



2020 Michigan Nonprofits Count Campaign

Introduction

The Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA), with seed funding from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and with support from the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), is launching an ambitious effort to mobilize nonprofits and partner with government to encourage participation in the 2020 census.

In the 2010 census Michigan was in danger of undercounting many vulnerable populations and as a result the state was at risk of losing federal funding that is vital to communities across the state. With support from the philanthropic community, the Michigan Nonprofit Association led a statewide effort to mobilize and engage nonprofits across the state to increase the 2010 census count, particularly in hard-to-count communities. Despite significant economic concerns and a high unemployment rate, Michigan was one of only a handful of states that exceeded its mail-in-rates from 2000 (78% compared to 69%). Two of the areas with significant philanthropic investment in 2010 were Calhoun and Genesee Counties. Both of these communities experienced an increase in the mail-in-rate with Calhoun seeing an increase from 76% in 2000 to 79% in 2010, and Genesee County saw an increase from 80% in 2000 to 82% in 2010.

In 2020 we are likely to experience a significant undercount in both rural and urban communities as the demographics are shifting toward an increasingly older, more diverse, lower income, and ultimately more vulnerable population with limited access to technology and greater discomfort engaging with government. Modeled on the campaign in 2010, the 2020 Michigan Nonprofits Count Campaign is a collaborative, coordinated, statewide effort to encourage participation in the census in communities that are at significant risk of being undercounted. The campaign will mobilize nonprofits to educate communities on the importance of maintaining participation rates and ideally increasing counts in hard-to-count communities, provide trainings and tools for nonprofits on effective outreach tactics, assist nonprofits in identifying hard-to-count communities, award mini-grants to local nonprofits, coordinate a statewide communications plan and work with government officials to avoid duplication of efforts and enhance government's communication and outreach efforts to ensure a complete count.

Although the 2020 campaign will be modified based on lessons learned from the 2010 campaign, MNA recognizes the unique circumstance of this census. Unlike past decennial census, the 2020 census has unique struggles including:

- Underfunding of the 2020 census that has resulted in the Government Accountability Office placing the census on its high risk list because of concern that the lack of funding will hinder the U.S. census Bureau's ability to complete the census on time and accurately. This lack of funding has also resulted in cancellation of 2 of the 3 dress rehearsals for the 2020 census.
- This decennial census will be unique because individuals will be encouraged to complete the census online and census takers will be equipped with internet-connected devices to simplify the process which makes the dress rehearsals crucial for testing out the system.

- "If you underfund the census, you get an undercount," says Kenneth Prewitt, who directed the Bureau during the 2000 census. "And if you don't count people, they are politically invisible, in effect." (Time, May 2017).
- According to the Pew Research Center, public trust in the government remains near historic lows. Only 20% of Americans today say they can trust the government in Washington to do what is right "just about always" (4%) or "most of the time" (16%). Getting people to respond to the census is difficult as it is, but when asked by an entity that they do not trust it makes the effort even more difficult.
- The U.S. census Bureau is currently experiencing a leadership vacuum with the resignation of the director in May 2017. As stated in an opinion piece published in the Washington Post authored by Republican and Democratic past directors of the Census Bureau, "The 2020 census faces unprecedented challenges in collecting data, including fear of government authorities in immigrant communities, cyber security threats (real or perceived) and uneven access to reliable Internet service, which could disadvantage rural, low-income and older households. The nation needs a Census Bureau director with the capabilities to navigate these minefields credibly and deliberately."

The unique challenges for the 2020 census have resulted in the need to increase the fieldwork from 2010 efforts. Over the next few years, MNA hopes to partner with regional organizations to provide \$1.4 million in mini-grants to nonprofits across the state compared to \$343,500 in 2010. These regional organizations will serve as census hubs to develop unique plans for their communities in support of fieldwork for nonprofits. In addition to the increased financial support at the local level, MNA's efforts in 2020 will include an enhanced communications effort that targets traditional and non-traditional media outlets to raise awareness of the need to complete the census and how to do so. And also different from 2010, MNA will work closely with the state to advocate for its investment in planning and outreach for the census in addition to what will be provided by the federal government.

The state of Michigan is not alone in its efforts to support a fair and accurate census count. Thanks to a small grant from the Joyce Foundation, CMF is part of a national census project of the United Philanthropy Forum. Specifically, CMF is educating members about what's a stake in the 2020 census and role for philanthropy, meeting with nonprofits to assess interest & readiness for a nonprofit get-out-the-count effort, advocating in support of funding & design of the census, and partnering with the state demographer to serve as a resource for planning and communication efforts census. In addition to the Joyce Foundation's investment, several national funders have come together as part of a census subgroup of the Democracy Funders Collaborative to develop a plan to ensure a complete count as the U.S. Constitution requires. In September 2017, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation awarded MNA with a 3-ear grant to launch the Michigan campaign.

