

Pennsylvania and the Census

The U.S. Census Bureau's goal for the federal decennial census is to **count all the people** living in the United States, **count them only once and count them in the right place**. States care about the census because its data are used for the distribution of federal funding and political power, and is used by decision-makers in the private and public sectors at all levels.

The census is a **federal project** conducted with federal funding, although **some states, including Pennsylvania, have allocated funding for census outreach**.

This profile includes: a) what census data means for Pennsylvania in terms of political and economic power, b) key demographic data for Pennsylvania, and c) what Pennsylvania is doing to encourage a full count.

POLITICAL POWER

Every decade, the seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are recalculated based on the latest census data. The new apportionment of congressional seats will be released on Dec. 31, 2020. According to Election Data Services, **Pennsylvania is projected to lose a seat**, going from 18 to 17 congressional seats. That means Pennsylvania also will have one less electoral college seat.

Census data is also the foundation for Pennsylvania's General Assembly to draw congressional districts and the Reapportionment Commission to draw legislative districts.

CORE PENNSYLVANIA STATS

Pennsylvania's total population was 12,702,379, according to the 2010 Census. **In 2018, the Census Bureau's estimate for Pennsylvania's population was 12,807,060, a growth of 0.82% in nine years**. Pennsylvania has the 5th largest population in the nation, and its growth rate is 43rd.

HARD TO COUNT POPULATIONS AND UNDERCOUNTS

The Census Bureau estimates **17.7% of people in Pennsylvania did not self-respond to the 2010 census**, representing what have come to be known as "hard to count" populations. Generally, the hard-to-count groups tend to be children younger than 5, immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, rural residents, low-income people, homeless and Native Americans.

Nationwide, the Census Bureau estimated an overcount of 0.01% in 2010, though individual states could have either an overcount or an undercount. Both overcounts and undercounts can create inaccuracies and affect states' needs. **In Pennsylvania the undercount was estimated at 17,400**. Undercounts affect a state's federal funding and potentially congressional representation if they are on the cusp of losing or gaining a seat.

