

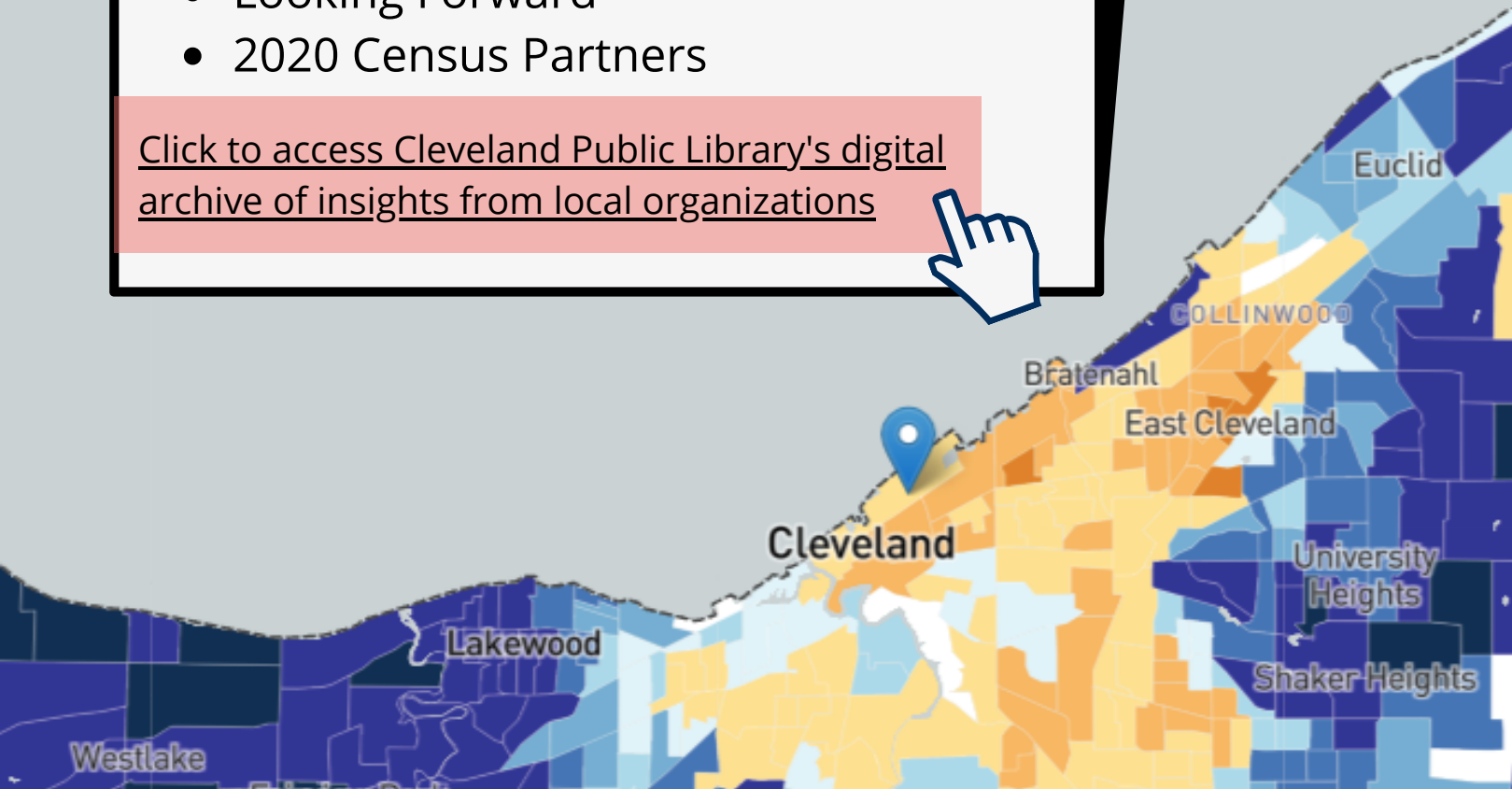
COMPLETE COUNT CLE

*Playbook for nonprofit organizations
planning to mobilize for the 2030 Census*

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DEAR COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDER,

Going into the 2020 census, Greater Cleveland nonprofit leaders expected there would be challenges- the digital divide, the spread of misinformation, government distrust, and privacy issues, to name a few. With limited funding from philanthropy and no financial support from the government, it was clear that getting the count up in 2020 would be a grassroots effort.

