



Grant Program Overview and Guide

SUMMARY OF PROGRAM

The 2020 Census Grant Program was created through a \$1,000,000 appropriation to the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA). The funds enacted as a part of the 2019-2020 Education Trust Fund serves as a vehicle to support the accurate count of the Alabama Counts! 2020 Census campaign. Funds are administered by ADECA in coordination with the State Department of Education. All funds must be appropriated by December 31, 2019. All application materials are available at www.census.alabama.gov/grants.

PROGRAM GOALS

ADECA will award grants to eligible applicants to conduct census outreach activities throughout Alabama to accomplish the following goals:

- Ensure a fair, accurate and inclusive census count for Alabama.
- Increase the self-response rates of hard-to-count communities and populations in Alabama.

ADECA understands hard-to-count populations and communities to include residents that are:

- Hard to Locate, such as those who are homeless, or live in unconventional housing;
- Hard to Persuade, or those who are fearful of government;
- Hard to Contact, like residents who are highly mobile, or live in gated communities;
- Hard to Interview, such as individuals with language barriers, low levels of literacy, or are hearing-impaired and/or visually impaired.

The intent of the Program is to increase awareness of the 2020 Census in hard-to-count communities. Hard-to-count communities are residents that are least likely to participate in the census. These communities vary from city to city, county to county and according to U.S. Census Bureau generally include, but not limited to, the following:

- Young children
- Recent immigrants
- Racial and ethnic minorities, including populations that speak little or no English
- Renters of housing units
- People with lower incomes
- People unemployed
- People with lower educational attainment
- Formerly incarcerated people
- The aging population
- People with mental or physical disabilities
- College or university students
- Members of the military

For 2020, households with no computer or inadequate Internet access may also be at risk of an undercount since this will be the first ever online census.

In 2010, Alabama had a 72 percent response rate to the census with lower rates particularly in west Alabama and in some urban areas. A slowed population growth in Alabama has put the state in danger of losing one of our seven congressional seats after the 2020 Census. The loss of a Congressional representative would mean one less critical voice advocating for Alabama on the national stage. The only way to potentially avoid this outcome is for all Alabamians to participate in the 2020 Census.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS (Must serve undercounted communities)

- Organizations with tax exempt 501 (c)(3) status, and/or tribes.
- Community groups fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) organization.
- Organizations and coalitions working in the identified hard-to-count communities.
- Local governmental entities and public agencies working regionally or working with organizations and coalitions in the identified hard-to-count communities and geographies.
- Program will not fund individual efforts.

ELIGIBLE PROGRAMS

Grants awarded through this grant program may be used only for programs which support the overall goals of the 2020 Alabama Counts! Census Action Plan. The Plan may be found at (www.census.alabama.gov/grants) Applicants are encouraged to assess their readiness to plan, organize and implement activities based on the 2020 Alabama Counts! Census Action Plan. Specifically, successful applicants should submit sophisticated outreach strategies designed to encourage census response from hard to count geographies and population subgroups. Programs should supplement and amplify national, state, and local efforts to encourage every Alabama household to respond to the census, but especially target hard-to-count populations (as defined under “Program Goals” above). Examples of funding activities include:

- Local nonprofits and community-based groups create training, awareness campaigns and educational materials about the census.
- Trusted community organizations and leaders engage their constituents to participate in census events to encourage awareness and increase motivation as a part of the 2020 Alabama Counts! campaign.
- Organizations organizing and hosting community events on or around Census Day April 1, 2020 and facilitating community participation in the census through computers, tablets and other equipment on hand to help attendees fill out their census forms then and there.

Efforts should leverage and build on, rather than duplicate, existing efforts; innovative approaches are encouraged, particularly those used to engage new populations, or using new and culturally relevant outreach and education methods.

Grant funds may not be used to supplant funding for any previously planned activities, such as to underwrite existing complete count committee activities, or existing communication efforts that are amended to include census communications.

An overview of eligible and ineligible costs is included below under “Program Budget”.

GRANT FUNDING

- Funding is anticipated to run from January 2020 through June 2020.
- Applicants should base the amount requested on the scope of the project. Most grants will range from \$10,000 to \$40,000 but requests for more funding will be considered.
- Collaboration with other organizations and leveraging other sources of funds will be given higher funding priority. Collaboration with educational entities and complete count committees will also be given higher funding priority.
- Grantee organizations will be required to submit a report at the end of the grant period to share results and demonstrate that all funds were spent as intended.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The proposed program should increase return rates, particularly within low response score communities and populations. Applicants are encouraged to strike a balance between measures which have proven successful in the past and innovative, collaborative efforts. Grant proposals will be reviewed using criteria outlined under the general headings listed below.

