

# IDAHO

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 populations<sup>1</sup> 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 Idaho based on review of secondary data, and interviews with key actors involved (n=2).

<sup>1</sup>We 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

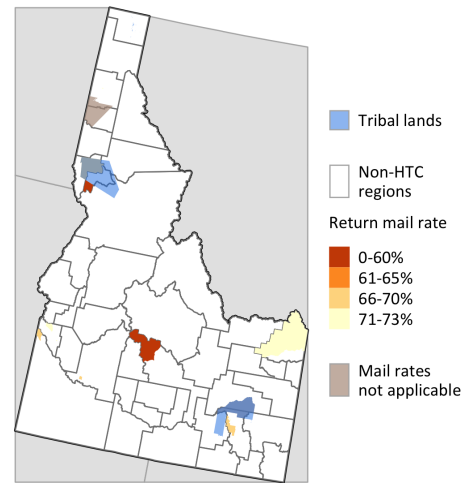
**1,687,809**

TOTAL POPULATION

**46,594**

TOTAL POPULATION LIVING IN HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED CENSUS TRACTS

## HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED TRACTS BY COUNTY



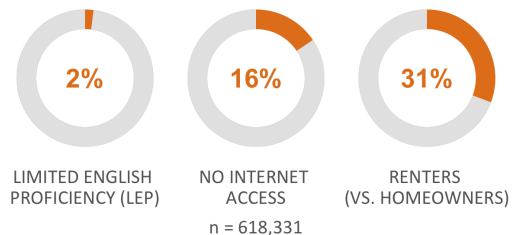
Special update/enumerate method used for counting as mail return rates are not applicable

## 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](http://www.CensusHardToCountMaps2020.us).

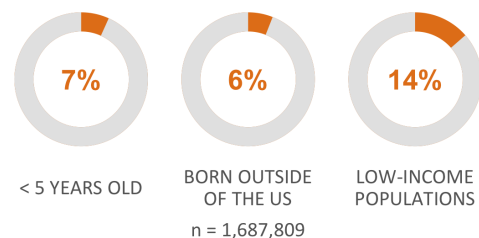
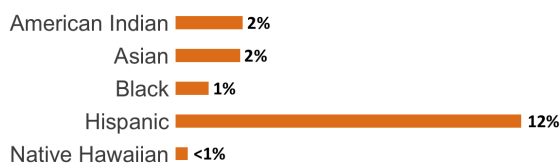
### HOUSEHOLDS

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:

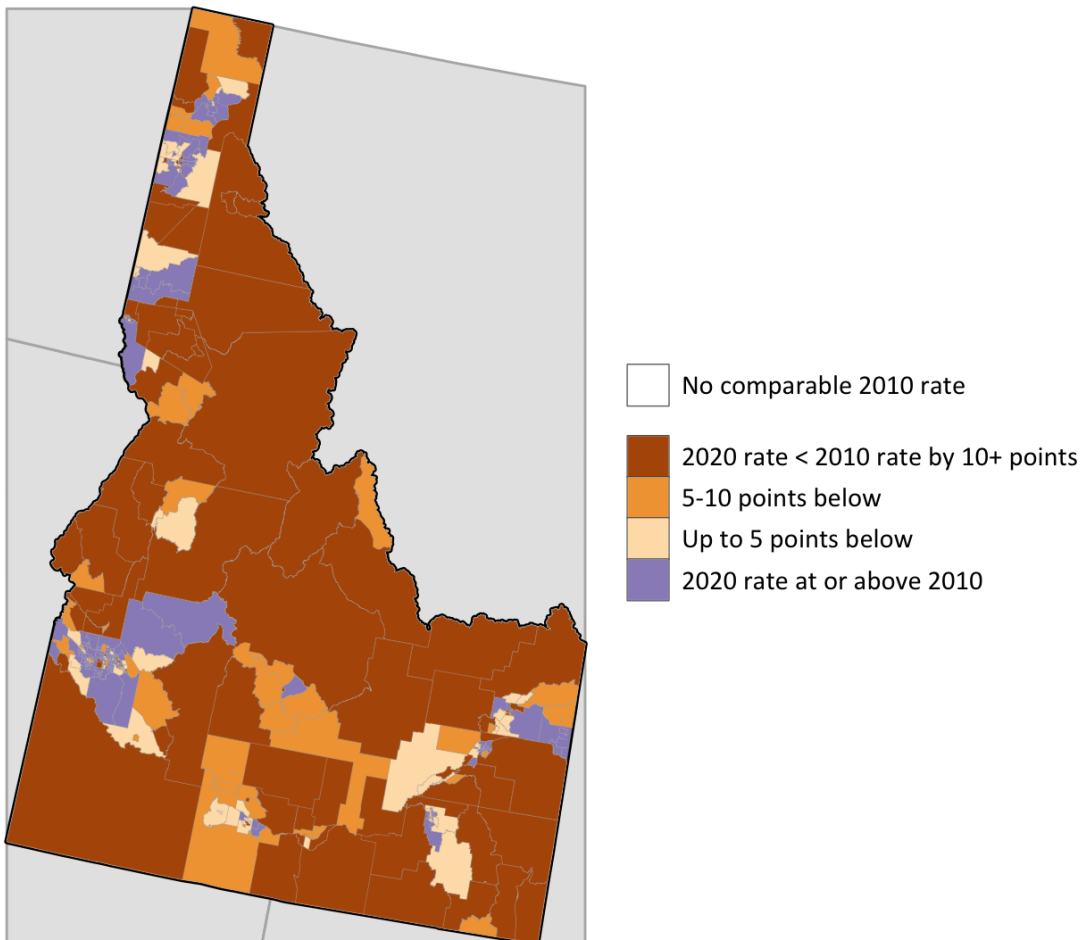




# OVERVIEW OF CENSUS SELF-RESPONSE RATES

YEAR	SELF RESPONSE	CHANGE
<b>2020</b>	<b>69.3%</b>	<b>+2.2</b>
2010	67.1%	

CENSUS TRACTS WHERE 2020 CENSUS RETURN RATE WAS LOWER THAN 2010



## STRUCTURE OF CENSUS OUTREACH

The State Complete Count Committee was one of the main structures for organizing census efforts within Idaho. Governor Brad Little formed the State Complete Count Committee in July 2019, and it included representation from major nonprofit and philanthropic organizations; industry (e.g., dairy companies); as well as state, county, and local governments. Overall, the State Complete Count Committee included between 40 and 60 members.

In addition to the State Complete Count Committee, the Idaho Community Foundation provided grant support to 12 nonprofit organizations to conduct outreach to historically undercounted populations within the state. Organizations that received grants were selected because they are considered to be “trusted voices” in the communities they serve. They included two of Idaho’s tribal nations; Jannus, an organization focused on working with Idaho’s large refugee population; and the Idaho Commission for Libraries. A subgroup of the State Complete Count Committee consisting of nonprofit organizations, including the Idaho Community Foundation, United Way, AARP, Idaho Association of Counties and Cities, as well as representatives from all five of the important tribal governments within the state, also worked together to focus outreach on historically undercounted populations.

Idaho is a large state with a small population that lives mainly in rural areas, with a few larger urban centers. Because of the state’s geography, the nonprofit partners used a regional approach to promote the 2020 Census, forming smaller regional groups to take on outreach to specific regions and populations. These smaller groups were organized around the major population centers so that local representatives trusted within their communities could serve as census messengers and advocates. Each regional group convened a diverse advisory group, which included representatives of community organizations as well as representatives of city, county, and state governments, with a specific emphasis on bringing together organizations that would be well positioned to engage with historically undercounted populations, including immigrant and refugees, those with disabilities, and the faith community. The regional advisory groups each had about 20 to 30 representatives.

While the State Complete Count Committee and the nonprofits were engaged in parallel efforts, there was also coordination between the two groups. For example, the Idaho Community Foundation sat on the State Complete Count Committee and was thus able to share State Complete Count Committee information with nonprofit partners they were working with. Partners also shared resources. The city of Boise developed a comprehensive communications plan and tool kit that they made accessible to any community or group across the state. Resources included messaging and templates that could be adapted to organizational or community needs.

Similarly, when a county government regional planning group contributed funding to develop messaging for Spanish-speaking populations, these resources were also disseminated for use within the broader set of

actors engaged in census efforts across the state.

**Table 1: Key actors involved in Census Efforts<sup>2</sup>:**

<b>Actor</b>	<b>Role</b>
<b>State Complete Count Committee</b>	The Governor’s Office coordinated and led the Committee’s efforts. The Committee co- chair, a former Idaho legislator, also played an important role in leading and coordinating efforts.
<b>Idaho Community Foundation</b>	Participated in the State Complete Count Committee; leveraged critical funding to support 2020 Census efforts in the state.
<b>Nonprofit Organizations</b>	Non-profit organizations that participated on the State Complete Count Committee subgroup included the United Way, AARP, Idaho Associations of Cities and Counties, and Jannus, an organization focused on working with Idaho’s large refugee population.

