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The Nonprofit Nerd (April 2018)

The Nonprofit Institute at Portland State University

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The Nonprofit
Institute
PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY

Monthly Newsletter
October 2016

THE NONPROFIT NERD

Research you can use.

This month's topic is the 2020 Census

You may have heard that the U.S. government is preparing for the next Census in 2020. Did you know that [Oregon has joined seventeen other states in a lawsuit](#) to block changes to the Census? Do you know what's at stake for your nonprofit and the communities you serve? (hint: a lot!)

In this e-news, we interview Jason Jurjevich and Charles Rynerson of PSU's Population Research Center to understand how nonprofits can **take action** by getting involved in local Complete Count Committees and by sharing important information with their communities.

Let the resources and insights we share in The Nonprofit Nerd inspire you to get your nerd on and find innovative ways to make research and data work for you and your nonprofit!



RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT

In addition to being one of the most important population data sets used in research, planning and evaluation, the Census also informs major policy decisions including voting districts and the allocation of billions of federal dollars for education, health care, housing and transportation programs, including about [\\$10 billion in Oregon alone](#). Many of those funds reached local communities through nonprofit programs and services.

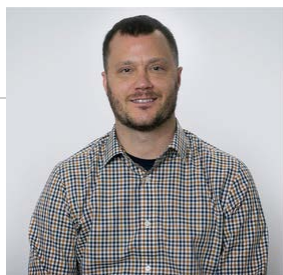
Undercounting is an Equity Issue

[Vu Le of NAF recently said that achieving an accurate count in the Census is a social justice issue.](#) When people aren't counted, they are deprived of political representation and their fair share of community resources. Yet some individuals are at high risk of not being counted, and the methods used to conduct the Census can create further barriers. [The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights](#) has compiled a resource library documenting the history and impact of undercounting people of color, immigrants and rural communities, along with some great culturally specific resources to help communities boost participation.

[PSU's Population Research Center](#) is part of a national network of State Data Centers that partner with the Census Bureau to improve coordination with local governments and nonprofits. They recently launched [Census 20/20 Now](#), a resource site to foster community preparedness and inspire individual action to support a fair and accurate census in 2020 and beyond. In 2010, 250,000 nonprofit and community-based organizations mobilized across the country to improve the census and make sure their communities were counted. In 2020, this mobilization will be more important than ever. Be sure to check out their resource library, including their [map of hard-to-count regions in Oregon](#) where local partner support will be especially critical, and information about [forming volunteer Complete Count Committees](#) in your community.



NERDS AT WORK



This month we feature an interview with [Dr. Jason Jurjevich](#) and [Dr. Charles Rynerson](#) of PSU's Population Research Center

Many of our readers will be familiar with the Census and census data, but perhaps not everyone knows how the census is conducted. What process does the federal government follow to collect data? Where are we in that process right now?



Since 1790, the U.S. has conducted a census every ten years according to Article 1, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution. Social and economic data formerly collected in the decennial census are now collected in the American Community Survey (ACS).

Since 2010, the U.S. Census Bureau has administered the decennial census using a brief questionnaire to collect basic demographic data for individuals (i.e. age, sex, Hispanic origin, race, relationship) as well as for households (i.e. homeownership status).

Counting more than 300 million people takes a lot of resources and planning. To address the increasing cost of administering the decennial census, bureau officials are implementing a number of data and technological innovations in the [design approach for Census 2020](#). Two important Census 2020 programs, already underway, include Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) and 2018 Census Field Testing.

What role do local governments and community-based organizations play in

conducting the census?

Local governments and community-based organizations are essential for achieving a fair, complete, and accurate census. [For important upcoming dates in 2018](#) and beyond, including outreach and collaborative partnership programs for Get Out the Count (GOTC), check out [Census 20/20 Now](#).

The **first opportunity** for tribal and local governments to participate in Census 2020 is the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) program. Beginning in January 2018, the program sent registered governments the U.S. Census Bureau's residential address list for their jurisdiction. By reviewing and providing feedback on the master list of residential addresses, local officials certify the accuracy of the list, which helps the bureau determine where to count individuals. Registered governments have until June 2018 to complete their review.

The **second opportunity** for planning and coordinating census efforts locally is to form a Complete Count Committee (CCC). A CCC is a volunteer committee established by tribal, state, and local governments and community leaders to increase awareness of Census 2020, ultimately focused on maximizing census participation. Committees are most effective when they include a cross-section of the community, meaning the committee includes individuals from government, education, business, religious organizations, the media, and community groups. The advantages of CCCs are three-fold:

1. increased census response rates leading to lower undercount of immigrant and people of color,
2. local input and broad community participation and,
3. better organization and preparedness to avoid duplicating efforts.

In summer 2018, the U.S. Census Bureau will roll out its Integrated Partnership and Communications Operation Program. This program will detail the research and data-driven approach for Census 2020, highlight key outreach priorities, and outline integration with local partners and stakeholders. For now, organizations that are interested in joining a Complete Count Committee should contact [Charmaine Ramos](#), U.S. Census Bureau Partnership Specialist for the Pacific Northwest (including Alaska). More information on the 2020 Census Integrated Communications Plan is available [here](#), and additional resources for local governments and community-based organizations will be available in the coming months at [Census 20/20 Now](#).

