

FAIR COUNT

UPDATE FOR THE CBC CENSUS 2020 TASKFORCE (JULY 26, 2020)

Immediate Asks of the CBC

- **Require a robust Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) operation and mandate collection of Census responses through October 31, 2020. Secure agreement from Census Bureau to include NRFU operations in black areas with low-response rates.**
- **Require statutory extensions for the delivery of apportionment data to April 31, 2021 and redistricting data to July 31, 2021.**
- **Ensure that the Census Bureau delivers regular updates on 2020 Census operations and progress to Congress and the public until the end of the NRFU operation on October 31, 2020.**

THE 2020 CENSUS AND THE BLACK POPULATION

As stated in the National Urban League's June 2020 report titled, *State of the 2020 Census: An Accurate Black Count at Risk*, "For Black populations, the consequences [of an undercount] would be devastating, particularly in the aftermath of COVID-19[.]" **As of July 24, 2020, the national self-response rate was 62.4%, and the response rates in CBC member districts ranged from 48.1% to 78.1%.** Recent data from the *CUNY Census 2020 Response Rate Analysis* indicated that the self-response rates of predominantly Black census tracts were approximately **14% lower** than those of predominantly White census tracts.

IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Census Bureau is operating under a schedule that extends the 2020 Census until October 31, 2020. The current schedule also delayed the start of the Nonresponse Followup Operation (NRFU) until August 11, 2020, which has been critical to accurate counts. **However, rising rates of COVID-19 infections (particularly in southeastern states and metropolitan areas with large Black populations) could potentially impact NRFU, leading to a significant undercount of the Black population.** Of note: 58% of blacks live in the South, which is the area most likely to not receive NRFU due to COVID surges.

The Census Bureau and the Administration earlier petitioned Congress to extend the delivery of census data to the President until April 30, 2021 and the delivery of redistricting data to the states until July 31, 2021. These extensions allow for a full and robust NRFU.

EXCLUSION OF UNDOCUMENTED PERSONS

On July 21st, President Trump issued an **executive memorandum to exclude undocumented persons in the apportionment process.** This memorandum is blatantly unconstitutional and is already being challenged in court. Advocates believe that this action is merely another scare tactic (similar to the proposed and defeated citizenship question) that is designed to discourage the participation of communities of color, immigrants, and refugees.

ERASURE OF PEOPLE OF COLOR

High risk of "imputation" likely if Census Bureau cuts timing of NRFU and data collection. When there are low self-response rates in historically undercounted communities, the Census Bureau may rely on administrative records, which are not as accurate as self-response data.

However, when administrative records are not available, **the Census Bureau could implement a more inaccurate statistical practice of "imputation", which estimates the demographics of a household based on the characteristics of nearby households.** This process can be extremely detrimental to communities of color in gentrified areas or in areas where people of color are in the minority, as the practice would treat those areas as comprised of a higher white population than is actual.