



ADVOCATES FOR JUSTICE, INSPIRED BY CATHOLIC SISTERS

NETWORK Lobby Position on Funding the Census

NETWORK believes it is every citizen's right and responsibility to participate in the political process. No individual or community should be disenfranchised by federal policy. A modern, accurate, and equitable 2020 Census is necessary for a fair democracy in which everybody counts.

What We Know

Since 1790, the U.S. Census Bureau has conducted a count of the country's population every 10 years, as required by the U.S. Constitution. In conjunction with this count, the American Community Survey (ACS) gathers more detailed information on the changing economic and social conditions of the population. Both of these programs are crucial for informing policymakers, apportioning Congressional districts, and distributing over \$450 billion in federal program funding each year that is used for public healthcare, education, development, transportation, housing, the enforcement of civil rights, and much more.

Our Values:

- Our faith traditions compel us to care for those most in need, and providing adequate funding for an effective 2020 Census is a crucial prerequisite for federal policies and programs to respond to the needs of marginalized communities.
- Our faith mandates that everybody counts.
- Political participation is vital to fulfilling the moral obligation to concern ourselves with the common good and to strive for a just society.

Investing in the Common Good

The census and ACS are crucial sources of information for state and local governments, researchers, businesses, and many other stakeholders working for the common good. Despite the importance of this Constitutional requirement, preparation for the 2020 Census is threatened by uncertain and insufficient funding. A failure to provide adequate funding for the Census Bureau will not only impact the effectiveness of the census, but also cost taxpayers billions of dollars as the Census Bureau is forced to fall back on more costly counting methods of the past. For effective governance to respond to the needs of the people and promote the common good, we need to invest in Census Bureau preparations so that nobody is left out.

Census Fast Facts

\$5 billion: With adequate investment in preparation, new counting methods could save taxpayers \$5 billion

\$450 Billion: the 2020 Census will determine the allocation of over \$450 billion in federal funding every year

334 million: The 2020 Census must count roughly 334 million people across the country

The Census Project, [FY2017 U.S. Census Bureau Appropriations: Why Full Funding Matters](#)

1 million: About 1 million children ages 0 to 4 were undercounted in the 2010 Census

Dr. William P. O'Hare, [Five Steps for Reducing the High Net Undercount of Young Children in the 2020 Census](#)



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"Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city."

-Luke 2:1-5

Federal Policies Must Mend Gaps, not Widen Them

Providing adequate funding for an effective and accurate 2020 Census is a crucial prerequisite for federal policies and programs to respond to the needs of marginalized communities. Past decennial censuses have tended to undercount communities of color, people experiencing poverty, young children, and rural residents. The systematic undercounting of these communities decreases their access to federal funding and proportional representation. If the Census Bureau does not receive increased funding to conduct necessary tests and prepare for 2020, we fear that these gaps in the census will persist.

A modern, accurate, and equitable 2020 Census is needed for effective governance to promote the common good. Many of the programs that help to mend the gaps in our society and allow all to live in dignity depend on data from the decennial census. The 2020 Census will have implications for the funding of:

- Rural business and industry development loans
- Job training and other employment programs under the Job Training Partnership Act
- Health care for infants and children
- Child care to enable low-income and working families to work, train for a job, or obtain an education
- Water and waste disposal systems
- Policing agencies and community-based entities to work together to reduce crime
- Monitoring and enforcing employment discrimination laws under the Civil Rights Act
- Local agencies for food, health care, and legal services for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities

An underfunded, inaccurate 2020 Census would skew the projections of needed resources and programs away from the communities that need them. An equitable census is the foundation for a society in which everybody has a chance for success, all have dignity, and everybody counts.

NETWORK's Policy Priorities

Ramp up Census Bureau funding in FY 2018:

The Trump Administration's request of \$1.5 billion for the Census Bureau is woefully inadequate. Congress should ensure the Census Bureau has adequate resources to prepare for the 2020 Census in the crucial FY 2018 budget year.

Oppose efforts to weaken the Census:

Congress must oppose efforts that would steer money away from the Census Bureau to other programs funded by the Commerce, Justice, and Science bill. We also urge Congress to oppose any amendments during consideration of FY 2018 appropriations bills that would change the mandatory status of the American Community Survey.

