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Stakes are High for Cities and Regions Ahead of an Unsettled 2020 Census.

A little over one year from now, the United States will participate in a democratic tradition that stretches back to the founding of the republic: the once-a-decade census of its population.

From 1790 (U.S. population: 3.9 million) to 2010 (U.S. population: 309 million), the decennial census has changed alongside the nation itself. From the territory it covers, to the questions it asks, to how it collects the information, the census has reflected evolution in technology, the role of the federal government, and the size of the country itself.

As we approach 2020, however, both technical and political changes in the census are introducing unprecedented new challenges. The stakes are high for cities and regions, which depend on a full and accurate count of their populations to ensure their fiscal health and political strength. Three areas of concern stand out.

Continue reading.

The Brookings Institute

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