



CENSUS 2020 GET-OUT-THE-COUNT REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

NC Counts and Blueprint NC invite organizations committed to ensuring a fair and accurate Census to apply for grants in the range of \$7-15,000 for individual organizations. Collaborative proposals for larger amounts will be considered. Funds will support plans in NC communities at risk of being undercounted, also known as hard-to-count (HTC) communities. In the fall of 2019, up to \$250,000 will be disbursed. Additional rounds will be announced contingent on funding.

Section 1. Introduction

Get-Out-the-Count is NC Counts Coalition and Blueprint NC's coordinated statewide campaign to increase 2020 Census participation among NC Communities at risk of being undercounted, communities also known as hard-to-count (HTC) communities. Between 2019 -2020 NC Counts Coalition, Blueprint NC and partners will conduct Get-Out-the-Count outreach to individuals residing in HTC communities. The overall goal of North Carolina's Get-Out-the-Count campaign is to increase 2020 Census self-response rates among historically undercounted populations.

In an effort to support nonprofit organizations in reaching the communities they know best, NC Counts Coalition invites proposals from Coalition partners interested in conducting 2020 Census education and outreach programming to support the [Get-Out-the-Count Plan](#). This plan was developed in partnership with the NC Census Taskforce and lays out NC Counts' and Blueprint's methodology for determining HTCCs and shared tactics.

Background

Once every decade, on the first day of April, the United States Census Bureau takes a snapshot of America through the Decennial Census. Decennial Census data are used to determine the reapportionment of seats in the House of Representatives, to distribute more than \$800 billion of federal funding, and to assist decision-makers in planning for services and economic development. Census data must be accurate, reliable, and fair to support political balance, equitable distribution of federal funds and to paint an accurate picture of communities to ensure that every community has access to the resources and services it needs to improve the quality of every individual's life.

North Carolina has a lot at stake with the 2020 Census. With an accurate Census count North Carolina is projected to gain a seat in the House of Representatives, increasing its representation from 13 to 14 representatives. Money-wise, North Carolina receives about \$16.3 billion a year from federal assistance programs that distribute funds based on Decennial Census driven data; this is equivalent to about \$1,600 per person per year in federal funding.¹ This funding supports programs such as Section 8 housing and the

¹ George Washington University Counting for Dollars 2020: North Carolina, <https://nmcndn.io/e186d21f8c7946a19faed23c3da2f0da/e33ebba15b7e45b7a7ca3024d892a391/files/resources/North-Carolina-Counting-for-Dollars.pdf>

Children’s Health Insurance Program. Additionally, local governments use population and growth trends for community planning and development to decide where services, such as hospitals, schools and transit routes, should be located to accommodate the needs of community members. Accurate Census data are essential to the economic well-being of North Carolina and the general well-being of every single North Carolinian. Inaccurate counts paint a distorted picture of our communities and will result in a misallocation of resources for North Carolina.

Challenges to a Fair and Accurate 2020 Census Count

1. **Undercounted Communities:** Populations with historical undercounts are identified as hard-to-count communities (HTCCs). Several challenges lead to an undercount of populations, such as: lack of internet access; concerns of confidentiality; distrust of government; misunderstanding of who should be counted; lack of stability in living arrangements; and language barriers. North Carolina’s HTCCs consist of traditionally marginalized groups (Black or African-Americans, Hispanic or Latinx individuals, Native Americans and immigrant populations); low-income individuals; and children younger than six years.² If these already vulnerable communities are undercounted, they risk funding and resources, fair representation in government and engagement in civic life. Communities that are not counted are essentially invisible.
2. **The First Online Census - Internet Response:** The Census operation is moving to a digital format, which will rely primarily on self-response through online submissions. An online system creates the potential security of information threats and system crashes, and online disinformation campaigns, all of which are exacerbated by the Bureau’s lack of funding, as well as by distrust of government, particularly in communities of color and immigrant communities. Also, the digital divide could curtail participation among homes that lack internet access. According to The Leadership Conference (<https://civilrights.org/census/>), “The nation’s first high-tech census, while offering the promise of cost savings, could lead to poor or uneven participation, technological infrastructure failings, or both, thereby increasing the undercount of groups historically underrepresented in the census. Modernizing the census is important, but technology also comes with new and untested risks that must be addressed now.”
3. **Citizenship Question:** In March 2018, the U.S. Department of Commerce added an untested and untimely citizenship question to the Census questionnaire, creating one of the greatest constitutional challenges of this decade to go through the US Supreme Court. Ultimately, there will not be a citizenship question on the 2020 Census questionnaire; however, the initial addition of the question, and the publicity and controversy that surrounded the question, created a chilling effect that must be dealt with, which begins with rebuilding trust in the integrity of the operation.

With all of the challenges facing the 2020 Census, early engagement is particularly crucial as is reaching the level of scale and message penetration necessary to increase participation of diverse communities.

Section 2. Grant Application Process

² Tippett, Rebecca, North Carolina Center for Public Policy Research, *Census 2020: Here’s what you need to know about North Carolina’s hard-to-count communities*, <https://nccppr.org/census-2020-heres-what-you-need-to-know-about-north-carolinas-hard-to-count-communities/>, August 2, 2019.

