New York State Census Equity Fund

DOCUMENTATION & EVALUATION REPORT

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Seema Shah, Ph.D.
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Kareem Alston
NEW YORK FOUNDATION

Matt Amalfitano
RAISEDBYUS.ORG

Meeta Anand
NEW YORK COUNTS 2020

Amit Bagga
NYC CENSUS 2020

Fran Barrett
NEW YORK STATE GOVERNOR’S OFFICE

Marcela Barrientos
NEW YORK CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TABLE

Gary Bass
BAUMAN FOUNDATION

Jeff Behler
CENSUS REGIONAL OFFICE

Jocelyn Bissonnette
FUNDERS CENSUS INITIATIVE AT FUNDERS’ COMMITTEE FOR CIVIC PARTICIPATION

Aldrin Bonilla
MANHATTAN BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S OFFICE

Ronna Brown
PHILANTHROPY NEW YORK

Elizabeth Burakowski
NEW YORK STATE CENSUS TASK FORCE

Emily Alber Chase
NY FUNDERS ALLIANCE

Steve Choi
NEW YORK COUNTS 2020

Lurie Daniels-Favors
CENTER FOR LAW AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AT MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE

Brenda Episcopo
UNITED WAY OF NEW YORK STATE

Yancy Garrido
CLARK ESTATES FOUNDATION

Joli Golden
CENSUS REGIONAL OFFICE

Peter Lobo
NEW YORK CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT – DEMOGRAPHIC UNIT

Melody Lopez
NEW YORK CIVIC ENGAGEMENT TABLE

Terri Anne Lowenthal
CENSUS CONSULTANT

Melinda Mack
NEW YORK ASSOCIATION OF TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROFESSIONALS

Julie Menin
NYC CENSUS 2020

Melva Miller
ASSOCIATION FOR A BETTER NEW YORK

Sarah Palmer
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF ELMIRA-CORNING AND THE FINGER LAKES

Peter Panepento
MEDIA CONSULTANT

Amy Peterson
MAYOR’S OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Rovika Rajkishun
NEW YORK COUNTS 2020

Corinne Ribble
NY FUNDERS ALLIANCE

Steven Romalewski
CUNY MAPPING CENTER

Yurij Rudensky
BRENNAN CENTER FOR JUSTICE

Tory Russo
MAYOR’S OFFICE, CITY OF SYRACUSE

Joseph Salvo
NEW YORK CITY PLANNING DEPARTMENT – DEMOGRAPHIC UNIT

Susie Tanenbaum
QUEENS BOROUGH PRESIDENT’S OFFICE

Rich Tobe
NEW YORK STATE CENSUS TASK FORCE

Dennis Walcott
QUEENS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Jeffrey Wice
NEW YORK LAW SCHOOL

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When New York funders began meeting in the summer of 2017 to discuss how we could work together to promote a fair and equitable count across New York State during the 2020 census, we knew there were big challenges ahead. We understood what was on the line for our state — the potential loss of two congressional seats and billions of federal dollars tied directly to the census count. This realization helped make the need for a large-scale statewide collaboration, something not previously tried by the philanthropic community, a necessity.

In the beginning of our work together, we anticipated having to engage with many funders, advocates, and allies in order to build a truly statewide collaborative and to raise the necessary funds to have an impact in the hard-to-count communities that exist in every region of the state. We were cognizant of the challenges posed by the first-time implementation of a primarily electronic census and a political atmosphere actively working against the inclusion of undocumented immigrants, one of the populations hardest to reach in census-taking. We prepared and advanced our funding strategy for two years leading up to the April 1, 2020 Census Day kick-off.

And then the COVID-19 pandemic came.

As this evaluation of the New York State Census Equity Fund details, the pandemic affected the 2020 census (and the collaborative itself) in countless ways. Almost every aspect of the census was delayed by three to six months, including the release and certification of final population counts, which is scheduled for summer 2021. For this reason, we have decided to release our independently commissioned evaluation in two parts.

Part One, which follows here, is comprised of research and analysis of the Fund’s activities and its effectiveness as a functioning funder collaborative. Insights from this analysis could have value for fast-approaching redistricting efforts, and for other statewide collaborations taking shape in the coming years. The report also lays out a roadmap for Census 2030.

An addendum to be released later in 2021 will measure the collaborative’s effectiveness against the ultimate outcome of households counted. We acknowledge the inherent limitations of such an analysis. It’s impossible to infer whether our efforts alone made a difference — there were just too many other players and external factors. Nevertheless, it’s important to reflect on how our actions related to the outcome of the 2020 census.

We hope that this thorough evaluation of the collaborative process will be useful for funders, nonprofit leaders, social change activists, and anyone with an interest in the inner workings of a complex grantmaking operation. We look forward to your comments.

Sincerely,
The Evaluation Committee
New York State Census Equity Fund
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NYSCEF: OVERVIEW & BACKGROUND

The 2020 census was a high stakes affair for New York. With a decreasing population and a large number of historically hard-to-count groups residing in the state, along with efforts by the federal government to suppress the count among immigrant communities, New York risked losing not just one, but possibly two, congressional seats. An incomplete count had the potential to result in diminished federal resources for a host of community services, ranging from education to health care. In fact, estimates indicated that each uncounted individual in the state would translate into $3,054 in lost federal funding.

In June 2018, following a year of planning, the New York State Census Equity Fund (NYSCEF), a statewide collaborative of funders, was launched to support a fair, accurate, and complete count throughout New York. With nearly 40 supporting funders and more than $3 million in funding, the NYSCEF also represented an opportunity to test a model of statewide funder collaboration at scale.

Drawing upon survey, interview, and secondary data, this report documents and assesses the NYSCEF’s grantmaking, awareness-raising, and relationship-building work, as well as the feasibility and possibilities of future statewide funder collaboration. This report:

1) Documents the activities of the NYSCEF and situates its work within the national and state context;
2) Examines funders’ experiences with the NYSCEF;
3) Describes grantee partners’ census strategies, challenges, and successes; and
4) Offers recommendations to foster future statewide funder collaboration and prepare for the 2030 census.

FUND MEMBERSHIP & STRUCTURE

The NYSCEF received contributions from 37 institutional donors, as well a critical mass of individual donors, totaling $3.6 million. Ten of the 37 institutional donors were community foundations. The remaining represented a mix of private, public, and corporate foundations.

The New York Community Trust, the largest community foundation in the state and one of the state’s largest foundations overall based on asset size, served as the Fund’s administrative home. The New York Community Trust has a longstanding history of hosting funder collaboratives and brought considerable capacity, credibility, and expertise to the Fund, including past work on the census.

The Fund consisted of a 10-member Steering Committee (later expanded to 12 members) representing five major regions of the state: New York City; Western New York; Central New York; Hudson Valley; and Long Island.

The Steering Committee provided leadership for and oversight of the Fund’s work. A cluster of sub-committees were also formed to guide specific pieces of work: the Grantmaking Committee, External Relations Committee, Education Committee, and Documentation & Evaluation Committee. In addition, Regional Grantmaking Committees were formed to make grantmaking decisions within each of the five regions designated for the Fund.

The Fund’s day-to-day work was staffed by two consultants. In addition, the Fund hired a documentation and evaluation consultant to support its work.

Due to delays in the release of census data, this report focuses on documenting and evaluating the work of the collaborative. A companion research brief will assess the extent to which NYSCEF’s efforts contributed to an improved count for hard-to-count populations and geographies. The companion brief will be written and published following the release of the Census Bureau’s final data on the 2020 count.
CENSUS 2020: SETTING THE CONTEXT

Put simply, the 2020 census was unlike any other. The census, normally a nonpartisan activity, became a highly politicized one, as the Commerce Department proposed a series of changes which seemed designed to suppress the count of immigrants and people of color. To complicate matters further, the start of the census corresponded with the coronavirus pandemic, jeopardizing months of planning, much of which hinged on in-person outreach, requiring nimble pivots by both funders and grantee partners.

Major issues surrounding the 2020 census follow.

Online Census Format. For the first time in its history, the 2020 census was primarily conducted online. For some, this simplified the process, but for others, including people without reliable broadband access and/or limited digital proficiency, this new format had the potential to depress the count.

Census Bureau Budget Cuts. Funding for the Census Bureau in the years leading up to the 2020 census, when adjusted for inflation, fell below resources provided for the 2010 and 2000 census. Decreased funding led to a smaller number of census field offices for community outreach, as well as shortened testing protocols that would have helped the Bureau more clearly anticipate potential issues with the new census format.

The Citizenship Question. On March 26, 2018, against the recommendation of the Census Bureau, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced that it would add the question, “Is this person a citizen of the United States?” to the 2020 census. The Trump administration’s efforts to add the question ultimately failed in the Supreme Court, but the two-year quest to do so created chaos, confusion, and fear, with the likely consequence of creating a chilling effect on Get Out the Count (GOTC) efforts, particularly among immigrant communities.

Coronavirus Pandemic. The first known cases of COVID-19 were identified in New York in early March 2020. On March 20, Governor Andrew Cuomo issued a stay-at-home order closing all non-essential businesses statewide. The self-response phase of the census had started on March 12, but just a few days later, on March 18, the Census Bureau announced that it would halt its field operations, initially for two weeks.

The pandemic fundamentally changed census outreach plans as funders and nonprofits sought to adjust to remote operations while addressing the urgent health and economic needs of their communities. The pandemic also disrupted local government plans for GOTC efforts – New York State, which was slated to release funding for GOTC efforts in early March, did not do so, and New York City, which had an extensive GOTC campaign planned, had to hit pause on its work as well.

Changing Timelines for Census Completion. Due to the pandemic, the Census Bureau announced it would extend the count from July 31 to October 31. In July, the Trump administration abruptly changed the deadline from October 31 to September 30. Census Bureau officials advised against the change, noting that the compressed timeline would result in “serious errors” and compromise the quality of the data. After a series of legal battles, the count ended October 15, but the changing timelines and the last-minute litigation created a sense of whiplash, making it difficult for groups on the ground to plan their outreach.

