



April 21, 2010

Be Counted, America! How are we doing? (Part 4)

An analysis of the first four weeks of participation in the 2010 Census

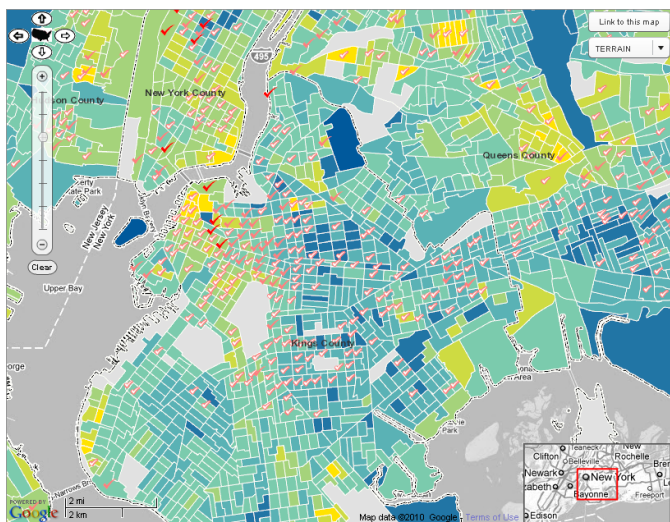
The Center for Urban Research (CUR) at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (CUNY) has analyzed the latest mail-in participation rates from the 2010 decennial census in an effort to understand which areas present the greatest challenges during the Nonresponse Follow-up operation and to help census advocates target the next phase of their outreach activities based on key demographic characteristics in each neighborhood. The Census Bureau will continue publishing mail-in rate data this week and will announce the final rate on April 26. We expect to provide a final analysis soon thereafter.

As of April 20, the national rate was 71%, almost matching the final 2000 participation rate of 72%. Strong response by mail is important because households not counted through the mail will now be enumerated through door-to-door interviews, a much more expensive and time consuming operation. According to the Census Bureau, it saves \$85 million in follow-up costs for each one percent of households that answers the census by mail. If the nation eventually exceeds its 2000 rate, it will be the second decade in a row that the census mail-back rate has increased over the previous decade, a historic shift in one barometer of the nation's civic engagement.

Though the nation as a whole has not yet matched its 2000 mail-in participation rate, **many states, counties, and tracts surged ahead of their 2000 rates, while others fell far short of that mark.** This week's analysis continues our examination of the relationship between participation rates, race/ethnicity, and hard-to-count scores, especially comparing high-response tracts with other tracts in major cities. It also highlights the low-response tracts in major cities, to provide insight for the Census Bureau and partner organizations as enumeration efforts now focus on households that did not mail back their questionnaires.

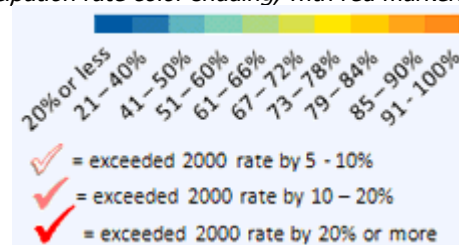
Advocates and others can visualize patterns of mail-in participation at the tract, county, and state levels at www.CensusHardToCountMaps.org. The map can help pinpoint areas for census participation follow up:

- High-achieving areas are highlighted with red check marks. The following map shows Brooklyn, NY:



(Map from www.CensusHardToCountMaps.org)

Participation rate color shading, with red markers:



- Neighborhoods with relatively low participation rates – which will be the focus of more expansive door-to-door enumeration efforts – are also obvious. In the map example above, pockets of dark blue census tracts (with participation rates in the 30% range) stand out amid clusters of check marks indicating high-achieving tracts.
- Other features at the site that are not available on the Census Bureau's "Take 10" map include:
 - A searchable, sortable display of best and worst performing tracts by county nationwide (based on their latest mail-in participation rates);
 - Maps of areas that received a replacement Census questionnaire;
 - Map overlays showing Congressional districts, ZIP Codes, tract-level maps of 2000 Census mail return rates, and recent foreclosure risk; and
 - Real-time, geo-located Census-related Tweets.

