

2020 CENSUS

STATE-BY-STATE REPORTS

MARYLAND

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 Maryland based on review of secondary data, and interviews with key actors involved (n=3).

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

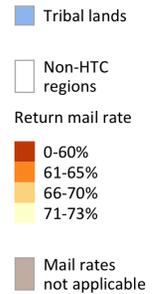
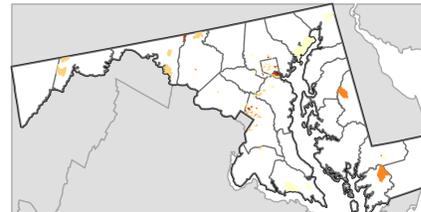
6,003,435

TOTAL POPULATION

686,493

TOTAL POPULATION LIVING IN HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED CENSUS TRACTS

HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED TRACTS BY COUNTY



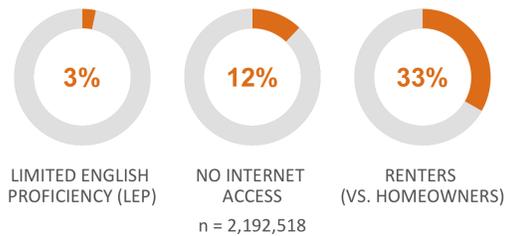
Special update/enumerate method used for counting as mail return rates are not applicable

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.

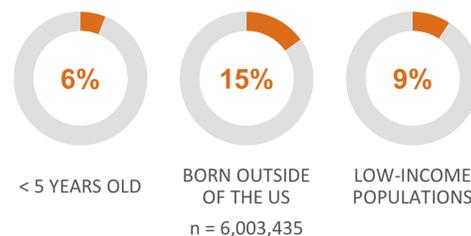
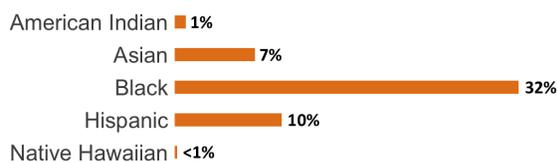
HOUSEHOLDS

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:

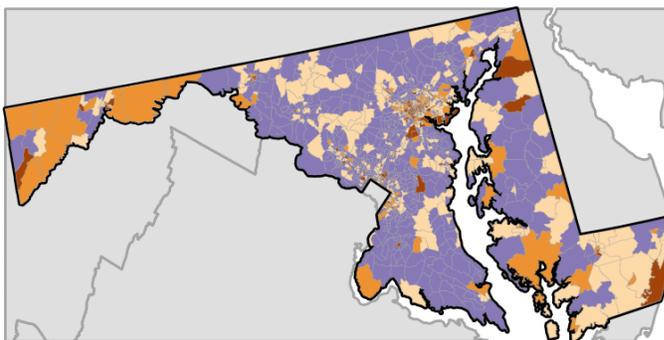




OVERVIEW OF CENSUS SELF-RESPONSE RATES

YEAR	SELF RESPONSE	CHANGE
2020	71.2%	+1.7
2010	69.5%	

CENSUS TRACTS WHERE 2020 CENSUS RETURN RATE WAS LOWER THAN 2010



- No comparable 2010 rate
- 2020 rate < 2010 rate by 10+ points
- 5-10 points below
- Up to 5 points below
- 2020 rate at or above 2010



STRUCTURE OF CENSUS OUTREACH

Maryland’s 2020 Census efforts were composed primarily of county-based and other smaller municipality-based efforts with only ad hoc coordination across efforts, as well as a funder-driven collaborative effort focused on outreach in the Washington, DC region.[1]

Planning for the 2020 Census began at the municipality level in late 2018. In September 2018, the Baltimore City Planning Department convened a Complete Count Committee and assigned a full-time staff member to lead the effort. The Complete Count Committee’s five subcommittees—each co-chaired by a city government employee and partner organization—developed their own engagement strategies, including target populations, messaging and communications tactics, potential partnerships, and timelines, which were compiled into a citywide action plan. The action plan was centered on the principle of “using the knowledge, expertise and leadership of community residents”[2] and aimed at three goals: (1) ensuring the most complete and accurate count of the city; (2) increasing digital literacy to enable that count; and (3) driving equitable outreach to the city’s more vulnerable communities. The Complete Count Committee met regularly and all meetings were open to the public. Part of the city’s strategy was a community grant program, which provided \$500 to \$5,000 grants to small businesses, faith communities, nonprofit organizations, groups of neighbors, and community leaders for census education, outreach, and mobilization aimed at historically undercounted communities (specifically, older adults, immigrants and people with low English proficiency, Black youth ages 18-29, people experiencing homelessness, families with young children, and returning citizens[3]), administered through a partnership with the Maryland Philanthropy Network. To support successful applications for the grants, the city and its partners offered about 10 in-person trainings to potential applicants—in multiple locations and languages—in which they shared ideas about possible outreach activities and encouraged use of new technology that could be purchased with grant money (e.g., iPads). The approximately 30 grantees initially attended calls every other week, then weekly, to facilitate information sharing and ongoing support for their efforts. The grantees quickly took leadership of the meetings, and some began collaborating with one another in their “Get Out the Count” (GOTC) efforts.

