Census Matters:
Census-Guided Funding in Massachusetts

The Bottom Line

Massachusetts received:

$62,042,612,264

in census-guided federal spending in Fiscal Year 2023.

This funding flowed from 371 census-guided federal assistance programs that, nationwide, allocate $2.24 trillion in FY 2023. These programs rely on state and local data from the decennial census (or data, like the American Community Survey, derived from the census) to direct federal funding to specific areas of the country.

An incorrect count in the census can cost a state millions — even billions — in federal funds over the decade between counts.

Where Massachusetts Census-Guided Spending Went in FY 2023[1]



Medicaid and Medicare
Providing millions of Americans with health insurance and assistance in paying for medical services, prescription drugs, surgeries, hospital stays, and more.

$45.92 billion



Health Spending (excluding Medicaid and Medicare)
Assisting households with medical costs, providing nutritional support, social services, community health centers, and more.

$6.72 billion



Infrastructure
Allocating funds for roads, bridges, energy production, broadband, water treatment, and other community infrastructure projects.

$2.58 billion



Education
Supporting primary education, special education, higher education, as well as training and education of community members on important issues.

$2.7 billion



Economic Development
Providing loans for business expansions, small business assistance, employment services, and more, to improve the economic well-being of communities.

$1.08 billion



Housing
Assisting homeowners and renters with housing costs, investing in public housing, and helping veterans, older Americans, people with disabilities, and others find affordable housing.

$4.45 billion

How the Census Directs Funding

Eligibility criteria – The census can inform who qualifies for funds. For example, census population data determines which areas count as rural and therefore qualify for The Rural Rental Assistance program.

Allocation formulas – Census data can decide how much money people or communities get. For example, the Social Services Block Grant program uses census data to calculate what percent of the total U.S. population lives in a state — and assigns funds accordingly.

Application evaluations – When states or communities compete for funding, the census can provide key data points. For example, the Middle Mile (Broadband) Grant Program prioritizes counties with greater numbers of underserved and high poverty communities.

Loan interest rates – Some federal assistance loan programs use census data in setting the interest rates on the loans they offer or guarantee. For example, the USDA's Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program sets interest rates based on the median household income and population of an area.

Why An Accurate Count Matters

Massachusetts had an estimated population of **6,992,395** as of 2023.[2] A complete and accurate population count in the 2030 census is an essential baseline to ensure the state gets the full federal funding to which it is entitled. Even small undercounts or overcounts can cost Massachusetts money, depending on the program and exactly who is miscounted. One challenge is that every state has significant populations of people who have been historically and persistently undercounted by the census, including people of color, young children, renters, and those in low-income households.

Put this Fact Sheet into Action



Make elected officials and policy makers in Massachusetts aware that inaccurate census numbers impact federal funds. Urge them to begin planning now to ensure everyone is accurately counted in 2030.



Educate your community on the impact the census has on funding for schools, health care, and other local needs in Massachusetts. This outreach can increase participation and help avoid undercounts.

Learn More



Learn more about the report, Census Matters: Why an Accurate Count is Essential to Funding Our Communities, on our website, including further details on our methodology, previous findings, and data on other states, at: **www.pogo.org/census-ma**.

If you have any questions, please contact **census.info@pogo.org.**

[1] Many programs serve multiple needs simultaneously, and in these cases, program funding was counted in more than one category. The total amount of funding by category, therefore, may exceed the state's total census-guided funding for the year.

[2] Population data sourced from the U.S. Census Bureau's American Community Survey 5-Year Data estimates, 2023.

POGO
PROJECT ON GOVERNMENT OVERSIGHT

Project On Goverment Oversight
PO Box 34758
Washington, DC 20043-4758
info@pogo.org | pogo.org