Partner organizations across Greater Cleveland mobilized and planned hundreds of in-person events, but they had to alter their outreach before the count even started due to the spread of COVID-19. The global pandemic shut down the economy and forced nonprofits to reassess how they operate in this new reality, including their census outreach strategy. The uncertainty of doing outreach work during a pandemic was made worse by other events throughout the extended census timeline, such as the reckoning over structural racism during the summer, threats by the administration to exclude undocumented populations from the census numbers, and the shifting deadlines. Through adversity and instability, nonprofit partners in the Greater Cleveland Region persevered and demonstrated flexibility, creativity, new digital competencies, and formed new collaborations to serve their communities better.

While many of the obstacles during 2020 were unique, the nonprofit partners have valuable lessons to share, included in this playbook. This report's recommendations came directly from the 60+ grantee partners representing the Greater Cleveland region. With the 2030 census to look forward to, the funders and nonprofit partners felt it was vital to share the partners' collective wisdom for people in their roles during the next census before too much time passed. The Cleveland Public Library has established a digital archive of 2020 census efforts to complement this document.

SUPPORT & AMPLIFY PERSONALIZED MESSAGES FROM TRUSTED VOICES IN TRUSTED SPACES

The **Complete Count CLE** initiative sought to support grassroots efforts to get an accurate and complete count in Ohio for the 2020 census, with a particular focus on five primary groups:

- Immigrants/newcomers
- African Americans
- Latinx
- Children under five and their families
- college students, renters, and people experiencing transience

key challenges:

- *Spread of Misinformation*
- *Distrust of Government*
- *Digital Divide in Cleveland*
- *COVID-19 Pandemic*

The Complete Count CLE coalition includes a diverse array of partners that serve communities deemed "hard-to-count" by the Census Bureau. These partners understand their communities' history, nuances, and lived experience better than an organization doing broad-based outreach. This section of the playbook highlights quotes from nonprofit partners serving undercounted communities living in Greater Cleveland and their suggestions for boosting their participation in the 2030 census.

IMMIGRANTS & REFUGEES

"Census education needs to be provided from the moment that an immigrant arrives in this country and then continuously as they learn about civics in the U.S."

-Asian Services In Action, Inc.

"New immigrants may not know what the Census is, and many families have a lot of questions about the process, so this is a time-intensive effort. **We found the most effective messaging to focus on empowerment:** filling out the Census is something everyone can do to make a better future for their children, families and community."

-HOLA, Ohio

AFRICAN AMERICANS

"Identify new strategies to get people to **respond as individuals and not as households**. Heads of households were the main respondents for the census notifications in the mail. If however you were not self-identified as a "head of household" (as was the case with the overwhelming majority of people in East Cleveland and other HTC communities), you were less inclined to feel responsible or take the initiative to complete the census. It would also make you reluctant to respond to official government questions regarding the household that you may not have responsibility for. This was especially the case for transient African American men."

-Promise of Democracy Foundation- Ohio Voter Fund

FAMILIES WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

"In addition to creating outreach materials focused on the parents and other adults, we would recommend adding more developmentally-appropriate **Census activities for children to do with their parents** to reinforce the Census message at home. This could include researching the impacts of the Census, interviewing adults in their families, creating graphs and Census-focused artwork, or chalking their neighborhood sidewalks with Census messages."

-Pre4CLE, Starting Point, and The Literacy Cooperative

PERSONS EXPERIENCING TRANSIENCE

"It is extremely important that the Census recognizes that people living on the streets require **trauma-informed care**. Training in harm reduction, conflict resolution, and person-centered care is standard for any street outreach worker and census workers would benefit from that training."

-North East Ohio Coalition for the Homeless

"Clients appreciated examples of how census data related to rehabilitation centers like the one they were currently in. They felt a sense of importance and belonging after understanding how their responses affect areas of treatment. Clients were very cooperative and enjoyed having **a closed space for privacy**, working individually with the Census Recruiter."

-Catholic Charities Corporation, Matt Talbot for Men Clinic

MULTILINGUAL HOUSEHOLDS

"This community is very relational. People tend to talk with their peers especially if you **speak their language**. Even though some recognized us in the community, it was still very challenging if we didn't speak the same dialect or if we weren't fluent in their language. Multilingual materials is very helpful especially if volunteers were not fluent in a language or have the vocabulary to explain the Census."

-Organization of Chinese Americans Inc., Greater Cleveland

"Ensuring **material in other languages** is available while advocating for individuals to take the census is critical, for the questions they have on their security, what is the census, how it affects them, and further ultimately gives a more personal touch and enables them to feel heard and counted as they're being reached by the only language they know."

