



NEWS

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New Report Calls for Greater Accuracy in Census Count of Young Latino Children

Washington, D.C.—April 26, 2016—With preparation now underway for the 2020 Census, a new report from the Child Trends Hispanic Institute and National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund calls for targeted efforts to accurately count young Latino children. The report reveals that more than 400,000 Latino children ages 0 to 4 were left uncounted in the 2010 Census, which likely impacted federal resource allocations to a number of counties and states.

According to the authors of “The Invisible Ones: How Latino Children Are Left Out of Our Nation’s Census Count,” the undercount of Latino children is a threat to fair political representation and the equitable distribution of social services.

Census data are used to distribute more than \$400 billion annually in federal government assistance, for programs such as Head Start and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC). They are also used by school districts to calculate facilities budgets and bus routes.

The undercount of young Latino children is heavily concentrated. Five states—California, Texas, Florida, Arizona, and New York—account for nearly three quarters (72 percent) of the net undercount, with 33 percent occurring in California alone. The total undercount is largely limited to the biggest 25 counties in the United States.

“An accurate census is a fair one,” says lead author William P. O’Hare, Ph.D., a national expert on the U.S. Census. “This report makes clear that young Latino children go uncounted too often.” More than 25 percent of U.S. children under age five are Latino, and two-thirds of these children live in or near poverty. The proportion of Latino children is projected to grow to 33 percent by 2050, making it the fastest-growing sector of the country’s child population.

“The persistent undercount of the nation’s second largest population group is a civil rights issue,” stated Arturo Vargas, executive director of NALEO Educational Fund. “Unless we bring Latino youth out of the shadows and into the light in Census 2020, the Latino community will continue to have disproportionate access to fair political representation and public services. We must make the investments necessary today to ensure a full and accurate count of Latino children tomorrow.”

The report suggests a few main reasons why young Latino children are often uncounted:

- **Latinos are more likely than non-Latinos to live in “hard-to-count” places** such as multi-unit buildings and areas with a high proportion of renters.
- **Latinos are more likely than non-Latinos to live in “hard-to-count” families and households**, including multigenerational families and households with complex relationships.

As Congress and other stakeholders plan for the 2020 Census, the report recommends that they ensure adequate funding and resources to accurately count Latino children. This may include the following:

- **Improve stakeholder messaging:** Census Bureau staff, their contractors and partners, Latino families and communities, and policymakers should be briefed on the negative consequences associated with the undercounting of young Latino children.
- **Initiate targeted outreach:** Since the undercount of young Latino children is so concentrated, outreach efforts should focus in these areas. For example, one of the Bureau’s outreach program, Census in Schools, could be expanded to preschools in the counties that have historically represented the greatest number of young Latino children undercounted.
- **Develop strategic partnerships:** This should include targeted efforts to develop relationships with vested stakeholders, such as civic organizations and early childhood education organizations that are able to reach households with young children, particularly in those states and counties that have large concentrations of Latino families.

Funding for “The Invisible Ones” was provided by the Heising-Simons Foundation and The Annie E. Casey Foundation.

About Child Trends

Child Trends is the nation’s leading research organization focused exclusively on improving the lives and prospects of children, youth, and their families. For 36 years, decision makers have relied on our rigorous research, unbiased analyses, and clear communications to improve public policies and interventions that serve children and families. We have more than 120 staff in three offices and multiple locations around the country, including our headquarters in Bethesda, Md. childtrends.org

About NALEO Educational Fund

NALEO Educational Fund is the nation’s leading 501(c) (3) non-profit organization that facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process, from citizenship to public service. Founded in 1981, NALEO Educational Fund achieves its mission through integrated strategies that include increasing the effectiveness of Latino policymakers, mobilizing the Latino community to engage in civic life and promoting policies that advance Latino political engagement. NALEO Educational Fund provides national leadership on key issues that affect Latino participation in our political process, including immigration and naturalization, voting rights, election reform, the Census and the appointment of qualified Latinos to top executive and judicial positions. www.naleo.org

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