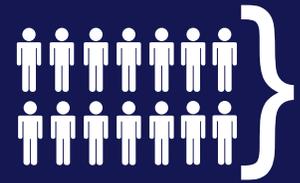


## Colorado kids and families are depending on a fair and accurate 2020 Census

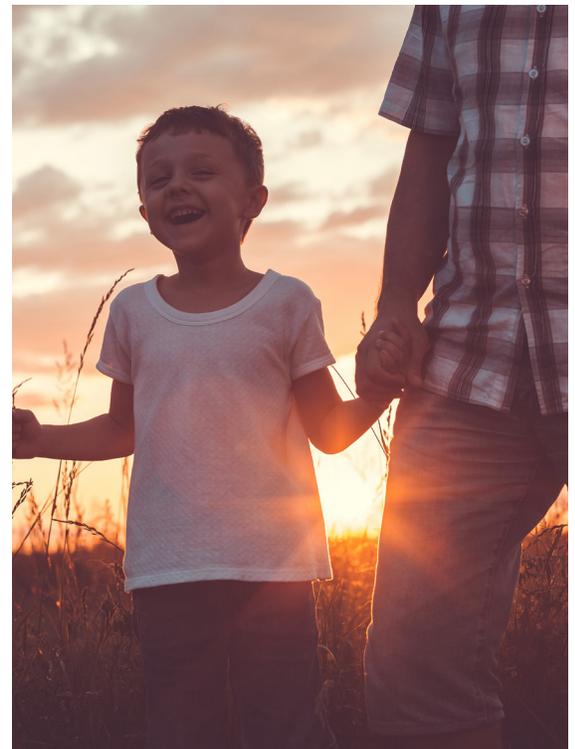


Most of us probably only think about the Census once every 10 years when we receive a short questionnaire to complete or a Census worker knocks on our door. Although it may not be top-of-mind for most Americans, the decennial Census is a foundational part of our democracy, and it affects everyone—including kids. Data from the Census are used to allocate federal funding, draw legislative districts and inform decisions about where to locate schools and other community resources. The 2020 Census is right around the corner, and we only have one chance to get it right. By dedicating resources to outreach efforts in the critical years leading up to the Census, Colorado's leaders can help ensure that every Colorado child is counted in 2020.



## The 2020 Census is facing many barriers to success

- 1. Consistent underfunding:** Although the decennial Census only happens once every 10 years, it is a massive undertaking that requires years of planning, research and field testing. Congress consistently underfunded Census preparations for most of the decade leading up to the 2020 Census, forcing the Census Bureau to cut back on important planning operations. Inadequate funding even resulted in the cancellation of two critical trial runs—including those designed to improve accuracy in hard-to-count rural communities.
- 2. The last-minute addition of an untested and unnecessary question that could depress response rates:** For the first time in 70 years, the 2020 Census questionnaire that goes to every household in the country will ask respondents a question about the citizenship status of each household resident. Six former Census directors from Republican and Democratic administrations have warned that the addition of this question late in the Census cycle will put the accuracy of the Census at grave risk. Citizenship data are already available through other Census Bureau surveys, and experts are concerned that this question could depress response rates among immigrant families. Lower response rates threaten the accuracy of the Census and would have far-reaching effects for Colorado's kids and families.
- 3. The first-ever high-tech Census:** For the first time in Census history, the Census Bureau will encourage households to complete their Census questionnaire online. Deployed successfully, the shift to an online Census could make participation easier and reduce costly follow-up efforts to reach those who initially fail to respond. The Census Bureau needs sufficient funding in order to adequately test these new technologies, ensure the security of the information collected and reach out to families and communities that still lack internet access.



# Young children under age 5 have historically been more likely to be missed in the Census than any other age group, with significant implications for kids and families.

The U.S. Constitution requires that the Census count *every person* living on American soil every 10 years. Yet, some groups of people are more likely to be missed by the Census than others, and young children are at the highest risk of being undercounted. The 2010 Census missed 2.2 million young children in the U.S., resulting in a net undercount of 1 million kids under age 5. In Colorado, children under 5 were undercounted by 18,000 (about 5 percent of all kids in this age group).

There are many reasons why young children are missed by the Census, but experts agree that kids under 5 are more likely than other age groups to live in households that are considered “hard-to-count”: families who are experiencing poverty, households where no adult speaks English well, or households with complex living arrangements (for example, grandparents raising grandchildren or children who split their time between parents who do not live together).

The undercount of young children has been getting steadily worse over time. In the lead-up to the 2020 Census, it is essential that Colorado’s leaders develop strategies to ensure that our youngest children are counted.



## If Colorado kids aren’t counted...

**Colorado loses out on federal funding for programs that are vital to our children and families.** Census data help direct more than \$600 billion of federal funding to states each year. A large portion of these funds go to programs that help Colorado’s kids thrive, including the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHP+ in Colorado), Head Start, special education programs and child care assistance for working families, among others. Simply put, an incomplete Census count will cost Colorado money for a decade.

**The data that policymakers, business leaders, and community leaders use to plan for local needs will be skewed for the next decade.** Planners and community leaders use Census data to inform decisions about where to locate important community resources like schools, hospitals and housing developments. Business leaders rely on Census data to determine where to make investments and open offices or stores. Without an accurate 2020 Census count, Colorado leaders will be forced to base their decisions on incomplete and inaccurate information for the next 10 years.

**Colorado will not have adequate political representation in Congress.** The larger a state’s population, the more political representation it receives in the U.S. House of Representatives. When Colorado kids aren’t counted in the Census, our kids, families and communities don’t get the political power in Washington they deserve.



## Questions for Candidates

*Here are questions you might ask candidates to learn more about their positions on issues affecting Colorado kids. Whether you ask in person, online or by phone, these questions are designed to help you educate candidates while learning more about whether they are making kids a priority in their platform:*

1. Generating public awareness about the importance of the Census is critical to ensuring a high response rate in Colorado. If elected, what is your plan to encourage Coloradans to participate in the Census?
2. The Census is required to count every person living on American soil, including people who have immigrated to the United States. Census Bureau researchers have noted that immigrant families are increasingly reluctant to participate in the Census because of concerns about confidentiality. In Colorado, nearly one in four kids lives in an immigrant family. If elected, how would you work to address these confidentiality concerns and ensure that Colorado kids in immigrant families are counted in the 2020 Census?



1580 Lincoln Street, Suite 420  
Denver, Colorado 80203

303.839.1580  
[www.coloradokids.org](http://www.coloradokids.org)