Larger counties set up complete count committees next, followed by the state and smaller counties. In late 2018, with support from the US Census Bureau, Prince George’s County established its Complete Count Committee, composed of government officials and subcommittee members from faith-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, parks, and public libraries, who helped host or attended workshops, trainings, and festivals and helped recruit other partners to the effort. Montgomery County formed a Complete Count Committee in early 2019, composed primarily of government officials representing regions across the county. Around the same time, the governor announced the formation of the State Complete Count Committee, preempting bills that a delegate and a senator were about to propose for the same purpose. The State Complete Count Committee first met in March 2019. Led by the Maryland Department of Planning, it composed primarily government agency leaders and staff, later joined by nonprofit leaders, two of whom served as co-

chairs. County governments occasionally attended State Complete Count Committee meetings but were not official members. Using a funding mechanism established through 2018 legislation and with guidance from the State Complete Count Committee, the Maryland Department of Planning awarded grants to local governments and nonprofit organizations in April 2019, spawning the creation of more municipality-based complete count committees (more details in Table 2 below). Later, the remaining money was distributed to smaller municipalities that had not benefited from the earlier round of grants. In support of the municipal complete count committees, the state sponsored a website containing communications resources (e.g., fact sheets in a few different languages) and sent a weekly newsletter highlighting municipality-based complete count committee accomplishments and coming events. The Maryland Department of Planning also provided valued support for targeted outreach.

Local government and nonprofit staff benefitted from ad hoc information sharing and periodic collaboration across municipalities and from getting information and resources through national nonprofit networks. In the absence of formal structures to support collaboration across most municipalities, lead municipal government staff members shared information and resources with each other informally (e.g., through a Slack channel), which allowed them to benefit from others' outreach ideas and experiences. Some municipalities collaborated on activities, particular within regions. For example, the Baltimore City and Baltimore County efforts coordinated and collaborated regularly. Government and nonprofit organization staff also attended events with nationally networked funders and nonprofit organizations, such as League of Women Voters of Maryland and Common Cause Maryland, and work group meetings organized by national hubs on the undercount of specific populations, such as Partnership for America's Children (focused on young children), in which resources and tactics from around the country were shared. Government and nonprofit organization staff attendees, in turn, shared those ideas with others. For example, representatives of Baltimore City attended a national conference that resulted in connecting with the business in its region that prints the backs of Dollar Store receipts, and after learning how inexpensive it would be to print census messages in two languages for all the Dollar Stores in its region, Baltimore City representatives emailed this information to all other municipality-based leads in the state to make sure they knew about the opportunity.

Washington, DC Region funders aligned funds for GOTC and established pooled funds. In 2018, the Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers began convening the 2020 Census Working Group, a group of funders plus the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments, aimed at strategically supporting a fair and accurate census count in the Washington, DC region (see first footnote for the Maryland municipalities included in this region). The group met regularly to coordinate activities, share information, and get updates from national and regional US Census Bureau officials. Many of the funders developed grantmaking strategies to facilitate outreach to historically undercounted communities (particularly communities of color, immigrants, and low-income communities) and support the work of complete count committees. In June 2019, many of the funders organized and hosted a regional cross-sector convening to kick off GOTC in the Greater Washington Region, attended by over 250 individuals from the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. A number of the funders also created a pooled fund called the Count DMV In Census Project, which was housed at the Greater Washington Community Foundation. In the fall of 2019, Count DMV In provided grants

to nonprofit organizations—local “trusted messengers”—in the Washington, DC region to support public education, outreach and mobilization, communications, partnerships, and other critical activities focused on traditionally undercounted communities.

