

FLORIDA

August 2021

Census data determines the allocation of federal and other funds to vital social programs, guides redistricting, and informs research. Therefore, an accurate census that captures historically undercounted populations¹ is crucial for our democracy. Since 2016, a collaborative of philanthropic funders has worked to align and pool funding to build and strengthen the infrastructure needed to support a fair and accurate count.

The Democracy Funders Collaborative's Census Subgroup, which is the steering committee for the census funder collaborative, engaged ORS Impact as a partner to develop state-level reports that provide an overview of philanthropic efforts to promote the 2020 Census within and across the 50 states, as well as the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico. This report provides a summary of census efforts for the State of Florida based on review of secondary data, and interviews with key actors involved (n=5).

¹We have opted to use the term "historically undercounted populations" in our narrative, but the term is interchangeable with "hard to count," which we use when our informants opted to do so



OVERVIEW GOING INTO 2020 CENSUS

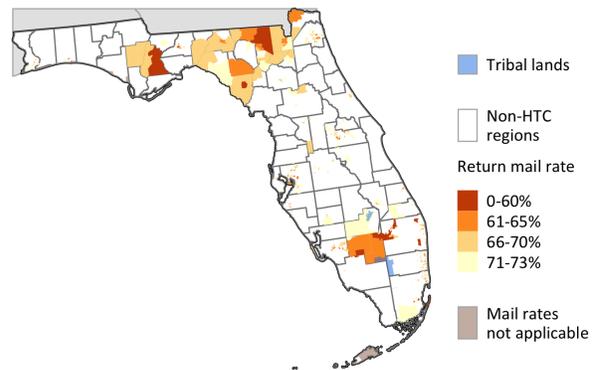
20,598,139

TOTAL POPULATION

3,146,481

TOTAL POPULATION LIVING IN HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED CENSUS TRACTS

HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED TRACTS BY COUNTY



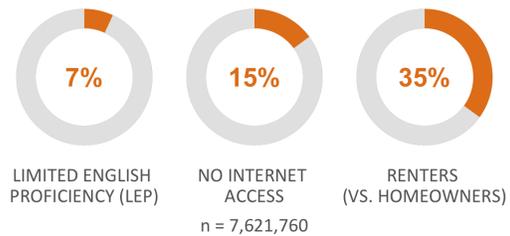
Special update/enumerate method used for counting as mail return rates are not applicable

Population

Past analyses of Census data have consistently shown differences in self-response rates based on household or individual characteristics, indicating that certain populations are at higher risk of being undercounted. The following graphs show the distribution of selected populations within the state that have historically been more likely to be undercounted. Data for all maps and graphs provided by CUNY Graduate Center via the Census 2020 Hard to Count/Response Rate map at www.CensusHardToCountMaps2020.us.

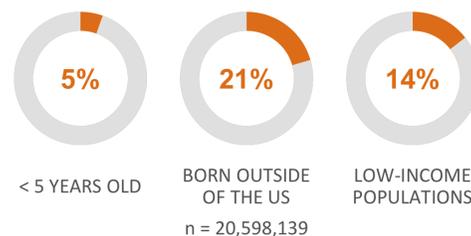
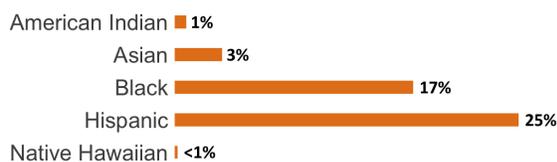
HOUSEHOLDS

Percent of total number of households in the state that have the following characteristics:



INDIVIDUALS

Percent of total number of individuals in the state that have characteristics of historically undercounted populations:

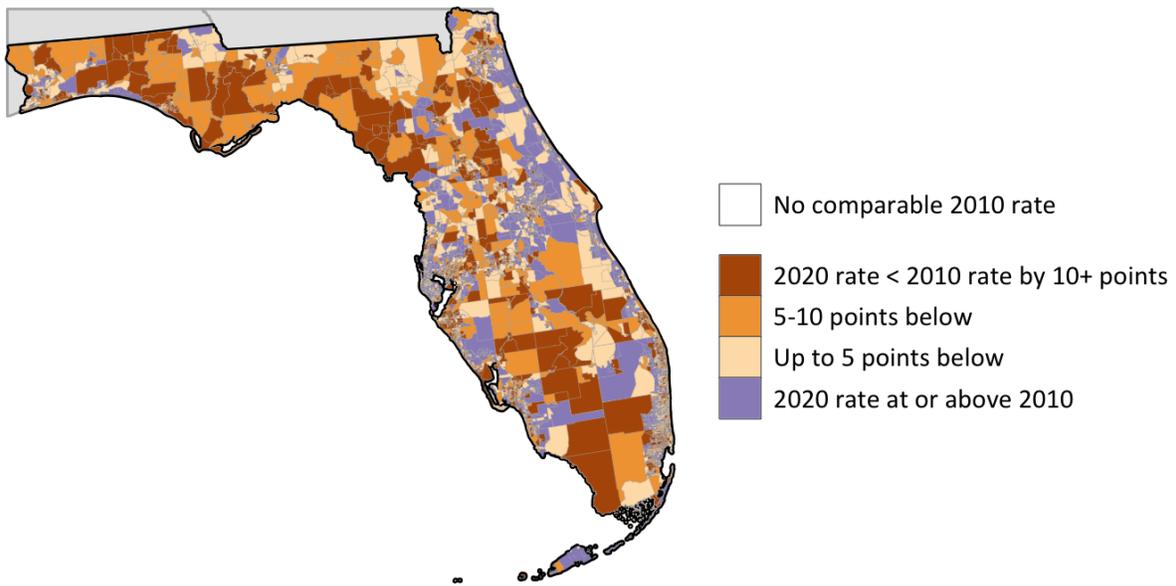




OVERVIEW OF CENSUS SELF-RESPONSE RATES

YEAR	SELF RESPONSE	CHANGE
2020	63.8%	+0.8
2010	63.0%	

CENSUS TRACTS WHERE 2020 CENSUS RETURN RATE WAS LOWER THAN 2010





STRUCTURE OF CENSUS OUTREACH

Florida's 2020 Census efforts were grounded in two collaborative efforts among nonprofit organizations and philanthropy, one statewide and one countywide. The efforts were hampered by an absence of state government investment, despite early and ongoing advocacy from multiple sources for sufficient funding for the census. Key milestones in the development of efforts in the state and descriptions of key structures and actors follow.

In late 2017, the Florida Nonprofit Alliance and Florida Philanthropic Network were encouraged and supported by their respective national infrastructure groups to begin planning for third-sector engagement in Florida's 2020 Census. After Florida Philanthropic Network's 2018 annual summit in January, Florida Nonprofit Alliance and Florida Philanthropic Network formalized their partnership to mobilize the state's nonprofits and foundations for 2020 Census outreach in a memorandum of understanding. In July 2018, Florida Nonprofit Alliance and Florida Philanthropic Network published a joint op-ed in *the Tampa Bay Times* on the importance of the census, and, in October and November 2018, they hosted a series of meetings in Miami, Fort Lauderdale, Tampa, Naples, Jacksonville, and Gainesville. The meetings were attended by grantmakers, nonprofit leaders, city officials, community volunteers, business leaders, and a representative from the Atlanta Regional Office of the US Census Bureau. Convening participants learned about the impact of the census on federal funding to the state and ways to become involved in Get Out the Count (GOTC) efforts. The meetings laid the foundation for Florida Counts Census 2020 by surfacing GOTC organizing and outreach opportunities and challenges, and by helping identify individuals and organizations who wanted to lead and participate in the efforts moving forward. At the convening in Miami, Florida Nonprofit Alliance and Florida Philanthropic Network connected with the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation, which became a crucial partner in the effort. In August 2019, a group of eight funder and nonprofit organizations convened and became the steering committee for Florida Counts Census 2020 (see Table 1 below). Florida Civic Engagement Table (FLCET) contributed some of the money they had received from the national Census Equity Fund to Florida Counts Census 2020's Pooled Census Fund, and the other steering committee members brought in additional contributions from other national and state foundations and donors. In December 2019, the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation hired a civic engagement professional to lead the collaboration full time and support the execution of a work plan that addressed outreach gaps in Florida's historically undercounted communities and included a grant program for trusted messengers. Florida Counts Census 2020 built a collaborative statewide hub and web portal for information, materials, and resources customized to Florida's needs and supported further resource sharing among grantees through a biweekly newsletter and monthly phone calls.

