

MISSOURI

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 Missouri based on review of secondary data, and interviews with key actors involved (n=2).

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

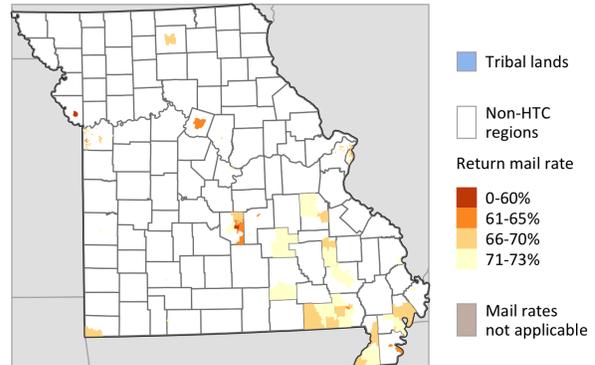
6,090,062

TOTAL POPULATION

541,306

TOTAL POPULATION LIVING IN HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED CENSUS TRACTS

HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED TRACTS BY COUNTY



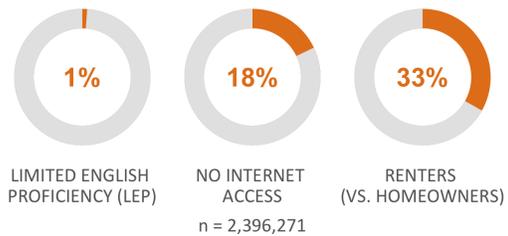
Special update/enumerate method used for counting as mail return rates are not applicable

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.

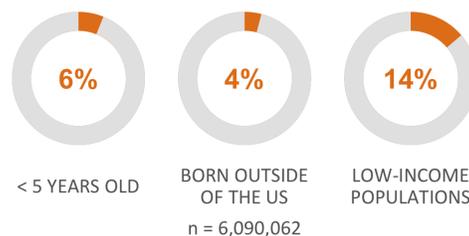
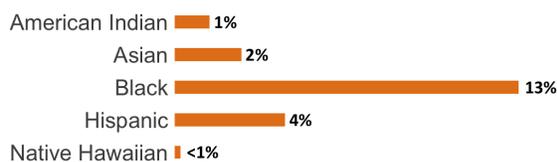
HOUSEHOLDS

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:

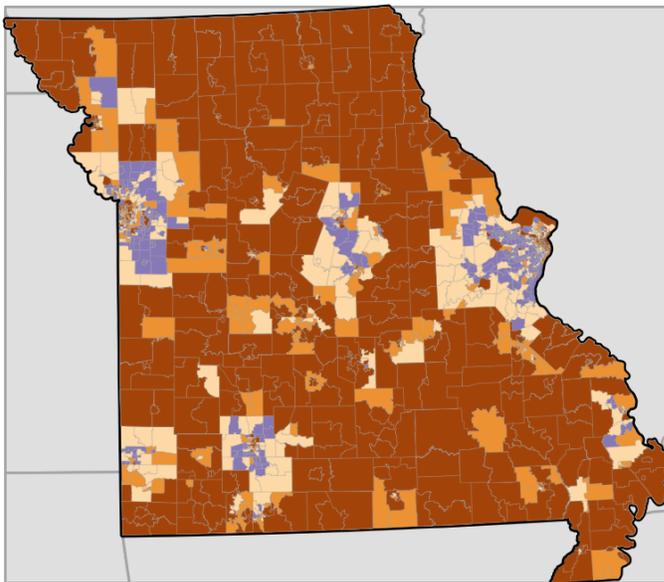




OVERVIEW OF CENSUS SELF-RESPONSE RATES

YEAR	SELF RESPONSE	CHANGE
2020	65.9%	-1.6
2010	67.5%	

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

Census outreach in Missouri was organized via statewide and regional networks that included representation from philanthropic funders, government, and grassroots organizations across the state. Two regional funder groups played leading roles in these networks. The Missouri Foundation for Health (MFH), a St. Louis-based funder, convened a regional funders network in 2018 with the creation of a St. Louis Regional Census Fund, consisting of multiple philanthropic players in the healthcare space, to organize a census response in the St. Louis region. Also in 2018, the state of Missouri created a State Complete Count Committee to organize efforts on behalf of the state. In 2019, funders in the Kansas City area started the KC Census Equity Fund to promote the census in that area. The State Complete Count Committee and the two regional funder groups made the decision early on to coordinate their efforts. The state agreed to undertake a broad-based media and communication campaign, while the regional groups focused on efforts to use outreach strategies aimed at historically undercounted populations to complement and augment the State Complete Count Committee's efforts. In addition to running a media campaign, the State Complete Count Committee formed different subcommittees focused on leveraging cross-sector partnerships to promote the census. In particular, the Committee focused on faith-based and educational institutions. The State Complete Count Committee identified private-sector champions to work closely with the business community to conduct outreach.

MFH, along with the St. Louis Regional Fund members, was a leading actor in census outreach efforts in the St. Louis area. MFH also supported census efforts in other regions of the state, including in the southwest, southeast, central, and northeast regions of the state. MFH also implemented the Missouri Counts campaign, which disseminated census-supportive messaging via a variety of communication mechanisms. Often, MFH worked with local regional partners to coordinate efforts. For example, the Southwest Missouri Council of Governments acted as a coordinating council in the region to unify efforts among 10 counties to do shared coordination and outreach. There was less regional coordination among groups working in central, northeast, and southeast Missouri. Funders in the Kansas City region formed the KC Census Equity Fund and acted as a hub for census work in that region.