There are some significant differences in how the census is being conducted this decade. What are some of the most significant changes we should be aware of? What concerns have been voiced about those changes?

The U.S. Census Bureau is implementing a number of data and technological [innovations](#) for Census 2020, hoping to achieve a smarter and more efficient census. These include, but are not limited to, improved address canvassing, better use of information technology, more efficient field operations, and harnessing the strength of government and administrative data.

One of the most significant changes from previous censuses is that the internet will be the primary response option, in addition to paper and phone. A concern however, is the digital divide among American households. More than three-quarters of Americans have internet access, but accessibility is lower for people of color, older adults, immigrants, individuals living outside metropolitan areas, and by educational attainment and household income. [Data](#) from the 2015 American Community Survey (ACS) show that:

- Among Black and Hispanic households, 64.9 and 70.9 percent, respectively, have internet access.
- Among individuals 65 years and older, 63.1 percent of individuals have internet access.

- The lowest rates of internet access are among limited English speaking households, households earning less than \$25,000, and households where individuals have less than a high school degree. Among these three groups, internet access is 55.8, 51.7, and 48.5 percent, respectively.

According to a Leadership Conference Education Fund policy [brief](#), the bureau plans on accounting for the digital divide by segmenting households as either “internet-first” or “internet-choice.” Households with demographic characteristics located in a geographic areas indicating consistent internet access are termed “internet-first” households and will be encouraged to fill out their census form on-line. Households with low internet connectivity will be labeled “internet-choice” households and will receive both the paper questionnaire and information for responding on-line.

To ensure the safety and security of census data, the U.S. Census Bureau will rely on Department of Homeland Security (DHS) cybersecurity systems for systems processing and data collection. Despite this assurance, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) has [outlined](#) a number of concerns around information technology, leading the GAO to classify Census 2020 as a “high-risk” government initiative.

This issue, along with recent high-profile data breaches in business, government, and healthcare operations, means it will be critical for the Bureau to ensure respondents that their data is safe and secure through education and outreach.

There are some particular concerns about low response rates for the 2020 Census among certain communities, given the recent increases in hate crimes and anti-immigrant rhetoric. In light of this, what messages or information about Census 2020 are important for nonprofits to share with their communities right now?

A major challenge of any census is ensuring that everyone gets counted. Certain individuals, referred to as hard-to-count populations, are often excluded or undercounted in the census. These individuals include children, rural residents, individuals of color, immigrants, people experiencing homelessness, renters, and others. According to Dr. William O'Hare, there are multiple reasons why individuals are undercounted, including: home address not included in census address roster, fear of government, privacy concerns, language issues, complex household relationships, and highly mobile populations with multiple addresses.

Census advocates and scholars are particularly concerned about response rates among immigrant groups and individuals of color given the decision in March 2018 by U.S. Commerce Department Secretary, Wilbur Ross, to include a question on [citizenship status](#). More information explaining the controversy and rationale for including the citizenship question is available at [Census 20/20 Now](#). Former Director of the U.S. Census Bureau, John Thompson, [notes](#) that including a citizenship question that has not been tested will likely affect “the rate, quality, and truthfulness of response” and will “run the risk of introducing serious undercounts for many population groups in the 2020 Census.”

Currently there are [two tools available at Census 20/20 Now](#) that compute a hard-to-count score for identifying hard-to-count neighborhoods. Local governments and community leaders looking to ensure a fair and accurate census count can use these tools for conducting census outreach, engagement, and education.

If people are interested in getting involved, what are some opportunities to do that? What are some good resources for people who want to learn more?

Unfortunately, the current sociopolitical environment has introduced a number of barriers to achieving a fair and accurate census count. Year-over-year funding deficiencies, changes in census leadership, implementation of new technology and approaches, and the recent addition of the citizenship status question all represent clear and present challenges.

To achieve the best count possible in every community across Oregon, **we encourage individuals to form a CCC by mid-summer** (contact [Charmaine Ramos](#), U.S. Census Bureau Partnership Specialist for the Pacific Northwest) and coordinate with the newly approved Census Coordinator for Oregon, part of the [Governor's Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Affirmative Action](#).

We also suggest interested individuals consult the following initiatives and resources:

- [U.S. Census Bureau, Census 2020 page](#) and [Census 2010 Community Partner Resource Library](#)
- [Census 20/20 Now](#)
- [The Census Project](#)
- [National Association of Counties Futures Lab](#)
- [Leadership Conference Education Fund](#)
- [National Council of State Legislatures](#)

Know someone you'd like to see featured in the Nonprofit Nerd? Tell us who and why!



INSTITUTE NEWS

We've begun accepting applications for our Fall 2018 Professional Certificate in Program Evaluation! [Register by June 30th](#) to take advantage of early bird pricing!

Join PSU's Center for Public Service at their [4th Annual Celebration of Public Service](#) on Saturday, April 28th. This year's program "Unite, Innovate, Transform" will include the presentation of Lifetime Achievement and Torch Awards, as well as speakers to engage us on the topic of how we re-invigorate and re-imagine public service in these challenging times.



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