

2020 CENSUS FUNDER TOOLKIT

SHARE   

2020 Census Funder Toolkit

Thank you for your interest in our 2020 Census Funder toolkit. If you have questions, please contact Director of the Funders Census Initiative, Jocelyn Bissonnette at jbissonnette@funderscommittee.org.

You can explore the sections of the toolkit below. Jump to a particular section by clicking on the links on the right-hand side of this page.

You can access the PDF version of the toolkit here – [FCI Toolkit](#)

The Importance of the Census

Accurate census data are essential for the fair distribution of political representation at the national, state and local levels, and for the prudent, equitable allocation of government resources. More than \$700 billion annually in federal assistance to states, localities, and families is distributed based on census data. Yet historically, the census has missed disproportionate numbers of racial minorities, immigrants, young children and the poor, leading to inequality in political power and in access to public funding and private investment for these communities

Unprecedented Challenges

The 2020 Census is facing unprecedented challenges — insufficient and delayed funding, resulting in canceled tests and scaled back preparations; cybersecurity threats (real and perceived) and the digital divide, as the first high-tech census rolls out; community reluctance and fear of sharing information with the government; and a leadership void at the Census Bureau.

On March 26, 2018, Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross announced his decision to add a citizenship question to the 2020 Census. Across the country, those opposed to this new, untested question spoke out, including 119 foundations in a letter to Secretary Ross. For more information and resources on the implications of the citizenship question, please see Census Resources on page 7.

The Stakes Are High

2020 CENSUS FUNDER TOOLKIT

[The Importance
of the Census](#)

[Census
Resources
Spotlight](#)

[Census 2020
Resources](#)

[A Call to Action
for Philanthropy:
A Guide with
Templates,
Samples, and
Examples](#)

[Participate.](#)

[Convene.](#)

[Invest.](#)

[Conclusion](#)

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Back to top](#)

In ensuring a fair and accurate count, the stakes are high for nonprofits, funders, and the constituencies and issues they care about. An accurate census facilitates the prudent flow of public, private, and philanthropic resources to constituencies and regions most in need. States, counties, and cities rely on census data to do their planning, determine how many schools will be needed, where health clinics should be built, and identify the current and future needs of many other services. Companies rely on census data to determine where to locate grocery stores, banks, retail stores, and other services. Census data are also used to monitor and enforce social equity and justice issues.

It is vital that grant makers get involved. The Census Bureau can't do it alone.

Foundations and nonprofits can provide the trusted community voices that can help people understand why it is important and safe to participate in the census. Funding for communications, outreach, and public education strategies to reach the hard to count supplements the Census Bureau's activities, which is critical for an accurate census.

Although philanthropy cannot and should not supplant the government's responsibility to ensure a fair and accurate census, funder engagement in support of the census is more important than ever.

What Else is at Stake for Funders? An Accurate Census Count:

- **Facilitates monitoring and enforcement of issues in your grant-making portfolio,** such as parity in education, housing, health, employment, economic development, transportation, and environmental protection.
- **Ensures a targeted flow of government and business resources to complement foundation investments.** Census undercounts cause a diversion of federal funds away from areas that need the resources the most, while overcounts in other areas create a distorted picture of need. The resulting resource gap is a strain on the philanthropic sector, which is often called upon to meet the needs of underfunded populations.
- **Strengthens your grantees' internal capacity and external influence.** Census data facilitate and guide nongovernmental organization (NGO) planning, service delivery, marketing, and fundraising efforts. Persuasive publications, brochures, policy proposals, and public testimony depend on accurate census data. With accurate, comprehensive data, NGOs can better educate their constituents, the media, government officials, corporations, and others.

Census Resources Spotlight

Data are a powerful and persuasive tool to help make the case for why your foundation, your philanthropic colleagues and partners, and community leaders should care about a fair and accurate census.

Here are three essential resources to help you.

Counting for Dollars 2020: The Role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds, George Washington University Institute of Public Policy. Identifies the 16 largest census-guided financial assistance programs and the distribution

of their FY 2015 funds by program and by state. Further analysis of up to 300 census-guided federal programs forthcoming.

