

Why the 2020 Census matters for NYC

1. Representation in House of Representatives

- i** *The census count determines representation in the House of Representatives, is used to draw political districts on the ground at federal, state, and local levels, and affects the flow of billions of dollars in federal funds to the state and city.*

2. Loss of Congressional Seats

- i** *The cost in representation because of an undercount may be seen in the possible loss of an additional congressional seat. New York State will likely lose one Congressional seat due to the reapportionment of the House of Representatives, because growth in the state has failed to keep pace with the rest of the nation.*

3. Undercounted Political Districts Misrepresent Their Constituents

- i** *When drawn, there is a disconnect between the representative and his/her constituents. In the case of the 14th congressional district in north Queens/east Bronx, the presence of substantial undercount in 2010 resulted in boundaries that were physically larger than they needed to be. As it now stands, the district likely represents far more people than the actual population calculated from what was a flawed count. And, because the decennial census drives many post-censal surveys, the characteristics of the population that are used to describe the constituents may not reflect those who live in the district, well into the decade.*

4. Financial Implications

- i** *The flow of dollars to New York State and, by extension New York City, from the federal government is affected by the census count. A census undercount shortchanges the city in its capacity to provide housing, maintain its infrastructure, and provide for the needs of residents in the areas of education and health, especially related to the well-being of children.*

5. Other Implications and Examples

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 - *NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene uses Census population counts as a base for the calculation of vital rates. In many neighborhoods with an undercount, it is impossible to accurately measure rates of illness. In neighborhoods with a large undercount, DOHMH would not be able to properly evaluate the progress of an immunization campaign.*
 - *Other activities that rely on accurate counts of children include the longer-range projection of school age populations in the context of school construction. Due to many neighborhoods being undercounted in 2010, DCP had to estimate the population of children to better reflect reality on the ground.*
 - *For Age-friendly NYC, a partnership between the City of New York and the New York Academy of Medicine, the Department of City Planning provided counts of the elderly population for 2010 and projected counts of the elderly for 2020 and 2030.*