Key Findings from Week 4 (as of April 20)

1. "High achievers" nationwide

- **Two states – North Carolina and South Carolina – have surpassed their 2000 mail-in rate by 5 percentage points or more.**
 - All but two counties in North Carolina, and all but three in South Carolina, exceeded their 2000 rates.
- **Almost 22% of the nation's counties (680) have exceeded their 2000 participation rate by 5 percentage points or more.** Last week (as of April 13) 472 counties had achieved this level. The greatest concentrations were in the South – especially North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Virginia, and to a lesser extent Georgia, Alabama, and Florida.
- **Nearly 18% of the nation's tracts (11,340) exceeded their 2000 participation rate by 5 percentage points or more.** This is almost twice as many tracts than had achieved this level last week (as of April 13).
 - *Already, nine census tracts have reached 100% participation through the mail.* Our detailed findings, below, include a list of these communities. In 2000, only 13 tracts had achieved a 100% mail-in rate.

2. Low participation tracts – the focus of door-to-door enumeration starting in May

- **Five percent (5%) of the nation's census tracts (3,510) had participation rates of 50 percent or less as of April 20.** The Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU) operation, when more than 600,000 census takers will visit homes that did not mail back their questionnaires, will be far more difficult in communities with low participation rates in the first phase of the census.
- **The nationwide median HTC score for these lowest-achieving census tracts is 59,** indicating that they tend to be somewhat hard to count historically.
- Based on 2000 demographic data, **these low-performing tracts tended to have more diverse populations than tracts with higher participation rates, on average:**
 - 46% non-Hispanic White
 - 31% non-Hispanic Black
 - 16% Hispanic
 - 3% non-Hispanic Asian
 - 4% other races.
- By comparison, tracts with mail-in rates above 50% have a very different race/ethnic composition on average nationwide:
 - 70% non-Hispanic White
 - 13% non-Hispanic Black
 - 11% Hispanic
 - 3% non-Hispanic Asian
 - 2% other races.

3. Low participation tracts in cities

A comparison of non-urbanized areas to cities shows substantial differences in characteristics of low-participation tracts (those with mail-in rates of 50% or less).

- **The median HTC score for low-performing tracts in cities is 80 compared with 41 in non-urban areas.**
- On average, low-performing tracts in non-urban areas have a non-Hispanic White population of 71%. In inner cities, these tracts on average are predominantly non-Hispanic Black (51%) and Hispanic (19%), while the non-Hispanic White population is 21%.
- Several of the nation's largest cities have a much greater concentration of tracts with mail-in rates of 50% or less. In Newark (NJ) and New Orleans, more than half of those cities' tracts are in this low-participation range. In Chicago, Cleveland, and New York City, between 20 and 31% of the tracts have low mail-in rates.
 - A city-by-city list is included in the detailed findings below, which displays these statistics as well as the median HTC scores for low- and high-participation tracts.
 - A separate spreadsheet is available online providing the average tract-level race and ethnicity characteristics in these cities for both types of tracts.

4. High participation tracts in major cities

- **In the nation's largest cities, "high achieving" tracts tend to have higher hard-to-count (HTC) scores.** On April 20, the 2,338 tracts in these cities with 2010 participation rates at least 5 percentage points higher than 2000 had a median HTC score of 69, compared with the other tracts in these cities that had a median HTC score of 51.
 - This difference is similar to last week (Week 3), when the high achieving tracts had a median HTC score of 74 compared with other tracts with a median HTC score of 53. This indicates that tracts that have substantially improved on their 2000 performance continue to be in neighborhoods generally considered hard to count.
 - According to the Census Bureau's HTC index, tracts with scores of 60 or higher are considered hard to count, and tracts with HTC scores of 76 or more are considered "very hard-to-count."
 - The detailed analysis, below, provides a city-by-city comparison of HTC scores for these high achieving tracts and each city's remaining tracts.