- **Example for Children at National Level**– Of the top 16 census-guided federal assistance programs, many touch the lives of the young children in your communities, including SNAP at \$69 billion, Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies at \$13.8 billion, and National School Lunch Program at \$11.5 billion annually.
- **Example in North Carolina**– In North Carolina, approximately \$16.3 billion dollars of federal funds flow to the state annually based on census data, including \$8.1 billion in Medicaid dollars and \$2.4 billion in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars.

Mapping Hard to Count Communitiesfor a Fair and Accurate 2020 Census, City University of New York (CUNY) Mapping Service at the Center for Urban Research, CUNY Graduate Center. Data available by state, county, congressional district, state legislative district, and census tract. CUNY will track response rates on the map when the census starts.

- **Example in Georgia** – In the 2010 census, only 77.2% of Georgia households mailed back their questionnaire, meaning costly and difficult in-person follow up by census takers was required for the remaining 22.8%. Approximately 22% of Georgians live in hard-to-count neighborhoods and are at risk of being missed in the 2020 census. The 2020 Census will be the first time the Census Bureau will be urging most households to submit their responses online; in 2016, 19.7% of Georgia households had either no internet subscriptions or dial up-only access.
- **Example from Census Tract in Atlanta**– In 2010, for tract 0026.00 in Fulton County, GA, only 57.7% of households mailed back their census questionnaire. We know that historically, communities of color have been disproportionately undercounted, leading to inequality in political power and in access to public funding and private investment for these communities. In this particular tract, about 91% of the population is Black, according to the American Community Survey.

Census 2020, Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights, includes factsheets on hard-to-count communities (e.g. young children, Latinos, Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, African Americans, and American Indians and Alaska Natives). Data are available by state, top 100 cities, and congressional district. New factsheets are routinely added to this webpage on hard-to-count communities and key 2020 Census policy and operational issues.

Hard-to-Count factsheets (as of May 8, 2018)

- [Hard to Count: Young Children and Their Communities](#)
- [Will You Count? Latinos in the 2020 Census](#)
- [Will You Count? Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders \(NHPis\) in the 2020 Census](#)
- [Will You Count? African Americans in the 2020 Census](#)
- [Will You Count? American Indians and Alaska Natives in the 2020 Census](#)
- [Will You Count? Middle Eastern and North African Americans \(MENA\) in the 2020 Census](#)
- [Will You Count? People Experiencing Homelessness in the 2020 Census](#)
- [Will You Count? Households with Low Incomes in the 2020 Census](#)

- [Will You Count? Renters in the 2020 Census](#)
- **Example in Arizona** – We know that historically, Latino communities have been disproportionately undercounted, leading to inequality in political power and in access to public funding and private investment for these communities. Approximately 2 million Latinos live in Arizona, and 45% or about 900,000 live in hard-to-count tracts, meaning almost half of Arizona's Latinos are especially at risk of being missed in the 2020 Census.
- **Example in Chicago**– Approximately 790,000 Latinos live in the Chicago area, and 60% or 480,000 live in hard-to-count tracts, meaning more than half of Latinos in the Chicago area are especially at risk of being missed in the 2020 Census.

Census 2020 Resources

FCI Resources on a Fair and Accurate 2020 Census (selected)

- [Key 2020 Census Milestones](#)
- [Census Policy Update– What's in Store for 2018?](#)
- [Emergency Briefing on Adding Citizenship Question to the 2020 Census \(3/29/18\)](#), with additional resources for funders from the Bauman Foundation
 - [Commonly Asked Questions About the New Census Citizenship Question](#)
 - [Top Messages from Citizenship Question Webinar](#)
 - [Funding Advocacy Around the Census](#), a legal memo on what foundations can and cannot engage in and fund
- [Census Accuracy and the Undercount: Why It Matters; How It's Measured](#)

Additional Census Resources for Funders

- [Census 2020: Why an Accurate Count Matters to Philanthropy](#), United Philanthropy Forum

Additional Census Resources

- [Census 2020](#), U.S. Census Bureau
- [On Our Way to 2020](#), Partnership Webpage, U.S. Census Bureau
- [State Data Center Program](#)
- [2020 Census Faces Challenges in Rural America](#), Dr. William O'Hare, Carsey School of Public Policy, University of New Hampshire
- [Make 2020 Census Count!](#), NALEO Educational Fund
- [Census 2020, Count Us In](#), Asian Americans Advancing Justice|AAJC
- [The Census Project](#)
- [2020 Census Resources and Legislation](#), National Conference of State Legislatures (including state legislation examples of Complete Count Committees, Governor executive orders on the 2020 Census, and legislation funding and supporting census work)
- [Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights- Census 2020](#)
- [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities\(search "2020 Census"\)](#)

