Kathryn M. Buder Center for American Indian Studies

Brown School
The 2020 U.S. Census: History and Implications for Native Communities and Researchers

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“Invisibility is the modern form of racism against Native Americans.”

-Dr. Stephanie Fryberg (Tulalip), University of Washington

Reverend Smith enumerates a Navajo family during the 1930 census.
Learning Goals

Negative impact of undercounts and racial misclassification on communities

Buder Center efforts on ensuring accurate AIAN census counts

Support communities most at-risk to complete census during covid-19
Community Representation
Missouri Funding Allocations (2010)

$16.5 Billion
Federal Program Obligations (Fiscal Year 2016)

$6.5B
Medical Assistance Program (Medicaid)

$1.2B
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)

$967M
Highway Planning and Construction

$243M
Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers

$210M
National School Lunch Program

$173M
State Children’s Health Insurance Program (S-CHIP)

*This information adapted from Counting for Dollars®, and does not include all federal program dollars.*
Theory of Change

NEW NARRATIVE

ACTIVATED PRIORITY STAKEHOLDERS
Native and non-Native

CHANGE LEVERS
education, pop culture and arts, media, philanthropy, policies and practices

THE CHANGE WE WISH TO SEE
Native peoples collectively author and lead a powerful narrative change, resulting in a more equitable reality, a lived experience of fully benefiting from and contributing to both Native nations and American society as a whole.

MOVEMENT OF MOVEMENTS
Hard-to-Count Populations

- Areas with high rates of poverty
- Lower levels of educational attainment
- Renters
- Young children
- Low-income
- People of color
- Immigrants
9% of Missouri’s population lives in Hard-to-count census tracts (U.S. Census, 2019)

10.6% of American Indians in Missouri’s lives in Hard-to-count census tracts (ACS, 2011-2015)

80,000 American Indians living in Missouri (U.S. Census, 2010)
‘We are still here’: Native Americans fight to be counted in US census

Native Americans, the census' most undercounted racial group, fight for an accurate 2020 tally
Fearing the widespread implications of an undercount, Native Americans are organizing and educating their communities ahead of the 2020 census.

Indian Country leaders urge Native people to be counted in 2020 Census

American Indian and Alaska Natives are the ethnic group with the highest undercount of any defined by the Census Bureau. According to the 2010 Census, roughly 26 percent of American Indians live in hard-to-count census tracts. More than 80 percent of reservation lands are ranked among the country’s hardest-to-count areas.
What does this mean for public health and social work researchers working with data?
Health Status
Health Care Access
Progress of National Health Objectives
Current Population Survey

Jobs, earnings, educations
Child support, health insurance
Unemployment
Healthcare Quality
Attitudes, Expectations, Behavior
Access to Care
2020 CENSUS: COUNTING EVERYONE ONCE, ONLY ONCE, AND IN THE RIGHT PLACE
A Framework for Hard to Count Populations

- Participation hindered by language, low literacy, lack of internet access
- Housing units not in our frame and/or persons wanting to remain hidden
- Suspicious of the government, low levels of engagement
- Highly mobile, people experiencing homelessness, physical access barriers such as gated communities

hard to locate

hard to interview

hard to contact

hard to persuade
Why are people being undercounted and what can we do about it?
$1 billion is dedicated to Indian Country based on census data

- Build tribal housing and make improvements
- Maintain and construct roads
- Provide employment and training programs.

Native people have been at risk for undercounts for various reasons:

- Miscategorizing mixed-race AIANs
- Language barriers
- Resistance to federal government activities due to historical mistrust
- Lack of culturally knowledgeable Census takers
American Indian Census History

1790
First U.S. Census conducted

1790-1840
Natives not identified in any of these censuses

1860
Natives living in the general population are identified for the first time

1924
Indian Citizen Act granted Native people citizenship

Early 1900s
Natives on reservations and in general population start to be counted

1960
Self-reporting of tribal information replaced census taker mere observations
Racism > Discrimination > Violence
Navajo student, Tom Torlino, when he entered the Carlisle Indian School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, (left) and then three years later.
What is Buder Center doing to ensure an Accurate Count of Native people?

1. Encourage AIAN people to provide detailed responses about race and tribal identities

2. Use trusted community voices to inform citizens about the importance of the census

3. Place 2020 census communication messages in tribal media channels

4. Create culturally appropriate messaging that emphasizes confidentiality, cultural continuity, and how the census secures funding for community programs
The *Natives’ Count* Project
The *Natives’ Count* Project

- A St. Louis Regional Census Fund Grant, a component fund of the St. Louis Community Foundation
- Targeted media campaign, an educational booth at the annual Pow Wow event, and technical assistance to complete census forms.
- Evidence shows that targeted outreach and individualized support can make a difference.
Recommendation 1. Detailed Race and Tribal Identity Responses

• You can enter more than one tribe.
• Write in the official name of your tribe.

American Indian or Alaska Native – Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc.
Side Note:
Multiple Race Boxes

• An individual can identify as American Indian or Alaska Native and also can identify as a member of another race, such as white, Black or Asian.

• If you check the box for American Indian or Alaska Native, and do not check other boxes on the race question, you will be counted in the **American Indian Alone category** in analyses of census data.

• If you check the box for American Indian or Alaska Native and check one or more races, you will be counted in the **American Indian Alone or in Combination category** in analyses of census data.
Recommendation 2. Use a Trusted Community Voice
Recommendation 3.
Use Tribal Media Channels

Visit the #NativesCount Census Booth at the Pow Wow
- IPads available to fill in the census
- Technical Assistants to help answer common questions about #2020Census forms

The 2020 Census is an opportunity to provide a better future for our communities. Your responses to the census are confidential and protected by law. No personal information is shared with any other government agencies or law enforcement.

For more information, contact us at 314-935-4510; bcais@wustl.edu or buder.wustl.edu

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Recommendation 4.
Culturally Appropriate Messaging

CHALLENGE ALERT!

Tribal leaders are urging American Indians and Alaska Natives to be seen & counted in the 2020 U.S. Census. Our people, our nations, and our future depends on each one of us completing the 2020 census form. Our communities rely on the Census for hospitals, health care, schools, roads, infrastructure, and programs.

Enter to win a $25 Amazon gift card by simply helping spread the word about why it’s important for Natives to be counted in the 2020 census!... See More
Covid-19 Affects on 2020 Census

Filling out the Census Forms

- **January 2020:** Census Bureau begins counting in remote Alaska
- **Mid-March 2020:** Households receive invite to respond online, through a paper form, or by phone.
- **April 1, 2020:** Census Day is observed nationwide.

Revised Schedule

- **March – October:** Self-Response Phase
- **April 30, 2021:** Deliver counts to congress

**January-May:** BCAIS bi-weekly posts, census challenge, Q&A session, presentations, distributions
What can we do?

• Promote census among friends & family @ my2020census.gov
• Share census posts on social media
• Advocate for additional census funding
• Take matters into your own hands for 2030 census

Buder Center Natives’ Count webpage: https://sites.wustl.edu/budercenter/natives-count/
NCAI Indian County Counts Campaign: http://indiancountrycounts.org/
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Thank You!

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