

Funding For Community-Based Address Collection To Improve LUCA Initiative To Improve the Accuracy and Fairness of Census 2020

Summary:

Community-based address collection for Census 2020 is necessary to reduce the persistent differential undercount of immigrants and low-income people. About half of all census undercount results from the fact that low-income minority and immigrant families who live in “unconventional” housing don’t have an opportunity to respond to the Census—because they never get a form to fill out.

The Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) which began in July, 2017 and ends in April, 2018 is the only phase of Census 2020 that allows submission of addresses to the Bureau’s Master Address File (MAF). Community-based address canvassing can enable at least 160,000 immigrant and low-income minority adults and children to have get counted.

The return on investment is huge. Over the decade from 2021-2030 the improved address list is likely to generate \$1,000 for each \$1 dollar spent in the initiative.¹ In addition to more government funding in a broad range of health, education, economic development, and social programs, minority and immigrant communities would have greater political representation on local, as well as national level.

The cost for the proposed initiative is \$1.7 million, in other words \$11 for each person added to the Census 2020 count.

How Community-based Address Canvassing Provides Immigrants and Low-Income People Who Want To Be Counted, The Chance To Be Included

Many low-income and immigrant households don’t get the chance to be counted, even if they want to be counted. If the Census Bureau does not have an address for them, they will not receive a census form to fill out.²

A significant percentage --up to 50%--of the entire differential undercount in the decennial census is due to the fact that low-income, predominantly minority, families and immigrants live

¹ Professor Andrew Reamer at George Washington University has recently (May 31, 2017) analyzed California’s census-driven federal funding in 2015 and calculated that the state currently receives more than \$76 billion per year in such funding, about \$1,958 per person. Although funding formulas are complex and there is not a liner relationship between each additional person counted in the census and eventual funding, low-income families are particularly impacted by the major programs driven by census data (from the decennial census and the American Community Survey) including: Medicaid, SNAP, Headstart, Section 8 Housing, National School Lunch Program, adult education and employment training for youth and adults (WIOA), community economic development and community services block grants.

² Although the Census Bureau will be encouraging online census response in 2020, the situation is the same. The census, understandably, wants to enumerate everyone in the right place; so, the Census Bureau’s Master Address File (MAF) needs to have an entry for each census respondent’s place of residence.

in “unconventional” dwellings, such as trailers, basements, garages, sheds, apartments without a mailbox or clearly-defined address, concealed living space above commercial establishments. These are frequently missing from the Census Bureau’s Master Address File.

Contrary to popular belief, the Census does not conduct door-to-door canvassing everywhere. When unconventional dwellings are not in the Census Master Address File, the people who live there do not receive their invitation to participate in the Census, do not get a password to respond online, do not get the Census call-center phone number, do not get follow-up letters, and to get any in-person follow-ups by Census staff.

Community-based Address Canvassing Can Effectively and Efficiently Identify Hidden Housing Units to Add to the Census Bureau’s Master Address File

In the 2000 Census, local advocacy and community groups successfully conducted address canvassing which provided additional addresses to the Census Master Address File. The California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA) Migrant Program conducted door-to-door address canvassing in areas populated by migrant and seasonal farm workers and submitted these addresses to the Census Bureau.

The US General Accounting Office Report lauded the canvassing activities and noted that the nonprofit successfully submitted 3,076 valid addresses”.³

Community-based organizations such as voter registration and GOTV organizations have significant experience in door to door canvassing that can be leveraged to conduct address canvassing.

High Return on Investment: A More Accurate Decennial Census Helps Communities Get Their Fair Share of Federal \$

We project a return on investment over the 2021-2030 decade of at least \$2 billion based on the scope of proposed activities below.

Time-Sensitive April, 2018 Deadline

The deadline for all addresses to be submitted to the Census Bureau is April 2018. This deadline is **less than 10 months away**.

Activities:

³ United States General Accounting Office Report to the Ranking Minority Member, Committee on Government Reform, House of Representatives July 2003 “DECENNIAL CENSUS Lessons Learned for Locating and Counting Migrant and Seasonal Farm Workers”. The report also noted that CRLA’s successful identification rate was 73% vs 21% for standard local government address update.

