

Greater Cleveland 2020 Census Project
Cleveland Census Rapid Response Fund
Request for Proposal

The Greater Cleveland Coalition is pleased to invite community partners to submit a proposal for rapid response funding to support census mobilizing or organizing efforts in neighborhoods and localities in Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga Counties with a low self-response rate.

Overview

The George Gund Foundation, The Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation, The Saint Luke’s Foundation, and The Cleveland Foundation (TCF) in partnership with the Ohio Census Advocacy Coalition, have worked to get out the count in the Greater Cleveland region through micro-grants, an organizing and mobilizing effort. The coalition of partners have awarded \$153,000 in micro-grants to 50 grantees thus far. The grants have supported local, community-based organizations that advance the work of the 2020 Census with populations identified to be at risk of an undercount in Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga counties. Hard to count (HTC) populations include five primary groups: 1) immigrants/newcomers, 2) African Americans, 3) Latinx, 4) children under five and their families, and 5) students, renters and people who are transient.

The ban on public gatherings and the closure of “trusted spaces” due to the COVID-19 pandemic forced census grantee partners to shift their work and find new ways of conducting outreach. Trusted voices evolved to become social media influencers. Zoom town halls and social media became the new virtual trusted spaces. As Greater Cleveland reopens, it will be critical to provide funding to partners who are conducting digital outreach, are comfortable with both traditional as well as non-traditional organizing techniques, and are trusted by communities that have a low census self-response rate.

The extension of the census timeline from July to October has created an additional unforeseeable burden on our census partner’s capacity. More importantly, our local response rates are sobering, as they are below expectations. Currently, The City of Cleveland self-response rate is 46.9%, making Cleveland DEAD LAST out of cities with 300,000+ people. The coalition seeks to build momentum in areas with low self-response rates. The effort to boost the self-response rate will involve a targeted approach for the third and fourth round of micro-grants.

Grant Opportunity

The Cleveland Foundation is administering and distributing grant funding to support local, community-based organizations in getting out the Census count in Northeast Ohio. Micro-grants ranging from \$1,000- \$5,000 will be awarded to groups conducting outreach activities in neighborhoods with [low self-response rates](#) based on data provided by the Census Bureau as of July 13, 2020. A low self-response is defined as a neighborhood or census tract with a lower self-response rate than the City of Cleveland. A third and fourth round of grantmaking will occur on an expedited timeline to quickly deploy resources.

Below is information about the eligibility criteria, timeline, funded activities, selection criteria, and the application process. For questions about the micro-grants, please contact Juan Galeano, Project Consultant, at jgaleano@clevefdn.org

Eligibility Criteria

Eligible applicants must:

1. Operate in the City of Cleveland and/or Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga County.
2. Be an incorporated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization.
3. Agree to let Cleveland Foundation share their application with other local foundations for the purposes of scoring and fundraising.
4. Be located or serve residents in a neighborhood/census tract that has a low self-response rate on the census as of 7/13/20. Grantees will be selected based on the level of trust they hold within communities and data provided by the census.

Timeline

July 13, 2020	Cleveland Census Rapid Response Fund RFP released
July 27, 2020	Third-Round proposals due
August 7, 2020	Third-Round grant decisions announced
Aug. 7- Oct 31, 2020	Third-Round grant period
August 10, 2020	Fourth-Round proposals due
August 21, 2020	Fourth-Round grant decisions announced
Aug. 22- Oct 31, 2020	Fourth-Round grant period

Funded Activities

Funded activities should be targeted to neighborhoods with a low self-response rate. Examples of promising activities include, but are not limited to:

- a. Digital organizing strategies (i.e. virtual town halls, facebook live, and geo-targeting through ads.)
- b. Traditional organizing strategies (i.e. phone banking, yard-signs, texting, and caravans.)
- c. Distributing census materials at meal distribution sites.
- d. PSAs and Ads that encourage people to fill out the census.
- e. Activating trusted spaces in a way that respects physical distancing.

Grantee Selection Criteria

For the third round of micro-grants, organizations should propose a scope of work that aims to achieve the objectives outlined above. Partners with the capacity to conduct digital, traditional, and non-traditional organizing will have the best chances of being funded. Applicants are encouraged to identify a hard-to-count population and an outreach strategy that focuses on neighborhoods and areas with a low self-response rate. Specific selection criteria includes:

1. Community Engagement

- a. Understanding and having relationships with residents in a neighborhood or census tract that has a low self-response rate.
- b. Track record of engaging residents on the 2020 census.
- c. Capacity to conduct traditional, non-traditional, and digital organizing to get out the count.
- d. Creative and practical outreach strategy that respects physical distancing and has a high likelihood of success.

2. Implementation

- a. Participate in monthly zoom community of practice town halls with other grantees to share lessons learned.
- b. Report on progress to local and regional partners, including writing a brief report at the end of grant period about your activities and impact.
- c. Selection criteria for the fourth round of micro-grants may be modified based on updated response rate data and continuing efforts to understand the types of outreach strategies that are working to increase response rates. If any changes are made, an updated application will be sent out electronically in accordance with the timeframe outlined above.

Application Process

Please address the following in a proposal of about two pages, and email the document to jgaleano@clevefdn.org with the title "Census 2020 (insert organization name)" by the designated deadline.

- a. Name of the organization submitting the application, mission statement, and contact information for key staff.
- b. Describe the community/neighborhood/census tract that you seek to conduct your outreach in, and your relationship with the people there.
- c. A summary of 2020 census outreach and activities to date.
- d. Capacity to conduct digital, traditional, and non-traditional organizing.

e. Proposed use of funds, including:

- i. The major outreach strategies that will be utilized to encourage participation/ counting of the hard to count in targeted neighborhoods.
- ii. A description of key partners in the outreach effort.

About the Greater Cleveland Census Coalition

The George Gund Foundation, The Char and Chuck Fowler Family Foundation, Saint Luke’s Foundation, The Cleveland Foundation, New Venture Fund and two members of the Ohio Census Advocacy Coalition (OCAC) – Cleveland VOTES and the Children’s Defense Fund-Ohio are partnering to offer micro-grant funding to support local, community-based organizations that advance the work of the 2020 Census with populations identified to be at risk of an undercount in Cuyahoga, Lake and Geauga counties. To date, 50 Northeast Ohio organizations shared \$153,000 in two rounds of grantmaking. For questions about the micro-grants, please contact Juan Galeano, Project Consultant, at jgaleano@clevelandfn.org