

Austin-Travis County Census 2020 After Action Update

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Presenters

Julie Wheeler

Travis County Intergovernmental Relations

Lila Valencia

City Demographer, Housing and Planning Department

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2020 Census Program Manager

Topics Covered

1. Background on the 2020 Census
2. Coalition and Campaign Breakdown
3. Outcome and Next Steps for Census Bureau
4. Reflections and Recommendations for 2030

Background on the 2020 Census

Julie Wheeler

Travis County Intergovernmental Relations

Census Impacts

- \$1.5 Trillion of federal funds are allocated to state and local communities based on Census data. Examples of programs include:
 - Medicaid
 - Title I Grants to local school districts
 - Highway and public transit programs
- Travis County is estimated to lose \$1,500 per year for each person not counted
- Reapportionment of Congressional seats among states
- Redistricting of state house, senate, legislative and other districts
 - City of Austin Council Districts
 - Travis County Commissioners Courts

City & County Partnership

- Lessons learned from 2010 Census Partnership
- Creation of a Census Program Manager Position
- Austin-Travis County Complete Count Committee
- Austin-Travis County Census 2020 Community Collaborative and financial investments

Key Local Timeline Dates

2018

January – March	Preliminary planning with the Census Action Team
October	Formal announcement by Mayor Adler and Judge Eckhardt regarding formation of the Austin-Travis County Complete Count Committee

2019

April	Kick-off meeting of the A-TC Complete Count Committee and press conference
August	Census Program Manager hired City of Austin and Travis County ILA Partnership

2020

March	Austin-Travis County Census 2020 Community Collaborative formed Local jurisdictions declare stay-at-home orders; Census Bureau and local campaign suspend in-person events
October	Deadline for Census extended and amended multiple times

Coalition and Campaign Breakdown

John Lawler

Census Program Manager

Campaign Strategy + Organizing

Institutional – Harness support, talent, and resources of institutional partners and their networks

- Countywide Complete Count Committee served as organizing body
- Austin-Travis County Interlocal Agreement (ILA) enabled staff and administrative support

Grassroots – Foster teams within local hard to count populations to develop unique, relevant, targeted strategies

- Census Action Team served as organizing body
- 2020 Census Collaborative Fund provided funding for community specific campaigns composed of and led by hard to count community members

Media - Develop local messaging and content to be broadcast on digital, radio, and targeted devices

- Regional Media Collaborative served as organizing body for regional bilingual ads and events
- Digital Team served as organizing body for local ads, data analysis, and content.

Institutional: Countywide Complete Count Committee

Ascension Health	City of Austin	Huston-Tillotson University	St. Edward's University
Austin American Statesman	City of Manor	Interfaith Action of Central Texas	Telemundo
Austin Asian Chamber	City of Pflugerville	Jolt Texas	The University of Texas at Austin
Austin Community College	David Chapel Missionary Baptist Church	La Prensa Austin	Texas Counts
Austin ISD	Deeds Not Words	Latino Healthcare Forum	Texas Demographic Center
Austin Tech Alliance	Del Valle ISD	League of Women Voters	Travis County
Capital Metro	Every Texan	Mobile Loaves and Fishes	United Way of Greater Austin
Catholic Diocese of Austin	Foundation Communities	One Voice	Univision
Central Health	Go Austin / Vamos Austin	St. David's Foundation	Workers Defense Project

Institutional Partner Highlights

Austin ISD +
Austin Coalition of PTAs

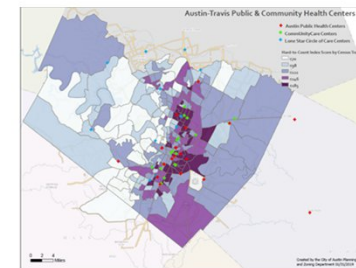
“Everybody Counts -
Todos Contamos!”

Healthcare Partners

“The 2020 Census
Impacts Everyone.”

City of Austin

“Stay Home -
Be Counted”



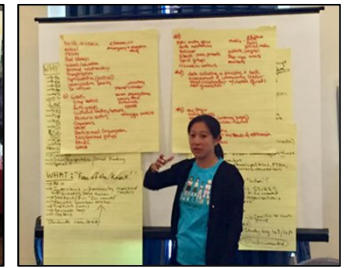
Grassroots: Community CCCs



Data Driven

Key Hard to Count populations were identified utilizing:

- US Census Bureau data,
- local volunteer support, and
- input from State Demographer's Office



Community Led

Leaders, non-profits, and volunteers organized:

- Messaging and campaign tactics developed through community led conversations and strategy sessions,
- Countywide budget shaped by unique needs of each individual campaign,
- Census Action Team continuously evolved and grew to reflect hard to count communities.



