



## EDITORIAL

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### Undercounted Populations in the Census

The Census is our best source of information about our communities. It tells us what groups of people are growing, which are shrinking, and gives us a big picture view of our neighbors. The Census is not like a survey where we just need a small sample of people. The Census is a count of everybody, at least in theory. Unfortunately, some populations are more likely to be undercounted.

In Minnesota, the Census has historically undercounted young children, people of color, indigenous people, low-income households, people with disabilities, renter households, and snowbirds, among others. A project called The CoCreation Table with support from Grassroots Solutions has studied how to improve the count of these underserved groups. After speaking with 200 people from across the state, they found nearly a dozen reasons why the Census has missed its target of counting everyone.

The project found that many people do not know what the census is or why it is done. People are also fearful, both of random people showing up at their house and with how the data might be used against them. Some people feel the information is “none of your business” and the questions are an invasion of privacy. Other groups have been historically traumatized or exploited by the government in the past and are skeptical of the government asking personal questions. Similarly, indigenous populations feel they have effectively “been erased” and are invisible to the broader society. People also do not see the Census as their own, but rather an imposition upon them from an outside entity. Undercounted populations want to learn about the Census from people like them. The study also found that community members have not heard stories of how the Census actually benefits them or their community in real, not abstract terms. And finally, some people are not aware of the Census timeline or the process of how it works. These are complex issues that require us to keep talking with people about how the Census works and why it is important to take part.

We want to make sure everyone is counted in the Census this April. Encourage your friends, family, and neighbors to take the 10 minutes needed to complete the Census, either online, by phone, by mail, or with a Census worker. Your time invested in the Census will pay off. Political representation, public funding, and community planning projects depend on it.

To learn more about the CoCreation Table and Grassroots Solutions study, visit <https://mcf.org/sites/default/files/files/pages/19%20Census%202020%20MN%20Plan%20Themes%20FINAL.pdf>

For more information on undercounted populations, visit  
<https://mn.gov/admin/2020-census/learn-about/who-gets-missed/>

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