

KEY 2020 CENSUS FUNDER MILESTONES

Across the country, philanthropy is working to ensure a fair and accurate 2020 Census. Accurate census data are essential for the fair distribution of political representation and the equitable distribution of resources, and also serve as a bedrock of planning and decision-making for all sectors. Although philanthropy cannot and should not supplant the government's responsibility to conduct a good census, funder engagement in support of the constitutionally required count is more important than ever.

This resource – a companion to the [Key 2020 Census Milestones](#) – can guide your foundation's strategic and effective engagement through the count. The timeline suggests a sequence of actions that match the roll out of the census itself, and each foundation can adapt the scope and timing of its work as appropriate. There are a wealth of readily available resources and experts on 2020 Census policy and operational issues to guide the work. (Consider, for example the FCI [website](#), which includes a census funder toolkit, menu of funding options, and other resources). The imperative to participate, convene, and invest is urgent, whether your foundation has been deeply involved in census work for years or is considering it for the first time.

If your foundation is considering census work, here are a few steps to get started:

- The census has implications for all communities on a range of issues. Identify how the census connects to your foundation's priorities. For example, determine if your community and/or grantees include historically undercounted populations and how census data are used for [federal programs](#) on which your grantees depend.
- Educate your Board and Staff about the importance of a complete and accurate census count, gain your foundation's support, plan your Census 2020 work, and put Census 2020 funding in your 2019-2020 budgets.
- Understand the existing census stakeholders and infrastructure in your state, region, and/or community. Determine who is responsible for working with the Census Bureau on Census 2020 in your state (i.e. State Demographer, Data Center, Secretary of State), county or city, and learn how you can partner with them. Determine how your foundation can participate in or lead efforts, convene grantees and other stakeholders, and the most effective strategy to invest.
- Connect with other funders, and collaborate, where possible. For example, join FCI's Working Group to stay abreast of key census policy and operational issues, coordinate with Regional Associations of Grantmakers through United Philanthropy Forum, contribute to pooled or aligned funds in your state or region, or join a funder collaborative.

NOTE: If you are a funder who is new to census work or is interested in limited engagement census work, review the items in BOLD.

GETTING STARTED

ONGOING

Opportunities for Ongoing Engagement

PARTICIPATE

- Engage state and local officials, including state demographers, to determine the status of census preparations. Identify if state and local governments are establishing Complete Count Committees (CCCs) and ensure a role for philanthropy. Advocate for state and local government funding to supplement Census Bureau activities in areas such as education, communications, advertising, and outreach.
- Establish relationships with Area Census Office (ACO) Manager/s and Regional Census Center Director/s in (or covering) your state. (Note that 40 of the 248 ACOs [will open early](#), while the remainder will open late summer of 2019.)

- Conduct regular state or regional asset mapping. Scan for non-traditional partners, including grantmakers and community leaders, to determine who has power in your state to help ensure an accurate census.
- Engage libraries, academic institutions, businesses or faith-based groups to discuss the importance of the census and encourage their support of census efforts.
- Engage grantees and identify who is interested in working on the census and ensure they are connected to national, state, and local technical assistance and resources.

CONVENE

- Identify and convene interested funders and stakeholders to develop a plan for a complete census count in your state or locality. Identify grantees and other stakeholders who have the capacity to reach HTC populations. Coordinate census efforts to ensure aligned strategies, outreach, messaging, and assistance.
- **Schedule regular meetings and events with grantees through July 2020 to review progress of census preparations and implementation.** Discuss approaches to mobilization and collaboration among field partners who can help recruit potential census workers and trusted messengers, and engage community based organizations, support Get Out the Count (GOTC) and Nonresponse Follow-Up (NRFU) efforts in HTC communities, and develop communications channels with regional and local Census Bureau officials to address challenges that arise in the field.
- Plan and execute foundation event/s with census experts and Census Bureau staff, where grantmakers can educate other funders about basic issues and challenges, review the menu of options for investing, make commitments, and plan next steps.
- Establish a pool of consultants and census experts for state and community based census funders.
- Identify traditional media, ethnic media, and social media influencers and develop effective messaging in partnership with national funders, national and local groups, and the Census Bureau.

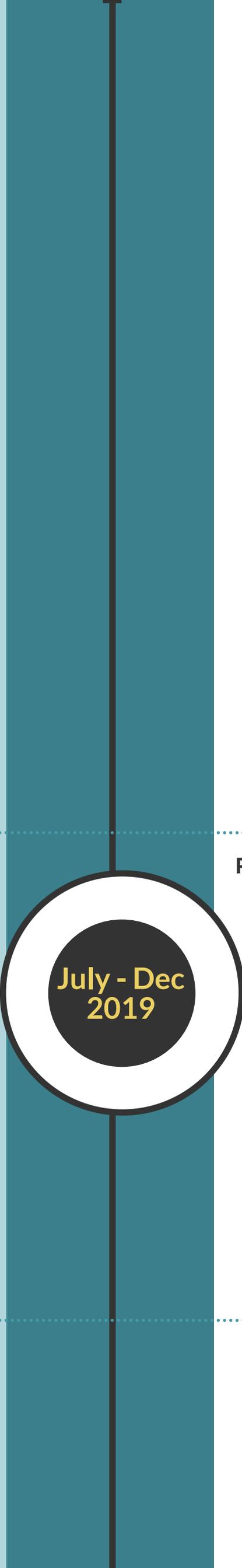
INVEST

- Make grantmaking recommendations to foundation boards. For a list of grantmaking opportunities see FCI's [Menu of Options](#).
- **Put census funding in your budgets through 2021.**
- **Identify historically HTC areas in your state or community to inform grantmaking. Evaluate best practices for targeting resources to support HTC populations, including legal assistance, message testing, communications strategies, and GOTC and NRFU strategies.**
- Create a regional, state, or local funder table to ensure funders are organized and strategically aligned. This might include community foundations, private and family foundations, corporate funders, workplace giving programs, and individual donors.
- Create or contribute to a state or local pooled fund.
- If interested in supporting census at the national level, a Plan of Action developed in 2015 by a group of funders and stakeholders has been guiding the work. Contact the Bauman Foundation for more information about the Plan, ways of supporting the census at the national level, or the Census Equity Fund that has been created to support GOTC efforts in states with limited philanthropic infrastructure and large numbers of HTC communities.