- (1) **Goals and objectives (10 percent):** The program demonstrates a plan and strategy that closely aligns with the goals and criteria of the Alabama Counts! 2020 Census Action Plan, particularly in reaching hard-to-count populations and geographies. The program identifies obstacles to participation in the 2020 Census and identifies workable strategies for overcoming these challenges.
- (2) **Program readiness and timeline (15 percent):** The program is ready to proceed at an appropriate time relative to the US Census and the Alabama Counts! 2020 Census Grant Program’s administrative timeline.
- (3) **Budget (15 percent):** Costs are realistic, reasonable, and eligible, and the budget is well defined.
- (4) **Program impact (20 percent):** The program demonstrates measurable and reportable program impacts, especially against targeted hard-to-count populations and geographies as defined under “Program Goals” above. The program will lead to increased Census participation, particularly during the self-response period.
- (5) **Program focus (15 percent):** The program focuses on reaching at least one, but preferably more than one, of the hard-to-count populations or geographies as defined above under “Program Goals.”

- (6) **Partnerships (25 percent):** The applicant proposes teaming with strong and diverse community partners with a demonstrated expertise or experience reaching hard-to-count populations.

TIMELINE

You will need to demonstrate that you will be able to complete the Program within the 6-month window for performance under the grant (January 1, 2020-June 30, 2020).

All grant activities should align with the outreach schedule of the 2020 Alabama Counts! Census Action Plan (available at www.census.alabama.gov/grants).

GRANT ADMINISTRATION SCHEDULE:

September 4, 2019. Grant opportunity announced and workshop held in Montgomery at the Alabama Center for Commerce.

October 11, 2019: Full Grant Application must be submitted ONLINE by 5:00 p.m. Submission must include a completed application, with all required attachments submitted via e-mail to icount@census.alabama.gov. All application materials are available at www.census.alabama.gov/grants.

Mid October – Early November, 2019: Application evaluation and scoring: After an initial "threshold" review (for application completeness and program and applicant eligibility) conducted by ADECA staff, the Census Grants Committee will evaluate, rank, and recommend funding levels for eligible applicants and programs.

Mid November, 2019: Date of award announcement.

Mid-late December, 2019: Execution of Grant Agreements: Legal Documentation is submitted by grant applicant for review by ADECA staff. Grant Agreements are drafted by ADECA staff and executed by grantee (first) and ADECA.

January 1, 2020: Grant Program commencement date.

June 1, 2020: Deadline for completion of program work.

August 1, 2020: Deadline for submission of report.

PROGRAM BUDGET AND MATCH

Grant awards will range from a suggested minimum of \$10,000 to a suggested maximum of \$40,000 but requests for more will be considered.

Grantees must submit a budget spreadsheet showing cost breakdowns.

Grant recipients are required to match the grant dollar-for-dollar in cash and/or an equivalent dollar value of in-kind services acceptable to the Census Grant Committee.

Grantee should expect to receive payment at least thirty days after ADECA's acceptance of the request for disbursement and any supporting documentation.

Documentation of commitment for matching funds must be provided no later than **November 8, 2019**. Failure to meet the match requirement will result in forfeiture of the grant award.

A grantee may use more than one source of State funds on a single program if the scope of work is divided, and the funds do not overlap.

Any program grant expenditures, including matches must:

- Not have been used as matching funds for any other State-assisted program;
 - Be expended on the grant Program for expenses that are necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of the grant Program;
 - Be eligible expenses authorized by the grant agreement;
 - Be verifiable and documented;
 - Be incurred and contributed within the grant period, as defined by the Grant Agreement.
- Ineligible Match:
 - Expenditures made before September 1, 2019 or after June 1, 2020.
 - Expenditures that do not relate to the grant Program.
 - Expenditures that have not been approved in the Grant Agreement or in any amendment to the Grant Agreement.
- Examples of Cash Match:
 - Cash expenditures
 - Expenditures supported by a non-State grant or loan
 - Applicant organization staff salaries for work specifically allocable to the Program

- Examples of In-Kind Match:
 - Volunteer time for work on the program
 - Donated professional services (can be valued at their professional rate, but only if working on the program in their professional role (e.g. an architect donating architectural designs))
 - Donated materials/supplies
 - Discounted services (the amount that is discounted is in-kind match)
 - Staff salaries for work specifically allocable to the program from partner organizations (non-State staff only)

