

The 2020 Census: What's at Stake for Wyoming

The 2020 Census

The census is a constitutionally required, once-a-decade count of every person living in the United States. The census is critical for three primary reasons:

1. Census data are used to reapportion seats in Congress, and to draw state and local legislative districts, ensuring fair political representation.
2. Census data are used to allocate [over \\$800 Billion](#) in federal programs and funding to states and localities.
3. Elected officials, businesses and other decision-makers use census data to make critical economic decisions and to inform public policy solutions.

Wyoming Count Risk Factors	
Total Population	568,798
Population in HTC areas	22,614
Percentage in HTC areas	4%
Population in Tracts NOT receiving census by mail	26,760
Percentage households NO internet/ dial-up only	16.8%

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

Threats of an Undercount

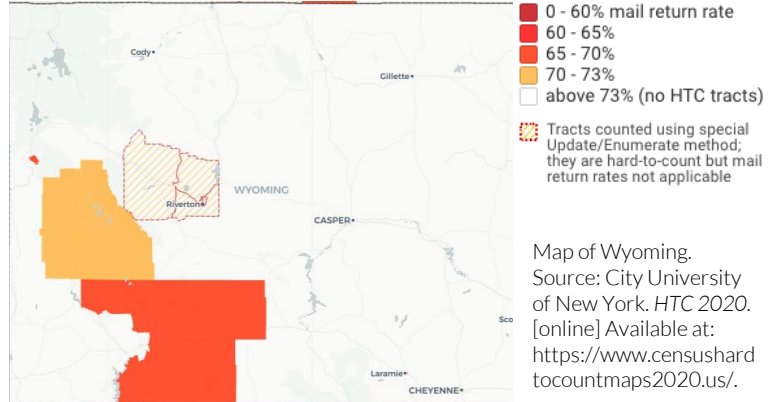
Unfortunately, the 2020 Census is facing [unprecedented challenges](#), including chronic and insufficient funding, decreasing public trust and delays to its IT systems. These threats heighten the risk that the census will fail to count every person living in the US – especially in rural areas.

In FY2015, Wyoming received \$881 million from the top 16 census-derived federal financial assistance programs. Census data determined federal aid allocations to support 20% or \$410 million in Wyoming education spending and 67% or \$263 million in highway safety spending.

1. **Reduced Funding:** In 2015, Wyoming received over [\\$881 million](#) from federal assistance programs using decennial Census data. Without accurate data, the federal government will [misallocate annual funding](#) for education, health care, highways, law enforcement and other programs. Additionally, census data provides the state population estimates that are used to allocate **\$129 million to counties and cities** from the state general fund annually.
2. **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.
3. **Citizenship Question:** The addition of a new and untested [question about citizenship status](#) to the 2020 form is one of the most detrimental decisions to undermine the census. It is likely to [depress participation](#), [increase costs](#) by at least \$91.2 million, increase inaccuracy and inequity and erode public trust. Areas with foreign-born populations may see greater declines in participation rates.
3. **“Internet Choice”:** The 2020 Census will be the first decennial count using an online system to collect responses. Areas with low internet coverage or weak connectivity may experience greater difficulty participating in the count.
4. **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 alternative enumeration practices that may result in undercounts of up to 8%.

Hard to Count Populations in the State of Wyoming

The goal of the census is to count “count everyone once, only once, and in the right place.” But some areas and population groups are "hard to count," because they have low self-response rates. This "non-response follow-up" can be difficult, time-consuming and costly, especially for rural areas.



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

Hard-to-Count Group	Representation in Wyoming’s Population
Hispanic or Latino	10% or 56,880 people
American Indian or Alaska Native	4% or 25,662 people
Children under age 5	7% or 39,816 people
Foreign-Born Individuals	4% or 25,662 people
Persons Living in Poverty	12% or 65,762 people
Persons Living Near Poverty Level (between 100-200% FPL)	17% or 95,950 people
Limited English Proficient Households	1% or 2,809 households <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 74% speak Spanish (2,070 households). ▪ 12% speak Indo-European languages (326 households). ▪ 13% speak Asian/ Pacific Islander languages (370 households).

Top Counties with Large Hard-To-Count Populations

Counties at Risk	Total Population	Percent Hard to Count Population	Percent NOT mailed census form	Percent WITHOUT internet or only dial-up service	Percent Largest Community of Color	Percent Children Under Age 5	Percent Foreign-Born
Albany	37,836	7%			9% Latino	5%	7%
Fremont	40,683		65.8%		23% AI/AN	7%	2%
Laramie	96,459	6%		14.1%	14% Latino	6%	4%
Natrona	80,871			17.1%	8% Latino	7%	4%
Sublette	10,032	100%			8% Latino	7%	4%
Sweetwater	44,812	4%			16% Latino	7%	6%
Teton	22,623	12%			15% Latino	5%	13%