Making Health Care Count:

Health Policy Impacts of the U.S. Census

Friday, November 20, 2020

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Participating in the Webinar

To mute yourself, click either of the buttons with a microphone icon. The mic will have a line through it and turn orange when you are muted.

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Materials

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• Agenda
• Selected Resources List
• Selected Experts List
• Speaker Bios
• Presentation Slides
• Video (posted later)
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The 2020 Census

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Key Census Timeline

- **JANUARY 2020** – 2020 Census began in remote Alaska
- **MARCH 2020** – 2020 Census Self Response Opened Nationwide
- **APRIL/MAY 2020** – 2020 Census Operations Suspended
- **APRIL 1, 2020** – Census Day
- **MID-MAY** – Field operations and hiring began to resume
- **JULY/ AUGUST** – Door to Door enumeration began (was May 15)
- **OCTOBER 15** – 2020 Census enumeration concluded (Was July 31)
Challenges Faced Getting Out the Count

Operations impacted by COVID-19 and Natural Disasters
- Field Operations Suspended and Timeline Extended
- Uncertainty
- Mail Delays & Rural Delivery Stymied
- Phone Center Capacity Reduced, impacting Languages and Wait Times
- People Displaced. i.e. economic displacement, students went home

Census Outreach Impacted by Political Interference
- Fear
- Timeline Uncertainty
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- **NO LATER THAN DEC 31, 2020*** – Apportionment numbers sent to Pres. (Census Bureau requested April 30, 2021)
- **NO LATER THAN MAR 30, 2020*** – Redistricting files sent to states (Census Bureau requested July 31, 2021)
Data processing and quality improvement activities would have taken five months before the coronavirus pandemic disrupted and delayed all census operations. Now, unless Congress pushes back the statutory reporting deadlines for apportionment and redistricting data, the time for these vital activities will be cut in half:

- 26 weeks in 2000
- 21 weeks in 2010
- 11 weeks in 2020

Despite a larger, more diverse population and a census that was upended in every community by the pandemic.
Next Steps

1. The census is not over - important data processing and tabulation is underway.

2. We - the advocates that got out the count - are concerned about the impact of the pandemic, natural disasters and politics on census data.

3. That’s why Congress must act to extend the statutory reporting deadlines for apportionment and redistricting in order to give the Census Bureau the time it needs to process the data.

4. There must be transparency of during the data processing and tabulation phase of the 2020 Census.
The 2020 Census

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The Roles of the Decennial Census

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Roles of the Decennial Census

- Support Democracy
  - Apportionment, redistricting, Voting Rights Act enforcement

- Promote Economic Growth
  - Business decision-making regarding where to locate, what goods and services to carry, measure market performance

- Facilitate Efficient, Effective Government
  - Needs analysis, program implementation, geographic allocation of grants and loans, program evaluation

- Enable Social Science
Census-Derived Datasets

- Data directly from the decennial census are rarely used for decision-making, with exceptions (e.g., apportionment, population density classifications) – out of date, few variables

- The decennial census serves as the basis for more current, detailed datasets used in decision-making, particularly:
  - Annual Population Estimates
  - American Community Survey
  - Core-based Statistical Areas
Uses of Census-Derived Data for Allocation of Public Funding

- Eligibility – geographic, household, applicant
- Network adequacy
- Share allocation (formula grants)
- Reimbursement rates
- Household voucher payment levels
- Scoring in grants competitions
The Roles of the Decennial Census

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How the Decennial Census Helps Us Understand & Address Public Health Challenges

Cara Brumfield, Senior Policy Analyst, Georgetown Center on Poverty & Inequality
OVERVIEW

1. Census Data Quality

2. Relevance to Public Health

3. Responding to COVID-19

- Census data are the statistical backbone of public health data.
- Differential undercounts undermine the fairness and accuracy of census data.
- Without accurate population counts, we can’t understand prevalence of disease and mortality.
- Accurate census data are essential to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
Differential undercounts exist for people of color, young children, and others. The Census Bureau finds it hard to count many marginalized groups, including people experiencing homelessness, people experiencing poverty, and others.
2020 Census Self-Response Rates

Source: CUNY, HTC 2020
Population Counts & Health Rates

- Net undercounts and overcounts can result in systematic errors in denominators and, therefore, in rate estimates of disease, mortality, etc.

- How do these errors affect understandings of health disparities between places and groups, social determinants of health, and health trends over time?

Toy Example:

\[
\text{Rate:} \quad \frac{\text{N. of Cases in a Defined Population}}{\text{N. of People In A Defined Population}} \quad \text{per specified unit of time}
\]

- **Actual:** \(\frac{30,000}{100,000} = 30.0\%\)
- **Undercount:** \(\frac{30,000}{90,000} = 33.3\%\)
- **Overcount:** \(\frac{30,000}{110,000} = 27.3\%\)

Source: Adapted from Nancy Krieger. Census & Differential Privacy: Public Health & Health Equity Questions. CNSTAT workshop, 2019
Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Population estimates based on the 2010 Census and other socio-economic data from census-derived datasets are used to help

- track COVID-19 outbreaks and estimate mortality and infection rates;
- to estimate community resilience and provide insights into where COVID-19 healthcare will be needed most and guide other decision-making and resource planning;
- And more....
We value your input!

Please fill out the evaluation survey you will receive immediately after this presentation and by email this afternoon!