In-Depth Analysis of Week 4 Findings

High Achievers Nationwide

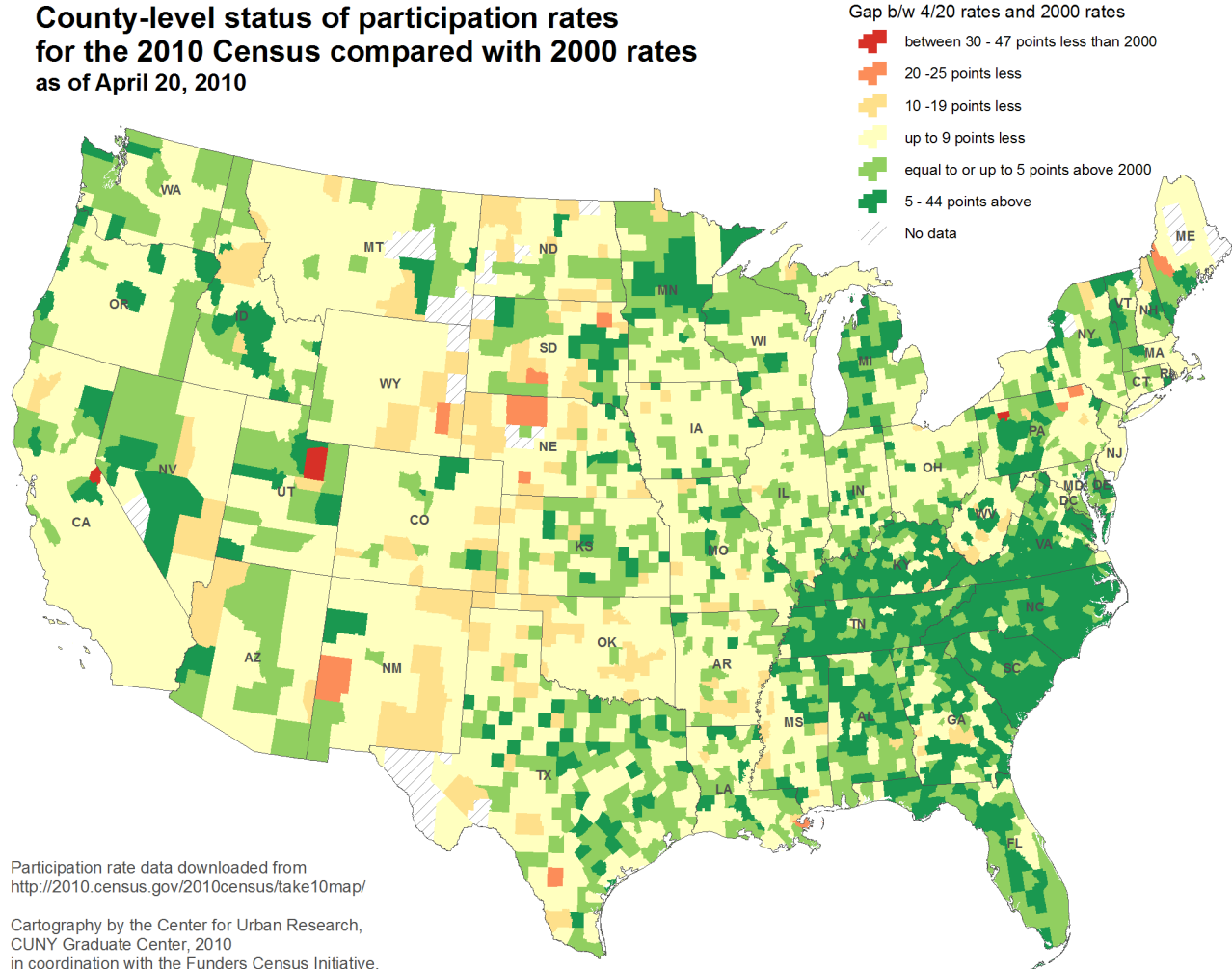
Two states – North Carolina and South Carolina – have surpassed their 2000 mail-in rate by 5 percentage points or more.

- All but two counties in North Carolina, and all but three in South Carolina, exceeded their 2000 rates.

Almost 22% of the nation's counties (680) have exceeded their 2000 participation rate by 5 percentage points or more.

- The greatest concentrations were in the South – especially North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, and Virginia, and to a lesser extent Georgia, Alabama, and Florida.

The following map shows countywide participation rates in 2010 compared with 2000. The dark green shaded counties are ahead of their 2000 rates by 5 percentage points or more.



Nearly 18% of the nation's tracts (11,340) exceeded their 2000 participation rate by 5 percentage points or more. This is almost twice as many tracts than had achieved this level last week (as of April 13).

