We always knew that the 2020 Census in Texas would be a marathon – a long-haul challenge that would test our communities like few before. Yet, even in the face of COVID-19, we see our neighbors stepping forward to build our state’s future together.

With the federal government’s extension on the Census timeline, we have almost six months of enumeration left and an even better chance to reach a complete and accurate count. As our partners in this vital work, we want to share with you the milestones we’ve reached to make Texas count in 2020.

**COVID-19 and the TEXAS COUNTS POOLED FUND GRANTEES**

As the Texas Counts Pooled Fund began disbursing awards, most of our grantees were geared up and motivated to engage their communities. Many involved person-to-person contact and large events to drum up excitement and spread the word about the importance of the 2020 Census. In light of COVID-19, this direct outreach has become impossible and runs contrary to public health guidance. To support our grantees, we notified grant recipients on March 17th that we supported them making the programmatic and operational changes necessary to their grant scope, without penalization, to ensure the health and well-being of their staff and communities. We also offered support and ideas to help them pivot their census engagement activities.

**Extended CENSUS TIMELINE**

In mid-April, the US Census Bureau announced they would be extending the census timeline from July 31st until the end of October and they halted the opening of some field offices, delayed door to door enumerators and the Update Leave outreach. Below are the updated timelines for these initiatives:

- **Field Operations:** Resume June 1, 2020
- **Self-Response Phase Revised:** March 12-October 31
- **Group Quarters E-Response Enumeration Revised:** April 2 - September 3
- **Update Leave Revised:** June 13 - July 9
- **Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU) Revised:** August 11 - October 31

In response to these updates by the Bureau, we have extended the grant period for all projects under the Texas Counts Pooled Fund to **October 31st**, with the reporting deadline extended to November 30th.

Please view the press release regarding census operations and extensions [HERE](#).

Our grantees have responded with appreciation for these measures to help increase their likelihood of promoting participation in the census. Some shared all the great work they have done to date, here are a couple of highlights!
**SUCCESS STORIES**

**ARISE Adelante** is a non-profit in the Rio Grande Valley that promotes the personal development and empowerment of the immigrant community through educational programs that strengthen their organized community and civic participation. Originally, ARISE had planned door-to-door canvassing, Colonia census engagement activities and school events. As a result of COVID-19, their canvassers have taken to the phones to engage their community in one-on-one interviews to walk participants through the Census as well as some of the activities highlighted below. Already, ARISE has reached 5,000 people in their community through a variety of activities:

- Driving to multiple remote Colonias with mobile billboards and pre-recorded announcements with census information and call center contact info. They plan to continue these efforts over the summer, and begin to engage in person when deemed safe.
- Providing census material with distribution of school lunches.
- Multiple Spanish radio advertisements and interviews.
- Social Media Image Challenges with prizes that help local businesses affected by COVID-19.

**Austin Voices and Education for Youth (AVEY)** is a non-profit that mobilizes the community to improve public education and expand opportunities for students and families by building successful schools and strong neighborhoods through partnership with community leaders, young people, parents, and educators. In partnership with the Austin Complete Count Committee, AVEY had originally planned to host community events and set up multiple mobile kiosks with partners across Austin. In light of COVID-19, they cancelled 2 events that would have reached 1,000 people. But their new outreach strategy has helped them reach more than their original target:

- Food Pantry distribution including census material: reaching 1,600 families this month.
- Phone banks: AVEY Family Resource Center social workers have been calling all their case-managed families and helping to walk them through the census by phone. They are also coordinating with teachers and school staff in north Austin to communicate the importance of the census directly through the school.
- Virtual meetings with schools, non-profits and neighborhood partners in three areas of north Austin continue to coordinate and encourage census efforts.
- Additional efforts include coordinating with schools to include posters and messaging at targeted apartment complexes promoting the census. When deemed safe, they will follow up with block leaders trained on census to visit these apartment complex’s for in person assistance.
CENSUS RESPONSE RATES

as of 5/15/20

The numbers are rolling in: 54.2% of Texans have self-responded to the census, compared to 59.6% for the total country. Texas ranks 40th out of all states for their response rates, with Minnesota coming in 1st (at 69.7%) and New Mexico last (at 47.1%).

Suburbs are seeing some of the higher response rates, such as Rockwall County (Dallas) and Fort Bend County (Houston) which have surpassed 65% census participation. Amarillo, San Angelo, Lubbock, and El Paso also have higher response rates than the state. The Texas city with the highest response rate, Mountain City, ranks 79th among cities nationwide with an 85.9% response rate.

Lower response rates in Texas can be attributed to several characteristics that make our state hard-to-count (HTC) – namely, low-income neighborhoods where individuals are difficult to reliably locate and contact and a lack of broadband access in both urban and rural areas. Other attributing factors include:

- A high rate of “Update Leave” households which are:
  - Housing units that do not have mail delivered to the physical location.
  - Housing units where the mail delivery information for the housing unit cannot be verified.

