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N.C. Stands to Lose Billions from Poor 2020 Census According to New Study

RALEIGH—The results of the 2020 Decennial Census are likely to help guide the allocation of more than \$16 billion in federal spending for North Carolina each year, according to a new study led by Professor Andrew Reamer of George Washington University. The George Washington University project is called “Counting for Dollars.” The report contains a 50-state [listing](#) of funds directed annually to state and local governments by census data for health care, Head Start, roads and highway, school lunch programs, housing assistance, and a variety of other programs. A [summary of the national](#) findings calculated \$589.7 billion in Census-directed funding from 16 federal programs.

On the eve of congressional actions to fully fund planning for the 2020 count, representatives of a coalition of census stakeholders representing business, industry, civil rights, academia, and state and local government called on North Carolinians to demand the state is properly counted in 2020 by supporting full funding in the federal Fiscal 2018 funding. A poor count will put as much as \$170 billion in federal support to North Carolina over the next decade at risk, according to the Census Project coalition’s review of the study.

“The Census Bureau estimates that over 25,000 young children in North Carolina were not counted in the 2010 census, the eighth highest amount in the country. When young children are left out of the census it means fewer resources for critical programs that promote healthy growth and development during early childhood, like Head Start, the Child Care and Development Block Grant, and the Maternal and Child Health Service Block Grant,” said Adam Sotak, the public engagement director for NC Child.

Phil Sparks of the Census Project said North Carolina had much to lose from a poorly planned census count. “The state has a lot at stake in this debate,” Sparks declared.

“We cannot turn a blind eye to an underfunded and at-risk Census,” Stacey Carless, the director of the N.C. Counts Coalition, declared. “We must ensure that the 2020 Census is adequately funded to secure an accurate count, protect North Carolina’s political representation, ensure that North Carolina receives its fair share of federal funding and to support economic growth and community planning throughout our state.”

While the study focused on 16 federal programs, just 5 accounted for most of the federal funding to North Carolina; led by Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, Medicare Part B, HUD Section 8 Housing Vouchers, and Department of Transportation Highway Planning & Construction Funds. “All North Carolinians benefit from a high-quality, complete and fair census,” Sparks added.

“The fair and equitable distribution of federal financial assistance to state and local governments and households will depend on the accuracy of the 2020 Census,” said Professor Reamer, who conducted the study.

“An accurate Census count ensures our local programs receive the necessary federal, state and local dollars to build pathways of opportunity for all North Carolina children,” said Greg Borom, the advocacy director of Children First/Communities In Schools Buncombe County.

“A successful Census 2020 requires a full count of the nation’s second largest population group,” stated Arturo Vargas, the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund’s executive director. “The stakes are too high to fail. If we do not provide the Census Bureau with the funding it needs now, the Latino community in North Carolina and nationwide will continue to have disproportionate access to fair political representation and critical public services in the future.”

The full study can be found at:

<https://gwipp.gwu.edu/counting-dollars-role-decennial-census-geographic-distribution-federal-funds>

Detailed findings on each of the 16 programs the group already researched can be found at the links below:

[Medical Assistance Program \(Medicaid\)](#)

[Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program \(SNAP\)](#)

[Medicare Part B \(Supplemental Medical Insurance\) – Physicians Fee Schedule Services](#)

[Highway Planning and Construction](#)

[Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers](#)

[Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies](#)

[National School Lunch Program](#)

[Special Education Grants \(IDEA\)](#)

[State Children's Health Insurance Program \(S-CHIP\)](#)

[Section 8 Housing Assistance Payments Program \(Project-based\)](#)

[Head Start/Early Head Start](#)

[Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children \(WIC\)](#)

[Foster Care \(Title IV-E\)](#)

[Health Center Programs \(Community, Migrant, Homeless, Public Housing\)](#)

[Low Income Home Energy Assistance \(LIHEAP\)](#)

PRESS NOTE: The Leadership Conference Education Fund produced a [fact sheet on the uses of the data](#) in the George Washington University report.

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