

Census 2020 in NC: Brief for Grantmakers

Why is a complete and accurate 2020 Census important for North Carolina?



Directly affects the allocation of \$16.3 billion annually in federal funds for critical public services such as hospitals, schools, road repairs and emergency response services for the next 10 years in North Carolina.



Provides key decision-makers with the information they need to ensure that government resources are directed strategically to the state's communities.



Ensures that communities are appropriately represented in the statehouse and in Congress. With an accurate 2020 Census count, North Carolina is projected to gain a seat in the House of Representatives, increasing its representation from 13 to 14 representatives.



The first storm of the hurricane season has already impacted North Carolina with Tropical Storm Arthur and COVID-19 relief will be needed for years to come. The US Census Bureau has already begun to generate data to understand the needs of Americans from COVID-19.



Knowing how many children live in a community will provide the foundation for important policy and planning decisions over the next 10 years. For example, should a community build a new library? A new school? Should it expand Head Start for pre-K children?



Even just a 3% undercount of North Carolina's children could represent a loss of \$330 Million over the next ten years.



The Census is the backbone of virtually every data product researchers, governments, and businesses use to understand who we are, how we've changed, and what this might mean for the future.



Programs that use Census Bureau statistics to help older people include home weatherization and grants for housing for low-income people over age 65.



The [Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program](#), formerly known as food stamps, is the second-largest federal program tied to census statistics. Other low-income programs contingent on census statistics include medical assistance under Title XIX; child care, job preparation and other temporary assistance programs and housing assistance.



Several major programs [informed by Census Bureau](#) statistics help [college students](#), including:

- Pell Grants.
- Aid for land grant and historically black colleges and universities.
- Federal grants for vocational training, such as funding provided to states in 2015 to improve vocational training in high schools, community colleges and technical centers.

How COVID-19 is affecting the response rate in NC

Due to COVID-19, the US Census Bureau has adjusted their schedule and requested an extension from Congress for delivering the final census count to the President.

New Schedule

Self Response Phase:

Group Quarters (E-Response & Paper Enumeration):



Original: Mar 12 - Jul 31

Original: Apr 2 - Jun 5

Response to the 2020 Census lags rates observed in 2010. However, the extended self-response timeframe provides ample opportunity to continue to boost the rates and increase the pace of response rate increases.

Every household that doesn't fill out the census form online, by mail, or by phone—known as “self-response”—enters the Census Bureau's non-response follow-up (NRFU) universe. During NRFU, the Census Bureau sends trained enumerators door-to-door to collect census responses directly. This is an expensive and time-consuming process. **NRFU was supposed to start in May 2020 but has been delayed due to COVID-19.**

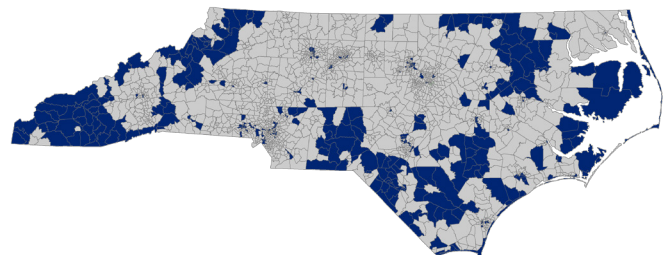
The Census Bureau currently plans to begin [NRFU operations in mid-August](#).

Who is not responding to the 2020 Census?

Internet access

There are also clear geographic patterns emerging: the lowest-responding tracts are heavily concentrated in western North Carolina, the Sandhills, and the northeast. These low-response patterns overlap with areas with low internet access and [where field operations were suspended due to COVID-19](#).

Lowest-responding census tracts, 6/1/2020



People of color

We are now seeing that the individuals living in the lowest-responding tracts are increasingly likely to be minority residents. On March 20th, just over one in four (27%) of residents in the lowest-responding tracts identified as American Indian, Black, or Hispanic/Latinx. [As of May 17th, this proportion had increased to 44%.](#)

College students (this is affecting college towns across the state/country)

For many cities and towns, a Census undercount could mean losing out on millions of dollars in federal funds.

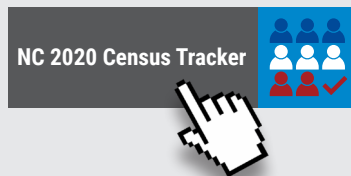
UNC System College town and Current Count:

Municipality Name	2010 Self-Response Rate	2020 Self-Response Rate, as of June 10
Asheville (UNC-Asheville)	68.8%	57.9%
Boone (Appalachian State University)	59.7%	44.1%
Chapel Hill (UNC-Chapel Hill)	74.3%	65.3%
Charlotte (UNC-Charlotte)	67.7%	59.3%
Jackson County (Western Carolina University)	33.7%	27.6%
Durham (North Carolina Central University)	67.5%	56.4%
Elizabeth City (Elizabeth City State University)	64.1%	53.6%
Fayetteville (Fayetteville State University)	65.1%	55.4%
Greensboro (North Carolina A&T State University and UNC-Greensboro)	68.2%	60.9%
Greenville (East Carolina University)	61.9%	51.5%
Pembroke (UNC-Pembroke)	27.0%	32.6%
Raleigh (North Carolina State University)	70.5%	61.3%
Wilmington (UNC-Wilmington)	68.4%	55.6%
Winston-Salem (Winston-Salem State University)	67.7%	56.2%

BARRIERS:

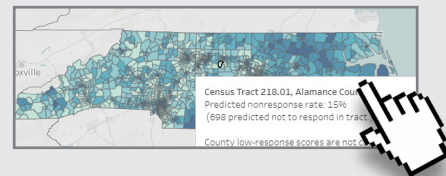
- Growing distrust in government
- Limited media attention for Census
- Months of debate over the now-dropped citizenship question – which the Census Bureau itself called a [major barrier](#) to participation.

View updates for your county:



[Updates on self-response rates](#) for North Carolina at the state, county, and census tract level. If you would like to receive these updates via email, please [subscribe to our newsletter](#).

Locate Hard To Count areas in North Carolina:



The NC Counts Coalition and Carolina Demography have developed an [interactive mapping tool](#) specific to North Carolina to identify the state's hard to count communities.

About Carolina Demography:

Located within the Carolina Population Center at UNC-Chapel Hill, we use population-level data and other available research to provide context and perspective to people working to shape North Carolina's future. Collectively, we have decades of experience making population estimates and forecasts, analyzing population-level and economic trends, and communicating that data back out into the world in a way that's easy to understand and act upon. Our work informs decision-making, evaluation, and policy across North Carolina, where we serve organizations and people in all 100 counties.