For more than 25 years, MNA has been a trusted partner in addressing pressing issues for nonprofit organizations throughout Michigan, including those serving vulnerable populations. Michigan's nonprofit community is ideally suited to encourage hard-to-count communities to be counted. MNA learned from its past voter engagement efforts and its efforts in census 2010 that nothing can replace the encouragement and reassurance of a trusted nonprofit. Nonprofits serving hard-to-count communities have well-established relationships, speak the communities' language, and are generally regarded with a higher level of trust than government.

Due to the level of trust and proximity to their communities, nonprofits are ideally positioned to reach those individuals who might be hesitant to respond to a request from the government.

Purpose

There's a lot at stake for the 2020 census and there is a clear need for aggressive outreach, communication, coordination and organizing to ensure a fair and complete count in Michigan.

First, communities are at risk of losing critical revenue for programs and services relied on by all Michigan residents. Public officials use census data and the number of people counted to determine distribution of federal funds. In 2014, Michigan was allocated \$17.7 billion in federal funds that support many programs and services of importance including, but not limited to: Head Start; food stamps; special education; free and reduced lunch programs; WIC, and the Children's Health Insurance Program. Under current funding figures, Michigan would lose \$1,800 of federal funds per year for every person not counted. Without the government funding, communities would turn to philanthropy and nonprofits to fill the void.

Second, those with the most to lose from an undercount are the hardest to count, including communities of color, immigrants, young children, the homeless, and those traditionally served by nonprofits. For example, in Michigan 10.8% of the population under the age of five years old lives in a hard-to-count community. Many of the hardest to count individuals live in rural areas where there has been a significant shift in the demographics that may be missed in the 2020 census count.

Third, the Census Bureau is facing budget constraints like never before, resulting in the Bureau planning to collect the majority of census information online, decrease the number of regional and local census offices by 50 percent, and scale back door-to-door outreach by official census enumerators. Considering the current political climate, it is likely that many individuals from the hardest-to-count groups will be hesitant to complete the census and provide information to the government. The proposed changes and financial constraints increase the potential of undercounts, particularly in Michigan's urban areas experiencing high economic stress and rural areas with high levels of poverty.

When census information is not accurate, it threatens to muffle the voices of undercounted groups and regions, and undermines the basic political equality central to our democracy. Required by the Constitution, census data are used to reapportion the 435 U.S. House of Representatives seats among the states, and to draw legislative districts within the state. Based on the 2020 census, Michigan may lose a congressional seat, resulting in a decrease in the number of seats held by Michigan in the Electoral College.

Nonprofits are uniquely positioned to educate and mobilize their communities to participate in the census:

- Nonprofits are located in and maintain everyday contact with communities most at risk of being undercounted;
- Nonprofits have trusting relationships with the communities they serve;
- Many nonprofits can provide access to education and materials in various languages and tailored to the cultural needs of the community;
- Nonprofits are out in the community at events, meetings and everywhere people live, work and play; and

- Nonprofits driven by social missions have an inherent interest in ensuring that their communities have access to the funds, services, representations and physical and social infrastructure impacted by the census count.

Project Description

Goal: To maintain statewide participation rates from the 2010 census for the statewide number of respondents to the 2020 census. To create a multi-level coalition of nonprofits ready to address future democracy issues.

Strategy: To cultivate involvement of nonprofit organizations in census 2020 with a focus on hard-to-count communities.

Objectives:

I. Form a statewide coalition - *The statewide Nonprofit Complete Count Committee will be instrumental in outreach, awareness and implementing strategies to ensure a complete count.*

The Nonprofit Complete Count Committee will be comprised of grass-top organizations that represent grassroots organizations serving hard-to-count communities and organizations that directly represent individuals that are traditionally hard-to-count, including people of color, immigrants, homeless citizens, and young children. The Nonprofit Complete Count Committee will provide guidance for the campaign, and individual representatives of the committee will educate their networks on the census and mobilize their members to take the lead and/or participate in get-out-the-count efforts in their local communities.

II. Implement a statewide communications strategy - *Working with an experienced communications firm, the campaign will effectively communicate with policymakers, the media and the public on the census.*

Considering the lack of funding at the federal level, there will be a need for messaging targeted at policymakers that encourage local municipalities and the state to dedicate additional resources to enhance communication and outreach for census 2020.

Messaging is also needed to educate the media and the public on why the census is important, with messages tailored for traditionally hard-to-count populations to encourage their participation in the census. In addition to assistance with messaging, the communications firm will work with the campaign to develop and maintain a website and social media presence. Finally, the communications firm will develop and promote media advocacy tools for use by local nonprofits, including, but not limited to, earned and paid media options.

