

**2020 census study: 10,000 Delaware children will likely not be included**

[**Meredith Newman**](http://www.delawareonline.com/staff/10059188/meredith-newman/)**, Delaware News Journal -** Published 12:01 a.m. ET June 27, 2018 | **Updated 8:23 a.m. ET June 27, 2018**

Delaware is one of a dozen states planning to sue the federal government in an attempt to keep a controversial citizenship question from appearing on the 2020 U.S. Census. Daniel Sato/The News Journal/Wochit

About 10,000 Delaware children are at risk of being not counted in the 2020 census, which could mean less federal money for programs like school lunches and public health insurance, according to a new study.

"This comes down to dollars," said Janice Barlow, director of [Kids Count at the University of Delaware](https://www.sppa.udel.edu/ccrs/research-data/kids-count-in-delaware). "The more of an undercount, the fewer federal dollars will be allocated to us. We need everyone counted."

Last year, Delaware received $500 million from the 10 largest federal programs that serve children, according to the [Kids Count Data Book](https://datacenter.kidscount.org/), released Wednesday.

The data book, a report by the Annie E. Casey Foundation that analyzes of the health of children in the United States, found that 1 million children nationwide were not counted in the previous census in 2010. This was the worst "undercount" for any age group, the foundation said.

The report ranked Delaware 21st in the country for health, 27th in education and 29th in economic well-being.

Every 10 years, the U.S. Census Bureau counts the total number of people in the country through an April 1 survey. Experts fear the Trump administration's mandate to ask residents about their citizenship in the upcoming survey will deter some people from completing it.

The 10,000 children represent about 17 percent of children between birth and 5 years old who likely will not be included, the report predicted.

**Map:**[See where hard-to-count areas in Delaware are located](https://www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us/)

Barlow said there are pockets throughout the country where it's more difficult to measure exactly. The people not included in the national survey are often minorities, particularly Hispanics, who don't speak English as their first language, she said. Cultural or language barriers can prevent people from completing the survey.

These pockets are in both rural and urban communities in Delaware, specifically Wilmington and Georgetown.

The hardest area to count in Delaware is in Newark, near the University of Delaware, where 58.3 percent of the tract's households mailed back their 2010 census questionnaire, according to census data. Neighboring tracts had response rates ranging from 72 to 84 percent.

Earlier this year, [the Justice Department asked the bureau to include a question about a person's citizenship status](https://www.delawareonline.com/story/news/politics/onpolitics/2018/03/26/citizenship-question-put-back-2020-census/461044002/). Typically, the census reports on the total number of residents, not the total number of citizens. This will be the first time the question has been in the survey in 70 years.

When questions are added to the census, they're typically vetted in a series of tests so that researchers understand the implications of the question, Barlow said.

Since testing for the 2020 census had already begun when the "last minute decision" was made, it's unclear if this question will frighten people into not responding, she said.

While the census is controlled by the federal government, states are dependent on the data because it is linked to how much money they receive in federal funding, Barlow said.

The fewer people in an area, the less money the state could receive for programs such as Head Start and the Children's Health Insurance Program. Businesses also look at census data when determining where they want to be located, which has a ripple effect on states' economies, she said.

Although the census is less than two years away, Barlow said it's important for Delaware officials to begin thinking about outreach to the hard-to-count communities.

"We’re going to be the ones to live with the consequences," Barlow said.

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