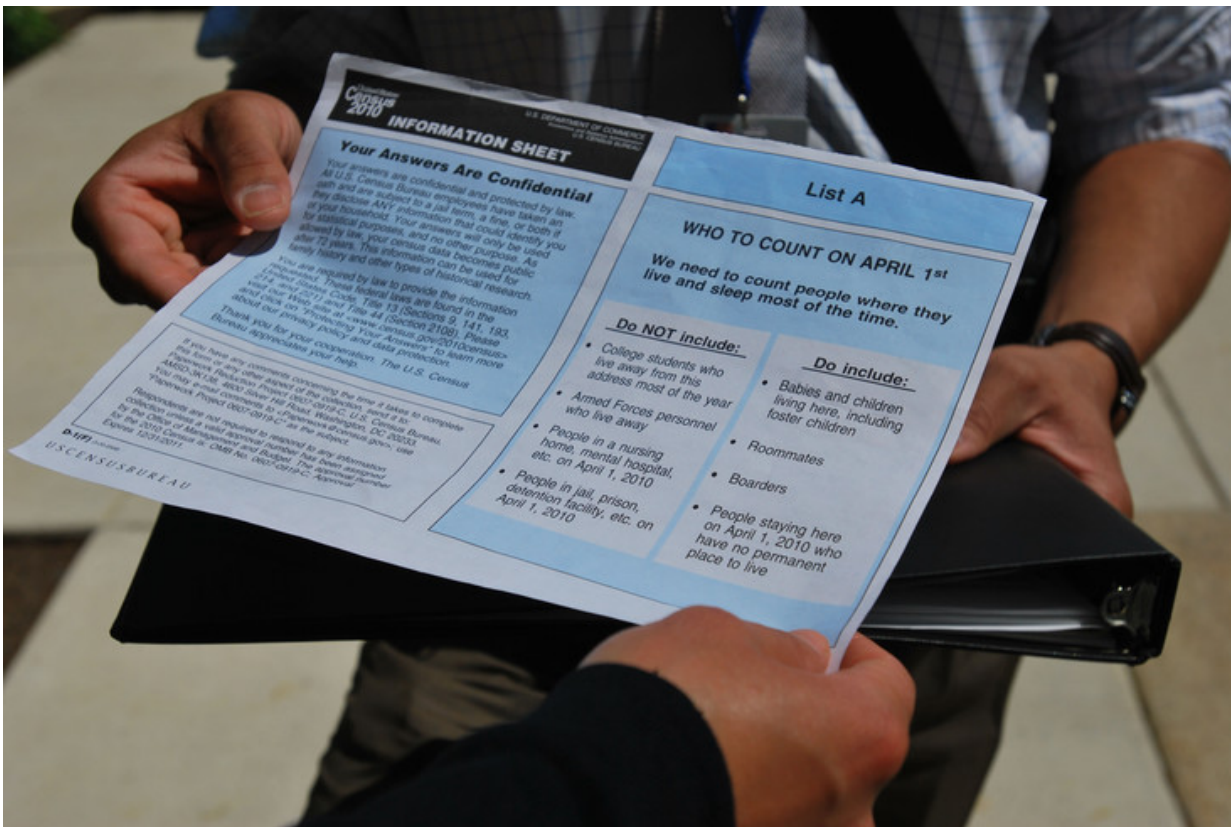


Hispanic youth underrepresented in most recent U.S. census

June 24 2016, by Joslyn Neiderer



2010 United States Census information sheet. Credit: U.S. Census Bureau

In a recent comparison of Census Bureau data, researchers estimate that nearly 400,000 Hispanic children were not counted in the 2010 census. The misrepresentation of a population could lead to less political

representation and the loss of funding for critical programs aimed at early childhood wellness, according to researchers.

While comparing the United States Census Bureau's 2010 Decennial Census and the U.S. Census Bureau's Vintage 2010 Population Estimates, researchers discovered a significant discrepancy in the count of Hispanic youth under the age of five. Yeris Mayol-Garcia, a doctoral candidate in the Sociology and Demography Program at Penn State, along with her co-authors, independent researcher William O'Hare, Elizabeth Wildsmith and Alicia Torres, both of Child Trends, produced a report, titled "The Invisible Ones: How Latino Children Are Left out of Our Nation's' Census Count," that outlines their findings.

While there is no clear agreement on the reasons for the staggering undercount, researchers have identified several potential causes that they hope will start a discussion on how to enhance the accuracy of the next [census](#).

The decennial census, a report based on counts of people at their usual place of residence, was compared against the vintage estimates, which provide annual estimates based on births, deaths and migration. The researchers focused on data for April 1, 2010, by subtracting the Vintage Population Estimates for the Hispanic population aged 0-4 from the decennial census count of the same population to arrive at the difference between the two: 400,000—what they refer to as the "undercount."

The 400,000 estimate is close to the entire population of the city of Portland, Oregon, according to Mayol-Garcia.

By using population statistics at the county level, the researchers also discovered that the undercount of young Hispanics was highly concentrated in counties within the states with the largest Hispanic populations in the U.S.—California, Texas, Florida, Arizona and New

York.

Several factors may have led to this astonishing undercount, according to Mayol-Garcia. Hispanic children are concentrated in neighborhoods where it's often difficult to count people, such as areas with a high proportion of renters. Hispanic children also are more likely to live in complex families where several generations, and subfamilies may be present. In some cases, adults may not know children are meant to be included in the count and others may also be reluctant to participate in the census if one or more members of their household are undocumented.

In their report, the researchers caution that more work is needed to understand why such a significant portion of the young Hispanic [population](#) was missed. "In all likelihood, the undercount is a result of a combination of these factors," Mayol-Garcia said.

The next decennial census is slated for 2020, and may seem far off, but planning is already in the works. Mayol-Garcia believes that additional steps to avoid undercounting need to be explored for implementation in the next round of the census; which includes more research and development of specific outreach campaigns.

Beginning outreach efforts early is key to developing networks that will reach households with young Hispanic children in time for the 2020 census. This outreach includes leveraging programs that already serve children, like the Woman Infant and Children Nutrition program (WIC), and encouraging health care providers and preschools to provide information to the families about the importance of making sure to include young children in the count.

Mayol-Garcia also thinks that another route to explore for the future census is to improve the phrasing of questions concerning 1- to 4-years-

olds, since a similar technique improved the undercount for [children](#) under the age of 1. Mayol-Garcia added, "an accurate census is a fair one."

More information: The Invisible Ones: How Latino Children Are Left Out of Our Nation's Census Count: [www.childtrends.org/?publicati ... nations-census-count](http://www.childtrends.org/?publicati...nations-census-count)

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

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