## FUNDING FOR CENSUS OUTREACH

Overall, an estimated \$275,000 of total funding from philanthropy and local government supported census efforts within the state.

**Table 2: Funding for 2020 Census Outreach<sup>3</sup>**

<b>Funding Source and Amount</b>	<b>Funding Purpose</b>
Philanthropy: <b>\$125,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The State Complete Count Committee formed a partnership with Idaho Public Television, providing \$15,000 to run pro-census advertisements during peak viewing times.</li> <li>• The Idaho Community Foundation leveraged \$110,000 from out-of-state and local funders to support 2020 Census outreach and regranted these dollars to 12 organizations across the state foundation.</li> </ul>

<sup>2</sup>Data 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

<sup>3</sup>Funding 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

State/City Government: <b>\$150,000</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The city of Boise provided \$100,000 toward marketing that benefited the entire state. Another county government regional planning agency contributed \$50,000 to develop a tool kit that included the information in Spanish, which groups across the state used and appreciated.</li> </ul>
In-Kind Contributions: <b>Unknown</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multiple organizations involved in the State Complete Count Committee provided in-kind contributions of labor and staff time.</li> </ul>

## Description of 2020 Census Outreach

**The State Complete Count Committee and regional subcommittees coordinated statewide and community communication efforts to promote the 2020 Census.** Funding from the city of Boise supported development of census communications materials that benefited the whole state. The state also supported a traditional statewide media campaign.

**The Idaho Community Foundation provided grants to organizations to conduct regional outreach to historically undercounted populations using a “trusted messenger” model.** The grants were provided to organizations across the state that were well positioned to reach historically undercounted populations. Grantees were given latitude to use funding in ways they thought would be most useful. Specific populations of focus included Latinx, homeless, refugee and immigrant, and tribal populations. Children under 5 were also a focus.

**COVID-19 disrupted the census efforts across the state, causing a shift to virtual engagement.** As the COVID-19 pandemic began, the Idaho Community Foundation gave flexibility to grantees to adapt their strategies without restriction. The grantees were creative in changing tactics. For example, one group canceled their in-person activity and instead made an online video to promote the Get Out the Count effort. The video received recognition in a national competition. Public schools also put bookmarks featuring information about the census in school lunches that were still being provided to students even though classes had been canceled.

**Engaging case workers as trusted messengers was an effective way to promote the census among refugee and immigrant populations.** One tactic that was successful with immigrant and refugee communities was engaging with their cases workers and social service providers to provide them with census messaging to share with their clients.

**As Idaho has historically been a resettlement state where about 160 languages are spoken, some organizations within the state were able to provide translation and interpretation assistance to encourage non-English-speaking populations to complete the census.** Some actors in the state increased their efficacy by translating messaging and having interpreters on hand to engage with immigrant populations. In addition,

groups worked with Hispanic radio stations, churches, community centers, and public libraries to raise awareness and provide internet access for these communities to complete the census.

**Efforts in the state relied on data from the previous census to target resources to historically undercounted areas.** The State Complete Count Committee used data from the previous census to target the undercounted populations. They also used the annual homeless count to target shelters and congregate places where homeless individuals lived.

**Besides the COVID-19 pandemic, the state faced other challenges that also disrupted 2020 Census efforts.** For example, significant wildfires during the summer hampered Get Out the Count efforts. There was also a lot of misinformation regarding the deadline for completing the census coming from the federal government.

## LESSONS LEARNED

- **Getting an earlier start** on educating organizations in undercounted communities about the importance of the census would have allowed for more success.
- **The diversity of the representation** on the State Complete Count Committee and among the regional nonprofit groups working on the census was a great asset to the success of efforts in the state, allowing for better identification of trusted messengers. Having an equity lens was also impactful in including all undercounted populations.
- **Effective collaboration with the Census Bureau propelled efforts.** The Census Bureau staff were strong collaborative partners in Idaho. They effectively engaged with local leaders on the importance of the 2020 Census.
- **Flexibility allowed for efforts to adapt in the face of challenges.** Grantees were given flexibility to use approaches that worked for their community, which allowed for greater adaptability in the face of the pandemic.

## LOOKING FORWARD

Relationships built during the 2020 Census will endure, and these can be the basis for future collaborations. In particular, there are opportunities to leverage connections made between more urban and rural partners. In addition, there is currently greater recognition among some elected public officials that having an accurate count matters, which may pave the way for more resources to be allocated to support the census in the future. At this point there are no concrete plans to leverage relationships around other pressing issues (e.g., redistricting); however, opportunities may arise in the future.





## DATA SOURCES

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

- Idaho Community Foundation
- United Way of Treasure Valley