- [Center on Budget and Policy Priorities](#) – [Secure 2020 Census](#)
- [Prison Policy Initiative](#) (information on counting incarcerated persons)
- [NALEO Educational Fund](#) – [Make 2020 Census Count!](#)
- [National Congress of American Indians](#) – [Census 2020](#)
- [National LGBTQ Task Force](#) – [We're Queering the Census Big Time!](#)
- [ReadyNation](#), a project of Council for a Strong America – [An Accurate Census is Essential for Business](#)
- [State Voices](#) – [Census 101](#)

A Call to Action for Philanthropy: A Guide with Templates, Samples, and Examples

All around the country, philanthropy is mobilizing to help ensure a fair and accurate 2020 Census. Below you'll find concrete steps of engagement for your foundation, with resources and templates to "make the case." Marcia Avner, FCI co-chair and board member of the Bauman Foundation, coined our tagline – Participate. Convene. Invest – which highlights three main ways funders can engage leading up to the 2020 census. We've organized this guide for you by these three categories of engagement and included templates and examples to support your work, which come directly from funders already engaging in this work.

All the resources included in this toolkit are samples and should be tailored to the needs of your organization and/or community. Additionally, as policy developments and census operations unfold, samples and templates may need to be adjusted to address these changes and progress.

If you are wondering if **there are other funders or field partners already engaged in your state for a fair and accurate 2020 census**, please contact Jocelyn Bissonnette, Director, Funders Census Initiative, jbissonnette@funderscommittee.org.

Participate.

At Your Foundation

Start within your foundation! An accurate census promotes an efficient grant-making strategy targeted to constituencies and regions most in need of resources. Census data help your foundation focus its work on the areas of greatest hardship, so that you can allocate limited resources most effectively. Secure internal commitment and provide education on what's at stake and why the census matters to the communities your foundation cares about. Make sure your explanation is aligned with your foundation's mission.

- [Internal Memo](#) – **TEMPLATE for Funders**

For information on how foundations can engage in and support advocacy related to the census, please [click here](#).

In Your Community

Use your leadership role in your community or state to help ensure a fair and accurate census.

State and Local Officials

Reach out to share information on the importance of the census and determine whether they have begun to organize resources and influential voices to support the Census Bureau's efforts.

- [Sample letter to elected official about the new citizenship question](#)– **TEMPLATE for Funders**

Connect with government representatives who have an interest in a fair and accurate census, such as the state demographer (if your state has one).

- Find your state agency liaison to the U.S. Census Bureau [here](#).

Encourage state and local government funding to support complete count work and mobilization efforts. For examples of state legislation for Complete Count Committees, Governor executive orders on the 2020 Census, and legislation funding and supporting census work please see 2020 Census resources and legislation from the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Complete Count Committees

One of the Census Bureau's key strategies for ensuring an accurate census is to enlist tribal, state, and local elected officials and community leaders in educating their constituencies about the census and encouraging them to complete their census forms. Through Complete Count Committees, the Census Bureau assists local leaders in planning and implementing outreach campaigns tailored to their communities. The committees have proven to be effective at improving the accuracy of the count because their members are knowledgeable about and trusted by their local communities.

- [Census 2020 State Complete Count Commissions – Get Started](#), Census Bureau, Issued January 2018.
- [Census 2020 Complete Count Committees – Get Started](#), Census Bureau, Published January 2018.
- [2010 Complete Count Committees Guide](#), Census Bureau, Published November 2008. Please note – this link will be updated with resources from the Census Bureau as they are released
- [Counting 2010 and Planning for 2020](#), California Complete Count, Published June 2012
- [Minnesota Complete Count Committee Census 2020 factsheet](#)
- [Minnesota State Demographic Center, Census 2020 Complete Count Committees](#)

Business Outreach

Businesses have a lot at stake for a fair and accurate census. They use census data to guide strategic development, operational decisions, and investment of resources. You or

your foundation can reach out to local businesses or national companies with offices in your community to encourage their engagement.