1. **Develop Partnerships With Key Cities:** Many cities with large minorities such as San Jose, San Francisco, New York, New Haven, Las Vegas, and Baltimore, are concerned about Census undercount because of their high proportion of immigrant and low-income populations. While it is possible to submit addresses without the direct approval of City government, cities could be strategic partners to local nonprofits conducting address canvassing.

- Budget: \$50K

2. **Refinement of the targeting model for identifying priority tracts where unconventional housing is prevalent.** Researchers will create algorithmic models, test the validity of those models and produce recommendations of “High Priority Census tracts”. The results can be field tested and refined iteratively.

- Budget: \$100K

3. **Training to Effectively Conduct Community-based Address Canvassing** Using a Train the Trainer model for scalability, training will include training in procedures and communications for door to door canvassing. Local project coordinators will also receive training on how to assure adequate supervision and monitoring of field staff, and compliance with procedures to guarantee confidentiality and security of information collected. Training materials, such as field guides, checklists, operation guides, and videos would be developed and translated into multiple languages.

- Trainers: Curriculum and training materials will be designed by experienced outreach professionals who have worked extensively in low-income, minority communities.
- Budget: \$200K

4. **Door-to-Door Address Canvassing by 80-100 community-based nonprofits:** Funders can fund nonprofits who have expertise in civic engagement, voter registration or immigrant community organizing and who have field workers for door-to-door canvassing. Level of funding will depend on local community-based non-profits’ capacity, mix of language/cultural competencies needed in any given community.

Nonprofit staff or volunteers would go to locations recommended as “High Priority Census Tracts” (or have the discretion of going to locations that they know about from their own experience) and submit info about potential “nonstandard” housing.)

Door to door canvassing for addresses will also yield valuable on-the ground learnings for later outreach efforts in 2019 and 2020.

- Types of Nonprofits: Immigrant, Civic Engagement and Voter registration nonprofits with field staff are well suited to conduct door-to-door address canvassing.
- Example nonprofit: Mi Familia Vota
- Budget: Rapid response grants of \$5,000-\$50,000 per nonprofit. Assuming 100 nonprofits are funded, budget for door-to-door address canvassing is \$1.2 million.

5. Data Collection and Management Technology: Replacing paper and handwritten notes used by nonprofits in 2000, address collection can be done more digitally, yielding faster and more accurate data. Nonprofit staff or volunteers can use their mobile phones and submit structured data - dwelling description, and location by “pin” on their phone’s map application - via text to a secure database. The longitude and latitude is extracted and the data is then transformed to conform to the format required by the US Census Bureau and transmitted to the US Census Bureau.

- Example Technology Provider: CommunityInsights
- Budget: \$200K

Process Overview:

1. Development of Model to Identify High Priority Census Tracts
2. Community-based non-profits are funded, trained, and canvass addresses
4. Non-profits submit potential low-visibility housing information (rolling basis)
5. Submitted addresses are sent to US Census by April, 2018
6. Evaluate & publish report on lessons learned

Timeline & Milestones:

City Partnerships – August 1 – Feb 1
 Data Analysis: August 1- September 30th
 Technology Development: August 1- October 30th
 Nonprofit Training: September 1 - 15th
 Address Canvassing: September 15 2017- April 15, 2018
 Deadline for Address Submissions – April 30 2018

**Timeline may be delayed and extended, depending on Census Bureau success in meeting operational requirements for delivering LUCA materials to local government partners. It is expected that LUCA materials will be delivered from early January through mid-March. Consequently the address deadline in some communities might be as late as July 15, 2018 but this cannot be guaranteed.*

Budget Overview:

City Partnerships: \$50K
 Data Analysis: \$100K
 Training and Technical Assistance: \$200K
 Technology: \$150K
 Door-to-door canvassing: \$1.2 million @ average \$12K for each of the 100 nonprofit grantees

Total Funding Required: \$1.7 million