The 2020 Census

The census is a constitutionally required, once-a-decade count of every person living in the United States and has a fundamental role in our democracy. The census is critical to our democracy for three primary reasons:

1. Census data are used to reapportion seats in the US House of Representatives, and to draw state and local legislative districts, ensuring fair political representation.

2. Census data are used to allocate over $800 billion nationally in federal programs and resources.

3. Elected officials, businesses and other decision-makers use census data to make critical economic decisions and to inform public policy solutions.

Washington Count Risk Factors	
Total Population	7,073,146
Population in HTC areas	789,071
Percentage in HTC areas	11%
Population in Tracts NOT receiving census by mail	53,267
Percentage households NO internet/ dial-up only	12.6%

To achieve its constitutional mandate, the census must be fair and accurate or risk undermining this indispensible population data for the next 10 years.
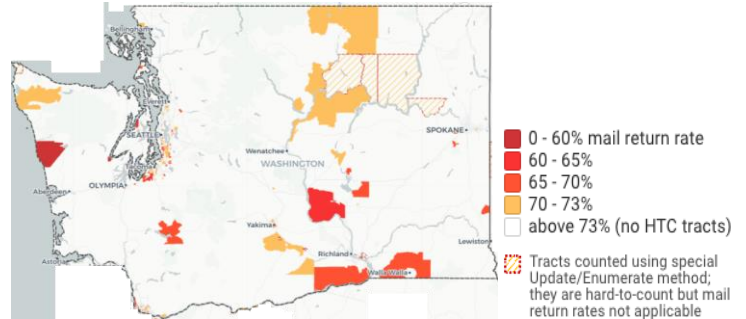
Threats of an Undercount

Unfortunately, the 2020 Census is facing unprecedented challenges that heighten the risk that the census will fail to count every person living in the US.

> In 2010, a 1 percent undercount would have missed 67,245 people in Washington, losing the state $2,614,278 from census-derived federal programs.

1. **Unequal Representation:** In 2010, an accurate count gained Washington one congressional seat. However, the 2020 census is at risk of undercounting hard-to-count (HTC) communities, putting the state's representation at risk.

2. **Reduced Funding:** In 2015, Washington received approximately $13.7 billion from federal programs using census data. Without accurate data, the federal government will misallocate funding for education, Medicaid, highways and other programs. Census data also inform how $200 million is allocated to counties and cities annually.

3. **Economic Impact:** Business leaders rely on census demographic and economic data to inform development projections, marketing strategies and investment opportunities. Inaccurate data will derail potential economic growth for 10 years.

4. **Diminished Local Capacity:** The Census Bureau plans to cut Area Census Office (ACO) totals from 2010, reducing capacity to visit unresponsive households and liaise with complete count committees. **Washington will lose four ACOs, including two in King County.**

5. **Citizenship Question:** The addition of a new and untested question about citizenship to the 2020 Census form is extremely detrimental. It will depress participation, increase inaccuracy, increase costs and damage public trust in the census.

6. **"Internet Choice":** The 2020 Census will be the first decennial count using an online system to collect responses. Areas with low internet coverage or connectivity may experience greater difficulty in participating in the count.

7. **Update/Enumerate:** Areas without city-style addresses, in remote locations, or that have been affected by major disasters will not be mailed a census form. Instead, the Census Bureau will use enumeration practices that may result in undercounts of up to 8%.

Hard-to-Count Populations in Washington

The goal of the census is to "count everyone once, only once, and in the right place." But some areas and population groups are "hard to count," forcing the Census Bureau to send personnel to each non-responding household, which is difficult, time-consuming and expensive.

Map of Washington. Source: City University of New York. *HTC 2020*. [online] Available at: https://www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us/.

Hard-to-Count Group	Representation in Washington's Population
Hispanic or Latino	12% or 848,777 people
Black or African American	5% or 353,657 people
Asian	10% or 707,315 people
American Indian or Alaska Native	3% or 212,194 people
Children Under Age 5	6% or 424, 388 people
Foreign-Born Individuals	15% or 1,081,398 people
Limited English Proficient Households	4% or 104,404 households • **41% speak Spanish** (42,823 households). • **15% speak Indo-European languages** (15,877 households). • **37% speak Asian/Pacific Islander languages** (38,810 households). • **7% speak other languages** (6,894 households).

Top Counties with Largest Hard-To-Count Populations

Counties with Large HTC Populations	Total Population	Percent Hard to Count	Percent WITHOUT internet or only dial-up service	Percent Largest Community of Color	Percent Children Under Age 5	Percent Foreign-Born
Adams	19,100	18%		62% Latino	11%	25%
Clark	450,893	15%	11.1%	9% Latino	6%	12%
Douglas	40,101	16%		31% Latino	7%	17%
Grant	92,530	28%	20.7%	40% Latino	8%	20%
King	2,079,550	14%	8.8%	19% Asian	6%	23%
Kitsap	257,488	6%	10.4%	8% Asian	6%	9%
Kittitas	42,785	18%		9% Latino	5%	7%
Okanogan	41,299	42%		19% Latino 13% AI/AN	7%	12%
Pierce	832,896	17%	13.5%	10% Latino	7%	12%
Snohomish	758,649	9%	10.6%	12% Asian	6%	17%
Walla Walla	59,809	8%		21% Latino	6%	11%
Whitman	47,494	39%		10% Asian	4%	11%
Yakima	247,681	28%	22.7%	48% Latino	8%	19%