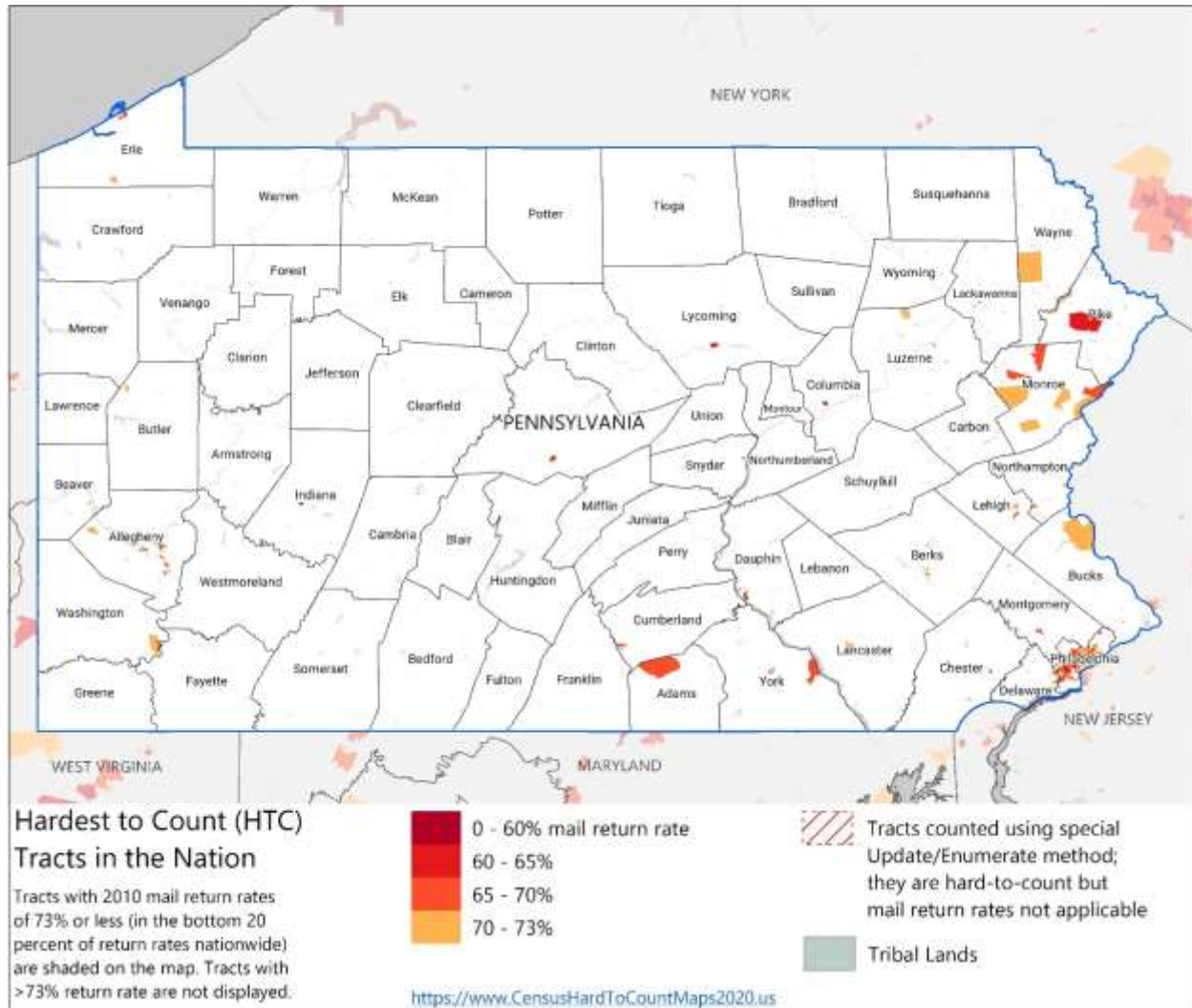
ECONOMIC POWER

Federal funding is distributed to states and localities based on formulas that rely on census data. Based on Counting for Dollars 2020 by Andrew Reamer of George Washington University, **Pennsylvania received \$39,179,047,733 in FY2016** from federal funds distributed through 55 federal spending programs that are guided by data derived from the 2010 census. **That equals \$3,084.39 per Pennsylvania resident**, on average, and every year in this decade.

Private and public sector decisionmakers often rely on census data as well. The Census Bureau has created several tools for public use, including the Economic Census and the

ENSURING A COMPLETE COUNT

Pennsylvania has created the Governor's **Census 2020 Complete Count Commission**, and appropriated \$4,000,000 for outreach to ensure that Pennsylvania residents are all counted.



CONTACTS AND RESOURCES

- Pennsylvania census contact: Norman Bristol-Colon, nbristolco@pa.gov
- [Census 2020 Complete Count Commission](#) and [Pennsylvania Counts 2020](#)
- [Census Bureau's Regional Offices](#)
- [Census Bureau's 2020 Census Toolkit for State and Local Officials](#)
- POGO Report on how five federal programs affect [Pennsylvania](#) communities.
- NCSL's LegisBrief, [State Efforts to Support the Census](#)
- NCSL's LegisBrief, [What You Need to Know about the Census](#)
- NCSL's LegisBrief, [Everyone Needs to Be Counted, But How?](#)
- NCSL's [2020 Census Talking Points \(for Legislators and Others\)](#)
- NCSL's webpage, [2020 Census Resources and Legislation](#)
- NCSL contacts: Wendy Underhill (Wendy.underhill@ncsl.org) and Christi Zamarripa (Christi.zamarripa@ncsl.org)

Thank you to the Center for Urban Research at the CUNY Graduate Center for providing the map for this profile. An interactive version of the map is online at www.CensusHardtoCountMaps2020.us.