ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE

Why the Census Matters for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Communities

ALASKA

Introduction

Every 10 years, the federal government is legally required to **count every person living in the country, regardless of citizenship status,** as part of the U.S. Census. Certain populations, however, are more likely than others to be missed. Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPIs), people with limited English proficiency, people with low incomes, and young children are some of the groups that are undercounted in the census.

What are the Consequences of Undercounting AANHPI Communities?

The U.S. Census Bureau estimates that 16 million people were not counted in the 2010 Census. AANHPIs have been undercounted for decades, putting our families, communities, and neighborhoods at a disadvantage. Today, roughly one in five Asian Americans and one third of NHPIs live in hard-to-count census tracts. Some AANHPI communities are especially at risk of being missed, including those that have limited English skills and/or are low-income.

When AANHPI communities are undercounted, they may be given less than their fair share of government resources, including for education and health care. Many programs that impact AANHPI communities are based in whole or in part on census data. With a lack of data on AANHPI communities, there is less funding for vital programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Medicaid, and more.

How Does the Census Impact our Democracy?

Undercounting also results in AANHPIs being denied a full voice in policy decision-making and federal funding allocated to states and localities where AANHPIs live. There are 435 representative seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, with each representing one congressional district. These seats are allocated throughout the country based on population size as collected in the census. The 2010 Census results caused 12 seats to shift between several states, which translated directly into the shifting of power. The 2020 Census will also determine which states get more and which states get fewer seats in the House of Representatives.

Seat Projection for Alaska in 2020: Alaska is currently projected to have have a **total of 1 congressional seat**.

Data from Census Bureau 2017 Population Estimates

Asian Americans
About 62,800 living in Alaska in 2017.

Counties with Highest Asian American Populations in Alaska		
1	Anchorage Municipality	36,673
2	Fairbanks North Star Borough	5,276
3	Matanuska-Susitna Borough	3,505
4	Juneau City and Borough	3,240
5	Kodiak Island Borough	3,136
6	Aleutians West Census Area	2,455
7	Kenai Peninsula Borough	1,719
8	Aleutians East Borough	1,462
9	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	1,434
10	Sitka City and Borough	833

Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders
About 14,500 living in Alaska in 2017.

Counties with Highest Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Populations in Alaska		
1	Anchorage Municipality	10,204
2	Matanuska-Susitna Borough	960
3	Fairbanks North Star Borough	923
4	Juneau City and Borough	584
5	Kenai Peninsula Borough	331
6	North Slope Borough	232
7	Aleutians West Census Area	201
8	Kodiak Island Borough	198
9	Ketchikan Gateway Borough	98
10	Bethel Census Area	96

Data on race are generally available from the Census Bureau in two forms, for those of a single racial background (referred to as "alone"), with multiracial people captured in an independent category, and for those of either single or multiple racial backgrounds (referred to as "alone or in combination with one or more other races"). These data tables, populations are measured for the "alone or in combination" population.

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Education

The decennial census helps determine how the federal government allocates more than $47 billion in federal funding for educational programs each year.

Nationally, Asian Americans and NHPIs are less likely than non-Hispanic Whites to hold a high school degree. Among NHPI ethnic groups, Marshallese, Fijian, and Tongan Americans are less likely to hold a high school diploma or GED than average. In Alaska, 18% of Asian Americans have less than a high school education.

Nationally, educational attainment of Hmong, Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese Americans are lowest among Asian American ethnic groups and are among the lowest of all racial and ethnic communities.

The census count is used to determine where funding for low income students, bilingual language programs, career and technical education grants, and school lunch goes. Participating in census means more money for critical education programs in your community.

Health

Unfortunately, the sample size was too small to provide Alaska-specific health insurance data for Asian Americans or NHPIs. Nationally, over 1.2 million Asian Americans and almost 63,000 NHPIs do not have health insurance. Both Asian Americans (6.6%) and NHPIs (10.5%) have higher rates of being uninsured compared to non-Hispanic Whites (5.9%).

If AANHPIs are undercounted and accurate data is not collected about AANHPI communities, federal funding for programs such as Medicaid, Medicare, Children's Health Insurance Program, reproductive health programs, and more will not be adequately allocated to AANHPI communities. Participating in census means more money for critical health programs in your community.

Voting

Census data are used to determine where limited-English speaking voters can access translated ballots and bilingual poll workers. This right is guaranteed by **the Voting Rights Act,** which requires language assistance to be provided for Asian American, Hispanic, American Indian, and Alaska Native groups.

Census data are often used by counties to identify which language or dialect to use for written and oral assistance at the polls. For example, a county will use census data to determine whether to hire Cantonese-speaking or Mandarin-speaking poll workers or which polling locations to place bilingual poll workers. More information about the Voting Rights Act can be found here.

Census Bureau Regional Census Center for Alaska

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16 Large Census Guided Federal Programs in Alaska

Total	**$2 billion**
Program	**Funding**
Medicaid	$1 billion
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	$168 million
Medicare Part B	$90 million
Highway Planning and Construction	$511 million
Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher	$40 million
Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies	$38 million
National School Lunch Program	$35 million
Special Education Grants (IDEA)	$36 billion
State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)	$24 million
Head Start	$42 million
Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	$24 million
Foster Care (Title IV-E)	$21 million
Health Center Programs	$67 million
Low Income Home Energy Assistance	$18 million
Child Care and Development Fund	$8 million
Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program	$9 million

Language Materials

The Census Bureau will provide language guides, language glossaries, and language identification cards in these Asian languages:

Chinese * Vietnamese * Korean * Tagalog
Japanese * Hindi * Bengali * Thai * Gujarati
Khmer * Nepali * Urdu * Telugu * Burmese
Punjabi * Lao * Hmong * Tamil * Malayalam
Indonesian * Ilocano * Marathi

In-Language Internet Questionnaire & Census Questionnaire Assistance

Chinese * Vietnamese
Korean * Tagalog * Japanese