Additional Legal Battles around Excluding Undocumented Individuals. In July 2020, the Trump administration revived its attempts to exclude undocumented people from the count, asking the Census Bureau to estimate noncitizens in each state using pre-existing data and deliver those numbers to the president. Although there was litigation to challenge this policy, ultimately the clock ran out for the Trump administration. The government dropped this directive on the first day of the Biden administration.
**NYSCEF ACTIVITIES**

As a pooled fund, much of NYSCEF’s efforts centered around distributing monies equitably across the state, with the aim of ensuring that the hardest-to-count populations were reached. In addition to grantmaking, the NYSCEF played other important roles to support Census 2020, including providing census education and awareness for both funders and grantees; building partnerships to coordinate with other key stakeholders; and engaging in advocacy efforts to support a fair and accurate count.

**Grantmaking.** The Fund awarded 124 grants to 120 organizations totaling $2.8 million ranging in size from $350 to $100,000. The Fund engaged in four rounds of grantmaking between May 2019 and August 2020. The initial round of grantmaking began with larger organizations that could lay the groundwork for GOTC efforts, providing training and support for smaller organizations, and work at the statewide or regional level. Subsequent rounds were increasingly targeted and inclusive of small, grassroots organizations using a regional approach based on emerging data about where response rates were lagging.

Of its grantmaking dollars, the Fund retained a modest balance to support redistricting work. Among state funder collaboratives nationally, the NYSCEF was one of the few that identified redistricting from the onset as an extension of its GOTC efforts.

**Census Education & Awareness.** A key role that NYSCEF played early on in its work and continued throughout the 2020 census was to provide educational opportunities for funders to learn more about the census, its importance, and the issues complicating the count in 2020. Some of these took the form of formal events, such as ones held in partnership with Philanthropy New York and the New York State Funders’ Alliance, while others were more informal, such as inviting guest speakers to steering committee meetings. In addition, the Fund stayed abreast of communications from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources and sent out a monthly newsletter summarizing ongoing developments and learning opportunities.

**Census Advocacy.** Given the controversies associated with the 2020 census, the philanthropic community, on several occasions, wrote letters to the Commerce Department. NYSCEF used its network to garner signatures from foundations in New York State. NYSCEF also met with state and local officials to advocate for timely, fair, and equitable distribution of funds.

**Partnerships.** The NYSCEF invested a considerable degree of time and energy in developing and sustaining strategic partnerships with key actors in the census landscape, helping to foster a remarkably interconnected network of census partners throughout the state. This included the U.S. Census Bureau, New York State, national partners, grantee partners, as well as local governments and Complete Count Committees.
FUNDER EXPERIENCES & LESSONS
Drawing upon interviews with 14 funders and 9 allies/partners, as well as responses to a funder survey (N=27; 73% response rate), the evaluation sought to address the following questions:

- How well did the Fund execute its work?
- What did Fund members gain from their participation?
- To what extent did the Fund engage other stakeholders effectively in its work?
- How can the work of the NYSCEF inform future statewide funder collaboration?

The key findings are:

- Most Fund participants (59 percent) had no prior experience with the census.
- In addition to their contributions to the Fund, 74% of Fund members made additional grants to support GOTC efforts, totaling at least $1.24 million.
- Funders also supported the census in other ways, by attending educational events (59%), using their foundation’s social media handles to promote GOTC efforts (48%), and encouraging peer funders to support GOTC efforts (41%).
- The Fund was well-managed and well-administered (all items rated 4.4 or higher on a 5-point scale).
- The grantmaking process was well-run (all items rated 4.0 or higher). In fact, grantee partners gave even higher ratings than Fund members to the grantmaking process.
- Fund members built new relationships with a variety of partners, most deeply with funders outside of their regions.
- The Fund’s work aligned with its equity values, including maintaining a focus on reaching hard-to-count populations and balancing upstate and downstate concerns (all items rated 4.0 or higher).
- Fund members benefited in a variety of ways, but especially by gaining new knowledge related to the census (4.4 on a 5-point scale).
- Participation in the Fund also increased interest in statewide funder collaboration (4.2 on a 5-point scale). In interviews, funders noted that coming together for statewide policy change can be more impactful than working solely at a local level, and that working collectively gives funders more voice and influence on issues of common concern.
- External partners spoke highly of the Fund, complimenting its close connection to community, expertise, and open lines of communication.

GRANTEE EXPERIENCES & LESSONS
Drawing upon interviews with 24 grantees, as well as responses to a grantee survey (N=86; 72% response rate), the evaluation sought to address the following questions:

- What are the organizational characteristics of CBOs supported through the NYSCEF?
- What strategies were used by grantee partners to increase participation in the 2020 census?
- What challenges did grantees face in implementing their outreach efforts?
- How were grantee partners’ organizational capacities strengthened (if at all) through the Fund?
- What were grantee partners’ experiences with the NYSCEF?

The key findings are:

- Eighty-one percent of grantee partners identified service delivery/human services as one of their primary areas of focus; followed by advocacy (57%) and community organizing (35%).
- Fifty-six percent of grantee partners had no prior experience with the census; 71 percent had started preparing for the census before receiving their grant, some for as long as a year.
- Two-thirds (64%) of grantees conducted census outreach with modest support -- $50,000 or less from all funding sources.
- Grantee partners focused primarily on the following hard-to-count populations: people living in low-income neighborhoods (84%); families with children 0-5 (77%); older adults (71%); and immigrants and refugees (70%).
• Seventy-four percent of grantees conducted outreach in a language other than English. Outreach was conducted in at least 39 different languages.
• Grantee partners made significant pivots to digital and virtual strategies due to COVID-19 but still perceived relational strategies, such as the use of trusted messengers and coalition-building, to be more effective.
• Limitations on in-person outreach and the Census Bureau’s changing timeline for completion posed major challenges for groups’ GOTC efforts. Protests for racial justice, as well as the racial inequities surfaced by the pandemic, created powerful messaging opportunities.
• Eighty-three percent of grantee partners said they built or deepened their expertise on the census. A similar percentage said they built or deepened their communications skills as well as their connections with community constituencies through their census work.
• Grantee partners reported overwhelmingly positive experiences with the NYSCEF (4.4 or higher on a five-point scale on 8 out of 9 items) and especially appreciated the Fund’s flexibility and early awards.

**STATEWIDE COLLABORATION: LESSONS**

Fund members, particularly Steering Committee members, lauded their experience with the Fund, with many describing it as eye-opening and transformative. Here are some of the lessons learned.

**Successful collaborations** require head and heart. When asked what contributed to such a positive experience with the NYSCEF, funders’ responses reflected a combination of both values and operational practices that contributed to a collaborative, warm, and adaptive culture rooted in trust. Values such as respect and honesty grounded the work of the Fund, while attention to operational processes, from a commitment to honoring deadlines to making sure there was clarity on action items, helped the group accomplish its goals.

**Use Engage New York as a springboard for future collaboration.** A critical mass of funders observed that it was sometimes hard to know where the NYSCEF ended and Engage New York began, given the shared goals of the two entities and the overlap in membership. Though not all NYSCEF are members of Engage New York, many observed that Engage New York became stronger as a result of the census work and should be used as the natural point of entry for future statewide collaboration.

**Be attentive to which issues are ripe for successful collaboration.** In many ways, census was the perfect issue for statewide collaboration given its wide applicability to the work of virtually any foundation, regardless of how progressive or mainstream it is and regardless of its issue areas of interest. Most issues will not have such broad resonance, and in interviews, funders said that for future collaborations, they would have to consider the time and staff capacity involved; their board’s interest and support for statewide collaboration; and the potential benefits for their communities. It is expected that future statewide collaboratives might engage a smaller group of funders or require greater sensitivity to navigating different views.
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CENSUS 2030: FUND ACTIVITIES AND GRANTMAKING

Start early. The most consistent recommendation from literally every single stakeholder interviewed for this evaluation was to initiate support for census efforts earlier. Thoughts varied on how early, but many suggested at least five years prior. By starting earlier, funders could lay the groundwork for their collaboration, including establishing a clear set of goals and activities and determining what kind of staffing is needed for the Fund. An earlier start would also allow for initial grants to be awarded sooner, an act that would align more closely with when grantee partners begin planning for census, given that many in this cycle had started their census planning a full year before they received funding from the NYSCEF.

Support LUCA efforts. The Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) gives state, local, and tribal governments the opportunity to review and comment on the Census Bureau’s address files. Given how critical it is for the census to have accurate address information to conduct its count, foundations have an opportunity to connect with the state and their local municipalities to find out about the status of its LUCA operations and how philanthropy can support their efforts.

Keep stakeholders aware of the census and its implications for communities. With the network and relationships NYSCEF built through the 2020 census, it has an opportunity to keep the conversations and the relationships going by bringing people together for periodic online or in-person briefings, or even email updates, to keep the census, and related activities such as the American Community Survey, on everyone’s radar in “off” years.

Invest in civic engagement efforts writ large. As many grantee partners said, getting counted is one component of sustaining a vibrant democracy. Building an informed citizenry able to make choices about who represents them and how they can have input in how resources flow to their communities is a long-term effort, not something that happens once every ten years. Organizations on the ground, as well as many allies, advocated for a long-term commitment to civic engagement, building a pipeline of organizations that can support civic engagement and civic literacy writ large and position census efforts for greater success.

Strengthen communication and coordination among census stakeholders. New York State was fortunate to have many entities support the census – NYSCEF, other philanthropists who operated outside of the NYSCEF, New York City, New York State, New York Counts 2020, nonprofits who were outside of NY Counts 2020, county governments, and Complete Count Committees. Many observed that it would be helpful to have more coordination among the entities and to the extent possible, a centralized repository for information and resources.