Overall, nine census tracts have reached 100% participation through the mail. They range in population from 42 people (in San Mateo County, CA) to 5,017 people (Tolland County, CT), based on 2000 population figures. (On average, census tracts contain 2,500 people.) They are located across the country. Reaching 100% via the mail does not necessarily mean that 100% of the population has been counted; the final rate will depend on a complete count of households as well as group quarters populations and people who live in transient housing.

TABLE 1: Tracts with 100% mail-in rates as of April 20

Tract	Link to Census 2010 mapping site
Census Tract 112 in Washington County, AR (pop. in 2000: 1,860)	http://bit.ly/92Baxf
Census Tract 6035 in San Mateo County, CA (pop. in 2000: 42)	http://bit.ly/9RVfPm
Census Tract 7031 in New London County, CT (pop. in 2000: 1,494)	http://bit.ly/cQBxyV
Census Tract 5291 in Tolland County, CT (pop. in 2000: 5,017)	http://bit.ly/8Z8BSK
Census Tract 108 in Dougherty County, GA (pop. in 2000: 1,016)	http://bit.ly/b2joHB
Census Tract 68.01 in Fulton County, GA (pop. in 2000: 2,648)	http://bit.ly/9Isdjd
Census Tract 6 in Douglas County, NV (pop. in 2000: 2,128)	http://bit.ly/bwk5UA
Census Tract 102.01 in Butler County, OH (pop. in 2000: 1,825)	http://bit.ly/cwzSeM
Census Tract 13 in Taylor County, TX (pop. in 2000: 900)	http://bit.ly/aJsMeo

Low participation tracts – the focus of door-to-door enumeration

The Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU) operation, when more than 600,000 census takers will visit homes that did not mail back their census questionnaires, will be far more difficult in communities with low participation rates in the first phase of the census. In this section we focus on tracts that only had a mail-in participation rate (as of April 20) of 50% or less. In other words, these are areas where most of the households will need to be counted via personal interviews with census takers. It does not capture the full "NRFU" universe – even tracts with high mail-in rates will have households that need to be enumerated in person – but it provides neighborhood-level context for areas that will experience a substantial level of door-to-door activity.

Five percent (5%) of the nation's census tracts (3,510) had participation rates of 50 percent or less as of April 20. On average these low-participation tracts are located in communities that tend to be somewhat hard to count historically. **The nationwide median HTC score for these lowest-achieving census tracts is 59.**

Based on 2000 demographic data, **these low-performing tracts tended to have more diverse populations than tracts with higher participation rates, on average.** By comparison, tracts with mail-in rates above 50% have a very different race/ethnic composition on average.

TABLE 2
Nationwide average race/ethnicity composition of tracts by level of mail-in participation

	Percent White	Percent Black	Percent Asian	Percent Hispanic	Percent other race categories
Mail-in rate 50% or less (3,500 tracts)	46%	31%	3%	16%	4%
Mail-in rate above 50% (60,967 tracts)	70%	13%	3%	11%	2%

Note:

1. Race/ethnicity data based on 2000 Census.
2. Some tracts not included in groupings due to missing data. Therefore number of tracts may not match nationwide total.

Low participation tracts in cities

A comparison of non-urbanized areas to cities shows substantial differences in characteristics of low-participation tracts (with mail-in rates of 50% or less).

TABLE 3
Median HTC score for low-performing tracts in cities is 80 compared with 41 in non-urban areas

Urban/Non-Urban category	Median HTC Score	# of tracts
Non-urbanized area	41	1,644
Urbanized area, but outside city limits	73	202
Inside city limits	80	1,664
Nationwide	59	3,510

On average, low-performing tracts in non-urban areas have a non-Hispanic White population of 71%. In inner cities, these tracts on average are predominantly non-Hispanic Black (52%) and Hispanic (19%), while the non-Hispanic White population is 21%.