- [An Accurate Census is Essential for Business](#), Ready Nation, a project of Council for a Strong America
- Business leaders' [letter of concern](#) about adding citizenship question to the census
- Business association [letter in support](#) of adequate Census Bureau funding

Engage your networks and partners

Leverage the influence you, the leaders of your foundation, and your foundation trustees have to talk publicly about the importance of the census.

- [Census Blog– *TEMPLATE for Funders*](#)
- [Get it Right, Right Now–](#) Census Article, Philanthropy New York
- [A Roadmap for Census 2020: Securing a Fair and Accurate Count of Latinos in California](#), Latino Community Foundation and NALEO Educational Fund
- [Census 2020 Webpage](#), Florida Philanthropic Network

With the Census Bureau

Reach out to and meet with your regional census director or (starting in 2019) your closest Area Census Office manager.

- Find your region and regional director [here](#)
- [2020 Census Area Census Office locations](#) (opening on flow basis in 2019)

Convene.

Funders, Grantees, and Stakeholders

Maximize your power as a convener for inspiration, information, strategy, and action options. There are a variety of audiences you can convene in your networks. First determine who needs to be involved. Suggestions include your grantees, philanthropic partners, the business community, and multi-sectoral stakeholders.

As a convener, you can help coordinate census mobilization efforts to ensure aligned strategies, outreach, messaging, and assistance.

Informational and Planning Census Events– These activities can take many forms. You may want to organize a stand-alone census briefing or add it on to an existing meeting. Once you have buy-in, you may want to have a planning meeting for those interested in supporting a fair and accurate census.

- [Invitations to stand-alone census event for funders– *TEMPLATE for Funders*](#)
- [2020 Census PowerPoint presentation for funder briefing– *TEMPLATE for Funders*](#)
- [Conference session proposal and agenda– *TEMPLATE for Funders*](#)

Local funder table– Create a regional, state, or local funder census table, to ensure funders are organized and strategically aligned. This might include community foundations, private and family foundations, corporate funders, workplace giving

programs like the United Way, and individual donors.

- [Meeting agenda for funder collaborative meeting](#)– **TEMPLATE for Funders**

Invest.

In Your Community

As you begin to plan how your organization can help support a fair and accurate census, consider the following questions:

- Which states or local jurisdictions are important to your overall grant-making strategy?
- Where are the most significant population shifts, and what are the notable demographic trends, for key constituencies in your portfolio?
- Where are the hardest-to-count populations located?
- In which state or local jurisdictions can you assist your grantees in participating effectively in post-census issues (ie. redistricting, voter engagement, community organizing, and policy advocacy) that can build on census grant making and mobilization?
- Where are gaps and opportunities in the field? Which areas are potential blind spots for other funders and grantees, where you could make a significant impact?

Grants to Stakeholder Organizations

The Census Bureau does not provide direct funding to outside organizations working to promote the census. Without support from the philanthropic sector, stakeholder organizations who are the trusted voices may simply have no other resources to turn to for funding to conduct outreach.

Foundations can play a vital role in filling this gap by providing grants to nonprofit organizations to help make sure that everyone is counted in the 2020 census. Stakeholder organizations are the trusted voices in their communities and are essential for ensuring a fair and accurate count. Fund your current grantees to start engaging in census work, either through add-on grants to their existing work or new grants. Additionally, you can identify and fund those organizations that will help make state and local plans a success, including the appropriate "hub" organization(s).

- [RFP for Field Strategy](#)– **EXAMPLE for Funders**

Examples of State Partnership Efforts

- [The 2020 Census is Fast Approaching, and California's Democracy, Well-Being, and Prosperity Are at Stake](#), Advancement Project
- [2020 Michigan Nonprofits Count Campaign](#), Michigan Nonprofit Association
- [Minnesota Census Mobilization Partnership](#)
- [Illinois Count Me InCensus 2020](#)

Creating or Giving to a Pooled Fund

Pooled funds are a way to maximize coordinated strategies, so consider creating or

contributing to a state or local pooled census fund. If interested in supporting national work and efforts around federal funding and public policies that impact the fairness and accuracy of the census, support the 2020 Census Project, a pooled fund at New Venture Fund.