Build relationships with local and county governments; seed Complete Count Committees. There was wide variation in the strength and efficacy of Complete Count Committees, but a critical mass of both grantees and funders who were deeply involved in such efforts believed that deeper relationship with local government had the potential to strengthen future GOTC efforts in a variety of ways. They believed such partnerships could build and strengthen the local infrastructure for civic engagement, inclusive of census outreach; support counties by helping them move money more nimbly; and make the case more powerfully for the ways in which the census supports community and human services.

Continue to prioritize grassroots organizations, while also supporting larger organizations that can help build capacity. With the critical role of trusted messengers in GOTC efforts, both grantee partners and funders discussed the importance of prioritizing grassroots organizations who have authentic relationships in the community. At the same time, organizations like the New York Civic Engagement Table and the New York Immigration Coalition create efficiencies by developing resources, such as toolkits and media, that can be used across the state. These organizations also provide valuable technical
assistance and capacity-building resources to smaller organizations.

**Invest in digital literacy and broadband access.** Although investments in digital literacy and broadband access may seem tangential, grantees raised these issues with consistency across urban, suburban, and rural regions. As the census moves online and digital outreach strategies increasingly become the norm, improving broadband infrastructure and tackling the problem of internet deserts not only benefits GOTC efforts, but benefits communities more broadly, giving them better access to health care and other social services.

**Discuss how best to support advocacy efforts.** Given all the threats to the census, the Fund supported a number of advocacy efforts. It is unclear to what extent philanthropy made a difference in national advocacy efforts, although there is some evidence that NYSCEF helped keep pressure on the state to release its funding, however belatedly. Can philanthropy play a productive role in census advocacy? Although this evaluation does not provide any clear answers, it would behoove the members of NYSCEF to think more deeply from the get-go about whether or not it wants to engage in advocacy and if so, what form it will take.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CENSUS 2030:**

**FUND STRUCTURE**

**Build on the successes of the existing structure.** Fund members gave high marks to the structure of the Fund, particularly the Steering Committee, Grantmaking Committee, and Regional Grantmaking Committee. The Trust, as an administrative home, also received high marks. The next iteration of the Fund can likely use a similar structure with minor tweaks.

**Assess capacity needed and ascribe roles and responsibilities accordingly.** As one Steering Committee member said of the Fund, “Everyone owns it and no one owns it.” The observation speaks to the value of taking time up front to clarify roles and responsibilities, particularly if the Fund decides to expand or change its scope. Although things generally ran smoothly, the Fund Chair carried a disproportionate workload and at times, there was duplication in how consultants performed their roles. For the next iteration of the NYSCEF, it will be helpful to articulate the capacity needed upfront and develop clarity on who is doing what, with an eye toward lessening administrative work for the Fund chair. One option for doing so is to consider co-chairs representing upstate and downstate regions.

**Revisit sub-committee structure.** Much of the work of the Education and External Relations Committee phased out over time. In the next iteration of the Fund, these activities could be coordinated more efficiently by the Fund consultant(s) with support from the Steering Committee as needed.

**Consider how to engage non-donor foundations.** Some smaller foundations were disappointed they could not contribute more financially but believed they could contribute in other ways, for example, by helping to recruit and engage funders in their region or providing input on potential grantees in under-resourced parts of the state. To this end, NYSCEF may want to consider ways to meaningfully engage foundations who may not be in a position to contribute financially to the Fund or commit to sitting on the Steering Committee.

**Explore evaluation and learning opportunities during the course of the Fund’s work.** Some funders felt that in the future it would be helpful to have opportunities to learn along the way to inform their decision-making. In other states, evaluation teams held learning sessions with grantee partners early in the process and conducted baseline surveys that would allow them to better track progress and assess impact. At the same time, the Fund will need to balance any learning and evaluation efforts with the potential time burden on already stretched grantees.

**Build in opportunities to learn about different parts of the state.** As part of the ongoing effort to learn about the diversity of the state and its communities, funders were interested in opportunities to do site visits so they could have a better first-hand sense of the possibilities for connection and collaboration, while also gaining an understanding of how local contexts are unique.
In spring 2017, Sol Marie Alfonso Jones of the Long Island Community Foundation, Patricia Swann of The New York Community Trust, and Maria Mottola of the New York Foundation met to discuss the possibilities of collaborating on the 2020 census. All three had worked on the previous census and knew that the 2020 count would be an especially high stakes affair.

With a decreasing population and a large number of historically hard-to-count groups residing in the state, along with efforts by the federal government to suppress the count among immigrant communities, New York risked losing not just one, but possibly two, congressional seats. An incomplete count had the potential to result in diminished federal resources for a host of community services, ranging from education to health care. In fact, estimates indicated that each uncounted individual in the state would translate into $3,054 in lost federal funding per year.

By the time the three leaders met that spring, Jones had already been participating in the Funders’ Census Initiative, a national working group on the census. There, she was exposed to census efforts across the country, including models of statewide collaboration. At the same time, the New York Foundation was hosting Engage New York, a network of foundations across the state that were collectively working on issues of common concern, particularly those related to community engagement. Between the infrastructure provided by Engage New York and the desire to come together in a meaningful and impactful way, the group decided early on to focus their collaborative efforts not just in their downstate communities, but across the entire state.

In the ensuing months, this core group of funders connected with census experts, fellow funders, and nonprofit leaders to lay the groundwork for their vision. In June 2018, following more than a year of planning, Swann officially announced the formation of the New York State Census Equity Fund (NYSCEF) at Philanthropy New York’s annual convening. The Fund’s goal was to ensure a fair, accurate, and complete count in the state. Specifically, the Fund wanted to make sure the hardest-to-count populations – people of color, immigrants, those living in rural areas, children under the age of 5, among others – were included in the count.

1 We use the term “hard-to-count” here and throughout the report, given that it is a specific term used by the Census Bureau with a broad body of research associated with it. However, we use the term with sensitivity, recognizing that it is imperfect and can imply that the “problem” of undercounting lies with individuals who make up marginalized communities, rather than how patterns of inequity and exclusion contribute to the undercounting of particular groups of people in the first place.
The Fund ultimately secured contributions from 37 institutional donors across the state, totaling $3.6 million – a sum that supported 120 grantee partners. Outside of Engage New York, there had been few examples of statewide funder collaboration and certainly none at the scale of the NYSCEF. For many of the participating funders, in addition to working towards a fair and accurate count, the Fund was an opportunity to test the potential value of statewide funder collaboration and understand what would be required for such a model to work.

To that end, this report documents and assesses the NYSCEF’s grantmaking, awareness-raising, and relationship-building work, as well as the feasibility and possibilities of statewide funder collaboration more broadly. This report:

1) Documents the activities of the NYSCEF and situates its work within the national and state context;
2) Examines funders’ experiences with the NYSCEF;
3) Describes grantee partners’ census strategies, challenges, and successes; and
4) Offers recommendations to foster future statewide funder collaboration and prepare for the 2030 census.

Due to delays in the release of census data, this report focuses on documenting and evaluating the work of the collaborative. A companion research brief will assess the extent to which NYSCEF’s efforts contributed to an improved count for hard-to-count populations and geographies. The companion brief will be written and published following the release of the Census Bureau’s final data on the 2020 count.

FUND MEMBERSHIP & STRUCTURE

Membership

The NYSCEF recruited its donors through a variety of means. Some donors became engaged through informational briefings; others learned of the effort through an e-mail Lorie Slutsky, president of The New York Community Trust, sent out to community foundations across the state; while still others were recruited through peer-to-peer conversations with the Fund’s core group of leaders. Importantly, this funder engagement process was ongoing, with new donors contributing to and joining the Fund throughout its duration.

In the end, the NYSCEF received contributions from 37 institutional donors, as well a critical mass of individual donors (primarily through donor-advised funds at The New York Community Trust), totaling $3.6 million. Contributions from institutional donors ranged from $10,000 to $525,000. Ten of the 37 institutional donors were community foundations. The remaining contributed a mix of private, public, and corporate foundations. Two contributions are of particular note:

- The Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation was one of the largest contributors to the Fund, donating $300,000, with the stipulation that the monies support census activities in Western New York. The gift allowed the NYSCEF to deepen and expand its efforts considerably in the region.
- In the Hudson Valley, local funders created a pooled fund for the census, housed at the Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley. The bulk of the fund – $145,000 – went to the Trust and a portion remained locally. This proved to be an effective model for the region, where some funders were concerned about the optics of awarding a grant to a large community foundation. At the same time, this arrangement streamlined the administrative process by giving the Trust one grant, versus seven smaller grants from the region.

Some individual donors made contributions less than $10,000.
The largest number of contributions came from New York City-based foundations, though Fund donors had a footprint in each of the state’s ten regions: New York City, Long Island, Hudson Valley, Capital Region, Mohawk Valley, North Country, Central New York, Finger Lakes, Western New York, and Southern Tier.3

For grantmaking purposes, the Fund collapsed these regions into five: New York City, Long Island, Hudson Valley (inclusive of the Capital Region), Central New York (inclusive of Mohawk Valley and North Country), and Western New York (inclusive of the Southern Tier and Finger Lakes).

In addition to those that contributed monetarily to the Fund, many others attended educational events and expressed interest in the census updates. The Fund’s email distribution list totaled over 300 contacts statewide.

The Health & Welfare Council of Long Island provided training, tools, and resources to the Nassau and Suffolk County Complete Count Committees to reach hard-to-count communities and populations across Long Island. Among its accomplishments: engaging more than 300 nonprofit, business, and faith leaders in its complete count committees and sub-committees, helping to build relationships and connections that are expected to foster ongoing collaboration on community issues.

3 The ten regions align with those designated by New York Empire State Development.
## Contributing Funders & Geographic Regions Served

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FUND STRUCTURE

Administrative Home
The New York Community Trust, the largest community foundation in the state and one of the state’s largest foundations overall based on asset size, served as the Fund’s administrative home. The New York Community Trust has a longstanding history of hosting funder collaboratives and brought considerable capacity, credibility, and expertise to the Fund, including past work on the census.

