



VIRGINIANS 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 Virginia 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. Virginia is home to disproportionate shares of populations that are most frequently undercounted, including African Americans and veterans. For example, Virginia is among the top ten states in the nation in percentage of its population that is African American.



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

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 is the Woman, Infants, and Children (WIC) benefits program. WIC allocations among states are determined with Census data, and for FY16, these data ensured that Virginia received more than \$113 million.

Highway Planning and Construction

Virginia's many industrial and vast rural areas rely on well-maintained roads and bridges. Virginia received more than \$1 billion 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.

Developing of Public Housing

Virginia is home to significant populations of older Americans, veterans, and others in need of housing assistance. Census data have ensured that Virginia received nearly \$35 million in FY16 to build, repair, and renovate public housing, efforts that helped the state continue making progress toward ending homelessness.

When it is adequately funded, the Census Bureau produces highly accurate, detailed data that enable us to direct a total of over \$17.7 billion to the Virginian 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 Virginians 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.