- [Massachusetts Census Equity Fund 2020](#)
- [Illinois Count Me In 2010 Census Campaign](#)
 - [Factsheet](#)
 - [Press Release](#)
 - [Count Me In – Illinois 2010 Census Initiative RFP](#)

To Ensure a Fair and Accurate Census

There are a variety of ways philanthropy can invest in a fair and accurate census including:

- [Census Infrastructure](#)– Plan for and develop a strong local or state census infrastructure, which may link up with other civic engagement efforts.
- [Get Out The Count](#)– Fund implementation of "Get Out the Count" (GOTC) efforts in your state and/or locality focused on the hardest to count and reach populations groups, including resources for grantees to host census events and distribute promotional materials.
- could include convening and training ethnic media; and outreach and educational campaigns to augment the Census Bureau's efforts with targeted messaging, issue framing, content development, and production of print, online, video, or other materials.
- [Policy](#)– Support groups that can communicate with federal leaders to promote adequate funding for the census and sound census operational and design decisions.
- [Technical Assistance](#)– Fund a state or local organization to be the "backbone" for branding, promotion, training, regranting, and technical support to organizations in and of hard-to-count communities.
- [Evaluation](#)– Support the documentation and evaluation of census work so that lessons learned and best practices are readily available to better prepare for the 2030 Census.
- [Communications and Messaging](#)– Invest in locally appropriate and culturally sensitive communications strategy and messaging plans to reach hard to count communities. This

[Community Outreach Toolkit](#), A quickstart guide for tailoring census outreach efforts for people you serve, U.S. Census Bureau

Resources

- [2020 Census Landscape Scan and Recommendations for Cross-Sectoral Campaign Engagement](#), prepared for the California Community Foundation

Aligned National and State Engagement

There is an infrastructure of national stakeholder organizations developing materials in English and other languages and providing training and technical assistance to help state and local groups. To ensure aligned messaging and engagement, state and local

organizations are encouraged to reach out to these organizations for training and information on best practices.

National Stakeholder Organizations, including but not limited to:

- Asian Americans Advancing Justice|AAJC – [Census 2020, Count Us In](#)
- [Color of Change](#)
- [Faith in the Public Life](#)
- Leadership Conference for Civil and Human Rights- [Census 2020](#)
- NALEO Educational Fund – [Make 2020 Census Count!](#)
- National Congress of American Indians – [Census 2020](#)
- National LGBTQ Task Force – [We're Queering the Census Big Time!](#)
- [National Urban League](#)
- ReadyNation, a project of Council for a Strong America – [An Accurate Census is Essential for Business](#)
- Shepherding the Next Generation, a project of Council for a Strong America
- State Voices – [Census 101](#)

Potential Community Partners

Partners to consider include but are not limited to [public libraries](#), [schools](#), community service agencies, religious institutions and faith leaders, business leaders, state/local elected representatives and agency officials, civic organizations (e.g. The Elks; VFW posts; fraternal groups, such as The Links and Concerned Black Men), news outlets/media companies.

For information on how foundations can engage in and support advocacy related to the census, please [click here](#).

Conclusion

Every 10 years, the census presents a unique opportunity to gain a true snapshot of the U.S. population and understand who we are and where we are going as a nation. Participation will determine the flow of money, power, services, and policy priorities across the country for the next decade. Funders are uniquely situated to motivate other key community voices and to serve as conveners in their respective areas and a resource for nonprofit organizations, to help ensure a successful 2020 Census.

Acknowledgements

The Funders Census Initiative is grateful for the generous support, expertise, and technical assistance from those who were instrumental in preparing this toolkit. A special thanks to Terri Ann Lowenthal, FCI 2020 Consultant, Karen Narasaki, Bauman Foundation Consultant, Democracy Funders Collaborative Census Subgroup, the Ford Foundation, the FCI Working Group Co-Chairs – Marcia Ayer, Bauman Foundation, and Alexis Torres

the FCI Working Group Co-Chairs – Marcia Avner, Bauman Foundation, and Alexie Torres, Access Strategies Fund, and the FCI Working Group Leadership Team for sharing their census engagement materials for this toolkit.



Member Portal

Log In

© 2021 FCCP | 641 S St NW, 3rd Floor, Washington, DC 20001

[Site Map](#) [Site Credits](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Contact](#)