In addition to contributing $525,000 to the Fund, the Trust provided substantial in-kind administrative and communications staff support. Patricia Swann, senior program officer at The New York Community Trust, served as the Fund’s chair, on average spending a third of her time on the Fund and at peak moments, spending as much as 75 percent of her workload on census-related activities. Barbara Taveras, special projects officer at the Trust, supported the grantmaking and administrative activities of the Fund, including organizing and facilitating its retreats, producing grant reports, writing grant proposals to secure funding, and drafting updates for institutional supporters.

Committee Structure
The Fund consisted of a 10-member Steering Committee (later expanded to 12 members) representing each of the five major regions of the state. The Steering Committee originally met bi-weekly but quickly shifted to weekly meetings to stay abreast of rapidly shifting state and federal contexts.

The Steering Committee’s role was to provide leadership for and oversight of the Fund’s work. Committee members developed the Fund’s grantmaking strategy and process, oversaw grant distributions, supported regional fundraising, coordinated with government officials to inform allocation of state funding, and served as champions across the state to promote Get Out the Count (GOTC) efforts statewide.

A cluster of sub-committees was also formed to guide specific pieces of work: the Grantmaking Committee, External Relations Committee, Education Committee, and Documentation & Evaluation Committee. In addition, Regional Grantmaking Committees were formed to make grantmaking decisions within each of the five regions designated for the Fund. Regional Grantmaking Committees included donors within regions, who may not have been members of the Steering Committee.

Roles and responsibilities of each sub-committee were as follows:

- The **Education Committee** was responsible for designing and conducting quarterly census-related briefings for funders, coordinating with Philanthropy New York as needed, and following up with attendees of these learning events. This committee was led by Jen Drake of the Dyson Foundation.

- The **External Relations Committee** was formed to maintain relations and promote information-sharing with regional, state, and national census initiatives such as New York Counts 2020, the New York Civic Engagement Table, Association for a Better New York, and the U.S. Census Bureau. This committee was chaired by Robyn Smith of the Central New York Community Foundation and Sol Marie Alfonso Jones of the Long Island Community Foundation.
• The **Grantmaking Committee** took the lead on issuing requests for letters of interest and reviewing proposals. It coordinated with regional funders to make grant recommendations to the Steering Committee. This committee was led by Randi Hewit of the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes.

• The **Documentation & Evaluation Committee** developed an initial framework for the evaluation, hired a documentation and evaluation consultant, and provided guidance to the consultant on evaluation protocols and draft reports. Sabrina Hargrave of the Brooklyn Community Foundation chaired this committee through June 2020, with Allie Urbanski of the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo taking the reins thereafter.

**Consulting Support**

The Fund’s day-to-day work was staffed by two consultants, Lisa Fasolo Frishman and Michael Remaley. Fasolo Frishman, in her role as project director of Engage New York, began supporting the Fund’s work in fall 2017. Fasolo Frishman served as the connective tissue for much of the Fund, coordinating the Fund’s meetings, connecting with and learning from consultants in other states, bringing new funders into the fold, supporting sub-committees, connecting with the U.S. Census Bureau, coordinating advocacy efforts, and sending out regular updates to funders and grantee partners. Given her role with Engage New York and her home base in Syracuse, Fasolo Frishman brought a strong network of relationships to the effort, particularly those with state government officials and upstate funders.

Michael Remaley began his consultancy in June 2019. He served as the primary liaison to grantees, kept track of incoming funds from donors as well as outgoing grants, maintained stakeholder contact lists for funders, grantees, and allies, drafted op-eds and editorials, and provided support to the Fund’s sub-committees. As a former staff member of Philanthropy New York and its senior vice president of public policy and communications, Remaley had already been engaged in educating funders about the census and brought a strong network of relationships to the effort, especially among New York City-based funders.

In summer 2019, the Fund selected Seema Shah as its documentation and evaluation consultant. Shah conducted baseline interviews with Fund members and wrote an analytic memo for the Fund summarizing Fund members’ initial experiences, as well as the outcomes they hoped to achieve. Shah also monitored national, state, and local census developments and the work of the Fund to create a timeline of key events as a reference in planning for the 2030 census. Shah conducted the bulk of her work after GOTC efforts ended, collecting survey data from grantee partners and fund members about their experiences, successes, and challenges and interviewing funders, allies, and grantees to gather more nuanced information about their work. Based on this data, she crafted recommendations for how to prepare for the 2030 census.
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¹ Regional Leads; ² Provided consulting support to the Steering Committee; Fasolo Frishman was a non-voting member of the Steering Committee.
CENSUS 2020: SETTING THE CONTEXT

Put simply, the 2020 census was unlike any other. The census, normally a nonpartisan activity, became a highly politicized one, as the Commerce Department proposed a series of changes which seemed designed to suppress the count of immigrants and people of color.

To complicate matters further, the start of the census corresponded with the coronavirus pandemic, jeopardizing months of planning, much of which hinged on in-person outreach, and requiring nimble pivots by both funders and grantee partners.

The major controversies and issues facing the 2020 census follow.

Online Census Format
For the first time in its history, the 2020 census was primarily conducted online. For some, this simplified the process, but for others, including people without reliable broadband access and/or limited digital proficiency, this new format had the potential to depress the count among some of the hardest-to-count populations, including immigrants, people living in low-income communities, people living in rural areas, and older adults.

Census Bureau Budget Cuts
The decennial census is a tremendous undertaking, one that requires years of planning and the hiring of more than 500,000 temporary workers nationally. However, funding for the Census Bureau in the years leading up to the 2020 census, when adjusted for inflation, fell below resources provided for the 2010 and 2000 census. Decreased funding led to a smaller number of census field offices for community outreach, as well as shortened testing protocols that would have helped the Bureau more clearly anticipate potential issues with the new census format.

The Citizenship Question
Following a year of internal discussion within the Trump administration and much public concern and speculation, on March 26, 2018, against the recommendation of the Census Bureau, Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross announced that it would add the question, “Is this person a citizen of the United States?” to the 2020 census.

The Department of Commerce claimed that adding the question would allow the government to protect “minority voting rights,” although records show that the Administration wanted to use the question to exclude non-citizens from the all-important apportionment process that determines congressional representation. Although the 1950 census asked about respondents’ place of birth, a direct question about citizenship had never been asked on the census. Civil rights lawyers and other advocates warned that the question would discourage immigrants and undocumented individuals from completing the census, an outcome that would defy the U.S. Constitution, which explicitly calls for “the whole number of persons in each state” to be enumerated.

Multiple lawsuits were filed against the Census Bureau and the Commerce Department, including one on April 3, 2018 by the State of New York. Eighteen other states, 10 cities, and 4 counties joined the suit. By June 2019, the case had made its way to the Supreme Court.

“...The kinds of problems we thought we were setting out to solve paled in comparison to the problems that reared their heads. The federal government trying to sabotage its own process was deeply troubling, shocking, and terrible. It certainly never occurred to me that we were going to have to fight for the very heart and soul of the census.”

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER
In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court rejected the Trump administration’s reason for including the question, which, according to Chief Justice John Roberts, “appears to have been contrived.” The decision kept the door open for the Trump administration to offer alternate reasons, but in mid-July 2019, the Trump administration abandoned its effort to add a citizenship question to the census and instead said it would use existing government records to compile the data.

Although the failed campaign to include a citizenship question on the census was a victory on some levels, the two-year quest to do so created chaos, confusion, and fear. Given the broader anti-immigrant views espoused by the Administration, the controversy had the likely consequence of creating a chilling effect on GOTC efforts, particularly within immigrant communities. With many immigrants in mixed status households, even those in the United States legally worried that the government could use census data to harm them and their communities.

**Coronavirus Pandemic**

In December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia-like cases were identified in Wuhan, China. In a matter of weeks, the highly contagious virus, known as COVID-19, had spread globally. By the first week of March, COVID-19 cases had been identified in New York, with New Rochelle becoming an early epicenter of the virus. On March 20, 2020, Governor Andrew Cuomo issued a stay-at-home order closing all non-essential businesses statewide. The self-response phase of the census had started on March 12, but just a few days later, on March 18, the Census Bureau announced that it would halt its field operations, initially for two weeks.

In March and April, New York City became the global epicenter of the epidemic, with immigrant communities in Queens particularly hard hit. Sirens blared nonstop. At the peak of the virus, 1,000 people a day were dying in the city. In a two-month span, the virus claimed nearly 19,000 lives in New York City alone. With relatively little known about the highly contagious virus and few treatment options, stay-at-home orders remained in place through May, when some parts of the state began re-opening. New York City, which has been...
the hardest hit and home to the largest number of
the state’s hard-to-count populations, did not begin
re-opening until June.

The pandemic fundamentally changed census
outreach plans. In the early stages, funders and
nonprofits alike were scrambling to adjust to remote
operations, while addressing the urgent health and
economic needs of their communities. Funders
across the state set up COVID-19 funds and began
awarding rapid response grants, while nonprofits
shifted attention from their regular programming to
emergency efforts to meet the basic needs of their
communities, from providing food to distributing
personal protective equipment. The pandemic also
disrupted local government plans for GOTC efforts –
New York State, which was slated to release funding
for GOTC efforts in early March, did not do so and
New York City, which had an extensive GOTC campaign
planned, had to hit pause on its work as well.

Moreover, the pandemic complicated the count
itself, given the significant amount of out-migration,
especially in New York City. As universities shifted to
remote learning and closed dormitories, large numbers
of students left to return to their home states. Some
New York City residents, particularly those in the
tourism and restaurant industries, left altogether
after losing their jobs, while wealthier city residents
decamped for second homes outside of New York.
As the weeks progressed and everyone adjusted
to the new normal, nonprofits managed to couple
census outreach with their direct service and mutual
aid work, while also incorporating virtual outreach
through phone and text banking and social media.
By late summer, some groups began resuming in-
person events, but with public health protocols,
such as social distancing, in place.