Grassroots Partner Highlights

Asian American

“Count us in”

Black - African American

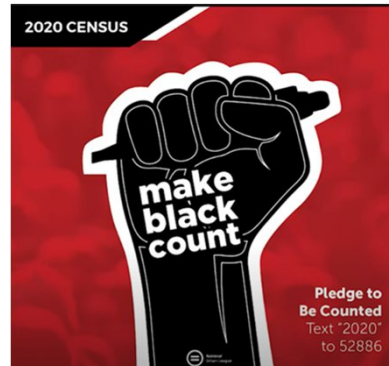
“Make Black Count”

Hispanic Latino

“Contamos Austin”

LGBTQIA+

#QueerTheCensusATX



Media: Five County Regional Media Grant

Radio Ads

Five Counties jointly used \$59,000 grant to collaborate on bilingual radio and TV ads.

Grocery Store Pop-ups

In partnership with the US Census Bureau and County Constable Precinct 4, Census events were hosted at grocery stores in high priority census tracts.



Media: Digital Team

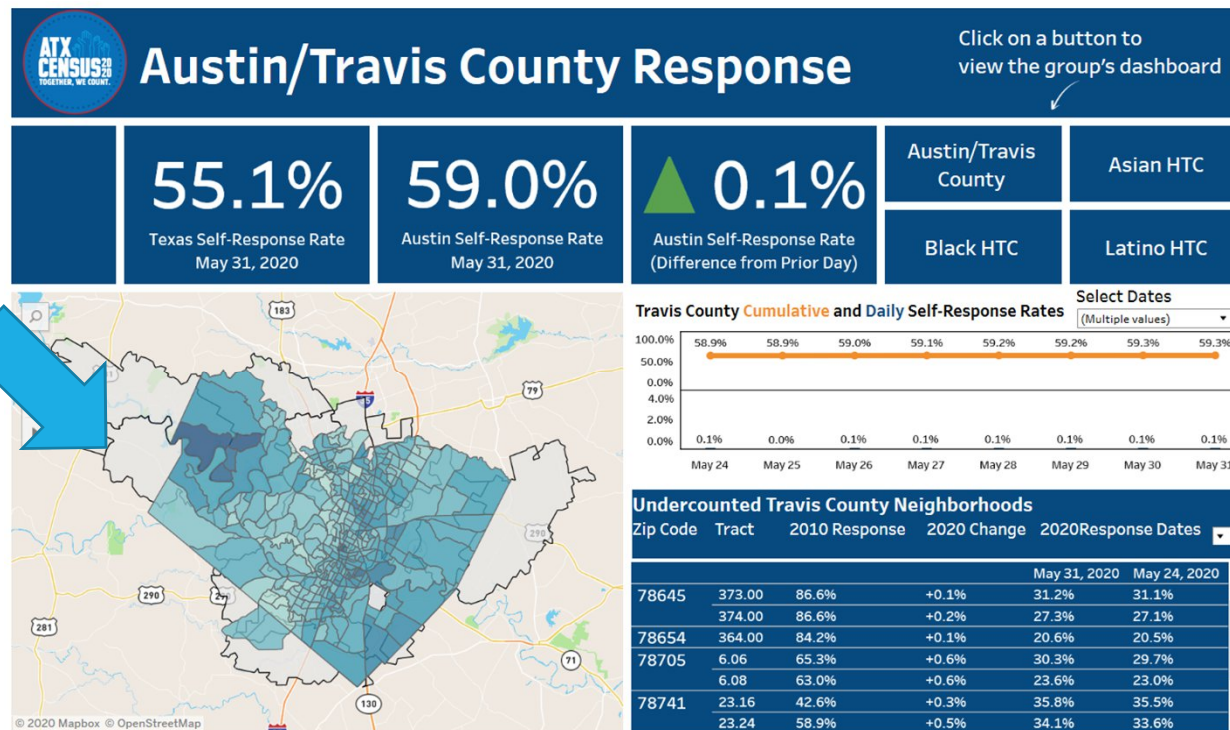
Data – Volunteer led mapping projects to illustrate local hurdles to participation and real-time response rates in targeted census tracts ([Austin/Travis Co Dashboard](#)).

