

NEVADA

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 Nevada 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

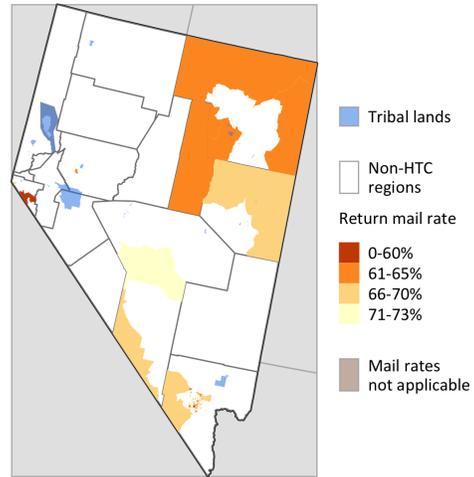
2,922,849

TOTAL POPULATION

948,746

TOTAL POPULATION LIVING IN HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED CENSUS TRACTS

HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED TRACTS BY COUNTY



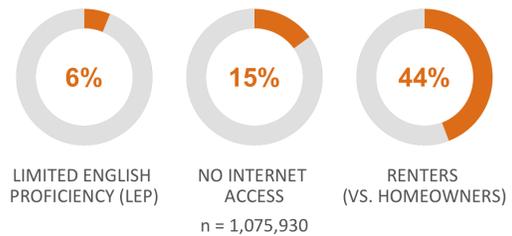
Special update/enumerate method used for counting as mail return rates are not applicable

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.

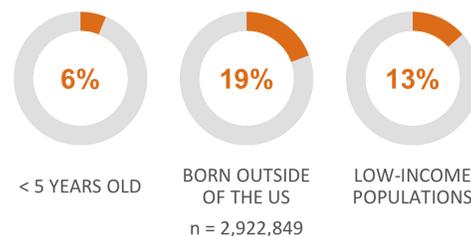
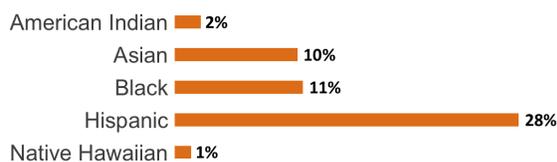
HOUSEHOLDS

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



INDIVIDUALS

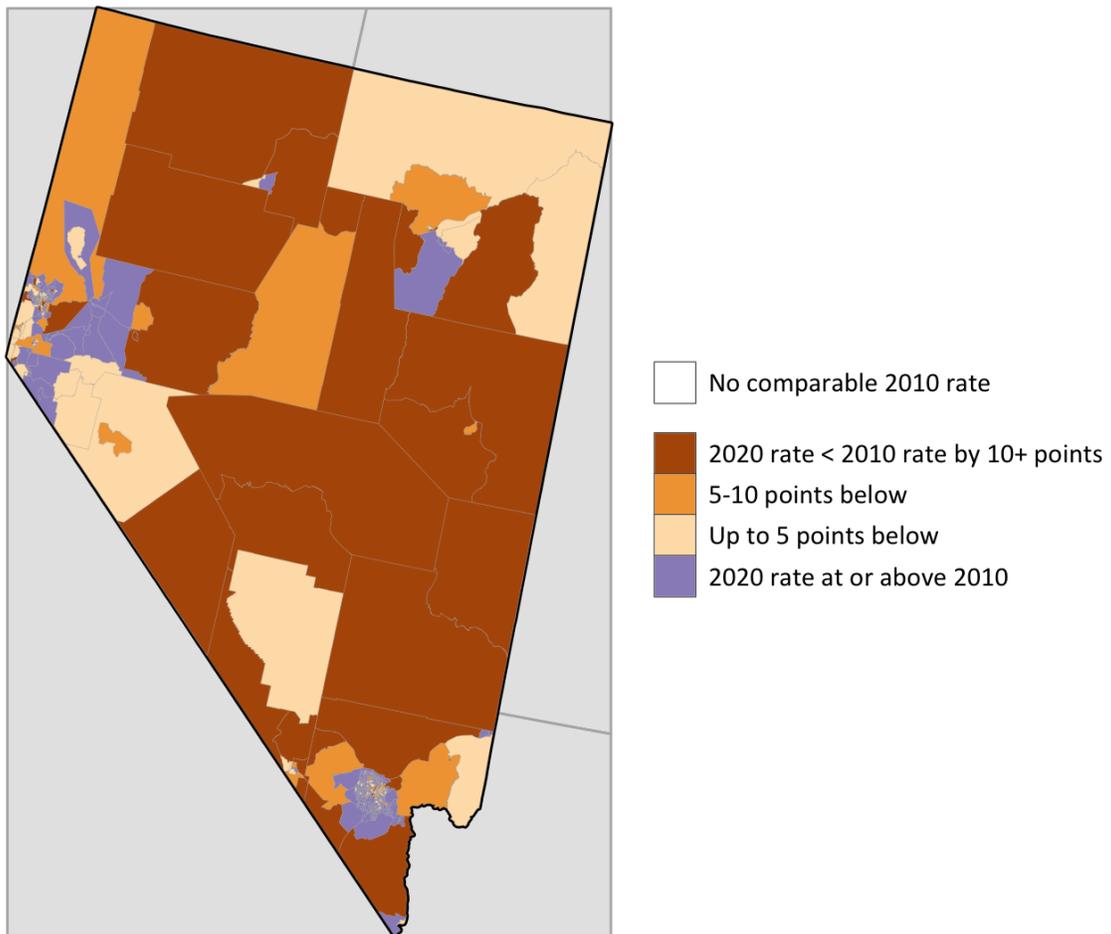
Percent of total number of individuals in the state that have characteristics of historically undercounted populations:



