

# CHALLENGES IN ACHIEVING AN ACCURATE CENSUS COUNT IN MASSACHUSETTS IN 2020

\$16 billion in annual funding for vital programs in Massachusetts depend on an accurate count in the decennial census. Census counts directly determine funding for state programs totaling \$1.2 billion. The Census doesn't count all population groups equally well, skewing the distribution of resources and representation. Massachusetts faces major challenges to achieving equity, and Boston has the second highest number of "Hard to Count" precincts in the country.

## "Hard to Count" groups (under 20% return rate) include:

- People of color (especially men, ages 18–49)
- Low income households, rural and urban (renters)
- Young children (ages 0–4), especially Black and Latino children
- Limited English Proficiency and foreign-born households
- Single, female-headed households
- Young adult mobiles

## New Challenges to Overcome for an Accurate Count in 2020

- The first high-tech census will use a new IT system that is already over budget and behind schedule, raises cyber security concerns, and could to worsen the digital divide.
- The possible inclusion of an untested citizenship question heightens the climate of fear and threatens participation in many immigrant communities.
- The Census Bureau has fewer resources for its field operation compared with 2010.

## Changes since 2010

### 2010

- Census forms mailed out and mailed back
- 100% in the field census count
- Paper-based follow-up
- In-person supervision and Census forms checked-in & scanned
- Visit every non-responding address up to 6 times. If unsuccessful, use "proxy" data from neighbors/landlords
- 12 Regional Census Centers, 506 Local Census Offices, \$550K+ census field staff

### 2020

- Primary response via Internet
- 30% in-field address canvasses supplemented with address list & map updates using government & commercial databases, GIS, etc.
- Automated field work (e.g. tablets)
- "Virtual" training of Census Bureau staff; remote supervision
- Cloud data transmission & storage
- Use administrative records to replace some or most door-to-door visits, no visit to vacant units
- 6 Regional Census Centers (none west of Worcester), 248 Area Census Offices, \$300K-\$450K census field staff



# WHY THE COUNT COUNTS: THE \$16 BILLION CASE FOR AN ACCURATE CENSUS COUNT IN MASSACHUSETTS IN 2020

The decennial Census counts for much more than a tally of every resident of the country. The Census impacts \$16 billion in funding for our commonwealth and directly accounts for \$1.2 billion in funding for vital programs in Massachusetts.

**We can feel the impacts of a Census undercount for a decade.** If a Census count is wrong, population estimates and research statistics could be off; the pictures we paint of our communities could be distorted; and our state could miss out on billions of dollars in federal funding. These federal funds address health and well-being and help ensure that Massachusetts' children grow up in well-resourced communities.

The list below identifies some of the larger sources of federal funding directly affected in Massachusetts by population counts. For details, see Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center, "Why the Count Counts: Major Sources of Federal Funding for Massachusetts Affected by Census Counts."

## ALLOTMENTS DIRECTLY AFFECTED BY CENSUS POPULATION COUNTS

- Special Education Grants to States: SFY 2019: \$290.9M
- Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies: SFY 2019: \$244.4M
- Head Start/Early Head Start: FFY 2017: \$156.5M
- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC): SFY 2019: \$79.0M
- Child Care Development Fund Mandatory and Matching Fund – Entitlement: SFY 2019: \$75.5M
- Child Care Development Block Grant – Discretionary: SFY 2019: \$35.3M
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program: SFY 2019: \$47.4M
- Social Services Block Grant: SFY 2019: \$33.2M
- Community Development Block Grant—Entitlement and Non-Entitlement: FFY 2017: \$31.2M (Entitlement grants); FFY 2017: \$29.8M (Non-entitlement grants)

## ALLOTMENTS PARTLY OR INDIRECTLY AFFECTED BY CENSUS POPULATION COUNTS

- Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP): SFY 2019: \$600.5M (a portion of this total)
- Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP): SFY 2019: \$136.5M