As part of the Census Bureau’s operational plan, the “Update Leave” follow-up has been postponed until mid-June. Until then, these households will not receive any communication regarding the census. Therefore, counties with higher populations of Update Leave will have lower census participation until the Census Bureau begins that portion of their operational plan. Charts below illustrate the correlation between select HTC characteristics and response rates in Texas.
Poverty and percent of house holds responding:

Percent/update leave and percent of house holds responding:

Percent broadband internet and percent of house holds responding:

Data Source: Texas Demographic Center
**Regional CENSUS RESPONSE RATES**

Regionally, North Texas leads census participation across the state with a response rate of 56%. By region, areas with higher HTC populations experience lower participation. Some of the lowest response rates are in rural West and South Texas, where some counties have only 10-15% participation in the census to-date.

Data Source: Census 2020 Response Rates & City University of New York Graduate Center, Census 2020 Hard to Count Map

**WEST TEXAS**

**TOTAL EST. POPULATION:** 1,126,324

**CENSUS RESPONSE RATE:** 49%

**INTERNET AVAILABILITY**

- 22% No Internet
- 4% Internet, No Subscription
- 74% Internet

**% PEOPLE OF COLOR**

- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic

**SELECT HTC CHARACTERISTICS**

- <200% Poverty
- <100% Poverty
- Renter
- Group Quarters
- Under 5 Yrs

**COUNTRIES WITH HIGHEST RESPONSE RATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tom Green*</td>
<td>57.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>El Paso**</td>
<td>55.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midland</td>
<td>48.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrews</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawson</td>
<td>45.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COUNTRIES WITH LOWEST RESPONSE RATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coke</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concho</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irion, Kimble, Martin, Hudspeth</td>
<td>9-15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upton</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presidio</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* highest response rate
** largest population
SOUTH TEXAS - RGV

TOTAL EST. POPULATION: 3,466,086
CENSUS RESPONSE RATE: 50%

INTERNET AVAILABILITY
- No Internet: 22%
- Internet, No Subscription: 4%
- Internet: 74%

COUNTRIES WITH HIGHEST RESPONSE RATES
- Gillespie*: 61.2%
- Comal: 60.0%
- Bexar**: 56.3%
- Ken: 54.6%
- Victoria: 53.4%

COUNTRIES WITH LOWEST RESPONSE RATES
- Zavala: 26.1%
- Dimmit: 23.0%
- Live Oak: 16.9%
- Zapata: 15.8%
- Duval: 11.7%

* highest response rate
** largest population

% PEOPLE OF COLOR
- Hispanic: 70%
- Black: 15%
- Asian: 7%
- American Indian: 2%
- Native Hawaiian: 1%

SELECT HTC CHARACTERISTICS
- <200% Poverty: 40%
- <100% Poverty: 30%
- Renter: 40%
- Group Quarters: 5%
- Under 5 Yrs: 15%
SOUTH TEXAS - RGV - SELECT COUNTY ANALYSIS

HIDALGO/WILLACY/STARR/ CAMERON

TOTAL EST. POPULATION: 458,915
CENSUS RESPONSE RATE: 38%
UPDATE LEAVE: 46,198

% PEOPLE OF COLOR
HISPANIC: 92%
ASIAN: 1%
BLACK: 0%
AMERICAN INDIAN: 0%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN: 0%

NO INTERNET: 36%
INTERNET, NO SUBSCRIPTION: 8%
INTERNET: 55%

SELECT HTC CHARACTERISTICS
UNDER 5 YEARS: 9%
GROUP QUARTERS: 1%
RENTER: 30%
<100% POVERTY: 35%
<200% POVERTY: 63%

WEBB/JIM HOGG/MAVERICK/ DIMMIT

TOTAL EST. POPULATION: 249,039
CENSUS RESPONSE RATE: 36%
UPDATE LEAVE: 5,916

% PEOPLE OF COLOR
HISPANIC: 96%
ASIAN: 1%
BLACK: 0%
AMERICAN INDIAN: 0%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN: 0%

NO INTERNET: 36%
INTERNET, NO SUBSCRIPTION: 8%
INTERNET: 55%

SELECT HTC CHARACTERISTICS
UNDER 5 YEARS: 9%
GROUP QUARTERS: 1%
RENTER: 35%
<100% POVERTY: 31%
<200% POVERTY: 58%

JIM WELLS/KLEBURG/NUECES

TOTAL EST. POPULATION: 301,997
CENSUS RESPONSE RATE: 44%
UPDATE LEAVE: 2,397

% PEOPLE OF COLOR
HISPANIC: 66%
ASIAN: 4%
BLACK: 2%
AMERICAN INDIAN: 1%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN: 0%

NO INTERNET: 20%
INTERNET, NO SUBSCRIPTION: 2%
INTERNET: 78%

SELECT HTC CHARACTERISTICS
UNDER 5 YEARS: 7%
GROUP QUARTERS: 1%
RENTER: 36%
<100% POVERTY: 16%
<200% POVERTY: 37%
NORTH TEXAS

