The Invisible Ones: How Latino Children Are Left Out of Our Nation’s Census Count

Report findings

• Approximately 400,000 young Latino children ages 0 to 4 were left uncounted by the 2010 Census.
• The net undercount rate for young Latino children was 7.1 percent, compared to 4.3 percent for non-Latinos.
• Five states—California, Texas, Florida, Arizona, and New York—accounted for 72 percent of the national net undercount of young Latinos.

Why does this happen?

• Latinos are more likely than non-Latinos to live in hard-to-count places: for example, areas with multi-unit buildings and a high proportion of renters.
• Latinos are more likely than non-Latinos to live in hard-to-count families and households, such as multigenerational and highly mobile families, and households with complex relationships.
• Latino adults are more likely than non-Latino adults to believe that young children do not need to be reported on the census form.
Implications

• The undercount of Latino children reduces potential federal funding for state programs serving low-income families.

• Four federal assistance programs—Head Start; the Special Supplemental Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); the Child Care and Development Block Grant; and the Maternal and Child Health Services Block Grant—distribute $20 billion annually to states and localities based, at least in part, on census counts of the population under age 5.

• Yet 62 percent of young Latino children—more than 11 million boys and girls—currently live in or near poverty.

Recommendations for the 2020 Census

• **Education.** Alert stakeholders to the potential implications of a high undercount among young Latino children. All relevant stakeholders—including Latino families and communities, and state and local policymakers—should understand the negative consequences of this undercount.

• **Engagement.** Improve targeted outreach to those areas with the largest number of undercounted children.

• **Partnerships.** Develop more relationships with vested stakeholders, such as civic organizations and early childhood education organizations that will be able to reach households with young children.

• **Research.** Examine who the undercounted young children are and what neighborhoods they live in. Test language used in Census instructions with low-income Latino parents to gauge clarity.

Reference

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