National funding catalyzed the formation of Miami-Dade Counts 2020, a county-level collaboration led by The Miami Foundation. In early 2019, after some conversations about the 2020 Census among The Miami Foundation, the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, and the Florida Philanthropic Network, The Miami Foundation applied for and received a grant from the national Census Equity Fund to lead a collaborative

effort in Miami-Dade County, which served as a catalyst for bringing in local philanthropic funding and participation and nonprofit partner involvement. Miami-Dade Counts 2020 partners kicked off their efforts in the summer of 2019 with a grantmaking program that prioritized grassroots outreach in historically undercounted communities, covering all geographies and populations in the county. The collaboration also invested in messaging research that informed the development of a communications toolkit; hosted workshops and educational and information sessions; led advocacy campaigns to fund census outreach efforts at the state and county levels; pushed census communications out to their respective networks; and presented at census-related meetings throughout the county, garnering media coverage. To support joint advancement of the census work, The Miami Foundation convened Miami-Dade Counts 2020 key partners (e.g., key funders, United Way, Early Learning Coalition of Miami-Dade/Monroe) in biweekly calls. They convened grantees on four occasions for learning and information-sharing, and through a newsletter and regular email messages passed on to them information from national and local sources about coming activities and new resources.

In the absence of state government investment in the 2020 Census, the philanthropy-nonprofit collaboratives tried to coordinate and support each other's and local governments' GOTC efforts. In January 2020, the governor announced the formation of the State Complete Count Committee, chaired by the lieutenant governor and funded from "existing state resources."^[1] The State Complete Count Committee met twice during its tenure, the second meeting lasting about 20 minutes. Some county governments established complete count committees, but with such little funding from the state, most languished. Primarily through the Wallace H. Coulter Foundation's involvement in both collaboratives, Florida Counts Census 2020 and Miami-Dade Counts 2020 coordinated and partnered on several efforts, including joint trainings for nonprofits, community-based organizations, and other local complete count committee members on ways to integrate Census 2020 into their work, and a campaign with Family Dollar and Dollar General Stores to encourage their customers to complete the census. Both collaboratives offered support to county complete count committees, with varying uptake. When county complete count committees were forming, Florida Counts Census 2020 suggested they get advice from Broward County, which was far ahead of the curve in organizing for GOTC. Florida Counts Census 2020 members served on various county complete count committees, and all county committees received their regular newsletter. Miami-Dade Counts 2020 included city governments on all their census news and updates email messages and, after January 2020, when government leaders were more responsive, provided them with data and communications templates they could use locally.

Many efforts aimed at state allocation of sufficient funding for the census were not successful. In 2018, FLCET began convening Table partners around advocating for and getting involved in the census and laying out the case for what Florida stood to gain from an accurate count and lose from an undercount. Leading up to and during the state's 2019 legislative session, FLCET led advocacy efforts at the national, state, and county levels aimed at fully funding census efforts, including participation in state Lobby Days, and put out statements against the inclusion of a citizenship question on the census form in accordance with the national call to action. State Voices, Florida Philanthropic Network, and Florida Nonprofit Alliance lobbied independently for

census funding, making phone calls, writing letters to the editor, and participating in Lobby Days. A Democratic legislator sponsored a bill to start a State Complete Count Committee, but it did not pass. In response to a request by the office of a Democratic US representative, Florida Philanthropic Network filed a budget request to fully fund the census; it was rejected. In both 2019 and 2020, Florida Philanthropic Network staff met with all members of the Florida delegation in Washington, DC, during the Foundations on the Hill meetings; they stressed the importance of the census and left behind documents with talking points. During the 2020 legislative session, Florida Philanthropic Network emailed every state and federal House and Senate member key data points that outlined impact to their districts, when applicable, and tools they could use when speaking about the importance of the census. To enlist grantees in advocacy for state investment in the census, Florida Counts Census 2020 gave grantees templates to write to legislative and congressional delegations to raise awareness about the census and to support them when speaking out at town hall meetings.