-Smart Development

NATIVE AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

"Some of the largest barriers with the census for Indigenous communities includes: a lack of trust behind the census; who should 'check' the Native American box; what constitutes a household when many of our community members live in non-nuclear family settings; and the a need to **inform the community about how census data is used**, and how important accurate data is for both urban and Natives living on reservations.

-Lake Erie Native American Council

PEOPLE ALONG THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

"In 2030 PCs for People hopes to **support in-person census completion** in both our storefront locations and at tabling events and other off-site opportunities. PCs for People staff and volunteers can not only share information about the census, but also show clients how to complete the census online, offer technology access and assistance in completing online forms, and provide an incentive of one month of free internet access upon completion. The incentive of one month of free access, along with information and tips, could also be digitally marketed to current internet subscribers."

-PCs for People

Although each group has unique insights and serves a specific community, there were some common recommendations among the organizations:

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Focus on historically undercounted people and neighborhoods.**
- **Coordinate with organizations that serve similar communities.**
- **Be creative with community outreach.**
- **Diversify funding sources.**
- **Expect the unexpected.**
- **Start planning earlier.**

RECOMMENDATION #1 FOCUS ON HISTORICALLY UNDERCOUNTED PEOPLE AND NEIGHBORHOODS

For nonprofits working with historically undercounted communities, you must build and maintain trusted relationships with the people you serve. Even with those relationships, though, the mistrust in government is deep and will require a multi-year effort to raise awareness and build ownership among residents. The sooner you start this process, the better.

"Our recommendation is that it will take an entire decade to address these challenges and the very real disparities that they represent. We recommend that the 2030 team start by **prioritizing areas with the least census participation years earlier** than the moment when there is an ask to make of an impoverished community with little to no trust of outsiders."

-Upcycle Parts Shop

"Finally, we want to acknowledge that the individuals and communities that are hardest to count are also the same ones that are most marginalized, disenfranchised, disempowered, and disengaged in democracy and civic participation in general. Therefore it is extremely important to **break down the many significant barriers** to participation and make our democracy more inclusive, accessible, fair, and equitable. It is also imperative to invest consistently in organizations and activities that are developing leaders and engaging marginalized communities on the problems that impact them -- year-round, and not only during presidential election years or every ten years when the Census count must be completed.

-OPAWL

RECOMMENDATION #2

COORDINATE WITH ORGANIZATIONS THAT SERVE SIMILAR COMMUNITIES

Our community benefited tremendously from such a concentrated effort by nonprofits to raise awareness and engagement around the census. At the same time, there was some concern about duplication of efforts. Partners that serve similar communities, neighborhoods, and sectors are encouraged to coordinate, collaborate and share resources around the census as much as possible.

"In review of Census 2020, we would tell our future CMHA staff when preparing to mobilize for the Census 2030 to continue developing strong community relationships. **Relationships with partners and the residents of the community will develop invaluable trust.** That trust will allow for collaborations, volunteer support and open dialogue if hesitations are present."

-Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority

"Partnerships were essential in obtaining important materials, manpower, and networking in this effort. This included partnerships with partner organizations but also other community stakeholders, such as engaged residents and businesses."

-Metro West CDO

"Collaborations. We could not have been successful without the numerous partners engaged in this work! Lisa Wong with OCA-Greater Cleveland had relationships with the Census enumerators, and she was very organized and consistent in advocating for their presence at our events and around the neighborhood."

-Midtown Cleveland

RECOMMENDATION #3

BE CREATIVE WITH COMMUNITY OUTREACH

As organizations everywhere had to reimagine what their community outreach would look like during a global pandemic, many found the opportunity to be creative, tapping into what they know about the community they serve and how to reach them with an important message like completing the census.

"**Text messaging was our most successful tool.** It was direct, timely, and concise. Social media is good for educating people on the census but must include various platforms to reach different demographics."
-[Esperanza Inc.](#)

"Including the businesses was among one of the biggest lessons learned; often times the owners of these **small-businesses are so inner-connected** with the community, they often can further the message by including them."
-[Smart Development Inc.](#)

"A **large banner** that we made encouraging folks in a specific neighborhood to sign up seemed to attract people and pique their interest. It was made so it could be adapted to the greater Cleveland area also and was used by the census folks at some of their events as well."
-[St. Aloysius.](#)

RECOMMENDATION #4

DIVERSIFY FUNDING SOURCES

Strategic organizing and coalition building will be essential for securing philanthropy and government resources to fund your nonprofit's census outreach work. Reach out to both early on and encourage their financial support. Many States, Counties, and Cities across the country directly funded nonprofits to do census outreach. In Ohio, The City of Columbus provided funding for grants to nonprofits. Don't wait until a year before the start of the census to begin asking.