OVERVIEW OF CENSUS SELF-RESPONSE RATES

YEAR	SELF RESPONSE	CHANGE
2020	66.6%	+5.2
2010	61.4%	

CENSUS TRACTS WHERE 2020 CENSUS RETURN RATE WAS LOWER THAN 2010



STRUCTURE OF CENSUS OUTREACH

Efforts to reach a complete count for the 2020 Census in Nevada were supported through the coalescence of highly engaged key actors and organizations. Silver State Voices (SSV), a coalition of nonprofits that serves at the state civic engagement table, began aligning partners around prioritization of census work as early as 2017. Census activities began more rapidly developing after Governor Steve Sisolak formed and budgeted the work of a State Complete Count Committee in April 2019. Around this time, SSV dually joined the State Complete Count Committee and closely partnered with Children’s Advocacy Alliance to launch “Nevadans Count,” a 35-member working group and campaign focused on census outreach.

Strategic planning for census outreach took form later in 2019, with SSV leading efforts to build a vision in conjunction with their partners. The Nevadans Count campaign leveraged existing relationships within SSV, and the work was further strengthened through the involvement of organizations outside of the coalition with shared interest in achieving a more complete count. Most of the census activities took place around Clark and Washoe County, the two counties with the largest populations. The State Complete Count Committee and campaign partners relied on collaborations with community organizations across the state to develop targeted messaging for undercounted groups and activate local outreach efforts, often engaging with local government and businesses. To financially support community organizations in their census outreach and complete count efforts, SSV also secured outside funding and served as a regranting organization. As outreach went on, weekly census communication hub calls with campaign partners were instrumental in continuing to exchange and amplify information across partners, and the Census Bureau partnership specialist used this medium to keep the group regularly informed of the latest census developments.

The State Complete Count Committee also acted as a collaborative space for information exchange and facilitated coordination across efforts. Through their early mobilization around census efforts, SSV established relationships within state government and supported its intention to involve a diverse set of stakeholders when forming the State Complete Count Committee. The resulting committee makeup (e.g., education, veterans, and hard-to-count subcommittees) leveraged diverse leadership from their respective groups and informed strategic planning efforts for successful outreach. Ultimately, the Census Bureau and State Complete Count Committee relied on the Update Leave special operations to drop off questionnaires in hard-to-reach rural communities and improve the count, an effort for which campaign partners prepared communities during the latter half of efforts.

Table 1: Key actors involved in Census Efforts²:

Actor	Role
Silver State Voices	A coalition of 16 organizations in Clark and Washoe County and the state civic engagement table for nonprofits in Nevada, representing nonprofit interests on the State Complete Count Committee. As census advocates and regranters, they worked closely with partner organizations to develop and implement strategies for complete count efforts.
State Complete Count Committee	The State Complete Count Committee played an instrumental role in gathering multi sector stakeholders to collaborate, exchange information, and inform strategic efforts for complete count activities.

FUNDING FOR CENSUS OUTREACH

Resources for Nevada census efforts came from a combination of philanthropy, state government, and in-kind contributions of materials and staff time. Overall, those involved in the efforts estimate that **over \$5.53 million in resources were leveraged within the state**, mostly in state government and philanthropic dollars, as well as through an unknown amount of in-kind contributions.

Table 2: Funding for 2020 Census Outreach³

Funding Source and Amount	Funding Purpose
Philanthropy: \$530,000	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Silver State Voices raised \$530,000 for census work, including \$400,000 from the national Census Equity Fund and \$130,000 from the Grove Foundation. The funding covered the organization’s census-related expenses, such as materials and staff time, and established a fund for regranteeing. Most of the funding was redistributed to local community partners to fund targeted outreach efforts, including their census-related staff capacity, materials, and travel.

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

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"> • In April 2019, the state government enacted SB504 to budget \$5 million toward outreach and educational census activities. State budget reductions in response to COVID-19 likely affected the true amount expended.
<p>In-Kind Contributions: unknown</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many organizations contributed staff time and other resources to census efforts within the state.