Table 1: Key actors involved in Census Efforts²:

Actor	Role
Florida Civic Engagement Table, Florida Nonprofit Alliance, Urban League of Broward County, and New Florida Majority	Through membership on the Florida Counts Census 2020 steering committee, these nonprofit leaders helped design/implement the collaborative’s strategy. They also led and supported nonprofit organizations funded through Florida Counts Census 2020. Florida Philanthropic Network also served as the fiscal sponsor for the collaborative.
Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties, Florida Philanthropic Network, Wallace H. Coulter Foundation, and Ventus Charitable Foundation	Through membership on the Florida Counts Census 2020 steering committee, these funders attracted others to contribute to the Pooled Census Fund and helped design/implement the collaborative’s strategy.
Sant La, Opa-locka Community Development, Centro Campesino Farmworker Center, and Engage Foundation	Led outreach efforts in their respective communities with funding from Florida Counts Census 2020.

²Data reflects the Census Bureau’s last update of self-response data (published in January 2021), which differs from the CUNY maps that use data from October 2020

FUNDING FOR CENSUS OUTREACH

More than \$2.9 million supported census efforts in Florida. In addition, some organizations and institutions made in-kind donations of staff time that supported efforts.

Table 2: Funding for 2020 Census Outreach³

Funding Source and Amount	Funding Purpose
<p>Philanthropy: \$2,625,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Florida Counts Census 2020 raised \$1.79 million for census efforts (about \$1 million from national sources, including \$120,500 from the national Census Equity Fund, and \$730,000 from state-based philanthropy); over \$1.2 million in pooled funds were directed to 67 organizations in 40 counties, mostly outside of Miami-Dade County due to other investments in that area. • Miami Foundation raised \$630,000 (including \$125,000 from the national Census Equity Fund); \$475,000 was regranted to 29 local nonprofit organizations (plus one matching grant to city government), and the remaining funds were directed to supporting outreach more broadly. • FLCET got additional money from the national Census Equity Fund to regrant to members of the Table for additional outreach in South Florida (around \$100,000), and New Florida Majority got their own grant from the national Census Equity Fund. • Helios Foundation gave funding to NALEO Education Fund for census efforts in the state, the national Census Equity Fund and Health Conversion Foundation of South Florida also gave money to the Broward County Complete Count Committee (unknown amounts). • Across all grants, the national Census Equity Fund contributed a total of \$1,390,000 to efforts in the state.

³Funding data should be taken as estimates. We included data from the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and Census Equity Fund (CEF) grants where applicable; other figures are estimates provided by key informants

<p>State/City Government: \$300,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although the state government reported it would allocate “existing state resources” to census efforts, it is not known if any was expended or how much. • The Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners contributed \$300,000 to census efforts.
<p>In-Kind Contributions: Unknown</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the collaborative leaders collectively dedicated hundreds of hours of in-kind time to census outreach (e.g., The Miami Foundation, which led Miami-Dade Counts 2020, and Community Foundation of Palm Beach, which produced the Florida 2020 Counts newsletter).

DESCRIPTION OF 2020 CENSUS OUTREACH

Beginning in December 2019, Florida Counts Census 2020 engaged in a statewide awareness-raising campaign aimed at legislators and thought leaders, primarily using free media. Through the Conroy Martinez Group’s persistence, Florida Counts Census 2020 leaders got access to newspaper editorial boards, with whom they discussed the implications of an undercount for the proportion of the state budget that comes from federal programs, resulting in a series of op-eds throughout the state. Florida Counts Census 2020 leaders also did interviews for television and radio and a series of presentations at Chambers of Commerce, and they invited grantees to do the same. Near the end of the response period, they increased their use of paid media, including TV and radio ads in various languages, based on grantee and partner knowledge of where their communities commonly accessed information.

