



Opinion: Will Kentucky continue to thrive? It depends on the 2020 Census.

While April 1, 2020 seems a long way off, much is at stake to be sure the Commonwealth receives its fair share of federal dollars for programs that use census-derived data. Kentucky is at high risk to [undercount our population](#), which would mean a devastating loss of federal funding – our tax dollars returned to the commonwealth – for needed infrastructure improvements for roads and bridges, services for our most vulnerable Kentuckians and investments in programs that educate our children and strengthen families.

With so much at stake for all Kentuckians, the [Count Me In KY 2020 Nonprofit Coalition](#) encourages all nonprofit organizations to look for simple ways to help ensure a complete census count. And we encourage all communities and residents to be counted. Kentucky simply cannot afford to leave money on the table.

Required by our constitution, the census is performed every 10 years to not only count our country's population, it also helps determine state populations that inform congressional representation and federal funding that comes to Kentucky. The constitution requires that all persons residing in Kentucky be counted.

Infrastructure funding for roads and bridges is determined by census-derived data, as are many statewide programs including health coverage (Medicare Part B, CHIP and Medicaid); nutrition assistance (SNAP/WIC and school meals); education (Head Start, Title I and student loans and grants); housing (Section 8 and housing loans); and critical programs for children (foster care, adoption assistance and child care). Kentucky receives approximately \$15.8 billion per year in funding for 55 of the more than 300 federal programs using census data.

[These allocations account for at least \\$2,021 per Kentuckian](#). An undercount of just 1 percent of our population, or about 45,000 people, would cost Kentucky almost \$91 million a year – and Kentucky would experience this loss for ten years. During the 2010 census, 12,568 children under the age of five went uncounted. This undercount cost the commonwealth and our local communities over \$12 million per year from just five of the many federally funded programs that exist to strengthen children and families.

In addition to children, other [hard-to-count populations](#) exist, such as transient families or individuals without a stable place to live, people living in poverty, the elderly, multi-family households, immigrants and rural communities. And with much of the census being conducted online in 2020, individuals who are distrustful of a count or reluctant to complete it online will need incentives to be counted.

An accurate count is also important to protecting Kentucky's representation in Congress. [Kentucky lost a seat after the 1990 census](#) and our current delegation of six representatives could be adversely affected by an undercount (or possibly positively affected depending on the count). Census data is also used to determine Kentucky's number of electoral college votes, as well as districts for state and local government.

Unfortunately, Kentucky has not appropriated any money for census outreach. Other states, including our neighbors in Virginia and friends in Georgia, are investing significant dollars to ensure

an accurate census. Regardless, outreach to secure a complete count must be done to avoid the devastating impact local communities would experience should Kentucky undercount our residents in 2020.

Kentucky Nonprofit Network and partners from across the Commonwealth formed the [Count Me In 2020 KY Nonprofit Coalition](#) to encourage nonprofits in all Kentucky communities to engage in simple census outreach that encourages their stakeholders to be counted. Nonprofits are in a unique position to assist in helping secure a complete count because the thousands of organizations across Kentucky come into contact with these typically hard-to-count residents on a regular basis. Nonprofits also understand more than most that cities and counties will look to our sector to meet the needs of citizens in the event of funding cuts to programs based on census-derived data.

Resources to help nonprofits engage, including webinar recordings and a current list of complete count committees where they can work with others in their community or launch a community effort themselves is available at www.kynonprofits.org/census2020. As we approach April 1, additional information and resources for nonprofits will continue to be posted to this site.

Kentucky cannot afford to procrastinate. Data from the 2020 Census will have long-term implications for Kentucky in the next decade. Each of us can play an active role in census outreach to help ensure an accurate count. We urge nonprofits and all Kentuckians to come together to prepare now to make sure every resident is counted in 2020.

More information about the [Count Me In KY Nonprofit Coalition](#) can be found at www.kynonprofits.org/census2020 or via email: countmeinky2020@kynonprofits.org.

Count Me In 2020 KY Nonprofit Coalition:

- [Advocacy Action Network](#)
- [Association of Kentucky Independent Colleges and Universities](#)
- [Catholic Charities of Louisville - Kentucky Office for Refugees](#)
- [Child Care Council of Kentucky](#)
- [Feeding Kentucky](#)
- [Kentucky Association of Counties](#)
- [Kentucky Head Start Association](#)
- [Kentucky Health Resources Alliance](#)
- [Kentucky League of Cities](#)
- [Kentucky Nonprofit Network](#)
- [Kentucky Public Library Association](#)
- [Kentucky Voices for Health](#)
- [Kentucky Youth Advocates](#)
- [Prevent Child Abuse Kentucky](#)
- [Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence](#)
- [United Way of Kentucky](#)

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