TABLE 4
Average tract race/ethnicity composition for low vs. high participation tracts nationwide

	Percent White		Percent Black		Percent Asian		Percent Hispanic		Percent other race categories	
	Mail-in rate 50% or less	Mail-in rate above 50%	Mail-in rate 50% or less	Mail-in rate above 50%	Mail-in rate 50% or less	Mail-in rate above 50%	Mail-in rate 50% or less	Mail-in rate above 50%	Mail-in rate 50% or less	Mail-in rate above 50%
Non-urbanized area	71%	84%	11%	7%	1%	1%	12%	6%	5%	2%
Urbanized area, but outside city	41%	72%	32%	9%	4%	5%	20%	12%	3%	2%
Inside city limits	21%	52%	51%	23%	5%	5%	19%	18%	4%	3%

The median values for tract composition is also a helpful metric. The table below shows the median proportion of tract race/ethnicity composition nationwide for low vs. high participation tracts. Within each urban/non-urban grouping, half of the tracts fall below and half are above the median value. For example, in non-urban areas, even though the average population for low-participation tracts is 71% White, more than half of those

tracts have a White population above 81%. Similarly, within cities, even though the average population for low-participation tracts is 19% Hispanic, more than half those tracts have a Hispanic population below 9%.

TABLE 5
Median tract race/ethnicity composition for low vs. high participation tracts nationwide

	<i>Percent White</i>		<i>Percent Black</i>		<i>Percent Asian</i>		<i>Percent Hispanic</i>		<i>Percent other race categories</i>	
	<i>Mail-in rate 50% or less</i>	<i>Mail-in rate above 50%</i>	<i>Mail-in rate 50% or less</i>	<i>Mail-in rate above 50%</i>	<i>Mail-in rate 50% or less</i>	<i>Mail-in rate above 50%</i>	<i>Mail-in rate 50% or less</i>	<i>Mail-in rate above 50%</i>	<i>Mail-in rate 50% or less</i>	<i>Mail-in rate above 50%</i>
Non-urbanized area	81%	92%	1%	1%	0%	0%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Urbanized area, but outside city	34%	83%	17%	3%	1%	2%	12%	4%	3%	2%
Inside city limits	8%	58%	56%	7%	1%	2%	9%	7%	3%	2%

Several of the nation's largest cities have a much greater concentration of tracts with mail-in rates of 50% or less. In Newark (NJ) and New Orleans, more than half of those city's tracts are in this low-participation range. In Chicago, Cleveland, and New York City, between 20 and 31% of the tracts have low mail-in rates. The city-by-city list below provides these statistics as well as the median HTC scores for low- and high-participation tracts.

TABLE 6
Median HTC scores and number/percent of tracts in large cities by low vs. high participation categories

City, State	Tracts with mail-in rate 50% or less			Tracts with mail-in rate above 50%			Median HTC score and total # tracts in each city		
	Median HTC score	# of tracts	% of each city's total tracts	Median HTC score	# of tracts	% of each city's total tracts	Median HTC score	# of tracts	% of each city's total # of tracts
Albuquerque, NM	88	3	3%	31	105	97%	31	108	100%
Anaheim, CA			0%	51	53	100%	51	53	100%
Anchorage, AK	44	1	2%	34	54	98%	35	55	100%
Arlington, TX	84	7	12%	19	53	88%	21	60	100%
Atlanta, GA	94	16	14%	66	100	86%	74	116	100%
Austin, TX	78	7	5%	45	139	95%	48	146	100%
Bakersfield, CA			0%	39	51	100%	39	51	100%
Baltimore, MD	85	5	3%	63	194	97%	63	199	100%
Boston, MA	79	25	16%	62	131	84%	65	156	100%
Buffalo, NY	84	14	16%	65	75	84%	68	89	100%
Charlotte, NC	102	1	1%	45	106	99%	46	107	100%
Chicago, IL	92	198	23%	60	652	77%	69	850	100%
Cincinnati, OH	96	13	11%	54	102	89%	63	115	100%
Cleveland, OH	86	47	22%	70	171	78%	74	218	100%
Colorado Springs, CO			0%	25	81	100%	25	81	100%
Columbus, OH	75	14	8%	40	163	92%	42	177	100%
Corpus Christi, TX	25	1	2%	46	52	98%	46	53	100%
Dallas, TX	87	29	11%	52	241	89%	57	270	100%
Denver, CO			0%	47	136	100%	47	136	100%
Detroit, MI	87	20	6%	69	291	94%	71	311	100%
El Paso, TX	41	1	1%	55	108	99%	55	109	100%
Fort Worth, TX	76	2	2%	49	129	98%	50	131	100%
Fresno, CA			0%	71	80	100%	71	80	100%
Honolulu, HI	96	5	5%	41	100	95%	42	105	100%
Houston, TX	72	26	7%	56	361	93%	58	387	100%