III. Develop tools and conduct trainings - *Educational opportunities and materials will be provided to increase the capacity of nonprofits across the state to engage in census 2020.*

Trainings and tools will provide nonprofit staff and volunteers with the information, skills and tactics necessary for local organizations to conduct get-out-the-count efforts in their communities.

MNA will partner with the census bureau, participating regional hubs and other community building organizations to provide tools and educational opportunities that specifically address: why the census is important to nonprofits and those we serve; understanding the timeline for the census and tips for completing the census online; partnering with local officials and nonprofits to increase outreach and communications about the census; forming local Complete Count Committees; communicating effectively about the census and working with the local media; and tactics for outreach (canvassing, phone banking, community events, etc.) to traditionally hard-to count-segments of the population, including communities of color. Specific training and technical assistance will be designed for the census hubs to assist in their fieldwork detailed below.

IV. Target fieldwork and engagement - Provide funding to regional census hubs to award mini-grants to nonprofits in communities and track their activities to share lessons learned and promote peer learning. And, enhance capacity of interested municipalities to support a complete count.

The campaign will partner with designated regional census hubs to develop plans unique to their communities that support fieldwork of local nonprofits. Designated census hubs will need to commit to the following with support from the state campaign:

- Educate nonprofits in your region about what's at stake for the 2020 census and possible roles for nonprofits to help ensure a complete count;
- Involve representatives of hard-to-count populations in developing and implementing a plan for awarding, managing and tracking mini-grants to local nonprofits;
- Partner with local complete count committees to coordinate efforts and avoid duplication of efforts; and
- Serve as a campaign key messenger with local media and state/federal policymakers in support of funding and outreach for the census.

MNA will provide designated census hubs with funding to support the administrative and staffing expenses associated with this work. The support will be in the form of funding for mini-grant distribution, training to educate local nonprofits about leading practices to encourage an accurate count in your communities, technical assistance to support the development and implementation of your local plans, opportunities to learn from your peers also engaging in this effort, and communication framework and materials that can be tailored for the needs of your community.

MNA will work with local funders and other key stakeholders to identify and designate regional census hubs. At this time census hubs are planned in the following counties with high concentrations of hard-to-count populations: Calhoun, Genesee, Ingham; Jackson; Kalamazoo; Kent, Oakland, Saginaw and Wayne.

V. Collect, analyze and visualize data - Partnering with universities across the state the campaign will provide local communities with data to assist their efforts in reaching hard-to-count populations.

The campaign will work with universities across the state to localize data by providing fact sheets for targeted communities on the importance of the census in terms of government dollars derived from the census and percentage of hard-to-count populations in targeted communities.

Researchers will also develop mapping applications to assist local organizations with canvassing and outreach to those that are traditionally hard-to-count in their communities, and may create a dashboard to track and share the number of nonprofits and communities the campaign seeks to engage.

VI. Partner with policymakers - *The campaign will work with policymakers on the local, state and federal levels to encourage adequate funding, design and implementation of the census.*

On the local level, the campaign collaborated with associations of local municipalities to support efforts to educate local governments about the Local Update of census Addresses Program (LUCA), build awareness of LUCA's importance to an accurate count, and to encourage both large and small municipalities to participate in and dedicate resources to the effort. LUCA is a program through which representatives of state and local governments review, correct, and update the census address list, which guides outreach efforts. MNA will also work with these associations to encourage local municipalities to form Complete Count Committees and to provide officials with the information to do so. In addition to partnering with associations of local municipalities, the campaign will encourage regional census hubs to work closely with their local officials on planning for the census, LUCA, complete count committees, communication and outreach efforts.

On the state level, the campaign is working closely with the Governor's office, Office of Foundation Liaison; and state Legislature to ensure adequate funding of the state demographer's office, Michigan's liaison with the U.S. Census Bureau, and to explore additional state appropriations for communications and outreach efforts to increase the census response rate in 2020. MNA will also work with state officials to promote a state Complete Count Committee that is representational of segments of the population that are traditionally hard-to-count.

On the federal level, the campaign will continue to encourage the Michigan congressional delegation to support adequate funding of the 2020 census and to protect the privacy and integrity of the census in terms of the questions asked on the form and the use of the data collected.

VII. Collaborate with foundation leaders - *Partnering with the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), the campaign will support CMF's efforts to encourage philanthropy to support get-out-the-count efforts.*

CMF will work with its membership to educate and encourage financial support of the 2020 Michigan Nonprofits Count Campaign and local get-out-the-count efforts with a focus on leveraging member support in targeted communities with hard-to-count populations and high concentrations of nonprofits.

Evaluation

MNA uses a multi-faceted approach for measuring its work. This approach includes both formal and informal methods of evaluation as well as measuring external and internal outcomes. An evaluator will be hired early in the campaign to ensure that MNA gets real-time feedback to make strategic decisions while implementing the project.

Budget

See attached.