Send your proposal to Addison at addison@blueprintnc.org. Please use the following for your file name and for the subject line of your email: [ORGANIZATION NAME]_GOTC2019_RFP.

Complete proposals will include a cover sheet, narrative (no more than 5 pages) and a budget. The grant selection committee appreciates concise, thoughtful proposals. Grants will be reviewed by a committee of volunteers:

- Stacey Carless, NC Counts Coalition
- Addison Evans, Blueprint NC
- Juliana Cabrales, NALEO Educational Fund
- David Heinen, NC Center for Nonprofits

There was an informational webinar session regarding the application process on November 6, 2019. [Click here to for the recorded webinar](#). Webinar participation is not required.

If you have questions regarding the RFP, please contact Addison Evans at addison@blueprintnc.org.

Timeline

Round 1 - Begin Accepting Proposals	October 18
Deadline for first round of applications	Deadline extended to November 12, 2019, 5:30 pm
Review of Applications by the Grant Review Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Applications will be reviewed and scored by the grant review team - Follow-up one-on-ones scheduled as necessary 	Week of November 11
Check-ins with applicants	Week of November 18
Round 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Round 1 applicants will be notified - Grant agreements sent 	Week of December 2
Round 2 – Begin Accepting Proposals	~February (contingent on funding)

Section 2. Priorities

With research from Carolina Demography, Blueprint NC and NC Counts Coalition identified 15 counties across the state at highest risk for an undercount. These counties are: Anson, Bertie, Cumberland, Duplin, Durham, Edgecombe, Guilford, Halifax, Hoke, Mecklenburg, Northampton, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, and Vance. These counties have the most overlapping risk factors for populations historically undercounted. Those risk factors include:

- share of residents living in one of the tracts predicted to be hardest to count in 2020
- tracts with highest share of children under 5; and
- tracts with highest share without broadband, and tracts with the highest share of all three of those factors combined.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is inviting proposals from Coalition partners interested in strategies to (1) directly contact a portion of the identified priority communities or (2) support the building of local infrastructure to reach the priority communities.

Outreach to hard-to-count populations from all NC counties will be considered with priority given to the 15 counties mentioned above.

Funded Activities

Grant funds may be used to support efforts to prepare for and/or conduct a robust field campaign to encourage full participation in the 2020 census. Such activities must target hard-to-count households and could include, but are not limited to:

- Developing partnerships with public agencies, child care and other service providers, schools, health care centers, local businesses, faith-based groups, and other entities to plan a comprehensive census outreach campaign for hard-to-count communities / populations;
- Providing materials and information to community partners to support their outreach activities;
- Organizing events to promote participation in the census and provide information about filling out the census form;
- Establishing community sites that provide information and assistance to community members about the census form and how to fill it out online or on paper;
- Conducting targeted communications efforts through organizing tactics such as phone banks, event canvassing, peer-to-peer texting, relational organizing and other digital tools.

Activities that are connected to or amplify broader existing or planned civic engagement efforts are encouraged. Creative and innovative ideas are encouraged.

Grant Amounts

Grant amounts will vary, depending on proposed activities and the organization's capacity. Most grants will be in the \$7,000-15,000 range, for the time period starting mid-November 2019 through June 30, 2020.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

1. Organizational considerations:
 - a. **Status:** Must be a 501(c)(3) organization. Applicants that are not 501(c)(3) may apply under a fiscal sponsor that is a 501(c)(3) in good standing.
 - b. **Relationships & experience:** Applicants should be able to demonstrate established relationships and experience working with priority communities. Applicants should have a good track record working on activities that increase community engagement or civic participation, such as community organizing, public education, outreach, or advocacy. Priority will be given to NC established and/or based nonprofits.
 - c. **Capacity:** Applicants should be able to demonstrate organizational capacity (staff and/or volunteers) to implement the proposed plan of action.
 - d. **Representation:** Organizational and/or project leadership is reflective of the community the proposal is focused on.

- e. **Budget size:** Priority will be given to under-resourced organizations (budgets under \$500,000). *Note: Organizations should report a relevant budget size by including only their civic engagement budget, calculating an average over four years, and/or the size of their budget in municipal election years to account for electoral influx.*
- 2. **Tactics** that prioritize at least one of the hard to count areas or populations below:
 - a. **Hard to Count Geographic Areas:** Anson, Bertie, Cumberland, Duplin, Durham, Edgecombe, Guilford, Halifax, Hoke, Mecklenburg, Northampton, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, and Vance.
 - b. **Historically undercounted populations:** Young children, people of color, rural residents, and low-income households. Additionally, people with disabilities, seniors, people experiencing homelessness and LGBTQ+ people are also considered as hard-to-count populations.
 - c. Households with no computer or inadequate internet access
- 3. **Goals:** Clarity on engagement strategies and metrics for progress of outreach efforts.
- 4. **Alignment:** Where applicable, knowledge of and willingness to collaborate with the Census Bureau, Census Complete Count Committees, local governments, or other national and local nonprofit organizations, especially those active in their targeted geographies or with their focused population groups. Priority will be given to applicants who are active partners of the NC Census Task Force. Collaborations amongst organizations is encouraged and applicants are encouraged to reach out to local county complete count committees for partnership and collaboration opportunities. Collaborative proposals will be considered.
- 5. **Content Knowledge:** General knowledge about the Census process, uses of Census data and requirements regarding filling out the form.
- 6. **Vision:** An overall vision aligned with promoting civic engagement.