Indianapolis city (balance), IN	74	2	1%	41	194	99%	42	196	100%
Jacksonville, FL			0%	34	143	100%	34	143	100%
Kansas City, MO	70	5	3%	49	163	97%	51	168	100%
Las Vegas, NV	92	1	1%	35	94	99%	35	95	100%
Lexington-Fayette, KY			0%	28	60	100%	28	60	100%
Long Beach, CA	75	4	4%	64	96	96%	65	100	100%
Los Angeles, CA	107	15	2%	68	821	98%	69	836	100%
Memphis, TN	91	18	11%	51	141	89%	56	159	100%
Mesa, AZ			0%	26	83	100%	26	83	100%
Miami, FL	108	8	11%	84	62	89%	88	70	100%
Milwaukee, WI	99	23	10%	57	200	90%	64	223	100%
Minneapolis, MN			0%	52	121	100%	52	121	100%
Nashville-Davidson, TN	79	6	4%	37	129	96%	39	135	100%
New Orleans, LA	74	124	69%	39	55	31%	66	179	100%
New York, NY	63	679	31%	58	1,494	69%	60	2,173	100%
Newark, NJ	93	47	52%	85	43	48%	89	90	100%
Oakland, CA	98	6	6%	64	100	94%	66	106	100%
Oklahoma City, OK	94	5	3%	43	173	97%	44	178	100%
Omaha, NE			0%	24	118	100%	24	118	100%
Philadelphia, PA	81	37	10%	50	331	90%	55	368	100%
Phoenix, AZ	84	8	3%	41	281	97%	41	289	100%
Pittsburgh, PA	82	4	3%	44	136	97%	45	140	100%
Portland, OR			0%	43	143	100%	43	143	100%
Raleigh, NC	82	1	2%	42	52	98%	43	53	100%
Riverside, CA	94	1	2%	47	54	98%	49	55	100%
Sacramento, CA	87	1	1%	55	94	99%	55	95	100%
San Antonio, TX	83	2	1%	52	222	99%	52	224	100%
San Diego, CA	36	2	1%	39	262	99%	39	264	100%
San Francisco, CA	92	4	2%	45	171	98%	45	175	100%
San Jose, CA	86	2	1%	33	163	99%	34	165	100%
Santa Ana, CA			0%	59	53	100%	59	53	100%
Seattle, WA			0%	36	124	100%	36	124	100%
St. Louis, MO	96	5	4%	74	107	96%	75	112	100%
St. Paul, MN			0%	51	81	100%	51	81	100%
Stockton, CA			0%	62	46	100%	62	46	100%
Tampa, FL	96	4	5%	54	74	95%	56	78	100%
Toledo, OH			0%	46	97	100%	46	97	100%
Tucson, AZ			0%	54	99	100%	54	99	100%
Tulsa, OK	89	4	3%	39	116	97%	41	120	100%
Virginia Beach, VA			0%	12	87	100%	12	87	100%
Washington, DC	60	4	2%	65	181	98%	65	185	100%
Wichita, KS			0%	37	92	100%	37	92	100%
Across all major cities	78	1,457	12%	52	11,084	88%	55	12,541	100%

A separate spreadsheet is available online providing the average tract-level race and ethnicity characteristics in these cities for both types of tracts.

High participation tracts in major cities

In the nation's largest cities, "high achieving" tracts tend to have higher hard-to-count (HTC) scores. On April 20, the 2,338 tracts in these cities with 2010 participation rates at least 5 percentage points higher than 2000 had a median HTC score of 69, compared with the other tracts in these cities that had a median HTC score of 55.

This difference is similar to last week (Week 3), when the high achieving tracts had a median HTC score of 74 compared with other tracts with a median HTC score of 53. This indicates that tracts that have substantially improved on their 2000 performance continue to be in neighborhoods generally considered hard to count. According to the Census Bureau's HTC index, tracts with scores of 60 or higher are considered hard to count, and tracts with HTC scores of 76 or more are considered "very hard-to-count."