Content – Developed website, copy, templates, and localized resources

Support – Assisted grassroots teams in any and all things digital. Refining social media campaigns, tracking results, and content development.



Digital Team Highlight: Local Response Rate Dashboard



Data Analysis & A Look Ahead

Lila Valencia

Demographic Planner

City of Austin Housing & Planning Department

Not All Rates Are Created Equal

Total Response or Enumeration Rate

- Consists of percent of all housing units and addresses nationwide that were enumerated or reconciled
- Total Response = Self Response + Non-Response Follow-Up

Non-Response Follow-Up Rate

- Conducted by Census workers going door to door

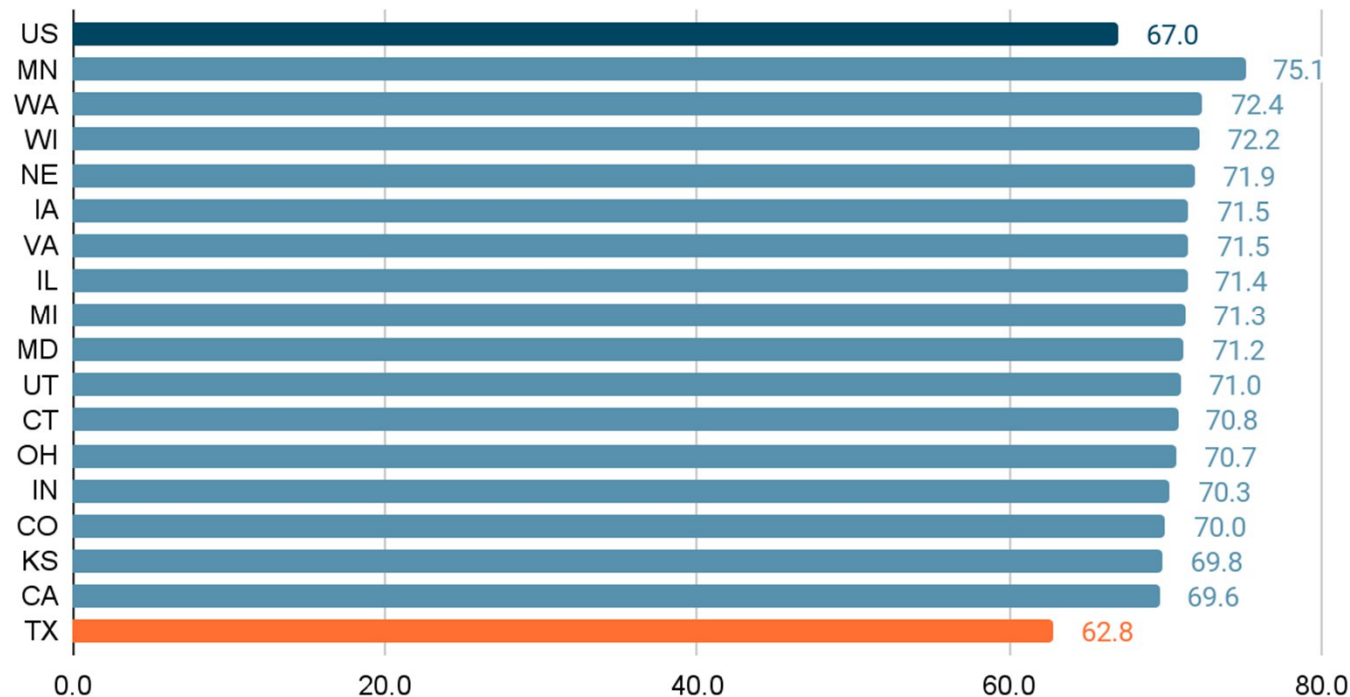
Self-Response Rate

- Individual households respond by phone, mail, or online
- Self-response yields the most accurate census data
- Best metric to evaluate the success of the Austin-Travis County Complete Count Committee

None of these rates represent counts.

