

# Accurate Census Data Matters to Alaska

## A State Perspective



### Resources

- The federal government allocates \$675 billion annually based on Census Bureau data.
- Alaska's economy depends on federal spending, which comprises 21.8% of state GDP.
- Census Bureau data affects the allocation of more than \$3.2 billion in Alaska each year.
- Alaska uses that federal funding to build/repair roads and bridges, operate our healthcare and education systems, provide nutrition assistance to low-income children and families, develop and operate affordable housing, support our foster care system, and much more.

### Democratic process

- The Decennial Census determines apportionment in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Census data is used to redraw state legislative boundaries.
- Local governments use census data to redraw their political subdivisions.

### Knowledge

- Governments, businesses, nonprofits, and universities use census data in their planning.
- Entities like ISER analyze census data when making public policy recommendations

### Justice

- Census data is used to enforce state and federal laws, including civil rights laws, voting rights requirements, and the obligation of financial institutions to serve minority populations.

### Impacts of inaccurate census data in Alaska

Many Alaska populations are disproportionately undercounted when resources are insufficient for the Census Bureau to properly gather accurate data. When this happens:

- The state receives less federal funding, making the current budget crisis even worse.
- All Alaska residents experience reductions in essential services like road repairs.
- Children and low-income Alaskans suffer disproportionately from decreases to education funding and programs that make up Alaska's social safety net.
- Redistricting may be inequitable because of poor data quality.
- Governments and organizations are less able to effectively plan for the future.
- Laws protecting vulnerable populations may not be properly enforced.

## What can Alaskans do to protect our state in the 2020 Census?

- Local and tribal governments, businesses, and nonprofit organizations should draft letters or adopt resolutions that:
  - Urge Governor Walker and the Alaska legislature to prioritize the allocation of resources to state agencies that coordinate with the U.S. Census Bureau to improve the accuracy of census data for Alaska. Those agencies include the Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the Department of Education and Early Development, the Division of Community and Regional Affairs, and the Division of Elections.
  - Urge Alaska's Congressional delegation to advocate for reasonable allocations of federal resources for Census Bureau programs in order to maintain or improve the accuracy of data collections for Alaska, including an appropriation of \$3.928 billion to the Census Bureau's Periodic Censuses and Programs account in FY2019.
- During the 2018 legislative session, the legislature should hold hearings in the appropriate committee(s) of jurisdiction on how Census Bureau data affects Alaska.
- Alaska stakeholders should engage in the Alaska Census Working Group by attending brief meetings approximately every other month, either in person or by phone.

### Learn more

- **Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development**, *Census data and information for Alaska*  
<http://live.laborstats.alaska.gov/cen/>
- **The Census Project**, *A network of national, state, and local organizations that supports a fair and accurate 2020 Census and comprehensive American Community Survey*  
<http://thecensusproject.org/>
- **The Foraker Group**, *Alaska's statewide nonprofit association, nonprofit capacity building organization, and convener of the Alaska Census Working Group*  
<http://www.forakergroup.org/>