ASIAN AMERICANS ADVANCING JUSTICE

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

Data from Census Bureau 2017 Population Estimates

WASHINGTON

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 Washington in 2020: Washington is currently projected to have a **total of 10 congressional seats**.

Asian Americans
About 819,000 living in Washington in 2017.

Counties with Highest Asian American Populations in Washington		
1	King County	459,868
2	Snohomish County	108,087
3	Pierce County	86,274
4	Clark County	30,926
5	Thurston County	24,057
6	Kitsap County	22,416
7	Spokane County	19,259
8	Whatcom County	13,829
9	Benton County	8,342
10	Island County	6,034

Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders
About 94,000 living in Washington in 2017.

Counties with Highest Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Populations in Washington		
1	King County	30,219
2	Pierce County	22,122
3	Snohomish County	9,499
4	Clark County	6,570
5	Kitsap County	4,811
6	Spokane County	4,742
7	Thurston County	4,742
8	Whatcom County	1,512
9	Yakima County	1,280
10	Benton County	958

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 Washington, 13% 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

In Washington, around 42,000 Asian Americans do not have access to health insurance.

While the sample size was too small to provide Washington-specific health insurance data for NHPIs, nationally, about 1 in 7 NHPIs don't have health insurance, a rate higher than whites.

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 Washington

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16 Large Census Guided Federal Programs in Washington

Total	**$14 billion**
Program	**Funding**
Medicaid	$8 billion
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	$2 billion
Medicare Part B	$1 billion
Highway Planning and Construction	$663 million
Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher	$477 million
Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies	$222 million
National School Lunch Program	$194 million
Special Education Grants (IDEA)	$220 million
State Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)	$129 million
Head Start	$180 million
Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	$148 million
Foster Care (Title IV-E)	$72 million
Health Center Programs	$122 million
Low Income Home Energy Assistance	$59 million
Child Care and Development Fund	$78 million
Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program	$94 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 * Telegu * Burmese
Punjabi * Lao * Hmong * Tamil * Malayalam
Indonesian * Ilocano * Marathi

In-Language Internet Questionnaire & Census Questionnaire Assistance

Chinese * Vietnamese
Korean * Tagalog * Japanese