear that responding to the questions in the Census may result in their deportation or incarceration by immigration and law enforcement officials.

### **Is it essential to answer the citizenship question?**

No. If a person skips a question on the Census, the Census Bureau will still accept the form even though it is incomplete. If a person skips several questions, or does not return the form, a Census enumerator will come to the residence to ask the same questions on the form.

### **Are there available jobs with the Census Bureau?**

#### *1. Is the Census Bureau hiring?*

Yes. The Census Bureau is hiring Enumerators, Census Field Supervisors/Recruiting Assistants, Office Operations Supervisors, and Office Clerks.

#### *2. Can I be considered for a Census Bureau job if I have a criminal conviction?*

Yes. Those with criminal histories can and should apply for Census 2020 positions. This is the first hiring cycle since the court-approved settlement<sup>10</sup> for \$15 million against the Census Bureau. The Census Bureau was sued for discriminatory hiring practices against people of color with criminal histories. The Census Bureau is now required

to assist applicants with correcting mistakes on criminal records and to provide advance notice for hiring. The 2020 count will require a large and diverse workforce. The Census Bureau still considers criminal history, but there are no general prohibitions on hiring.

#### *3. Will the Census Bureau hire non-citizens?*

It is unclear at this time. The Census Bureau hired non-citizen legal residents in the past through federal waivers. The Census Bureau requested waivers from the federal government for Census 2020, but has not received them. If a non-citizen legal resident applies and the waivers are received, their application status will move from "ineligible" to "eligible." Therefore, non-citizens may be hired in the future.

### **How can someone help make sure everyone is counted?**

- Encourage others to participate in the 2020 Census.
- Spread the word about the importance of the Census. Educate your community groups, community leaders, and neighbors about the census and HTC areas.
- Organize a Census Day in your community so that members of the community can fill out forms together.
- Join together with others to work as temporary Census Bureau workers to assist with the 2020 count. For more information about temporary census employment, call 1-855-JOB-2020. (Federal Relay Service: (800) 877-8339 TTY/ASCII)
- Host job fairs in partnership with the US Census Bureau.
- For attorneys, monitor Census hiring and background checks. Contact the Lawyers Committee at their Toll Free number: 888-299-5227 for more information.
- Organize or join a local Complete Count Committee (CCC), a volunteer group organized to increase awareness and motivation to complete the census.

### **Any other questions?**

For further questions related to Census 2020, please visit: <https://www.njisj.org/census2020> or email: [njcensus2020@njisj.org](mailto:njcensus2020@njisj.org).

**YOU MATTER. BE COUNTED. NJ COUNTS IN 2020.**



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> ANDREW REAMER, THE GEORGE WASHINGTON INST. OF PUB. POLICY, COUNTING FOR DOLLARS 2020: 16 LARGE FEDERAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS THAT DISTRIBUTE FUNDS ON BASIS OF DECENTNIAL CENSUS-DERIVED STATISTICS (FISCAL YEAR 2015): New Jersey 1 (2017), <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/New%20Jersey%20CFD%2008-18-17.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> RYAN HAYGOOD, DEMELZA BAER & BROOKE LEWIS, N.J. INST. FOR SOC. JUST., RECLAIMING THE AMERICAN DREAM: EXPANDING FINANCIAL SECURITY AND REDUCING THE RACIAL WEALTH GAP THROUGH MATCHED SAVINGS ACCOUNTS 4 (2019), [https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/1235/attachments/original/1554236355/Reclaiming\\_the\\_American\\_Dream\\_Digital\\_compressed.pdf?1554236355](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/njisj/pages/1235/attachments/original/1554236355/Reclaiming_the_American_Dream_Digital_compressed.pdf?1554236355).

<sup>3</sup> THOMAS MULE, U.S. DEP'T OF COMMERCE, DSSD 2010 CENSUS COVERAGE OF MEASUREMENT MEMORANDUM SERIES #2010-G-0 4-5 (2012), [https://www.census.gov/coverage\\_measurement/pdfs/g01.pdf](https://www.census.gov/coverage_measurement/pdfs/g01.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> *Id.*

<sup>5</sup> THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, TABLE 1A: STATES RANKED BY NUMBER OF AFRICAN AMERICANS (RACE ALONE OR IN COMBINATION) LIVING IN HARD-TO-COUNT (HTC) CENSUS TRACTS (2018), <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/census/2020/Table1a-States-Number-African-Americans-HTC.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, TABLE 1B: STATES RANKED BY PERCENT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS (RACE ALONE OR IN COMBINATION) LIVING IN HARD-TO-COUNT (HTC) CENSUS TRACTS (2018) <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/census/2020/Table1b-States-Percent-African-Americans-HTC.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> New Jersey 2010 Census Participation Data, *2010 Census Participation Rates*, U.S. Census Bureau, <https://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/census2010/staterates.cgi> (follow hyperlink; then go to “New Jersey” in the dropdown under “Download CSV data for:”; and click download) (last visited May 21, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> THE LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE, TABLE 2B: STATES RANKED BY PERCENT OF AFRICAN AMERICANS (RACE ALONE OR IN COMBINATION) LIVING IN HARD-TO-COUNT (HTC) CENSUS TRACTS (2018) <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/census/2020/Table2b-100-Largest-Places-Percent-African-Americans-HTC.pdf>.

<sup>9</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 decennial census and 2016 American Community Survey Estimates, with assistance from the CUNY Mapping Service, Center for Urban research, CUNY Graduate Center.

<sup>10</sup> Patrick Dorrian, *Census Bureau’s \$15M Hiring Bias Settlement OK’d*, BNA’s Labor & Emp’t (BNA) (Sept. 23, 2016).

