



A NALEO CAMPAIGN

MISSISSIPPIANS RELY UPON ACCURATE CENSUS DATA

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 North Carolina to receive its 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. Mississippi is home to disproportionate shares of populations that are most frequently undercounted, such as African Americans, people living with disabilities, and lower-income Americans. Mississippi has the second highest rate of poverty in the country, which creates challenges for the Census Bureau as it attempts to contact low-income families who may live in non-traditional or low-visibility housing.



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

Highway Planning and Construction

Mississippi's geographic size and rural spaces mean it has a significant number of miles of road to maintain, which ensure residents' access to economic and social opportunity. In FY17, thanks to Census data, Mississippi received nearly \$500 million in funding authorized by the 2015 Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act, the largest portion of it designated for maintenance of national highways and construction and repair of bridges and other highway facilities.

Head Start

Mississippi 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 Mississippi runs a sizeable program: because of Census data, the state received nearly \$184 million from the federal government to support this effort in FY16.

Rural Utilities and Telecommunications

According to 2010 Census data, 50.7 percent of Mississippi's population lives in rural areas, the fourth highest share of any state. These communities are often underdeveloped with insufficient infrastructure, and in 2013 only 62.3 percent of Mississippians had access to high-speed internet. Thankfully, Census data have ensured that the state receives significant shares of available federal funds to help rural Mississippi communities stay safe, healthy, and connected. In FY15, the state received \$188 million in loans through the Connect America Fund of the Federal Communication Commission (FCC) for new broadband build-out to for rural Mississippi.

When it is adequately funded, the Census Bureau produces highly accurate, detailed data that enable us to direct a total of over \$10.1 billion to the Mississippi 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 Mississippians 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.