Florida Counts Census 2020 and Miami-Dade Counts 2020 grantees prioritized outreach in the historically undercounted communities where they had histories and relationships. Most grantee activities occurred after the COVID-19 pandemic, which made most in-person events impossible. Grantees conducted outreach through social media, virtual town halls, phone banking, door hangers, stickers, flyers, caravans, Zoom social hours, and videos. Grantees engaged in a statewide peer-to-peer texting campaign that sent over 2.2 million text messages, using technology and tools provided by Florida Counts Census 2020 and contact lists provided by many of the partners and grantees. They volunteered as spokespeople for TV and radio interviews, media ads, op-eds, and newspaper articles, and—through partnerships—embedded census messaging in food drives and communications related to education, childcare, health care, social services, tax preparation, and housing.

The COVID-19 pandemic made it harder to reach many of the historically undercounted communities that are so highly represented in the state. Florida Counts Census 2020 was particularly focused on Hispanic Americans in South and Central Florida (along the I-4 corridor) and Haitian Americans in South Florida. These communities contain many new immigrants who cannot be reached through English-language media, phone

banking, and text-banking. The Conroy Martinez Group developed ads in Spanish and Creole early on; they were aired on Spanish and Creole radio and Telemundo. However, these communities' distrust of the federal government and fear sowed by the administration's efforts to include a citizenship question on the census form and exclude undocumented immigrants from the census-based numbers considered in the congressional seat apportionment process were very challenging to counter in the context of the pandemic, when the capacity for in-person relational organizing was severely attenuated. Fear- and trust-related challenges were further compounded by confusion and lack of general knowledge about who should be counted in the census. Many recent immigrants moved in with family and friends after losing their jobs due to the pandemic, resulting in large households of people with mixed immigration status who did not trust the census, did not know who should be counted, or both. People who live in the state part time were similarly plentiful and hard to reach, including "snowbirds" (retirees who live in multiple states), international students and post-doctoral fellows/university staff, and migrant farmworkers. Adding to the confusion were the pandemic-related changes in deadlines, which made it challenging for those doing outreach to maintain momentum.

Florida Counts Census 2020 used data to inform targeted outreach and media buys. Using available US Census Bureau application programming interfaces, FLCET created Excel Google sheets that helped them track current self-response rates by county, municipality, city (top 25 most populous), and census tract relative to final 2010 Census self-response rates. At monthly meetings of Florida Counts Census 2020 and FLCET members, FLCET used the sheets to celebrate higher response rates, and enlist partners and members with the capacity to contribute to targeted GOTC areas with lower response rates. The sheets were shared with all Florida Counts Census 2020 partners and grantees, and involved FLCET members in case they wanted to consult them outside of meetings. Using dashboard data from another source, they created a similar sheet with self-response rates by ZIP code, which they were able to use to buy targeted social media ads. Florida Nonprofit Alliance used self-response rates by congressional district that they received in weekly reports from their partners at the regional Census Bureau to enlist members of Congress to help with census outreach. Miami-Dade Counts 2020 also regularly referred to self-response data but did not have the capacity to do much targeted outreach based on that data.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **As early as possible, start raising awareness about the importance of the census for funding that comes to the state.** Or, even better, use census talking points and data points as part of every conversation with policymakers and other influencers, including funders. The 2020 Census work may have helped those involved progress toward this kind of continuous versus transactional civic engagement.
- **As early as possible, engage partners that can leverage existing networks to meet people where they are.** Build partnerships with existing statewide networks—both public and private—such as the Florida PTA, Florida Hospital Association, state and regional associations of builders and contractors, and public school systems. Build relationships with big retail stores, such as Walmart and Target, through their corporate headquarters, as local stores within a chain cannot give permission for outreach activities on their premises. Such relationships would likely benefit from memoranda of understanding that formalize expectations to push efforts out to their networks. Building partnerships like these at the national level would be even better.
- **Be better prepared for legal battles.** Be prepared for addressing threats to an accurate count and for communicating the threats to local partners.
- **Whenever possible, invest in full-time staff to drive census efforts—ideally someone with civic engagement expertise.** Even with its highly engaged steering committee, Florida Counts Census 2020 was able to be much more hands-on with grantees due to having a full-time leader helping them with planning and communications. Miami-Dade Counts 2020 wanted for such full-time support and missed opportunities to amplify many of their efforts due to limited capacity.
- **Sources of statewide information on census stakeholders and infrastructure would greatly assist GOTC coordination efforts.** To support understanding, resource- and information-sharing, coordination, and collaboration, it would be helpful to have a list or chart showing all the involved actors and groups of actors in the state’s census efforts—including partners in different collaborations and complete count committees, as well as sources of national support—which could be updated as the landscape evolves. Absent this, trainings were helpful for establishing regional connections among actors. It would also be helpful to have a platform showing current and planned locations of US Census Bureau Mobile Questionnaire Assistance units so organizations could direct people there. The latter would be particularly helpful when US Census Bureau staff is not responsive.
- **Do not assume wealthy areas will have high self-response rates.** Wealthy areas with high-rise apartment buildings (e.g., downtown Miami and along the beaches) contain historically undercounted populations, including people who live there part of the year or immigrated from other countries. Earlier established partnerships with Miami’s Downtown Development Authority and individual building boards could have helped spread the word that “census” does indeed apply to these residents.

