



## **Nonprofit Complete Count Committee**

### **Background:**

The Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA), with support from the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), is launching an ambitious effort to engage nonprofits in ensuring a fair and accurate census count in 2020.

In 2010 Michigan was in danger of falling below a few important thresholds for federal funding and representation- especially in Detroit. With support from the philanthropic community, the Michigan Nonprofit Association led a statewide effort to mobilize and engage nonprofits across to 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 under count 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. An accurate count is crucial in portraying Michigan's diverse demography and landscape of needs. This insight helps ensure multi-sector investment in the state can meet those needs equitably.

Based on a successful campaign in 2010, the 2020 Michigan Nonprofit Counts Campaign is a collaborative, coordinated, statewide effort to increase participation in the census in communities that are at significant risk of being undercounted. The campaign will mobilize nonprofits to educate and engage communities in increasing the count; 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.

### **Rationale for Nonprofit Involvement:**

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 most hard-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 is 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.

### **Purpose, Composition and Expectations of the Committee:**

Working closely with state and federal officials and utilizing their nonprofit networks of members, boards, volunteers and others - the Nonprofit Complete Count Committee will develop and implement a statewide outreach and awareness campaign to increase the decennial census count, particularly in hard to count areas.

The committee will be comprised of leaders from statewide organizations with members across the state and statewide or community organizations that represent groups of individuals whom are traditionally hard to count (i.e. young children, minorities, immigrants, homeless, etc).

The following are expectations of committee members:

- To participate in quarterly meetings beginning in February 2018 and concluding in June 2020.
- To provide guidance to MNA for the overall design and implementation of its 2020 Nonprofit Complete Count Campaign.
- To educate and encourage your networks to take action in their communities to increase the census count, particularly in local communities that are recipients of mini-grants and conducting their own local complete count campaigns.

**Contact:**

