

## IFCI and OhioGuidestone Gear Up for 2020 Census Outreach

By Rose Frech, *Assistant Director for Government Funding and Advocacy*

Efforts are underway at OhioGuidestone and the Institute of Family and Community Impact (IFCI) to prepare the individuals we serve for the 2020 Decennial Census. Conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau — the federal government’s largest statistical agency dedicated to providing current facts and figures about America’s people, places, and economy — census data is the driver that shapes communities nationwide.

Unfortunately, many of the individuals we serve are susceptible to not being counted. According to the Census Bureau, kids under the age of five are among [the most likely to not be counted](#);<sup>1</sup> an estimated five percent of children under five, or approximately one million individuals, were not counted in 2010. This likely is due to a lack of awareness around the need to include very young children when completing the census, as well as challenges related to economic insecurity experienced by many young families, including housing instability. Individuals living in poverty are also at risk; in some of the neighborhoods served by OhioGuidestone, fewer than 15 percent of children living in poverty were counted in 2010.

An accurate count is essential to promote fair representation in Congress and to inform important decisions about allocating more than \$675 billion in federal funding. According to the George Washington Institute of Public Policy, in 2016, Ohio received more than \$33.5 billion through 55 federal spending programs based on data collected from the 2010 Census. This includes many federal programs that support our service continuum and provide needed resources to families. The stakes are high!

At the IFCI, data informs every aspect of what we do. We recognize the critical importance of accurate data to inform policy making and resource distribution. In addition, we seek to empower communities to identify and advocate for their needs, and the census provides a small but important opportunity for each individual and family to say “I’m here and I matter!”

You can look for more of us over the next several months on our ongoing 2020 Census Outreach efforts, and we encourage other local organizations to get involved! As a trusted community voice with visible presence in traditionally undercounted neighborhoods, community-based organizations can help to address concerns or misconceptions that individuals may have related to the Census, and help to make certain that everyone is counted!

1. U.S. Census Bureau (2019). “Big Push to Count Every Newborn and Young Child in 2020 Census.” Suitland, MD: America Counts, U.S. Census Bureau.