Table 1: Key actors involved in Census Efforts²:

Actor	Role
Missouri Foundation for Health	MFH created a regional census funders table, the St. Louis Regional Census Fund, that laid the groundwork for funding outreach in the St. Louis area. MFH also created the “Missouri Counts” campaign, a communication campaign aimed at complementing the State Complete Count Committee’s broader media campaign. They also provided grants to organizations in many other regions of the state to ensure these areas were not neglected.
Kansas City Census Equity Fund	The Metro Kansas City Census Equity Fund, an initiative organized by a coalition of private and public foundations, including the Health Forward Foundation and the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, awarded grants to 23 nonprofit organizations to mobilize hard-to-count and other vulnerable populations in the Kansas City metropolitan area.
State Complete Count Committee	The Committee conducted a broad-based media campaign and mobilized cross-sector partners across the state in support of the census.

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

Overall, state government and philanthropic funders contributed approximately \$1.5 million to 2020 Census efforts.

Table 2: Funding for 2020 Census Outreach³

Funding Source and Amount	Funding Purpose
<p>Philanthropy: \$1,025,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$450,000 pooled by the St. Louis Regional Census Fund coalition of funders that covered eight state counties. Overall, the group provided funding (\$5,000 to \$20,000) to approximately 30 community-based organizations specializing in direct service and voter engagement to conduct census outreach. • In addition to contributing to the St. Louis Regional Census Fund, the MFH contributed an additional \$300,000 for census outreach to 12 other organizations focused on other regions of the state and also funded the Missouri Counts communications campaign. • The KC Census Equity Fund provided \$275,000 to 23 organizations in the Kansas City region.
<p>State Government: \$501,650</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The state funds primarily supported a media campaign in support of the census.
<p>In-Kind Contributions: Unknown</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grassroots organizations made in-kind donations in many areas of 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

DESCRIPTION OF 2020 CENSUS OUTREACH

Funders worked closely with grassroots organizations in developing their strategy. Funders worked closely with nonprofit groups to develop census strategy. In May 2019, the St. Louis Regional Census Fund held a meeting with community-based organizations to build awareness about the census and get feedback on strategies to engage populations across the state. MFH had another meeting in Poplar Bluff, MO. Kansas City organizations held a Kansas City-area meeting as well. Funders learned much from the initial meetings, and these early conversations helped inform grantmaking strategy.

On-the-ground efforts sought to leverage existing infrastructure to get the word out about the census. For example, some of the grassroots organizations that were ultimately funded were part of a state non-profit table on voter engagement and thus were well positioned to undertake outreach in undercounted communities. The infrastructure of the c3 table made it easier for groups to work collaboratively with other organizations to ensure they were not duplicating efforts and to share best practices around community outreach.

Those involved sought to develop messages and messengers that would be well positioned to implement outreach. For example, MFH used a combination of state-based and national survey data to inform development of census messaging. One local group engaged a local meatpacking union to provide translated materials to their members to encourage them to participate in the census.

Grassroots groups began engaging communities in 2019, using a variety of engagement mechanisms. For example, some groups sought to engage communities primarily in person, implementing a door-knocking campaign to canvass in communities where they expected there to be greater distrust of the census. Many in-person efforts went online with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. Groups also used a wide range of other engagement strategies, including postcards, text banking, and mailings. Several groups tried to integrate census activities into COVID-19 activities, such as putting Missouri Counts collateral at food- and mask-distribution sites.

The State Complete Count Committee and MFH mobilized cross-sector partners across the state to promote the census. The state Chamber of Commerce produced messaging and sent information to their membership to spread to communities. Other regional chambers of commerce collaborated to conduct outreach and hold webinars. MFH asked county and State Complete Count Committee agency-leads to engage school districts and universities via the Department of Education, believing the agencies would have some sway with school districts. Religious groups such as Missouri Faith Voices also played an important effort in conducting outreach, because there is a strong coalition of faith-based organizations across the state.

The State Complete Count Committee undertook a radio campaign to promote the census. MFH also created billboards across the state in specific areas to better target populations in rural areas with limited

access to broadband. MFH also supported an online digital campaign to promote the census.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted in-person engagement. In response, groups shifted to online efforts. Other groups tried to leverage new opportunities created by the pandemic. For example, Missouri Jobs with Justice staff volunteered for the Missouri Rural Crisis phonebank to get the word out and reach communities looking for direct service throughout the pandemic.

The State Complete Count Committee and MFH worked together to understand which populations had been undercounted in 2010, and devised strategies to engage these populations in 2020. For example, in southeast Missouri, MFH targeted Poplar Bluff County (which had a poor count in 2010) and engaged business leaders as well as community-based organizations in the region to help conduct outreach.



LESSONS LEARNED

- **Although the overall level of collaboration was high, efforts in some areas were relatively siloed.** A more coordinated approach could have led to better identification of gaps and allowed for better prioritization of effort within certain communities.
- **The collaboration across the different efforts in the state helped avoid duplication and improve reach.** The collaboration between the State Complete Count Committee and the two regional funder groups helped ensure the alignment of efforts.
- **The involvement of grassroots groups in planning ensured the focus remained on underrepresented communities throughout the effort.** This focus was sustained because of the number of funded advocacy groups that were led by people of color.

LOOKING FORWARD

- Many of the grassroots organizations that partnered on this effort are still working together and thinking more holistically about building community and worker power in Missouri over the long term, especially for communities of color across the state.



DATA SOURCES

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

- Missouri Foundation for Health
- Caitlyn Adams, Missouri Jobs with Justice