



These actions and lessons learned come from CMF's support of the MNA-led Michigan Nonprofits Complete Count Campaign.

WHAT FUNDERS CAN DO

- **Educate** – Share tools and resources with your grantees to encourage nonprofit get-out-the-count efforts in your community.
- **Advocate** – Encourage local/regional government leaders to form complete count committees to raise awareness about the census and increase participation. Recommend nonprofit representatives engage with hard-to-count communities to serve on the committees.
- **Champion** – Communicate the importance of the census and participation. Report any potential disinformation campaigns seeking to reduce participation in the census.
- **Partner** – Collaborate with nonprofits that represent hard-to-count populations to ensure that their voices are heard.
- **Promote** – Provide information about census bureau job opportunities on your website and to your grantees and other networks to encourage hiring from within hard-to-count populations.
- **Fund** – Provide support to existing grantees for get-out-the-count efforts and/or invest in local/statewide pooled funding efforts.

CMF's Census 2020 presentation for the Kansas Association of Community Foundations Annual National Conference can be viewed online at <https://tinyurl.com/CensusPresentation>.

TIPS FOR FUNDERS INVESTING IN THIS WORK

CURRENT GRANTEEES

- Educate your grantees on the importance of census data in relation to funding for programs that affect their work.
- Provide additional funds to support census capacity-building activities for grantees to be well-prepared to be the trusted voice with their communities, encouraging community members to complete the census.
- Provide additional funds to support tools and human resources for them to conduct get-out-the-count efforts. For example, a nonprofit may need to purchase iPads and hot spot Wi-Fi, a social service organization may need extra time built into visits, and staff and volunteers will need to be trained.
- Advocate for grantees to be included in local/regional/state census advisory committees as appropriate.
- Ask for data reports on grantees' census-related efforts at regular intervals to understand how their work is going on the ground and where additional support or connections may be beneficial.

NEW GRANTEES

- Engage with your state demographer, or an equivalent role, to find out which geographic areas and census tracts are most at risk for an undercount, then seek out potential grantees who are trusted in those communities.
- Support get-out-the-count efforts as well as the capacity building and tools needed to conduct the work.
- If there is an opportunity for pooled funding, designate the grantee and provide support for them to serve as the lead for a nonprofit-led campaign that oversees all elements of the work. Their work should include communications, training and technical assistance for nonprofits, grantmaking strategy, collaboration with government and data collection.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM MICHIGAN

- Creating a pooled fund to support state/multi-state nonprofit census campaign activities leverages economies of scale and, if structured with a framework delineating work in regions, provides the vehicle to allow for national and place-based funders to participate. Targeting by region also ensures that the dollars go to local nonprofits trusted in the hard-to-count populations in their geographic service area. *The Michigan framework can be viewed online at <https://tinyurl.com/CensusFramework>.*
- Diversity in the types of grants is important. General operating support in a pooled fund allows the lead organization to utilize the funds for infrastructure (communications, training/technical assistance, research, etc.) that benefits all areas participating in the campaign. This also allows for investments in regions that may not have sufficient funding to support their efforts.
- Encourage potential funders to support all elements of the census campaign by creating regional budgets that include an allocation for the statewide infrastructure activities (research, communications, evaluation, etc.). Funders can provide support at the regional level that also benefits the whole campaign. This leverage opportunity was valued by funders.
- Place-based funders appreciated the Michigan framework in order to target their grant to support the regional budgets that fund local efforts and administrative support for the regional hubs as well as local nonprofit mini-grants in support of their get-out-the-count efforts.
- Challenge grants to community foundations can leverage fundraising capacity to provide additional resources for specific geographies.
- Community foundations can leverage their community leadership and grantmaking expertise in support of the census. For Michigan, six community foundations are serving as regional census hub administrators.
- When there was concern regarding the role of philanthropy in relation to government's responsibility to implement the census, we provided data demonstrating the nonprofit sector role historically and shared the Census Bureau's research indicating trusted partners are needed in census implementation. (*The research can be viewed online at <https://tinyurl.com/CensusResearch>.*) We also included Census Bureau representatives in campaign meetings where funders could hear about their work and commitment, and that the nonprofit sector is amplifying their efforts, not supplanting the Census Bureau.
- In many cases, it may not be clear how supporting census activities aligns with grantmaking priorities, therefore it is critically important to make the connection between use of census data and funding for programs that do align with grantmaking priorities. This was especially true when meeting with the foundation board of directors.

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Learn more at www.michiganfoundations.org, call (616) 842-7080 or email Debbie McKeon, executive vice president and COO for CMF, at dmckeon@michiganfoundations.org.
