In the most recent decennial census in 2010, 78.9% of the state’s households mailed back their questionnaire, requiring more costly and difficult in-person follow up from the Census Bureau to count the remaining 21.1%.

Based on the latest census estimates, approximately 23% of Massachusetts’s current population (or 1,601,563 people) lives in hard-to-count neighborhoods, shaded in light orange to dark red on the map. These are census tracts where almost a quarter or more households did not mail in their census questionnaire in 2010. Without greater self-response these and other neighborhoods in the state could be missed in the 2020 census, putting a fair and accurate count in jeopardy for Massachusetts.

In 2020, for the first time the Census Bureau will be urging most households to submit their census responses online via the internet. As recently as 2018, 12.8% of Massachusetts’s households had either no internet subscription or dial-up only, according to the latest American Community Survey estimates.