



# ALASKANS RELY UPON ACCURATE CENSUS DATA

A NALEO CAMPAIGN

**ACCURATE CENSUS DATA ARE KEY** for federal funding allocations to state and localities. Federal resources are divided up between jurisdictions according to what Census data tell us about various communities' demographic characteristics, needs, and assets. In order for Alaskans to receive their fair share, the Census Bureau must master the difficult task of accurately counting the state's dynamic, diverse population.

Historically, certain hard-to-reach populations are more difficult to count than others. Alaska is home to disproportionate shares of populations that are most frequently undercounted, including people with lower incomes and people living in rural areas. Currently, 33 percent of Alaskans live in rural areas, compared to the national average of 21 percent.



## Federal Census-directed programs that are particularly important to Alaskans include:

### Head Start

Alaska is home to many children who face educational challenges related to their families' lower incomes. These young people benefit from access to Head Start classes, and West Virginia runs a sizeable program: because of Census data, the state received more than \$47 million from the federal government to support this effort in FY16.

### Highway Planning and Construction

Alaska's mountainous terrain and rural spaces mean it has a significant number of miles of road to maintain that are crucial to ensuring residents' access to economic and social opportunity. In FY16, thanks to Census data, Alaska received more than \$550 million in funding for highways planning and construction.

### Nutritional Support for Families

It is critical that children whose families face poverty and related challenges have their basic needs met, and achieve the healthy physical and mental development that will contribute to their success later in life. One of the key federal programs that provides food, and nutritional counseling and education, to pregnant and breastfeeding mothers in Alaska is the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) benefits program. WIC allocations among states are determined with Census data, and for FY16, these data ensured that Alaskans received more than \$24.5 million.

**When it is adequately funded, the Census Bureau produces highly accurate, detailed data that enable us to direct a total of over \$3.1 billion to Alaskan communities where those resources are most needed.**

But if the Census Bureau's hands are tied by declining appropriations or limitations that prevent it from conducting a sound decennial enumeration and accurate surveys, the quality of Census data similarly will decline, and many fewer Alaskans will benefit from these and many other Census-directed federal programs.

Congress must adequately fund the Census Bureau by providing it with no less than \$8 billion for the decennial Census in FY20. It is critical that Congress secure this funding by the start of the fiscal year, when address canvassing, advertising, and other key activities will already be underway. Any funding delay or uncertainty would disrupt the conduct of the survey and imperil the accuracy of Census data for a decade to come.