Changing Timelines for
Census Completion
The census was originally slated to end on July 31, 2020,
with the self-response period taking place from
March 12-July 31 and the non-response follow-up
taking place from May 13-July 31. The apportionment
count, as in years past, would be delivered to the
President of the United States by December 31.

Due to COVID-19, on May 4, 2020, the Census Bureau
announced that it would extend the count to October 31
and that the final numbers would be delivered to the
President on April 30, 2021. On July 30, however, the
administration abruptly changed the deadline from
October 31 to September 30 and changed the delivery
of the count to the President back to December 31.
Census Bureau officials advised against the shift, noting
that the compressed timeline would result in “serious
errors” and compromise the quality of the data.

In late September, a federal judge ordered the
October 31 deadline to be reinstated. In violation of
the order, the Commerce Department said it would
only extend the count to October 5. The Supreme
Court ultimately weighed in, extending the deadline
to October 15 but still short of the previously
communicated October 31 deadline.

The changing timelines and the last-minute litigation
created a sense of whiplash, making it difficult for
groups on the ground to plan their outreach, forcing
timeline changes for grants that had already been
approved, and creating chaos and confusion with
the potential effect of suppressing the count.
Additional Legal Battles around Excluding Undocumented Individuals

In July 2020, the Trump administration revived its attempts to exclude undocumented people from the count. The administration issued a memo stating the following, “For the purpose of the reapportionment of the representatives following the 2020 census, it is the policy of the United States to exclude from the apportionment base aliens who are not in a lawful immigration status.”

To implement this policy, the administration requested two sets of figures from the Census Bureau – one that would include undocumented individuals and one that would not, although the methodology for doing so was unclear given the absence of a citizenship question. As the New York Times asserted, such a policy “would most likely have the effect of shifting seats to states that are older, whiter, and typically more Republican.”

Yet another round of litigation ensued, with lower courts roundly dismissing the administration’s policy. The case was heard before the Supreme Court on November 30, 2020. In mid-December, the Court essentially punted on the case, considering it “premature” to issue a decision given that the case was filled with numerous contingencies.

On January 13, 2021, the Census Bureau halted its work on producing a state-by-state count of undocumented immigrants, effectively ending the effort to exclude them from the census. Five days later, the Census Bureau’s Trump-appointed director, Steven Dillingham, resigned nearly a full year before the end of his term. Whistleblowers had complained that his directives would have required the Bureau to produce “statistically indefensible” data. On January 20, the first day of the Biden administration, the government dropped the directive altogether, ensuring that noncitizens would be included in the count.

NYSCEF ACTIVITIES

The New York State Census Equity Fund raised $3.6 million and as a pooled fund, much of its efforts centered on awarding funds equitably across the state, with the aim of ensuring that the hardest-to-count populations were reached. In addition to grantmaking, the NYSCEF played other important roles to support Census 2020, including providing census education and awareness for both funders and grantees; building partnerships to coordinate with other key stakeholders; and engaging in advocacy efforts to support a fair and accurate count.

Grantmaking

Principles & Considerations

From the beginning, there was a laser-sharp focus on equity, with particular attention to ensuring that hard-to-count populations, including people of color, immigrants, people living in rural areas, families with children, and older adults, were prioritized. In addition, the Fund sought to balance downstate and upstate concerns.

Relatedly, the Fund was careful to mitigate power dynamics that tend to surface in funder collaboratives, with larger donors wielding more influence. As one Steering Committee member noted, “There wasn’t ever a sense that the funders who have more money have more power at the table,” a sentiment that was widely shared by other Steering Committee members.

As the Fund developed its grantmaking priorities, it had to pay close attention to the ways in which state and local monies for GOTC were being allocated. In an ideal scenario, the Fund would play a complementary role to the large pots of government funding that were anticipated, most notably funding from New York State and New York City. The Fund ultimately had to move at its own pace because of the slow process within government.
In June 2019, New York City indicated that it would commit $40 million to GOTC efforts, half of which would be awarded as grants to community-based groups. The City’s timing for making grant decisions was pushed back several times, ultimately not occurring until late November, which made it challenging for the Fund to take the City’s decisions into account.

Similarly, in April 2019, New York State announced a $20 million commitment for GOTC efforts, but Fund members were waiting for information about organizational funding guidelines throughout the fall of 2019 to no avail. With the onset of the pandemic, the funds were not released until August 2020.

Of note, the Fund generally attempted to adopt grantee-centered practices that minimized application and reporting burdens. With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, the Fund doubled down on this as a value, making it a point to communicate their flexibility to grantee partners, assuring them that the Fund would accommodate pivots to their strategies.

Four Phases of Grantmaking
The Fund awarded 124 grants to 120 organizations totaling $2,814,475, ranging in size from $350 to $100,000. The awards were distributed through four rounds of grantmaking between May 2019 and August 2020. The initial round of grantmaking began with larger organizations that could lay the groundwork for GOTC efforts, providing training and support for smaller organizations and working at the statewide or regional level. Subsequent rounds were increasingly targeted and inclusive of small, grassroots organizations using a regional approach based on emerging data about where response rates were lagging. (For a full list of grantees for each round, see Appendix A.)

• **Phase I (Preparation & Regional Organizing)** focused on grants to organizations working statewide or across multiple regions. These grants were made to 7 organizations, totaling $538,000. Grants focused on strategic priorities to help lay the foundation for Census 2020, such as helping ethnic and community news outlets prepare for the census and support for public libraries. These grants were awarded in May 2019.

• **Phase 2 (Core GOTC Grantmaking)** focused on supporting organizations closest to hardest-to-count communities across New York State. In late spring 2019, NYSCEF began compiling lists of prospective RFP recipients. In August 2019, the Fund reached out to more than 200 organizations statewide, requesting letters of intent due September 30. Following reviews by regional teams, the Fund invited a smaller subset of organizations to submit a full proposal. Fifty-eight grants totaling $1,519,000 were awarded in December 2019.

• **Phase 3 (Responding to Geographic Funding Gaps)** was intended to provide mini-grants to cover the costs of immediate needs such as securing technological capacity, offering incentives, or producing promotional materials. The pandemic began shortly after the start of Phase 3, with the Fund expanding its criteria for mini-grants as groups adapted to new realities. Given the influx of funding in NYC and Long Island and an analysis of hard-to-count areas, these grants focused on all other regions of the state. These grants were generally $4,000 or less with a minimal application process. Local funders reached out to organizations in their region to make them aware of the opportunity. In particular, the Fund conducted outreach in Central New York and the Capital Region to address funding gaps in those regions. The previous two rounds of grants were administered through The New York Community Trust, while this round was administered through the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, which had an easy-to-use open portal system. Thirty-seven grants, totaling $115,825, were awarded. Eighteen of these went to organizations in the Capital Region.
Phase 4 (Rapid Response) funding involved a modest amount of funds left over from the previous round due to the pandemic, as well as new funding from the National Census Equity Fund. This final round of funding was done by invitation only and focused on communities where the June 2020 self-response data showed low response rates. These grants were administered both through The New York Community Trust and the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes. The Fund awarded 22 grants, covering all regions of the state, totaling $641,650.

Among state funder collaboratives nationally, the NYSCEF was one of the few that identified redistricting from the onset as an extension of its GOTC efforts, while recognizing that not all members of the Fund would continue with this work. Of its grantmaking dollars, the Fund retained a modest balance of $150,000 to support redistricting efforts, with the aim of raising an additional $300,000 to $500,000.

Census Education & Awareness
A key role that NYSCEF played early on in its work and continued throughout the 2020 census was to provide educational opportunities for funders to learn more about the census, its importance, and the issues complicating the count in 2020. Some of these took the form of formal events, such as ones held in partnership with Philanthropy New York and the New York State Funders’ Alliance. Others were more informal, such as inviting guest speakers to steering committee meetings. In addition, Lisa Fasolo Frishman stayed abreast of communications from the U.S. Census Bureau and other sources and sent out a monthly newsletter summarizing ongoing developments and informing recipients of webinars and other learning opportunities.

One of the first learning events took place in July 2017, when Joe Salvo, chief demographer for the City of New York, and Terri Ann Lowenthal, a nationally recognized census expert, met with Philanthropy New York and a group of downstate funders to discuss issues related to the 2020 census. In September 2017, the initial group of funders met with nonprofit leaders, including those from the New York Immigration Coalition and the New York Civic Engagement Table to learn more about issues on the ground.

As the NYSCEF began to take shape, education and awareness activities expanded to become more inclusive of regions across the state. In November 2017, for example, Sol Marie Alfonso Jones presented at the New York State Funders Alliance annual conference in Buffalo, along with Joe Salvo, Terri Ann Lowenthal, and Melody Lopez of the New York Civic Engagement Table.

In April 2018, in partnership with Philanthropy New York, NYSCEF held a briefing with Steve Romalewski of the CUNY Mapping Center and Jeff Behler of the U.S. Census Bureau. Though the event took place in New York City, viewing parties were held in Buffalo, Syracuse, and Albany. In October 2018, another briefing was held with New York Counts 2020. In interviews, many funders credited their attendance at these early briefings as critical catalysts in advocating for their foundation’s engagement with the 2020 census.
As the NYSCEF’s work progressed, guest speakers were invited to Steering Committee meetings to brief Fund members on new developments. For example, early in the process, the Committee held a conference call with Vanita Gupta, then-executive director of the Leadership Conference, who briefed the group on census challenges. At its June 2020 retreat, Meeta Anand of New York Immigration Coalition and Marcela Barrientos of New York Civic Engagement Table provided insights from the ground about the ways in which organizations were pivoting, helping to inform the Fund’s grant decisions. Jeff Behler also provided an update to the Steering Committee on the Census Bureau’s response to the pandemic.