- **Within crises there were also opportunities.** It would be an understatement to say that the COVID-19 pandemic presented more challenges than opportunities, but it also inspired many nonprofits to find new partners so they could continue their GOTC outreach while also supporting their communities more broadly. People who receive census messaging along with helpful assistance (e.g., food, medical services, help with remote schooling) may be more likely to act on that messaging, and nonprofit organizations' new connections in their communities may strengthen future civic engagement efforts. The pandemic plus the protests following the police killing of George Floyd also provided an opportunity to talk with people at a time of high civic engagement and frame the census as a tool for social justice, helping to bring more funding for health care and education into historically underserved communities (e.g., "Counting Black Lives Matters").

LOOKING FORWARD

About half of the Florida Counts Census 2020 grantees were existing members of FLCET and half were not. Many of the Florida Counts Census 2020 and Miami-Dade Counts 2020 partners had worked together before, but their relationships varied. Working on the census together helped strengthen relationships across the state's third sector to the benefit of the state's community engagement ecosystem. The experience also helped the Florida Counts Census 2020 funders strengthen their value of pooling funds and get better at working together that way, which can result in more streamlined and coordinated grantmaking.

Many of the funders involved in Florida Counts Census 2020 have since created a pooled fund to support Get Out the Vote efforts and have begun collaborating on civic participation funding to support continued engagement with local communities beyond the 10-year census cycle and voting cycles. They also plan to participate in the Census Legacies project, a "network of funders, nonprofits, businesses, government agencies, and census coalitions from around the country ... seeking to repurpose census outreach tables [to ensure] that historically undercounted communities have an equal voice in shaping the future of our regions [and] that regional solutions are built from the bottom up, with cross-sector collaborations that honor the expertise of community members and community-serving organizations." [1] At the time of this writing, Florida Nonprofit Alliance is gearing up to repurpose the Florida Counts Census 2020 newsletter to restart communication with grantees to maintain engagement and build advocacy capacity (e.g., with census data and information about redistricting).

The Miami Foundation offered additional funding opportunities to Miami-Dade Counts 2020 grantees to do canvassing to inform the public about the Miami mayor's new strategic plan and to help with COVID-19 recovery. The funders and other partners have also been talking about converting the collaborative's website into a site that people visit to access census data and related stories to support making the census part of regular conversations.



DATA SOURCES

Representatives from the following organizations participated in interviews and/or contributed information for this report:

- Wallace H. Coulter Foundation
- Florida Civic Engagement Table
- State Voices
- The Miami Foundation
- Florida Nonprofit Alliance

This report also incorporated information shared during the “Florida Counts Census 2020 November Debrief” webinar, as well as input from Florida Philanthropy Network as part of a review process.

NOTES

[1] <https://www.flgov.com/2020/01/06/governor-ron-desantis-announces-floridas-2020-census-statewide-complete-count-committee-to-coordinate-with-the-u-s-census-bureau/>

[2] <https://censuslegacies.org/>