The Census 2020 Low Response Score (LRS) and Chicopee, Massachusetts

Chicopee Population Characteristics

Chicopee's population characteristics put the city at an average risk, relative to the state, for undercount in the upcoming Census. According to the latest ACS estimates, Chicopee's population includes:

- A Hispanic population about twice the state average, at 19% in Chicopee compared to 11% in Massachusetts, however of only 3.2% of all residents who speak Spanish speak English less than "very well", slightly lower than the state average of 3.5%.

- Overall the city has nearly half of the state's proportion of foreign-born residents, at 9.1% versus the Massachusetts average of 15.7%.

- By most "low response score" metrics, Chicopee is only slightly above or below the state average, including in youths (15-24), single female householders, vacant housing units, people living in poverty
- in the past 12 months, and renter/owner occupied housing.

Chicopee and Massachusetts Average

Key Demographics	Massachusetts	Chicopee
Ages 15-24	14.1%	13.5%
Hispanic	10.9%	18.7%
Female householder, no husband present, family	12.5%	15.8%
Vacant housing units	9.8%	6.7%
Poverty level, all people, w/in past 12 months	11.4%	14.5%
Renter-occupied	37.9%	41.8%
Owner-occupied	62.1%	58.2%
Foreign-born	15.7%	9.1%
Speak English less than "very well"*	8.9%	7.8%
*Languages spoken other than English:		
Spanish	8.6%	11.7%
Speak English less than "very well"	3.5%	3.2%
Other Indo-European languages	8.7%	9.0%
Speak English less than "very well"	3.0%	3.7%

UMass Donahue Institute. Source: 2016 ACS 5-year estimates Tables DP02, DP03, DP04, DP05 and 2015 ACS 5-year estimates Table B16001. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Division.

The Low Response Score

In preparation for the 2020 Census, the U.S. Census Bureau has developed a new hard-to-survey metric called the *Low Response Score (LRS).* This score identifies block groups and tracts whose characteristics predict low census mail return rate and are highly correlated (negatively) with census and survey participation. To calculate this score, the Bureau uses 2010-2014 American Community Survey data and looks at variables including housing, demographic, and socioeconomic, together with census operational data, including the 2010 Census Mail Return Rate for each block group and tract.

The LRS can be interpreted as the percentage of households predicted to NOT self-respond to the Decennial Census; the higher the LRS is in a census tract, the harder that area may be to survey. So, for example, if LRS=25, Census estimates that 25% of households in that tract will not self-respond to the Census. As a general rule of thumb, areas with a LRS of over 29 are considered the hardest to count in the upcoming Census.
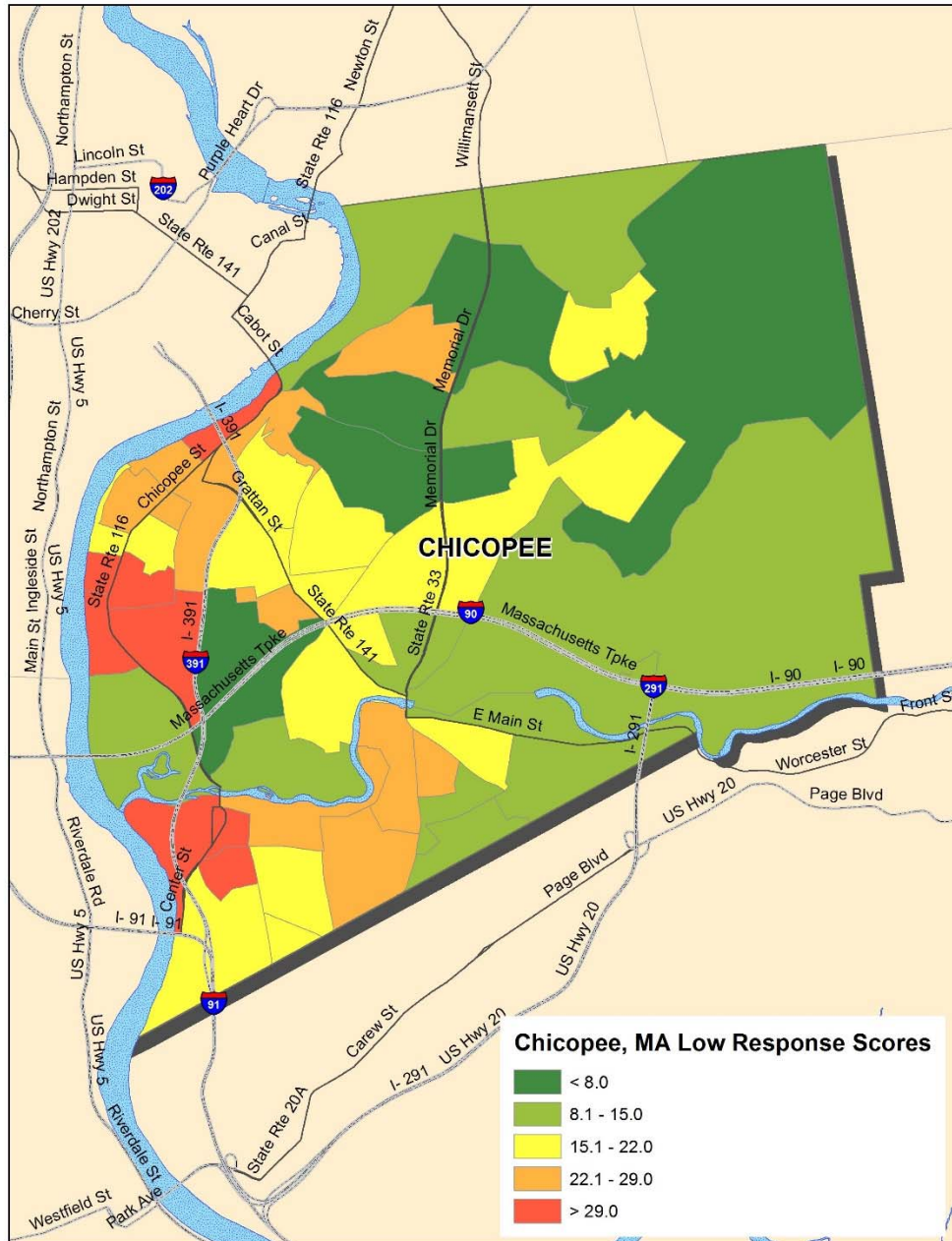
Factors that increase a geography's Low Response Score include high percentages of:

- vacant units
- Hispanic population
- % of single female head-of-households
- households at or below the

Chicopee, Massachusetts Hard-to-Count Map

Low Response Score Map, Chicopee

- Of all 4,889 Census block groups with LRS numbers in Massachusetts, the average LRS is 18.

- Of all 44 Census block groups in Chicopee, the average LRS is 18, with ¼ of tracts scoring 25 or higher and ranging up to 40 in the hardest-to-count Census block group located to the west of Chicopee center.

Source: UMass Donahue Institute using data from the U.S. Census Bureau's 2018 Planning Database. The 2018 Planning Database uses 2010 Census data and 2012-2016 American Community Survey Data.