TOTAL EST. POPULATION: 5,868,206
CENSUS RESPONSE RATE: 56%

INTERNET AVAILABILITY

- 81% Internet
- 16% No Internet
- 3% Internet, No Subscription

COUNTRIES WITH HIGHEST RESPONSE RATES

- Rockwall* 65.2%
- Collin 64.3%
- Randall 62.5%
- Ellis 62.1%
- Parker 62.0%
- Tarrant** 59.5%
- Dallas** 54.0%

COUNTRIES WITH LOWEST RESPONSE RATES

- Coleman 36.3%
- Cochran 31.7%
- Crosby 29.4%
- Castro 29.1%
- Liscomb 26.1%

* highest response rate
** largest population

% PEOPLE OF COLOR

SELECT HTC CHARACTERISTICS
**EAST TEXAS**

**Total Est. Population:** 1,283,008

**Census Response Rate:** 47%

- **6%** Update Leave
- **47%** Non-Response
- **497** Census Response

**Internet Availability**

- **26%** No Internet
- **4%** Internet, No Subscription
- **70%** Internet

**% People of Color**

- Native Hawaiian
- American Indian
- Asian
- Black
- Hispanic

**Select HTC Characteristics**

- <200% Poverty
- <100% Poverty
- Renter
- Group Quarters
- Under 5 Yrs

**Counties with Highest Response Rates**

- Smith* 55.0%
- Gregg 54.0%
- Bowie 53.1%
- Lamar 52.6%
- Jefferson** 50.6%

**Counties with Lowest Response Rates**

- Jasper 34.2%
- Trinity 29.2%
- Tyler 28.0%
- Newton 27.0%
- Sabine 22.0%

* highest response rate
** largest population
CENTRAL TEXAS

TOTAL EST. POPULATION: 1,416,569
CENSUS RESPONSE RATE: 53%

INTERNET AVAILABILITY

- 3% Update Leave
- 44% Non-Response
- 53% Census Response
- 17% Internet
- 4% Internet, No Subscription

% PEOPLE OF COLOR

SELECT HTC CHARACTERISTICS

COUNTRIES WITH HIGHEST RESPONSE RATES

- Williamson* 57.9%
- Travis** 55%
- Bell 54.4%
- Lampasas 54.3%
- McLennon 54.1%

COUNTRIES WITH LOWEST RESPONSE RATES

- Bosque 41.0%
- Grimes 40.0%
- Llano 38.5%
- Burleson 36.8%
- Leon 21.0%

* highest response rate
** largest population
GULF COAST

TOTAL EST. POPULATION: 3,083,927
CENSUS RESPONSE RATE: 53%

INTERNET AVAILABILITY

17% No Internet
3% Internet, No Subscription
80% Internet

COUNTIES WITH HIGHEST RESPONSE RATES

- Fort Bend* 65.0%
- Montgomery 57.0%
- Brazoria 54.0%
- Harris 52.0%
- Galveston** 51.1%

COUNTIES WITH LOWEST RESPONSE RATES

- Chambers 43.9%
- Waller 43.9%
- Colorado 43.5%
- Walker 39.0%
- Matagorda 30.7%

* highest response rate
** largest population

% PEOPLE OF COLOR

SELECT HTC CHARACTERISTICS
NEXT STEPS

Since Census Day (April 1st), response rates have dropped significantly from 3% daily growth in census reporting to 0.5% daily growth.

![Graph showing response rates and daily increase for U.S. and Texas](image)

*Data Source: Census 2020 Response Rates*

We hope to see some of these numbers climb as the Census Bureau begins their door-to-door enumeration and outreach to Update Leave. The Texas Counts Pooled Fund plans to offer continued support to our grantees and our partners across the state to keep these numbers rising. In the coming weeks, we will be diving more deeply into the response rates and connecting with our partners in the areas with the lowest census participation and developing some plans for support.

VIRTUAL CENSUS ROAD TRIP, TEXAS COUNTS: *June 15th - 19th*

In addition to focused support to our grantees, we are happy to announce that we will be supporting Texas Counts and our partners at Every Texan, formerly the Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP) with a Virtual Census Road Trip across Texas to drum up support and excitement for the census.

They will highlight the work of grassroots partners, city and county leaders, and learn about why Texas Counts from an assortment of regional “tour guides,” including librarians and park rangers. Through a variety of activities, their goal will be to empower local census advocates in regions across Texas to get out the count. Please join us and help spread the word to your GOTC colleagues: you can sign-up today at [txcounts.me/hop-in](http://txcounts.me/hop-in).
THANK YOU for being our partners in supporting the 2020 CENSUS in TEXAS

We continue to seek support for census activities, and any additional funds allocated towards the Texas Counts Pooled Fund will be focused on supporting the lowest performing counties in the state.

If you have any questions, as always, please feel free to reach out:

Angela Broyles
abroyles@cftexas.org