The detailed analysis, below, provides a city-by-city comparison of HTC scores for these high achieving tracts and each city's remaining tracts.

TABLE 7
Median HTC scores for tracts in large cities, by level of improvement over 2000 rate

City, State	Median HTC scores for tracts w/less than 5% gain over 2000	# of tracts	Median HTC scores for tracts with 5% or higher rate than 2000	# tracts	Median HTC score across all city tracts	Total tracts by city
Albuquerque, NM	31	94	39	8	31	102
Anaheim, CA	55	51	33	1	53	52
Anchorage, AK	34	50	51	4	34	54
Arlington, TX	19	56	36	2	19	58
Atlanta, GA	74	95	74	18	74	113
Austin, TX	43	117	56	19	45	136
Bakersfield, CA	41	44	28	5	39	49
Baltimore, MD	50	85	75	94	63	179
Boston, MA	61	110	66	32	64	142
Buffalo, NY	67	76	79	9	68	85
Charlotte, NC	36	86	80	17	44	103
Chicago, IL	63	419	75	277	67	696
Cincinnati, OH	52	92	95	21	63	113
Cleveland, OH	72	174	79	22	73	196
Colorado Springs, CO	23	76	66	4	25	80
Columbus, OH	42	156	57	9	42	165
Corpus Christi, TX	37	40	64	9	42	49
Dallas, TX	55	196	66	53	56	249
Denver, CO	39	102	73	29	46	131
Detroit, MI	70	280	89	19	71	299
El Paso, TX	53	100	72	4	54	104
Fort Worth, TX	47	110	53	15	49	125
Fresno, CA	70	71	89	2	71	73
Honolulu, HI	40	53	51	32	41	85
Houston, TX	55	235	56	109	56	344
Indianapolis city (balance), IN	31	132	70	49	39	181
Jacksonville, FL	34	116	35	19	34	135
Kansas City, MO	36	112	61	43	49	155
Las Vegas, NV	34	74	42	12	35	86
Lexington-Fayette, KY	27	55	60	2	29	57
Long Beach, CA	64	90	89	3	64	93
Los Angeles, CA	67	676	65	96	67	772
Memphis, TN	53	119	83	27	56	146
Mesa, AZ	33	67	17	12	31	79
Miami, FL	74	40	103	25	86	65
Milwaukee, WI	55	188	96	22	61	210
Minneapolis, MN	28	47	68	63	50	110
Nashville-Davidson (balance), TN	35	101	66	26	39	127
New Orleans, LA	67	170	58	8	67	178
New York, NY	57	1346	66	568	59	1914
Newark, NJ	87	61	91	20	89	81
Oakland, CA	66	80	78	19	67	99
Oklahoma City, OK	48	154	29	15	45	169
Omaha, NE	21	102	78	11	23	113
Philadelphia, PA	52	237	59	93	55	330
Phoenix, AZ	33	217	75	52	38	269
Pittsburgh, PA	38	94	64	34	44	128
Portland, OR	42	125	48	15	43	140
Raleigh, NC	33	37	63	14	43	51
Riverside, CA	50	54	32	1	49	55
Sacramento, CA	59	67	55	22	57	89
San Antonio, TX	52	198	37	16	52	214
San Diego, CA	39	247	73	8	39	255
San Francisco, CA	42	128	60	35	45	163

San Jose, CA	33	142	55	18	34	160
Santa Ana, CA	57	51			57	51
Seattle, WA	31	96	68	20	35	116
St. Louis, MO	62	67	83	39	75	106
St. Paul, MN	39	57	61	19	48	76
Stockton, CA	62	45	89	1	62	46
Tampa, FL	51	56	78	15	56	71
Toledo, OH	39	87	84	8	46	95
Tucson, AZ	53	88	72	9	53	97
Tulsa, OK	42	109	60	6	42	115
Virginia Beach, VA	12	87			12	87
Washington, DC	58	122	71	50	64	172
Wichita, KS	38	81	32	9	35	90
Across all large cities	51	9,190	69	2,338	55	11,528

For more information, contact:

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www.urbanresearch.org

www.CensusHardToCountMaps.org

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