"Develop strategies to more closely connect participation in the US census to the **Reapportionment and Redistricting Process**. Hold public forums to help educate opinion leaders in the census and re-apportionment process."

-Promise of Democracy Foundation (Ohio Voter Fund)

"I would encourage future teams working on the Census to join with groups in the **push for legal action early on**. Consider a wide range of strategies to protect our communities' interests from any attempts to game the system or produce an undercount of specific populations. We have seen that there are ways that the Census process can be exploited through underfunding, flawed hiring processes and overtly political actors in the Department of Commerce. "

-Policy Matters

"**Lobby elected officials early to include funds for the Census** in their budgets to pay for Census events. Waiting until the Census is upon us and asking philanthropy to help out is short sighted and does not help get more people to complete the Census."

-Fairfax Renaissance Development Corporation

RECOMENDATION #5 EXPECT THE UNEXPECTED

The 2020 census cycle was unprecedented- a global pandemic, the census's politicization, a reckoning over structural racism during the summer, and in-person outreach being discouraged. While we don't know what will happen in 2030, it would be wise to have backup plans in the case of unexpected obstacles. One of the best ways to do that is to build up digital advocacy and traditional organizing skillsets.

"Be flexible. Even without a pandemic, **things can change** and outreach methods you thought were productive may not be. Continue to evaluate your outreach and adapt to the needs of your community or target population."

-Cuyahoga Community College (Tri-C)

"**Plan for conducting the census during environmental emergencies** which may be commonplace in 10 years due to climate change and other pandemics or unknown factors."

-Promise of Democracy Foundation (Ohio Voter Fund)

RECOMMENDATION #6

START EARLIER

While partners varied in their suggested start date, there was an overall consensus that nonprofits, especially those that interact with hundreds of people, should begin organizing for the 2030 census two years before the projected start date. For coalitions that focus on a particular sector, neighborhood, or community, initial organizing should occur three years before the projected start date.

"Start the work NOW. Do not wait until 2030 to establish relationships with your residents and stakeholders. Be intentional about establishing yourself as a trustworthy, nonpartisan entity. Be intentional about building trust and relationships that are holistic in nature rather than exchange based."

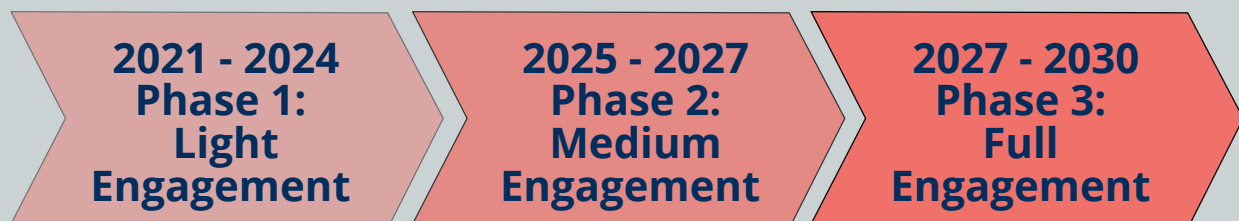
-Greater Collinwood Development Corporation

"Had we started 5 or so years early, we could have had our community try to **be a part of the conversation** around data collection of LGBTQ+ people."

-The LGBT Community Center of Greater Cleveland

2030 will be here sooner than you'd think!

Over the next ten years, consider ways to plan programs around census information so your community is prepared for data collection in 2030.



2021 - 2024

Phase 1: Light Engagement

FUNDING

- Seek diverse funding and grow organizational capacity.
- Invest in civic infrastructure of your organization.

ORGANIZING

- Continue to build relationships of trust with members of the community that you serve.
- Continue to build civic engagement muscle. Nonprofits could build this skill set by participating in redistricting process, educating members about upcoming elections/levies, or spreading the word about COVID-19 vaccine.
- Include the census into any democracy-building work and include in continuously.

EDUCATION

- Think of ways to remind the people you serve about the importance of the census and incorporate those ideas into your work. It could be updating program curriculums to include a session on the significance of the census. It could be reminders about how the services they are currently receiving are due to people in our community filling out the census, etc.
- Ongoing education for staff and people you serve around the services that are impacted by census participation

2025- 2027

Phase 2: Medium Engagement

FUNDING

- Nonprofits should begin planning efforts to organize on a citywide, countywide, and statewide level to seek financial support from the government to fund nonprofits doing census outreach.
- Nonprofits should begin reaching out to philanthropy, sharing their plans, and seeking their support for the 2030 census.

