



CENSUS 2020: IMPLICATIONS FOR UNDERCOUNTING AND CURRENT ACTION IN UTAH

SOCIAL SERVICES APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
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ISSUE BRIEF

SUMMARY

Census counts have significant implications for states, including determining how Congressional and state legislative districts are drawn and how Congress is apportioned, guiding the distribution of federal and state monies, and influencing decisions made by businesses, nonprofits, lawmakers and public officials. Utah has several counties with census tracts identified as hard-to-count (HTC) in the 2010 Census; additionally, it is estimated that Utah's population was undercounted by 0.48 percent in 2010. Utah has established a Complete Count Committee to assist with an accurate and cost-effective census count in 2020.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Traditionally HTC populations include the following:

- Racial and ethnic minorities
- Persons who do not speak English fluently
- Lower-income persons
- Homeless persons
- Undocumented immigrants
- Young mobile persons (such as college students or missionaries)
- Children
- Persons who are angry at and/or distrust the government
- LGBTQ persons
- Persons living in group quarters

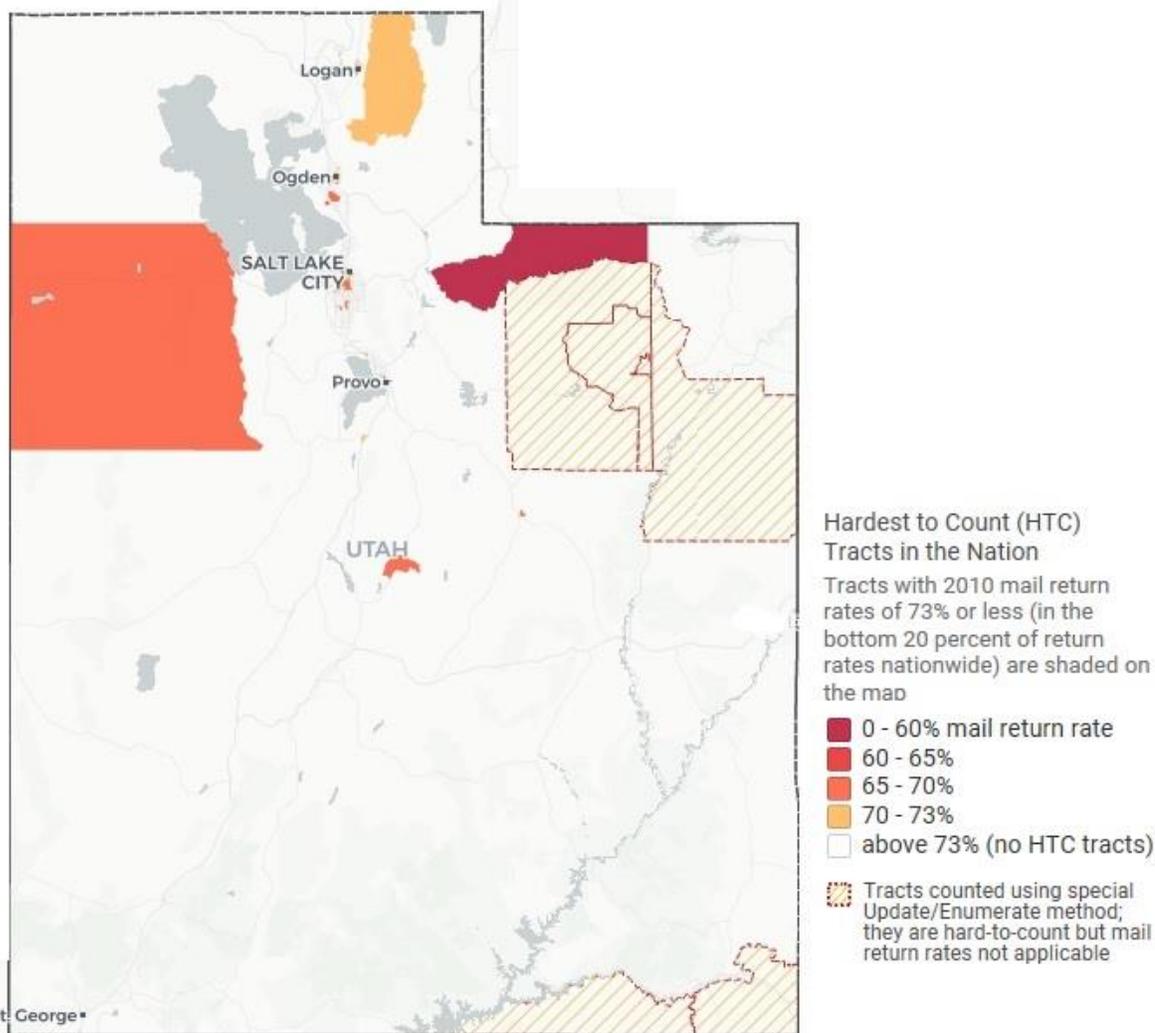
As indicated on the HTC map (next page), there are several areas designated as HTC in Utah for the 2020 U.S. Census. They include specific tracts in the following counties: Cache, Tooele, Weber, Davis, Salt Lake, Summit, Utah, Carbon, Sanpete, Duchesne, Uintah, and San Juan. Following the 2010 Census, the [U.S. Census Bureau](#)¹ estimated that Utah's population was undercounted by 0.48 percent, or approximately 13,045 persons (based on the 2010 population estimate).