Proposed match documentation may consist of one or more of the following:

- Approved budget from a non-State governmental agency documenting funds are budgeted for the program.
- For a nonprofit entity, a financial or bank statement from applicant with letter committing those funds.
- Commitment from 3rd-party donor of money, in-kind services or staff time; the letter needs to show clearly that the intended donation may be used toward the grant Program. For volunteered time or donated services, a signed statement from the donor stating the number of hours expected to be donated, the hourly rate, and the total amount of the donation, as well as a description of the services to be provided. For donated materials, a signed statement or receipt / invoice from the donor attesting to the value of the materials.
- Award letter or grant agreement for a non-State grant that will be used as match; documentation must be included to demonstrate that the grant may be used toward the census grant Program.

GRANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

All grantees will be required to enter into a grant agreement with ADECA, which generally contains the following standard terms and conditions:

Grant Term - All grant funds generally must be expended within the 6-month grant period, beginning January 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2020.

Reporting - Reporting requirements will be specified in the Grant Agreement.

Grant Disbursements –Disbursement requests shall identify all costs incurred to date and include documentation of the expenditures and payments.

Good Standing -- The organization must maintain good standing with the Office of Secretary of State and the IRS before ADECA will execute a grant agreement and must maintain good standing throughout the course of the Program.

Nondiscrimination - Grantees shall comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws and policies regarding drug, alcohol and smoke free work places, disabled access and equal opportunity for employment, housing, credit practices and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, familial status or physical and/or mental disabilities in any aspect of the grant Program.

Acknowledgment - Grantees are required to provide appropriate acknowledgment of the grant assistance for all programs in accordance with requirements outlined in the grant agreement and must include the Alabama Counts! 2020 Census logo on all publications.

Compliance with Applicable Laws – Grantees are responsible for complying with all federal, state, and local laws applicable to the Program.

DISCLAIMERS

Each applicant shall comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and policies regarding drug-, alcohol-, and smoke-free work places, disabled access and equal opportunity in employment, housing and credit practices, and prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, marital status, familial status, or physical and/or mental disabilities in any aspect of the grant Program.

GRANT APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Completed applications must contain:

1. A cover letter with:

- Legal name of the organization
- Dollar amount requested
- Purpose of the proposed project
- Description of the population served
- Proposed time period for the grant
- CEO/executive director signature and some evidence of board approval

2. Organizational information:

- Name, address and phone number of the applicant organization and main contact person for the proposal
- Mission and brief background of the applicant organization
- Information about the organization's programs and number of people served

3. A narrative (no more than 7 pages) with:

- A project description with objectives
- A description of the undercounted populations that the organization serves
- Identify the counties and specific tracts that you will serve based on the US Census Low Response Score Map (Tract numbers are included in interactive map available at www.census.alabama.gov/grants)
- A description of how, based on your organization's experience, the project will increase census participation in one or more historically undercounted communities
- A work plan with a time frame for accomplishing the project's objectives
- An explanation of potential challenges you may encounter and possible solutions to be considered
- A description of how you will document your outreach and evaluate your project's success
- A description of how your organization's volunteers, staff and board reflect the diversity of the community you are reaching (gender, racial, cultural, religious, linguistic)
- Identification of your partners, including roles and responsibilities
- Provide a clear outline of how your plan incorporates the state's 2020 Census Action Plan and logo (available at www.census.alabama.gov/grants) to launch your public education campaign; your grassroots strategies for organizing and

outreach; and your media/communications strategy and description of events and/or motivation efforts regarding the 2020 Census

4. Financial information:

An audit, financial review or 990. If using a fiscal sponsor, these documents should come from your fiscal sponsor

Dollar amount requested and proposed time period for the grant

Detailed budget for the project, including the proposed use of Alabama Counts!

Census grant funds and any additional support anticipated or secured from other sources

Documentation of your matching funds

Organization's operating budget for the current fiscal year. If using a fiscal sponsor, these documents should come from your fiscal sponsor

5. Supporting materials:

Copy of the most recent Internal Revenue Service 501 (c)(3) federal tax-exemption letter. If using a fiscal sponsor, these documents should come from your fiscal sponsor

List of current board of directors, trustees or governing board with individuals' affiliations. If using a fiscal sponsor, these documents should come from your fiscal sponsor

Letters of support or memoranda of understanding from project partners, if applicable

Copy of most recent annual report, if available.