Nonprofit organizations and philanthropy advocated for legislation to support a fair and accurate count in the state. In alignment with several delegates who recognized the importance of a robust 2020 Census effort, Common Cause Maryland, League of Women Voters of Maryland, and CASA de Maryland advocated for a bill in the 2018 session to fund census efforts. This resulted in \$5 million being allocated for the state grant program mentioned above. Advocacy activities included lobbying, asking nonprofit partners to write to legislators, writing op-eds and letters to the editor, and using social media to send public messages to partners and legislators. These organizations attempted to secure more funding in the 2019 session but were not successful. Maryland Philanthropy Network and some of its member philanthropies wrote op-eds in the Baltimore Sun before the 2020 Census, warning that the inclusion of a citizenship question on the census form would damage equity efforts, and later, urging the federal government to maintain the pandemic-related response period extension through October 2020 when it announced the extension would be moved back to September. The Network and many of its members also joined a national group of philanthropic leaders to send letters to the US Department of Commerce and regional US Census Bureau directors regarding the moving extension.

Table 1: Key actors involved in Census Efforts²:

Actor	Role
Common Cause Maryland, League of Women Voters of Maryland, and CASA de Maryland	Advocated for policies and for state funding for census; CASA de Maryland also participated in several municipality-based complete count committees statewide
Advocates for Children and Youth	Conducted social media campaign aligned with the organization’s youth-oriented advocacy goals
Baltimore Metropolitan Council	Partnered with Baltimore City’s Complete Count Committee on radio outreach throughout Baltimore County
Maryland Philanthropy Network	Served as the fiscal agent for Baltimore City’s Community Grant Program, offered resources and education opportunities for member philanthropies, activated broader independent-sector support for GOTC, and advocated for a fair and accurate census
Washington Regional Association of Grantmakers	Convened the 2020 Census Working Group composed of some funders that provided aligned funding and some that created a pooled fund called Count DMV In, focused on GOTC in the Washington, DC Region
Asian American LEAD, Edu-Futuro, Ethiopian Community Center, Justice for Muslims Collective (Defending Rights and Dissent Inc.), La Clínica del Pueblo (Promotores), Life After Release, Montgomery College Foundation—Robert E. Parilla Performing Arts Center, Prince George’s Children’s Resource Center, Progressive Maryland Education Fund, Seabury Resources for Aging	Along with CASA de Maryland (listed above), engaged in GOTC with support at least in part through Count DMV In

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

Greater Washington Community Foundation	Housed and managed the Count DMV In pooled fund, which was disbursed to Washington, DC region nonprofits
Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments	Participated in the 2020 Census Working Group and convened local officials and staff who worked on the census, including in Maryland
State of Maryland Department of Planning	Convened the State Complete Count Committee

FUNDING FOR CENSUS OUTREACH

Overall, at least \$5 million in state government funding supported 2020 Census efforts in Maryland. The total amount of philanthropic investment in the state’s efforts is unknown, as are any in-kind donations.

Table 2: Funding for 2020 Census Outreach³

Funding Source and Amount	Funding Purpose
Philanthropy: At least \$30,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five regional funders (Bainum Family Foundation, Bernstein Family Foundation, Consumer Health Foundation, Meyer Foundation, and United Way of the National Capital Area) and three national funders (Bauman Foundation, Weissberg Foundation, and National Census Equity Fund) contributed to the Count DMV In pooled fund, which made grants to nonprofit organizations, including several that did GOTC in Maryland (grants ranged from \$5,000 to \$20,000; total amount and recipients unknown) • The Annie E. Casey Foundation invested in focus groups to help determine the most resonant messages among populations in Baltimore County and gave \$30,000 to Advocates for Youth and Children for GOTC • Horizon Foundation provided some funding for GOTC in Howard County (amount and recipients unknown)

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 Government: \$5 million</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The National Conference of State Legislatures reported \$5 million in state funding. Informants reported that: • In 2018, the General Assembly passed a bill to allocate \$5 million for the 2020 Census grant program, to be administered through the Department of Planning • In April 2019, close to \$4.1 million in matching grants was awarded to local governments and nonprofit organizations (grants ranged from \$7,500 to almost \$582,000; similar proportions went to those in each sector); the remainder was later distributed to additional small municipalities • Baltimore City distributed \$109,000 of the funds from the state through their Community Grant Program to support resident-driven census education and outreach (up to \$500), planning and mobilization (\$500 to \$5,000), and long-term community-building efforts using technology (\$5,000 and over) • An additional \$1 to \$2 million from the Department of Planning budget went to media efforts
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DESCRIPTION OF 2020 CENSUS OUTREACH