After GOTC efforts ended, the Fund organized a mid-November briefing on redistricting in partnership with Philanthropy New York. Featured speakers included a member of the New York State Redistricting Commission, an author of a book on the impact of the post 2010 census redistricting cycle on state legislatures, and two redistricting experts.

Census Advocacy
Given the controversies associated with the 2020 census, the philanthropic community, on several occasions, wrote letters to the Commerce Department. In March 2018, for example, Gary Bass, executive director of the Bauman Foundation, led an effort to send a letter opposing the citizenship question to the Commerce Department. Members of what would become the New York State Census Equity Fund signed on to this letter and used their connections to encourage peer funders in New York to add their names as well. Similarly, in August 2020, Bass circulated a letter pushing for the count to end on October 31, rather than cutting it short. Again, NYSCEF used its network to garner signatures from foundations in New York State. See Appendix B for New York-based signatories.

NYSCEF’s advocacy efforts also took the form of meeting with state and local officials, to advocate for timely, fair, and equitable distribution of funds. For example, NYSCEF organized a meeting for interested New York City-based funders with the New York City deputy mayor who was overseeing the census work to discuss the City’s funding and support for GOTC efforts.

Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson, a grassroots organizing group in the Hudson Valley, engaged in a massive outreach campaign to reach communities of color and low-income people, especially immigrants. The group made frequent appearances on both English and Spanish-language radio, launched a text banking campaign that reached more than 240,000 residents, and tabled at community events, including local farmer’s markets.

Opportunities for Otsego engaged in GOTC efforts in rural areas where lack of broadband access was a major challenge. Its original plans for GOTC efforts included mobile kiosks, but the onset of COVID-19 stay-at-home orders thwarted those plans. The organization pivoted to newspaper ads that included a telephone number for assistance, as well as television ads that reached rural families with satellite service. Opportunities for Otsego also began collaborating with providers who were helping to provide basic needs to ensure that residents were getting information about the census.
Partnerships
The NYSCEF invested a considerable degree of time and energy in developing and sustaining strategic partnerships with key actors in the census landscape, helping to foster a remarkably inter-connected network of census partners throughout the state. This included the U.S. Census Bureau, New York State, national partners, grantee partners, as well as local governments and Complete Count Committees.

U.S. Census Bureau
Even before the NYSCEF was officially formed, the core group of funders who helped launch the Fund connected with Jeff Behler, the New York Regional Director for the Census Bureau, and Joli Golden, a partnership specialist in the New York office. Behler participated in several of the Fund’s educational events. In addition, the regional office coordinated with the Fund to help sponsor recruitment efforts to hire people from local communities for its GOTC work.

As the census progressed, the Bureau provided weekly updates and spreadsheets on the count so the Fund could make data-informed decisions about where resources were needed. NYSCEF’s relationship with the Regional Office ran parallel to relationships on the local level. Across the state, both funders and grantee partners worked with their local census field offices to procure promotional materials, learn about the latest developments, and partner around census hiring. In fact, in some regions, grantee partners and funders described their relationship with field offices as ones where they were “joined at the hip.”

National Partners
The NYSCEF worked at the national level with Census Counts, housed at the Leadership Conference Education Fund, and the Funders’ Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP) and one of its working groups, the Funders’ Census Initiative (FCI). Engagement with both entities helped NYSCEF learn from others across the country.

FCI, in particular, was a critical educational and learning resource for NYSCEF. Sol Marie Alfonso Jones served as the primary representative to FCI, pre-dating the start of the NYSCEF and ultimately became FCI’s co-chair. In addition to Jones, Patricia Swann, Michael Remaley, and Lisa Fasolo Frishman were also in regular communication with national partners. Swann, for example, served as a speaker on one of FCI’s webinars, while Remaley attended bi-weekly FCI progress calls and reported key updates to the Steering Committee. Fasolo Frishman convened consultants in other states for bi-monthly phone calls to exchange resources, information, and ideas.

Engagement with national partners helped NYSCEF stay abreast of developments at the national level, in particular the status of various litigation and advocacy efforts. As a result of these relationships, NYSCEF was able to share more about the New York State (not just New York City) context with national partners, helping others to gain an understanding of the diversity of New York’s population and its philanthropic landscape. In part because of this growing understanding, the National Census Equity Fund, which had not initially prioritized New York as one of its geographic focus areas, ultimately contributed to the NYSCEF as it recognized the state’s needs more fully.

New York State
In 2018, Fasolo Frishman and Swann initiated conversations with the State and expressed a desire to work together. Specifically, they developed a relationship with Elizabeth Burkowski and Rich Tobe, who were responsible for leading an interagency team within the state government to plan and prepare for the 2020 census. As the Fund’s work progressed, the NYSCEF kept the State in the loop about its efforts, while seeking clarity on how and when the State’s funding would be released.

While NYSCEF developed a strong relationship with its contacts in state government, for a host of reasons, the State was slow to allocate and release funding to support the count. In April 2019, a $20 million commitment was announced, with the funds slated to be distributed by year’s end. This eventually got pushed to March 2020, right as the count was beginning. However, the onset of COVID-19 put the State in a crisis situation and all funding was put on hold. Once the initial crisis passed, NYSCEF along with nonprofit advocates pushed for the
release of those funds. The funds were released in August, though it was only half of the original funding and the delay in funding meant that some nonprofit organizations did not receive funding in time to support their GOTC efforts or were not able to fully expend their funds.

Though funders understood the State’s predicament in March, they also believed there should have been better planning for the census and that the funding should have been distributed in 2019, as originally promised, to have had maximum impact on GOTC efforts.

Local Governments and Complete Count Committees
Several NYSCEF members, including Dyson Foundation, Long Island Community Foundation, Brooklyn Community Foundation, and Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, were active in either forming local Complete Count Committees or sitting on them, a role that helped them connect more closely with local government as well as other community leaders. Other Fund members collaborated with local governments to support the distribution of grants. Here are just a few examples:

• When New York State’s funding was finally disbursed, several foundations, such as the Brooklyn Community Foundation, served as re-grantors, taking the lead on distributing funds in their counties.

• In Central New York, the Fund awarded a grant to the City of Syracuse, with its grant supporting the City’s census coordinator.

• The Long Island Community Foundation awarded a grant to the Health and Welfare Council, later supplemented by an NYSCEF grant, which helped build a robust infrastructure for Suffolk County’s nearly 300 stakeholders from business, government, and nonprofit and helped distribute resources and information.

• In New York City, Sabrina Hargrave served as representative to the City of New York’s grantmaking committee, advising the city’s allocation of $20 million in census funding for nonprofit organizations.

While not a government entity per se, in New York City, Lorie Slutsky, president of The New York Community Trust, served as a member of the Census 2020 Organizing and Action Committee at Association for a Better New York (ABNY), an organization that connects government, business, and nonprofit leaders. Through ABNY, the NYSCEF’s New York City-based members were able to stay connected to local leaders and remain in the loop about local developments.

New York Counts 2020 & New York Civic Engagement Table
NYSCEF stayed connected to grantees’ work in part through its connection to New York Counts 2020, a coalition of nonprofits that included many of the Fund’s grantee partners. Maria Mottola participated as the funder liaison to New York Counts 2020, where she was able to share resources with nonprofits, and in some cases, help connect the dots of the various activities taking place across the state.

Mottola noted that it was helpful to get a flavor of the urgency of the work and realities on the ground and share those updates with the funders’ collaboratives. For example, the changing timelines for the census were not just a question of when outreach would end but also had implications for when and if staff would need to be laid off.

The Fund also developed a close relationship with the New York Civic Engagement Table, particularly after the onset of the pandemic. The New York Civic Engagement Table provided technical support related to digital outreach to many of the Fund’s grantee partners and was able to share valuable information with the Fund about needs on the ground, given their connection to so many grassroots organizations.

Partnership for the Public Good (PPG) played a critical role in supporting capacity-building efforts for GOTC efforts in Western New York by providing training and tools to community groups. For example, PPG published a policy brief, “Census 2020: Making Western New York Count,” offering an overview of the census, why it matters for Western New York, and a list of community resources and recommendations to achieve a complete count. In addition to the policy brief, PPG completed a Western New York Census Toolkit, which included sample social media graphics that highlighted local impacts of the census count.
# Census 2020: Key Events & Milestones

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| 2017 | **March**: Sol Marie Alfonso Jones joins Steering Committee of the Funders Census Initiative and reaches out to Pat Swann and Maria Mottola about beginning to work on the 2020 census.  
**Summer/Fall**: A series of briefings and meetings with census experts and nonprofit leaders take place.  
**November**: First meeting of the Philanthropy New York Census Working Group; includes early discussion of collaborative fund | **December**: The Department of Justice formally asks the Census Bureau to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census. |
| 2018 | **January**: Engage New York chooses census as one of its priority areas.  
**Spring**: Regional and statewide funder briefings are held to educate funders about the importance of the 2020 census.  
**July**: Core group meets to design funder collaborative. | **January**: The Census Bureau warns that adding a citizenship question would be costly and harm the accuracy of the count.  
**March 26**: Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross adds the question, “Is this person a citizen of the United States?” to the census.  
**Apr 3**: New York leads more than two dozen states and cities in filing a lawsuit in New York over the citizenship question. |
| 2019 | **February**: NYSCEF holds first in-person meeting.  
**May**: NYSCEF announces Phase 1 grants of more than $600K for 7 organizations doing statewide or regional work.  
**June**: Rockefeller Institute, with support from NYSCEF, releases Achieving a Complete 2020 Census Count in New York.  
**December**: NYSCEF announces Phase 2 grants, totaling $1.4 million to 56 organizations to support GOTC efforts statewide. | **January**: Federal court in NYC blocks the Trump Administration from including citizenship question on the census.  
**April**: New York State approves $20 million for census in state budget, half of what advocates wanted.  
**June**: Supreme Court temporarily blocks the citizenship question.  
**July**: Trump abandons the fight for a citizenship question and instructs the government to compile citizenship data from existing federal records instead.  
**December**: Governor Andrew Cuomo announces $20 million for local census work, with grants to be awarded in late January. |
| 2020 | **February**: Phase 3 mini-grants are awarded on a rolling basis.  
**April**: To date, 34 Phase 3 mini-grants have been awarded.  
**August**: Phase 4 grants awarded to provide additional support communities with low response rates.  
**October 15**: NYSCEF holds its last Steering Committee meeting. | **March 1**: First COVID-19 case in NY confirmed.  
**March 18**: Census Bureau announces that it will suspend field operations, initially for two weeks.  
**April**: It becomes clear that state funds will not be released.  
**May**: Census Bureau extends outreach to Oct 31 and delivery of apportionment counts to April 30, 2021.  
**July 31**: Long-awaited state funds are released, although it is only half of the $20 million promised.  
**August 3**: The Census Bureau announces that it will complete the count by Sept 30, a month earlier than planned.  
**October 15**: After a series of legal battles about the completion date that reach the Supreme Court, census outreach ends.  
**October 21**: NYS self-response rate lands at 64.2%, relative to the national rate of 67%. |
Non-Member Donors: The Fund communicated regularly with individual and institutional donors who were not members of the Fund.