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2017 population estimates, Utah's Congressional apportionment will not be affected by the 2020 U.S. Census. Utah's population would have to grow by more than [161,000](#)² persons for a fifth Congressional district to be established, which is far greater than the approximated margin of undercounting discussed above.

¹ 2010 Census Coverage Measurement Memorandum: https://www.census.gov/coverage_measurement/pdfs/g01.pdf

² Apportionment Allocation Report by Election Data Services: https://www.electiondataservices.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/NR_Appor17c3wTablesMapsC2.pdf

Census population counts also affect distribution of federal funding. Among the large federal assistance programs that distribute funds on the basis of Census-derived statistics are: Medicaid, Medicare Part B, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Head Start, Highway Planning and Construction, and the Children’s Health Insurance Program (CHIP). In looking solely at five grant programs administered by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (Medicaid, CHIP, Title IV-E Foster Care, Title IV-E Adoption Assistance, and the Child Care and Development Fund), in FY 2015, it is estimated that Utah lost \$533³ in federal funds per person missed in the 2010 U.S. Census (\$482 in Medicaid funding; the remaining \$51 spread amongst the other four programs). This amounts to approximately \$7 million in lost federal funds in FY 2015. Such lost funding affects the following state agencies: the Department of Health (Medicaid, Medicare, CHIP), the Department of Human Services (Title IV-E), the Department of Workforce Services (Medicaid, CHIP, Child Care and Development Fund, SNAP, Section 8, Head Start), and the Utah Department of Transportation (Highway Planning and Construction).



**Figure 1.
 Hardest to Count (HTC) Tracts in the Nation**

Source: City University of New York: Census 2020 Hard to Count Maps

³ “Counting for Dollars 2020” report from GW Institute of Public Policy: <https://gwipp.gwu.edu/sites/g/files/zaxdzs2181/f/downloads/GWIPP%20Reamer%20Fiscal%20Impacts%20of%20Census%20Undercount%20on%20FMAP-based%20Programs%2003-19-18.pdf>

Strategies to Avoid Undercounting

The US Census Bureau recommends the creation of complete count committees (CCCs) at the state and/or local level, to support a complete count. Such committees incorporate partners from a variety of sectors, including government, business, faith-based organizations, media, community-based civic organizations, cultural and/or linguistic groups, senior citizens, immigrants and refugees, and members of HTC populations. The creation of a CCC can improve the first-time response rate to the Census, thus saving funds that would have been expended on follow-up, in-person visits. Utah has established a CCC, with representatives from the following entities:

- Utah Automated Geographic Reference Center
- Wasatch Front Regional Council
- Pacificorp
- Utah Department of Heritage and Arts
- Department of Workforce Services (Workforce Development Division, Refugee Services)
- Zabriskie and Associates
- Governor's Office of Management and Budget
- State Senate and House of Representatives
- Utah League of Cities and Towns
- Mountainland, Five County, Uintah Basin, Southeastern Utah and Six County Association of Governments (AOGs)
- Salt Lake Chamber of Commerce
- Envision Utah
- Utah Department of Health
- Utah Governor's Commission on Aging
- Utah Department of Corrections
- Gardner Policy Institute
- Centro Hispano
- Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City
- Questar
- Utah Association of Counties
- Utah State Board of Education
- Utah System of Higher Education
- LDS Church
- Community members

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS), as part of the CCC, is strategically positioned to potentially play an important role in this effort; DWS has employment centers in each county, and interacts directly with many of the HTC populations. The Census Bureau incurs significant cost in following up with households that do not respond to the mail-out questionnaire or submit an online response; as such, DWS could facilitate better contact with HTC populations, and thus improve the first-time response rate and reduce the cost of the U.S. Census in Utah.