GOTC involved both broad-based marketing and efforts targeting specific, historically undercounted communities. Across efforts, the approach to GOTC with traditionally undercounted populations generally focused on organizational outreach and media campaigns, including ads on local television and radio stations, streaming services such as Pandora, and buses. Using state funds, Baltimore Metropolitan Council collaborated with Baltimore County and several other municipalities on a 5-month radio campaign aimed at increasing census awareness and response among traditionally undercounted communities. Some GOTC efforts reflected both the community doing the outreach and the community that was the target of the outreach. Actors in Prince George’s County waved signs in high traffic areas that read “Be Counted!” and hosted outdoor events near big apartment buildings designed to attract people when they looked outside their windows. Out for Justice, an advocacy organization for and of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals, hosted a Census Resource Fair and included census outreach in their nighttime Bailout events in Baltimore City, with trucks honking and people on loudspeakers talking about the importance of being counted. In several urban areas, where people are accustomed to answering their doors, GOTC still included door-knocking even after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. In Baltimore City, government staff “masked up” and, in communities with high concentrations of historically undercounted residents, went door-to-door with iPads and box lunches donated by a local business. Prince George’s County staff found creative ways to

use WhatsApp, such as sending a census graphic in Creole to Haitian community leaders and asking them to share it over WhatsApp and asking frozen-treat and food-cart owners in Mexican communities to carry piles of census pamphlets on their carts. Ethiopian Community Center translated informational pamphlets into Amharic and French, created videos in Amharic, and hosted webinars with question-and-answer opportunities so they could address the needs within their immigrant communities for focused education related to the census generally and information about filling out the forms specifically (e.g., regarding data security, the importance of counting very young children, relatives in hospitals, or household members that are not family members).

Municipality-based complete count committees successfully engaged the business sector in GOTC. Many larger jurisdictions successfully engaged area businesses on business-oriented subcommittees or specific GOTC efforts, including in Prince George’s County, Baltimore City, Montgomery County, and Charles County. Many businesses in Prince George’s County displayed marketing signs in their windows, distributed palm cards and other census swag, and verbally informed customers about the census. Baltimore City’s community grant program also attracted several small businesses, such as a barbershop.

Census Ambassador programs supported GOTC with an emphasis on civic engagement, particularly with young people. The Baltimore Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs and Montgomery County’s Office of Community Partnerships sponsored Census Ambassador programs that trained volunteers to provide support roles at events and promote the census on social media. Through a youth civic-engagement initiative of the Catalogue for Philanthropy: Greater Washington called Mikva Challenge DC, young people were trained as youth ambassadors for the census and called thousands of people in Central Maryland. The Montgomery College Complete Count Committee also launched a Montgomery College Counts Student Ambassador program, which supported student employees to host in-person and virtual census-participation events (e.g., a Virtual Census Festival) and spread messages about the importance of census participation through neighborhood listservs and community presentations. Advocates for Children and Youth planned to collaborate with universities and high schools to engage students as ambassadors, but the plans were derailed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Advocates for Children and Youth conducted a communications campaign aligned with its youth- and equity-oriented advocacy goals. Advocates for Children and Youth’s GOTC efforts focused on informing and activating their existing network of community activists and other professionals in child welfare, education, youth justice, and health care; prior grassroots organization partners; and legislators who subscribe to their weekly newsletter or follow them on social media. Through these avenues, the nonprofit organization amplified messages coming from other sources (e.g., the US Census Bureau) and created original messages aligned with their policy agenda that mirrored or complemented those from other sources (e.g., making sure foster youth and young mothers of young children knew they should be counted). They also purchased targeted social media ads on LinkedIn to reach professionals and thought leaders beyond their existing network, and on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to reach historically undercounted populations. Using Facebook’s functionality to target specific zip codes, they invested in ads targeting areas known to have higher

concentrations of historically undercounted populations—e.g., Latinx communities. Because they are favored by younger populations, Advocates for Children and Youth used carousels for their Instagram posts.

Players in the state’s GOTC efforts used a variety of data sources and applications to support their outreach efforts. Many municipalities created maps that pulled from various data sources to inform planning and targeted outreach. The state generated its own “Hard-to-Count” map that incorporated, for example, 2010 Census response rates and data on internet connectivity. The map was available on the state’s website and data could be downloaded as a CSV file so stakeholders could sort by zip code or county, which many municipalities found to be helpful. To inform planning, Baltimore City created a mapping application that pulled demographics from 2010 Census data plus, for example, business locations (to identify potential partners) and housing market data (to help focus on areas with a high ratio of populated residents to available housing). When the response period began, they added 2020 Census response data, which was used almost every day to inform targeted outreach. Late in the response period, Baltimore City invited all elected officials to canvas using an app and directed them to concentrations of historically undercounted communities. Prince George’s County also created various maps to help partners track self-response rates by census form completion method (online, by mail, or by phone) and census tract, which was updated daily, and they provided monthly reports to partners based on this data to inform outreach. The Annie E. Casey Foundation underwrote focus groups with mostly Black communities to find out which census messages resonated most with populations in Baltimore County. Advocates for Children and Youth and others used the results to help them craft the strongest possible messages—e.g., those that avoided repeating misinformation but rather connected the census to local issues and focused on benefits to individuals and communities.