Section 3. Section Grant Guidelines

In accordance with federal, state, and local laws, and in keeping with its mission, NC Counts will not fund organizations that use race, color, sex, religion, age, disability, sexual orientation, marital status, national origin, veteran status, or any other protected classification as a basis to deny services to qualifying individuals who seek assistance that falls within the scope of the organization’s mission. NC Counts and Blueprint NC encourage nonprofits whose Executive Director is a person of color or whose board is made up of a majority of people of color to apply.

**2019-2020 NC Counts & Blueprint NC
GOTC Proposal Template**

Organization Name _____

Organizational Budget \$ _____

Project Manager

Name (first, last) _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Appropriate contact for signing the GOTC Agreement Letter

Name (first, last) _____

Email _____

If applicable, fiscal sponsor name: _____

FEIN _____ Website: _____

Amount requested \$ _____

A brief summary of your organization's mission, history and current programs (Character Limit: 500)

Proposal Narrative

Please provide a 2-3 sentence summary of your organization's GOTC program.

Describe your organizations' work towards promoting community engagement, such as previous Census outreach, voter registration or mobilization, community organizing, services provided, public education, etc. Give at least one example of a set of goals and results you were able to achieve.

Applicable geographic areas and/or hard-to-count populations where you will focus your efforts. Check all that apply.

Counties: Anson Bertie Cumberland Duplin Durham Edgecombe Guilford Halifax Hoke Mecklenburg Northampton Robeson Sampson Scotland Vance

Historically undercounted populations: young children people of color rural residents low-income households people with disabilities seniors people experiencing homelessness LGBTQ+ people

Households with no computer or inadequate internet access

What is your organization's connection and prior organizing experience with the focus community/ies?

- What percentage of board members are members of the HTC community you checked above? To which HTC communities do board directors belong?
- Are your executive-level staff a member of an HTC community? If yes, which HTC community does your executive director belong to?
- Are your key staff for the proposed project members of an HTC community? If yes, which HTC community do your staff members belong to?

Prior experience/relationships:

Board:

Executive staff:

Key staff:

Which Get Out the Count or Census education efforts do you have existing relationships in?

NC Counts Coalition NC Census Task Force Census Bureau Complete Count Committees local governments any other national or local efforts (describe below)

Describe your approach to build on other efforts to increase the 2020 Census self-response rate.

How is your GOTC program aligned with your overall organization strategy/plan and how will you leverage existing relationships/programs to assist with your GOTC plan? Describe the commitment your organization's leadership has to the Census.

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Describe the strategies and activities your organization will employ to increase the 2020 Census self-response rate. Describe staffing and resources you have or will have for this project.

For direct contact methods, complete the chart below:

	Cost Per Unit (message/contact/etc)	Goal	Total
Live Calls			
Door Canvassing			
SMS			
Relational Organizing			
Event-based contacts			
Site-based contacts (help centers, etc)			
Other: _____			

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Budget – Please provide a GOTC program budget which includes your organization’s current income to support GOTC work, the amount of funds your organization will need to execute your plan and how will you allocate those funds. A suggested budget template is included below.

Income	Amount	Committed, Pending, or Still Need to Raise
<i>Ex. NC Counts Coalition RFP</i>	<i>\$5,000</i>	<i>Pending</i>
Total Income		
Expense	Amount	Brief Narrative Explanation
<i>Ex. Professional Services (ex. Graphic designer)</i>		
<i>Ex. Equipment / Supplies</i>		

<i>Ex. Travel related expenses</i>		
<i>Ex. Printing</i>		
Total Expense		

Attachments - Please include these attachments for your organization or fiscal sponsor.

- List of Board of Directors with affiliations
- List of key staff for the proposed project with brief bio

Section 4. – GOTC Agreement

All agreement items listed below are required to receive funding:

- Report on progress to goals to Blueprint regularly (reporting mechanism to be determined in partnership based on tactics)
- Share your Census work broadly and including the Coalition hashtag on social media outreach
- Engage and coordinate with the NC Census Task Force
- Attend NC Counts Coalition statewide convening (tentatively calendared for January 2020 in Raleigh) (please include travel costs in your project budget to attend this convening)
- Agree to share best practices and lessons learned with the Coalition and Blueprint NC
- Participate in a Coalition / Task Force debrief and a one-on-one debrief of your program.
- Providing a final grant narrative and financial report
- Report on outreach outcomes of the funded work by July 1, 2020
- Conduct only 501(c)3 appropriate activities with this funding

Applicant signature: _____ Date: _____

Applicant name: _____ Applicant title: _____