DESCRIPTION OF 2020 CENSUS OUTREACH

Organizers used a mix of print media, telecommunications, in-person outreach, and creative advertising methods to engage the general public for a complete count. Texting, phone banking, and op-eds in local newspapers pushed consistent messaging in support of census participation throughout the state, especially in the time leading up to National Census Day on April 1. Collaboration across partners facilitated much of the work. For example, community organizations guided the development of culturally responsive and multilingual ads for social media campaigns, various city governments supported outreach event planning, and civic engagement groups coordinated literature drops with joint census and voting information. Using response rate data toward the late stages of efforts, four mobile marketing trucks were deployed to advertise census call response information on routes along areas with less than 50% response rate.

Outreach activities were concentrated in the more populated areas of Washoe and Clark counties, but efforts were made to engage communities across the state. Campaign members engaged with local partners to activate on-the-ground outreach efforts in more sparsely populated areas, including drive-through fairs at area schools, collaborative programming through Head Start providers, and tabling with census information and real-time assistance for completion at area supermarkets, swap meets, and churches.

Organizations leveraged their trusted community relationships to facilitate information sessions with census experts and reach the most undercounted groups. Undercounted people in Nevada include low-income and single-parent households, young children, and Black, Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI), Latinx, and Indigenous communities. In addition to informing targeted messaging for the campaign, some organizations bridged census experts to their constituents to provide their expertise and dispel misinformation. For example, Children’s Advocacy Alliance was regularly invited to speak at family-oriented events hosted by partner organizations on Facebook Live to educate others about counting children between the ages of zero and five years old, who are frequently undercounted.

Undercounted groups were effectively reached through community organizations who led culturally responsive census outreach activities. CHISPA, Mi Familia Vota, and Make the Road Nevada represent the interests of Latinx communities and were involved in outreach activities, including engaging local elected officials and hosting reoccurring bilingual community events to encourage census participation among

immigrant households. The Asian Community Development Council hosted a series of events in various languages for multicultural engagement. Some groups collaborated for census activities, such as a local partnership with the National Congress of American Indians to host a variety of digital events, as well as Make it Work Nevada, a Black community advocacy organization, which leveraged its existing relationship with the only Head Start provider in the city of Las Vegas for drive-through resource fairs.

Key actors proactively responded to the challenges of the first digital census through refined messaging. In anticipation of many first-time census respondents, challenges of online responses for certain undercounted groups, and an increased risk of misinformation campaigns through pandemic relief efforts, campaign leaders prepared educational information and awareness language. Early on, campaigners pushed messaging that online was not the only form of participation as part of their strategy.

COVID-19 impacted the collaboration efforts within the State Complete Count Committee and created challenges for reaching undercounted groups in rural areas. Organizations shifted to more census mailers, online event planning, and telecommunications, leaning on national affiliate data resources to ramp up phone banking and text messaging while continuing to brainstorm ways to engage with offline communities. One such tactic was sending a screen-recorded video of census form completion so that others would see the process from trusted sources and be encouraged to participate themselves. Other partners redirected their funding toward safe and creative methods of live engagement, such as Make the Road's "Cena and Census" dinnertime informational video calls with Latinx families over provided meals.

LESSONS LEARNED

- **The Nevadans Count campaign and State Complete Count Committee were successful in complete count efforts despite many challenges.** SSV's early involvement in census efforts led to more established relationships with state government, and collaboration on the State Complete Count Committee was instrumental in helping outreach organizations adapt to shifting deadlines. Targeted partnerships with local leaders, such as those in the faith-based community, helped campaigners connect to many diverse groups. Key actors cite Nevada's surpassing of the 2010 census response rate in July 2020—despite the Census Bureau's pandemic response withdrawal of outreach efforts until August—as an indicator of successful organizing strategies and complete count activities.
- **Key actors believed that more focused organizing around addressing the undercount of children in Nevada and inviting Children's Advocacy Alliance as a Nevadans Counts partner resulted in better and more frequent messaging for parents to count their young children in census responses.**
- **Digital engagement strategies such as Facebook Live events drew large public audiences.** The events connected audiences ranging from 300 to over 4,000 viewers with notable speakers, including elected officials at every level of government (city council, county commissioners, state legislators, the Lieutenant Governor, and congressional members) and field experts (e.g., health and education specialists) in promotion of the census.
- **Although the structure worked well, earlier and greater capacity within leading groups could have further strengthened activities.** More funding funneled through regranteeing would have raised the capacity of community partner organizations and led to greater collective success.
- **Challenges remain to reach the undercounted groups who remain offline or are most responsive through in-person communication.** A technological divide among groups created outreach challenges, and organizations had to adapt quickly in response to the census. Key actors felt that among groups with the knowledge and access to respond digitally, canvassing to relay the importance in-person would have improved the response rates among the most hesitant.

LOOKING FORWARD

Partnerships built from 2020 Census activities in Nevada will be leveraged to support future efforts. With a more developed awareness of shared organizational missions and work, the network of potential partners has expanded. Campaign partners also stand to benefit from the working relationship established with the Lieutenant Governor's office through census efforts. Recognizing the state's fledgling grassroots organizing, current leadership intends to continue preparing for future census work, including the potential challenges around the count of undocumented people and redistricting battles facing the growing state.



DATA SOURCES

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

- Silver State Voices (n=2)