Census Self-Response Rates

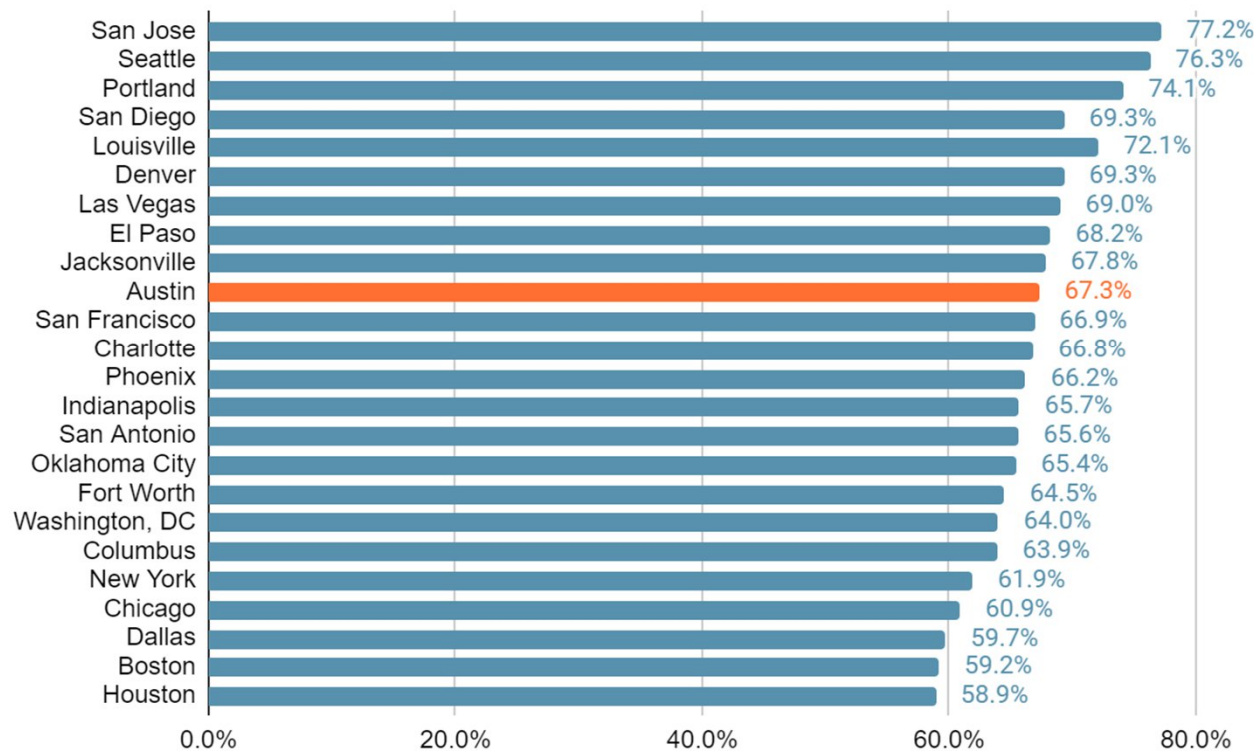
Percent of Housing Units that Self-Responded to 2020 Census



Texas ranked 39th in self-response rate in 2020; 35th in 2010.

Comparison of Selected Cities

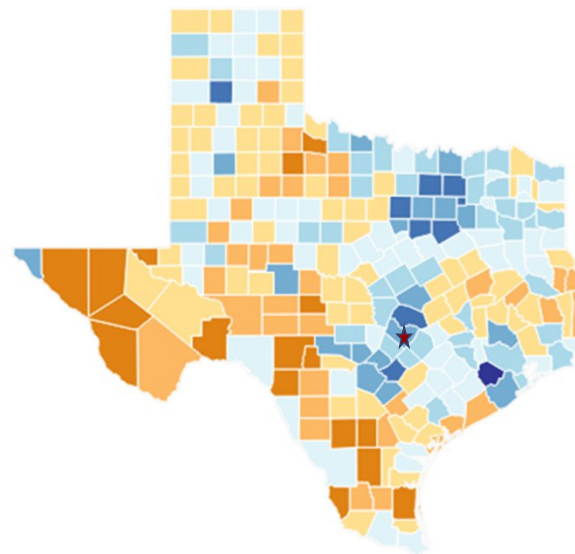
Percent of Housing Units Self-Responded to 2020 Census



Austin had the 2nd highest self-response rate among large Texas cities.

How did we do?