ORGANIZING

- Nonprofits that are interested in coordinating efforts among multiple partners should begin convening and planning strategy (Ex: neighborhood-based, ethnic-based, or sector-based)
- Large nonprofits, government entities, and philanthropic organizations should be convening internally and externally to plan their 2030 strategy.

EDUCATION

- Nonprofit partners should look for additional ways to incorporate reminders about the census into the work they are already doing.
- Nonprofits should think about strategies for recruiting community leaders to be census ambassadors to spread the word on its importance and combat misinformation.

2027- 2030

Phase 3: Full Engagement

FUNDING

- Implement plans created in phase 2 to seek financial support from government and philanthropy.
- Nonprofits should seek funding from different sources to conduct census outreach.
- Engage other partners to be part of advocacy efforts on multiple levels to secure funding from city, county, and state.

ORGANIZING

- Nonprofits should create a census outreach plan that involves engaging the people they serve to be ambassadors.
- Nonprofits should meet with organizations that serve similar populations and ensure they are not duplicating efforts.
- Integrate census work into everything you do at least a year out

EDUCATION

- Nonprofits should have staff training on the census, and brainstorm on ways to encourage the people they serve to fill out the census.
- Train staff on the importance of the census, and brainstorm ways to encourage the people you serve to fill out the form.
- Infuse processes like intake with questions about the census.

ELECTIONS AND LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS

Consider future elections when planning your democracy building strategy. Many organizations found success in combining census outreach with other civic messages.

- **2021 CLEVELAND MAYORAL ELECTION**
- **2022, 2024, 2026, AND 2028 COUNTY COUNCIL ELECTIONS**
- **2025 AND 2029 CLEVELAND CITY COUNCIL ELECTIONS**
- **2027, 2028, 2029, 2030 OHIO LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

2020 Census grantees, partners and organizations include:

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| Asian Services in Action, Inc. | Ideastream | The Refugee Response |
| Black Child Development
Institute - Cleveland | Ingenuity Cleveland | Smart Development Inc. |
| Burten, Bell, Carr
Development, Inc. | Kings & Queens of Art | Strengthening Our Students |
| Catholic Charities Corporation | Lakewood Community
Services Center | St. Aloysius Church |
| -Help Me Grow Program | Lake Erie Native American
Council | Starting Point |
| -Matt Talbot for Men Clinic | Libraries | Task Force to Declare
Racism a Public Health Crisis |
| Children's Defense Fund -Ohio | - Euclid, East Cleveland,
Cleveland and Cuyahoga | - Birthing Beautiful
Communities |
| Cleveland Clergy Alliance | Lifeline, Inc. | The Benjamin Rose Institute |
| Cleveland International Hall
of Fame | Metro West CDO | -The Rose Centers for
Aging Well |
| Cleveland Metropolitan School
District | Midtown Cleveland | The City Mission |
| The Cleveland Observer | NAACP | The LGBT Community |
| Cleveland VOTES | - Cleveland Chapter | Center of Greater Cleveland |
| Cuyahoga Community College | National Council of Negro
Women | The Literacy Cooperative |
| Cuyahoga County Complete
Count Committee | -Cuyahoga County
Section | The Presidents Council |
| Cuyahoga Metropolitan
Housing Authority | North East Ohio Coalition
for the Homeless | Thea Bowman Center |
| Delta Alpha Lambda
Foundation | Northeast Ohio Alliance
for Hope | Tremont West |
| Detroit Shoreway CDO | Ohio Women's Alliance | Upcycle Parts Shop |
| Downtown Cleveland Residents
Esperanza, Inc. | Old Brooklyn CDO | US Together |
| Fairfax Renaissance
Development Corporation | Olivet Housing and CDC | West Side Catholic Center |
| Famicos Foundation | OPAWL | WOVU 95.9 FM |
| Foluke Cultural Arts Center, Inc. | Organization of Chinese
Americans, Greater
Cleveland | Young Latino Network |
| Frontline Service | PCs for People | Young Leaders Program |
| Global Cleveland | Policy Matters | YWCA Greater Cleveland |
| Greater Collinwood
Development Corporation | Pre4CLE | |
| Hispanic Business Center | Promise of Democracy
Foundation | |
| HOLA Ohio | -Ohio Voter Fund | |

COMPLETE COUNT CLE

NORTHEAST OHIO PARTNERS



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