LESSONS LEARNED

- **Maryland’s census participation would benefit from the State Complete Count Committee being more community-centered and community-led.** Although the State Complete Count Committee included nonprofit leadership, the nonprofit sector was notably absent during the Committee’s earliest planning phases and those in leadership positions did not have decision-making authority. Smaller grassroots organizations and groups were not included in its membership throughout the Committee’s tenure. The Governor’s Office of Community Initiatives—which includes Ethnic Commissions that exist to serve as liaisons between the governor and the diversity of Marylanders—was included relatively late in the planning process and possibly only after GOTC commenced. If an accurate count hinges on participation among communities that are historically undercounted, then GOTC success depends on those communities having a seat at the table and a voice that informs decision-making related to outreach strategies, tactics, and messages. It is possible that the State Complete Count Committee could have been structured to support such inclusion and accountability if it had been created through legislation, but such legislation was preempted by the governor (see above).
- **For small, grassroots organizations to play bigger roles in census outreach efforts, more funding—and accessible funding mechanisms—must be dedicated for this purpose.** This was especially the case in 2020, since GOTC was happening at the same time as Get Out The Vote efforts, which limited the capacities of many grassroots groups for GOTC.
- **GOTC efforts would benefit from more support for collaboration across sectors and regions.** Many municipality-based complete count committees were very hands-on, and their efforts benefited greatly from access to funding, data and marketing resources, and information distributed by the state; from local accountability mechanisms (e.g., from city councils); and from ad hoc information sharing and collaboration. However, municipalities and nonprofit organizations missed having a more formal mechanism for information exchange and collaboration within and across sectors and regions. In addition to benefiting from others’ ideas and experiences, such a mechanism would allow GOTC efforts to benefit from complementary areas of expertise among different stakeholders across municipalities and sectors. Robust collaborative structures, and the momentum they can harness, could also help municipalities engage employees from other parts of their own governments (e.g., agency directors) who are otherwise challenging to activate. Finally, more active philanthropic support may have been helpful for establishing a structure for cross-sector collaboration, particularly in the absence of state support directed toward this.
- **Even the strongest media campaigns cannot replace the power of face-to-face community engagement.** Just as historically undercounted communities are best reached by trusted messengers, they are also more likely to access resources that are integrated into trusted digital spaces (e.g., a website they go to for a needed resource versus a website with only census resources). Even so, the digital divide (lack of access to technology and the internet) prevents many in historically

undercounted communities from accessing digital resources without targeted support. Further, those relying only on digital outreach for GOTC missed the benefit of refining messages based on information and feedback they would have gotten while canvassing.

- **Legislation requiring state governments to provide a minimum amount of funding to each municipality-based complete count committee would ensure sufficient staffing for local GOTC efforts.** Minimum funding thresholds based on a municipality's general population size and/or historically undercounted population size would allow local governments to sufficiently staff GOTC efforts—e.g., a full-time census coordinator—and would be a worthy goal for national advocacy groups.

LOOKING FORWARD

Without a collaborative infrastructure to support statewide GOTC, and considering municipalities' tendency to staff census efforts with time-limited positions, it is difficult for newly established relationships to endure. Stakeholders hope that the ties among those who interacted as part of census efforts will be sustained (e.g., community grant recipients).



DATA SOURCES

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

- Common Cause Maryland
- Advocates for Children and Youth
- Baltimore City Department of Planning
- Maryland Philanthropy Network (by email only)

NOTES

- [1] The Washington, DC region is known colloquially as the “DMV” and includes the Maryland counties of Calvert, Charles, Frederick, Montgomery, and Prince George’s (which includes the cities of Bethesda, Frederick, Gaithersburg, Rockville, and Silver Spring).
- [2] “Baltimore City Census 2020 Action Plan,” City of Baltimore 2020 Census, accessed June 30, 2021, <https://census2020.baltimorecity.gov/>.
- [3] Term for formerly incarcerated individuals