

Philanthropy, the Social Sector, & the Impact of the 2020 Census in Middle Tennessee



*Tennessee risks losing approximately **\$2,600** per person per year (for 10 years) in federal funding for each individual not counted.*

The United States census is so much more than just a head count.

It is a snapshot of America that determines how congressional seats and state legislative districts are apportioned, how state and federal dollars are distributed, where businesses choose to locate and invest, and how philanthropy and communities target their giving. **To do all of that properly, the count needs to be accurate.**

Census Results at Work in Communities:

What is impacted by the accuracy of the census count?

The federal government bases many of its spending decisions on census data. More than **132** government programs will use information from the census to determine how to allocate more than **\$900 billion** a year.

These funds fuel programs that serve lower-income families, including Nutrition Assistance programs, Head Start, Medicare, transportation, public health services, affordable housing, and schools.

An undercount in our state, will leave a significant funding gap for services to those in need – with a cost of as much as \$69,205,364* for each 1% undercounted. **This will add an increased burden on philanthropy to fill the gap, above and beyond other current pressing issues.**

** Based on 2015 Census and allocation figures.*

Barriers to an Accurate Count:

Who are the historically undercounted and why?

Minorities, particularly in marginalized communities:

- Language barriers
- Distrust of government

Young children (ages 0 – 5):

- Highest risk are children of color, low-income families and those in vulnerable families
- 25% live in hard to count areas

Rural communities:

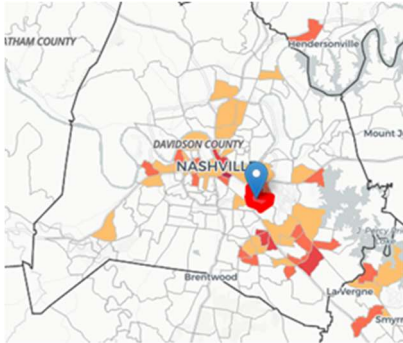
- Lack of access to internet and/or bandwidth*
- Migrant employment

Frequent movers:

- Young and mobile
- Low-income households
- New Americans

* For the first time, the US Census Bureau will offer an **online census form** to reduce its costs. Despite the opportunities this presents, several hurdles threaten the accuracy of the next decennial count including inadequate federal funding and testing of the system as well as limited ability to reach historically undercounted communities (including young children, rural households and many minority communities) through online communications and enrollment.

A Pooled Fund Approach



Several of the country's most difficult to count areas are within or adjacent to Davidson and Rutherford counties.

A group of Donors Forum members came together in September to learn about the issue and to determine whether and how local philanthropy could improve the outcomes of the upcoming Census. On their recommendation, a pooled fund is being created to maximize the efficiency, expedite the timing, and provide the greatest leverage in use of philanthropic dollars.

The fund will reside under the fiscal management of the United Way of Metropolitan Nashville and allocation decisions will be made by a panel of local leaders engaged in census-related work and in serving the historically undercounted. Empowering our local social sector experts to distribute funds on behalf of the pooled fund donors supports this multi-sector partnership and makes this a new approach to grantmaking for the MTDF.

The Donors Forum Coordinator will work with members of the allocation committee to design and manage the process and to coordinate our shared learning and financials with United Way.

Pooled Fund Goal:

This pooled fund effort is hoped to raise a minimum of **\$250,000** with a stretch goal of **\$500,000** before March 1, 2020. Cities of similar size have invested as much as several million dollars toward the effort, through a combination of public and private funds and have a head start in its use. *To date, Metropolitan Davidson County government has made no financial commitment.*

Examples of work to be funded:

Based on recommendations from national and local experts, it is anticipated that these funds will be invested into three core strategies.

1. **Outreach:** Employing trusted grassroots leadership, it is possible to reach the historically undercounted with both the crucial need to participate and assurance of the safety in participating. There is fear among many of these groups that participating in the census could lead to deportation, eviction from supported housing, or other loss of benefits and freedoms.
2. **Education:** Center for Nonprofit Management, and others, have proposed programming to connect with organizations serving the historically undercounted in order to educate these organizations. Examples include transitional housing providers, street outreach programs, and group living centers.
3. **Navigation assistance:** Like efforts surrounding the rollout of the Affordable Care Act, there is a need for navigators to assist in the participation/enrollment process. TIRRC is already engaged in this work and is rallying subcontractors and partners to expand their reach.

How to invest:

Contributions to the fund may be directed to Brian Hassett (President & CEO), United Way of Metropolitan Nashville, 250 Venture Circle, Nashville TN 37228.

Please note **2020 Census Fund** on your check and in ALL related correspondence.

Questions? Contact Kim Carpenter Drake, MTDF Coordinator, at kcarpenterdrake@gmail.com or 615.497.7292.