	U.S.	Texas	Travis	Austin	Dallas	Dallas	Bexar	San Antonio	Harris	Houston	El Paso	El Paso	Tarrant	Fort Worth
2020	67.0%	62.8%	67.3%	67.3%	63.9%	59.7%	67.3%	65.6%	62.9%	58.9%	66.8%	68.2%	68.9%	64.5%
2010	66.5%	64.4%	66.2%	66.7%	64.6%	61.9%	66.8%	67.2%	65.1%	63.5%	70.8%	72.6%	66.8%	65.8%



Austin-Travis County only large city-county pair to beat their 2010 response rate.



Looking Ahead

Apportionment File was released April 26, 2021

- Included national and state counts
- Texas gained 2 new congressional seats, 1 less than projected

2020 Census Counts to be released August 16th, September 30th

- “Redistricting File” or Public Law 94-171 File
- Race, Ethnicity, 18 plus, Occupancy Status, Group Quarters by Type
- Inform the work of the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission and County Commissioners Court redistricting process
- This release does not include the Demographic and Housing Characteristics file

Results of Post-Enumeration Survey to be released December 2021 or early 2022

- Includes measure of over/undercount for different demographic groups and geographies

Census Bureau Count Question Resolution

- Process for municipalities and other governing bodies to challenge their 2020 Census count

Reflections and Recommendations

John Lawler
Census Program Manager

Reflections on 2020

The Environment

Three primary local campaigns that had funding, staff, and prioritized community-based partnerships in the region's Hard to Count (HTC) communities.:

- Federally funded Census Partnership program
- City, County, and grant funded Austin-Travis County Census Program
- Privately funded United Way project to provide grants and regional (five county) coordination

State of Texas did not initially form a formal campaign, and chose not to fund any state-wide outreach until final month of Census.

- No direct funding from State
- Lack of coordination
- 'Texas Counts' filled the role of organizing statewide campaign and funding local efforts

Reflections on 2020

The Hurdles

Although funded and determined, the efforts faced repeated hurdles included an underdeveloped infrastructure between institutional and grassroots collaborators.

- Underdeveloped infrastructure: The local or grassroots partners had to develop frameworks and organizations in an impromptu fashion. Disproportionately relied on community volunteers, at times causing strain in the City/County and community leaders relationship.
- Volunteer Burnout: Relied on the energies of a very small population of advocates and community groups.
- COVID.

Recommendations for 2030

Start Earlier! Educate and Engage institutional partners at least three years in advance

Divide and Collaborate: Engage Census Bureau early to divide responsibilities

Avoid Duplication: Maintain Collaborative, establish local financial commitments in advance of Census, and combine grantmaking and fundraising with existing foundations

Staff Up...Earlier! Hire program manager earlier and provide dedicated administrative support

Recommendations for 2030

Data, data, data: Build on the data the Census Bureau provides with insight from state and local demographers and community volunteers.

Inch Wide and Mile Deep: Start community organizing more narrowly focused, and then build a wider coalition. This will take years not months to be effective.

Intersectional Campaigning: Future efforts should balance the need for equitable distribution of funds with funding of intersectional strategies that are most likely to increase response rates.

Use what we have: Leverage existing institutional resources to support existing grassroots and community-based operations.

One Big Idea for the next 10 years...

The Opportunity...

The County and City jointly fund and support from within an organizing entity that:

- Dismantles hurdles to civic participation
- Strengthens and prepares institutional-grassroots infrastructure
- Empowers hyper-local leaders to directly inform coordinated outreach strategy

Why should we do this?

- Shifts the balance of power from grant makers to the community experts that are already called upon in times of need: grassroot leaders and their networks within communities
- Long term investment that will not only better prepare our community for the 2030 Census but pays dividends in form of community preparedness and resiliency along the way

One Big Idea: How we get there...

Maintain combined City and County Collaborative:

- Continue to invest and support a County-City collaborative focusing on intersectional campaign strategies
- Leverage local and national data to identify 'hardest to reach' communities and their hurdles
- Engage existing and emerging community leaders to inform and direct coordinated strategy
- Maximize public investment by pairing collaborative fund dollars with external foundation grants in collaborative fashion
- Establish centralized digital presence and resources

Thank you!

This combined local effort was only successful due to the incredible dedication and hard work of hundreds of volunteers, government and non-profit staff members, and local media partners.

The leadership and service of the Census Action Team, Countywide Complete Count Committee, Digital Team, and regional collaborators is most appreciated.

Thank you!