Local Govt/Complete Count Committees: Funders worked with county and city governments in a variety of ways, in some cases forming or sitting on local Complete Count Committees.

New York Counts 2020 + NYCET: Maria Mottola served as the funder liaison to this coalition of nonprofit organizations, allowing the Fund to stay abreast of experiences on the ground. The Fund also developed a strong relationship with the New York Civic Engagement Table.

New York State: The Fund developed relationships with the Governor’s office to advocate for State funding and provide support around distributing those funds.

Grantee Partners: The Fund provided support to grantees across the state as needed and sent out periodic emails to keep them abreast of new developments.

Funders Census Initiative: Sol Marie Jones served on this national committee, bringing back valuable information to the group about federal developments and the national context.

U.S. Census Bureau: Developing an early relationship with the Bureau helped the Fund ensure their communities were connected to critical resources. The Bureau provided data on the progress of the count, allowing the Fund to make data-informed decisions about resources.

The NYS Census Equity Fund juggled a wide array of relationships in its efforts to support Census 2020.
LEARNING & EVALUATION QUESTIONS

- How well did the Fund execute its work?
- What did Fund members gain from their participation?
- To what extent did the Fund engage other stakeholders effectively in its work?
- How can the work of the NYSCEF inform future statewide funder collaboration?

DATA SOURCES

- Funder survey (27 of 37 institutional funders responded; 73% response rate)
- In-depth interviews with 14 funders and 9 allies/partners

KEY FINDINGS

- Most Fund participants (59 percent) had no prior experience with the census.
- In addition to their contributions to the Fund, 74% of Fund members made additional grants to support GOTC efforts, totaling at least $1.24 million.
- Funders also supported the census in other ways, by attending educational events (59%), using their foundation’s social media handles to promote GOTC efforts (48%), and encouraging peer funders to support GOTC efforts (41%).
- The Fund was well-managed and well-administered (all items rated 4.4 or higher on a 5-point scale).
- The grantmaking process was well-run (all items rated 4.0 or higher). In fact, grantee partners gave even higher ratings than Fund members to the grantmaking process.
- Fund members built new relationships with a variety of partners, most deeply with funders outside of their regions.
- The Fund’s work aligned with its equity values, including maintaining a focus on reaching hard-to-count populations and balancing upstate and downstate concerns (all items rated 4.0 or higher).
- Fund members benefited in a variety of ways but especially by gaining new knowledge related to the census (4.4 on a 5-point scale).
- Participation in the Fund also increased interest in statewide funder collaboration (4.2 on a 5-point scale).
- External partners spoke highly of the Fund, complimenting its close connection to community, expertise, and open lines of communication.
CENSUS EXPERIENCE

The majority of funders (59 percent) who responded to the survey had no prior experience with the census, while 18 percent had supported GOTC efforts in the 2010 census and 22 percent had done so for both the 2000 and 2010 census.

In interviews, a number of funders who were engaged with census activities for the first time indicated that they had to work creatively and strategically to get support from their boards, some of whom had lukewarm interest and felt drawn to more “urgent” community needs. Others were wary of getting involved in an effort that appeared “political.”

FUND MEMBERS’ PREVIOUS CENSUS EXPERIENCE

- **No Prior Experience**: 59%
- **2000 & 2010 Census**: 22%
- **2010 Census**: 19%
ADDITIONAL CENSUS FUNDING & SUPPORT

Monetary Support
In addition to their contributions to the NYSCEF, 74 percent of Fund members awarded additional grants to support the census.

According to information provided on the survey, NYSCEF members contributed at least another $1.24 million to support Census 2020 in New York. Six funders did not specify amounts but indicated additional support was embedded as either a portion of other grants or as a part of general operating support grants to organizations whose work included the census.

Non-monetary Support
In addition to their monetary contributions to NYSCEF, funders supported GOTC efforts in a variety of ways. Members attended education events and briefings, taking back important information about the latest development to their foundations and communities. Funders also used their foundation’s social media channels to support GOTC efforts and encouraged peer foundations to support the census.

A critical mass of foundations – the Brooklyn Community Foundation, the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, Long Island Community Foundation, the Dyson Foundation, the Central New York Community Foundation, and others – played a leadership role in their local Complete Count Committees and worked closely with them to help disseminate state funding once it eventually came through.

With the exception of a handful of funders on the Steering Committee, 85 percent of funders responding to the survey spent less than 10 percent of their time on the Fund and indicated that their participation in the Fund was manageable.

In addition to monetary support, did your foundation support GOTC efforts in any of the following ways? Number of Orgs (N=27) Percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number of Orgs</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attended a NYSCEF briefing</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used social media handles to promote GOTC</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraged peers to contribute funding</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocated for more state and/or local funding</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used foundation website to promote GOTC</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provided technical assistance to grantees</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held events to raise awareness about Census 2020</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped form local Complete Count Committee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Served on local Complete Count Committee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Held convening(s) for grantees</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acted as a pass-through entity</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FUND ADMINISTRATION

New York Community Trust

Fund donors believed the Fund was well-managed and well-administered. In interviews, many observed that the size and capacity of The New York Community Trust, along with its years of experience leading collaboratives, uniquely positioned it to support a complex, statewide effort.

In the words of one interviewee, “No other entity had the capability or the capacity to take this on without extra support being built into it.” In addition, they praised the leadership of the Fund’s chair, the Trust’s Patricia Swann, who brought substantial expertise, a broad network of relationships, and a general sense of calm and confidence to the table.

However, the Trust’s size came with procedures and rules that sometimes created barriers, although most were relatively minor and ultimately resolved. For example, the Trust’s grant portal made it more challenging to process grants to smaller organizations that were not already in its system. After identifying this as a challenge in its early rounds of grantmaking, the Fund addressed this by processing its mini-grants through the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, whose application portal did not have additional requirements for organizations not already in its system.

“I want to reiterate how important it was having The New York Community Trust as the backbone. Having their commitment and their administration on all of this was so integral to the success of the Fund.”

WESTERN NEW YORK FUNDER

PERSPECTIVES ON FUND ADMINISTRATION

(1=STRONGLY DISAGREE; 5=STRONGLY AGREE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The organizational structure of the NYSCEF helped advance the Fund’s goals and objectives. (N=24)</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Community Trust provided effective administrative stewardship of the Fund. (N=25)</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New York Community Trust provided effective leadership for the Fund. (N=26)</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fund’s overhead/administrative costs were appropriate. (N=19)</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Consultants
In interviews, many funders also gave high praise to the support provided by its consultants, Lisa Fasolo Frishman and Michael Remaley, as well as The New York Community Trust’s special projects officer, Barbara Tavares, describing their support as “essential” to managing the considerable tasks associated with the Fund.

One Steering Committee member noted, “Without Lisa and Michael being the hands and feet of the operation, I think it would have been much less effective. It was really important to have the staff dedicated to the process because there were so many moving parts and so much documentation that needed to be handled.”

Observing the amount of administrative effort required to keep the work of the Fund moving, several funders advocated for additional support, with one funder noting, “Funders [are always] shortchanging administrative support and not understanding how that support builds success.”

Committees
The organizational structure of the Fund also included a number of sub-committees as well as regional grantmaking committees. In interviews, funders offered their reflections on the committee structure.

• The regional grantmaking committees generally received strong reviews, particularly around funders being able to connect with one another and feel a part of the broader census effort. Suggestions for strengthening these committees included having a rubric for reviewing grants ahead of time, while also figuring out how to balance input from those who had been less engaged in census efforts versus those who were more engaged with census efforts.

• The Education Committee did some early work, organizing a conference panel, for example, but ultimately much of the learning work happened via Philanthropy New York and Michael Remaley, a consultant to NYSCEF and former Philanthropy New York staff member.

• The External Relations Committee similarly phased out over time as much of the work fell on people who already had relationships and connections with the Fund’s external partners.

• The Documentation & Evaluation Committee initially met regularly to hire an evaluator and establish a framework. Once the evaluator was hired, the Committee connected at key points (for example, to weigh in on data collection protocols and report drafts), rather than meeting on an ongoing basis, which seemed to work well.

“I count my kids because they will grow up in this community for the next ten years and they deserve to be counted—for better schools, better hospitals, a better life.”

~Carmela Miranda
Fund donors gave high ratings for the grantmaking process, which they perceived to be data-driven, flexible, and efficient, as well as the review process itself which allowed them to access proposals easily. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly, grantees who were asked a similar set of questions about the grantmaking experience, rated the Fund higher than Fund members themselves did! (see p. 59).