PARTICIPATE

- Build relationships with newly elected state and local officials and educate them about the importance of the census.
- Identify best practices, and develop RFPs, for various GOTC activities.

Jan - June
2019



July - Dec
2019

CONVENE

- **Convene grantees, funders, and other stakeholders to educate them about why the census matters to their work and challenges to Census 2020.** Encourage collaboration and share best practices around the areas of effective messages and messengers and approaches to GOTC mobilization, especially in HTC areas. Relevant convening topics include the implications of the final census questions for different populations, national and state-based research and message testing and how it can be adapted to meet local circumstances, or a process to distribute information about Census Bureau workforce recruitment and hiring.
- Launch census public relations events with grantees, funders, and other stakeholders at the national, state, local level around April 1, 2019 – one year from the 2020 Census “Census Day” (the reference date for the count).
- Convene funders in your area to explore opportunities for collaboration, including the potential for creating pooled or aligned funding strategies.

INVEST

- **Complete grant awards for census outreach and promotion as early as possible. Invest in areas where there might be gaps in Census Bureau resources, such as translating materials into languages spoken in your area, targeted messaging, and local media campaigns with ethnic media.**
- Allocate funds for rapid response to address unexpected policy and operational challenges that could affect participation in the census in the communities you serve, including the self-response and NRFU phases.
- **Commit to supporting GOTC.** Issue RFPs and prepare to award grants beginning the first half of 2019. (Contact FCI for model RFP’s and approaches to add-on grants for current grantees.) Link grantees to national or state groups providing technical assistance and training, and when possible, invest in training for grantees for GOTC planning and skill building.
- Include evaluation in your funding to inform Census 2030 activities.

PARTICIPATE

- Identify effective approaches to support Census Bureau outreach and promotion during NRFU May-July 2020. (NRFU will start in early April 2020 in neighborhoods with large numbers of off-campus college students who might leave the area before the regular NRFU operation starts.)
- **Attend FCI webinars and connect with funders across the country at FCCP’s Annual Convening, November 19-21.**

CONVENE

- Include information about the census and inspire engagement in GOTC efforts at all gatherings that your foundation sponsors.

INVEST

- Include final census GOTC grants in your 2020 budget, expanding the number of grantees you support, if possible.
- Share state census investments with FCI for aggregated Census 2020 tracking.

PARTICIPATE

- Shift attention to media, operations, map updating, and trouble-shooting.
- Coordinate with funders and stakeholders in your area to monitor the self-response rates and NRFU completion rates, which [CUNY Mapping Services](#) and the Census Bureau will report and map on a weekly basis.
- Focus on emerging needs of your grantees and stakeholders in your state through state funder and stakeholder hubs, and CCCs.

Jan - Jun
2020

CONVENE

- Launch census public relations events at national, state, and local levels with funders and grantees before April 1, 2020. (Peak census operations start in most places in mid-March 2020.)
- Continue census public relations events into the summer as the Census Bureau completes NRFU.
- Continue to convene grantees and other stakeholders to identify opportunities, share best practices, and address challenges that emerge as GOTC reaches its most intense period. Review progress of census preparation and implementation in your area – such as advertising, hiring, enumeration – to determine how your grantees can best support the Census Bureau’s work.

INVEST

- Complete grantmaking for 2020 work. Closely monitor 2020 Census implementation in real time to identify communities that need additional assistance to ensure an accurate count. Remain flexible to meet needs that arise unexpectedly.

PARTICIPATE

- **Evaluate lessons learned through Census 2020, synthesize best practices, and recommend a Census 2030 engagement strategy for your foundation.**

Jul - Dec
2020

CONVENE

- Support permanent infrastructure for census and American Community Survey (ACS the ongoing part of the decennial census that collects vital socio-economic data) advocacy.
- Consider hosting educational events in 2021 (such as webinars) to highlight 2020 Census and ACS data products and how funders and stakeholders can access and use those data to inform their work.
- Convene funders and stakeholders to develop a policy agenda to inform a Census 2030 redesign and create an advocacy plan and coordination timeline for 2030.

INVEST

- Share total census investments with FCI for aggregated Census 2020 tracking.
- Capture what was created, learned, and accomplished in a final assessment of your foundation’s engagement and investment in the 2020 Census.
- Determine what your foundation can do to sustain civic infrastructure and improve civic engagement to advance the ACS, timely planning for the 2030 Census, and other democratic processes.

FCI WORKING GROUP

FCI is committed to stimulating interest in the census among funders and their grantees through outreach, education, resource development, and technical assistance. Specifically, FCI supports grantmakers by providing forums for funders to learn, strategize and plan together; distributing census resources to inform grantmaking; and monitoring Census Bureau progress and tracking policy issues that could affect a fair and accurate count. By supporting grantmaker engagement through the 2020 census and beyond, FCI works to achieve a democracy where everybody counts because everyone is counted.

Join the [FCI Working Group](#) on the FCCP website. *FCCP membership is not required to join the working group.* Contact Jocelyn Bissonnette, Director of the Funders Census Initiative, for more information: Jbissonnette@funderscommittee.org

LEARN MORE + GET INVOLVED
[FundersCommittee.Org](#)

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