While the Fund aimed to be nimble and grantee-centered from the onset, the pandemic made such an orientation an imperative.

One funder spoke to the pivots required, “I think the Fund was really flexible with what outcomes were initially planned and really trusting nonprofits to do what was best for their constituents.” Another funder reflected on the importance of the humility that comes with this approach, “The flexibility goes a long way, even in our own work, just admitting that we do not have control, we don’t have the answers, and we’re going to do the best that we can with what we have.”

A NYC-based funder added, “We were able to fill in gaps between state and city funding, particularly when the State wasn’t releasing any funding and we were unsure whether they would, or at what rate. The ability to be there for organizations that were doing the work was really powerful.”

“... I think the way that the priorities were set was smart. It was data-driven and adaptive, so as we learn new information, we were willing to integrate that into the process and just be smarter about how to maximize the potential impact of the resources.”

NEW YORK CITY FUNDER

PERSPECTIVES ON GRANTMAKING

(1=STRONGLY DISAGREE; 5=STRONGLY AGREE)

| The Fund was flexible and adaptive in light of changing conditions. (N=21) | 4.4 |
| Grant funds were received promptly by our partners. (N=13) | 4.3 |
| Communications to Fund members were informative and helpful. (N=18) | 4.3 |
| Grantee reporting requirements were reasonable. (N=13) | 4.2 |
| Communications to grantee partners were clear. (N=24) | 4.2 |
| The grant review process was streamlined and efficient. (N=12) | 4.1 |
| There was a clear point of contact for grantees’ questions and concerns. (N=19) | 4.0 |
RELATIONSHIPS

Funders
There was variation in the degree to which fund donors were able to develop and deepen partnerships. Most notably, donors felt they were able to deepen relationships with fellow funders outside of their region. This was particularly true for members of the Steering Committee, who met weekly and developed strong, trusting relationships with one another. As a result of their participation in the NYSCEF, a number of these funders are already working together on other statewide collaboratives focused on issues of shared concern. At the same time, funders reported that their informal connections were also strengthened, with the comfort level to call one another for advice and support as needed.

Community-Based Organizations
To a lesser extent, but still significant, funders reported developing partnerships with a broader swath of community-based organizations and prospective grantees, an outcome that could have implications for decreasing funding inequities between urban and rural areas and between larger organizations and smaller, grassroots organizations.

One funder in Western New York stated, “It’s expanded our own reach. We fund eight different counties in [our region] and I think it has been a goal of the foundation, as a whole, to bring into the fold some of these outlying counties. The census was a way that that was achieved. It could have been better, but we at least laid the groundwork for that and we’ve become less city-centric.”

Another funder observed that the very nature of the collaboration exposed them to community organizations that they would not have otherwise known about, which she believed would benefit the field at large, giving funders a better understanding of the nonprofit ecosystem across the state.

Government
Likewise, a critical mass of funders shared that the census work helped them develop deeper relationships with local government, particularly through Complete Count Committees. In some cases, these new relationships have led to foundation leadership roles on local committees and task forces as funders become seen as go-to thought partners on critical issues facing their communities.

“[Participating in the NYSCEF] has expanded my network and the people I can turn to, pick up the phone and call, or send a quick email to.

I have the ability now, when I go into my board meetings or I talk to my CEO, to say I was just on a call with statewide funders, and this is what they are doing in response to COVID... this is what they are doing in response to Black Lives Matter. And I would say I am probably the only individual on the staff that has that ability to do that.

As a place-based funder, you become very focused on your place. But this has allowed me to say, my community isn’t that different from these other communities.”

CENTRAL NEW YORK FUNDER
PARTICIPATION IN THE NYSECF HELPED CREATE AND/OR DEEPEN RELATIONSHIPS WITH:
(1=STRONGLY DISAGREE; 5=STRONGLY AGREE)

| **Funders outside of our region (N=22)** | 4.0 |
| **Community-based organizations (N=23)** | 3.7 |
| **Funders within our region (N=23)** | 3.7 |
| **National organizations, including national funders (N=19)** | 3.6 |
| **Local government (N=22)** | 3.4 |
| **State government (N=20)** | 3.2 |
EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

“Equity” is literally embedded in the name of the Fund and speaks to the importance of equity as a guiding consideration. One of the major equity concerns was the distribution of resources to reach the hardest-to-count populations, including immigrants, people of color, people living in rural areas, and children under the age of five. In addition, the Fund sought to ensure that funds were disbursed equitably across the State. Survey respondents believed the Fund did a good job of balancing these considerations, a view that many interviewees echoed.

An upstate New York funder stated, “As a whole, I think that the Census Equity Fund was really intentional about how funds were distributed. I know there was a concern about downstate versus upstate, that there might be an imbalance in fund distribution. I don’t think that was the case. We really used data to see what regions are most undercounted and we tried to implement strategies in our grantmaking to help correct that imbalance.”

Not only did fund members feel monies were equitably distributed, almost all funders indicated that they were able to leverage additional dollars for their region that exceeded the contribution they made to the Fund itself.

“In the absence of state funding, support from the New York State Census Equity Fund ended up being truly some of the biggest dollars that moved into our region. It was a big win for our community.”

WESTERN NEW YORK FUNDER

PERSPECTIVES ON EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS
(1=STRONGLY DISAGREE; 5=STRONGLY AGREE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Fund maintained its focus on hard-to-count populations and regions throughout the grantmaking process. (N=22)</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation in the Fund helped our region access funding that would not have otherwise been available to us. (N=22)</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fund effectively balanced downstate and upstate concerns and needs. (N=20)</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fund distributed grant monies equitably across different regions of the state. (N=20)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BENEFITS FOR FUNDERS

Census Knowledge
Funders reported that they benefited in substantial ways, including an increase in their institution’s knowledge about and commitment to the census. For example, one foundation board that had been tepid in its initial support of the Fund was much less skittish later on when it was asked to provide additional funds after state funding had fallen through, a shift that was attributed to understanding the importance of the census. “The work that had happened proved to them that this was something really valuable for the community and had significant value,” said the foundation’s program officer.

“Now I look at funder collaboratives differently. I don’t look at them with skepticism. I look at it as a really great opportunity and not just the monetary return on investment, but what it offers in terms of learning and strategy sharing.

And where you need to advocate, in the case of the State for example, you just have more power behind your voice because you’re representing that many more foundations.”

NEW YORK CITY FUNDER

FUNDER EXPERIENCE
(1=STRONGLY DISAGREE; 5=STRONGLY AGREE)

Participation in the Fund increased our foundation’s knowledge of the Census and its importance. (N=26) 4.4

Participation in the Fund increased our interest and/or commitment to statewide funder collaboration on issues of common interest. (N=26) 4.2

Participation in the Fund increased our foundation’s knowledge of the Census and its importance. (N=26) 4.1

0 1 2 3 4 5
Interest in Statewide Collaboration

Notably, participation in the Fund provided a case study for the benefits of coming together on a statewide basis and whetted funders’ appetite for future collaboration. Funders noted the various ways in which statewide collaboration could benefit their institutions and the issues they care about.

Foremost, funders noted that moving policy at a state level can often be more powerful than doing so at a local level. To change state policy, as one funder said, “There is a growing awareness that if we want to influence policy, every part of the state has to be in the mix. And if it’s not, it’s a significantly less powerful message to lawmakers.”

A statewide coalition also gives funders more influence and power over resources. A funder in Central New York stated, “[Our small city] sometimes gets forgotten by the federal and state government, so that puts a lot of burden on us as funders. How do we fill the gap? Being part of statewide groups allows us to make sure that the needs of these communities are heard and seen and felt, not just by the people that live here.”

While participants’ interest in statewide collaboration increased, funders also noted that participation in such statewide collaborations would hinge on a number of variables, perhaps most importantly, the extent to which their boards would feel comfortable with such efforts, especially ones that were perceived to be messier or more political in nature. In addition, strong alignment with foundation values and priority areas would be important considerations.

That said, the experience with the Census Equity Fund, for many, affirmed the skill, competence, and commitment of fellow funders in New York State, which would make it more likely for funders to make the time and staff commitment.

Additional Benefits

In interviews, funders shared additional benefits of participating in the Fund:

- For some foundations, the flexibility of the Fund was a springboard for re-thinking their own institutional practices. An upstate funder observed, “All of the external factors that happened [with] the census forced us to be flexible, adaptable, and nonprofit-centric. Philanthropy is sometimes very stringent with how they report and record things, and I think that mindset has shifted. And it’s not just because of the census, but I think that the Census Equity Fund has taught us that that’s possible.”

- Some smaller funders said the NYSCEF gave them the opportunity to step into leadership roles, giving them new visibility. One community foundation in upstate New York mentioned that they received media coverage and attention from state political leaders that they might not have otherwise. Another funder shared, “We came out swinging as a major census funder who really knows what’s happening in that space. We’re not a major funder in terms of dollars, but in terms of our knowledge and the spaces we were in...[we were able] to be at certain tables [we would not normally be] invited to.”

- Funders also appreciated the opportunity to understand and respect diversity within the state more fully. Many funders noted that they gained a better sense of not only political views, but also world views, that vary regionally, helping them gain more context about their peer funders -- what could and could not work for their foundation, for their board, for their donors, and for their communities -- and learning to navigate and appreciate those nuances in their work better.
EXTERNAL PARTNERS

External partners spoke highly of the Fund. Almost all partners and allies interviewed observed that there was seemingly no ego involved and that the group was clear-eyed and focused on its goal of doing everything it could to support GOTC efforts.

Connections to Community

Partners appreciated foundations’ role as trusted messengers in their communities and the close, authentic relationships with community organizations on the ground. One partner stated that its relationship with the NYSCEF helped “open a lot of those doors that we would never have been able to do on our own, or it would have taken longer to be able to do so.” More specifically, NYSCEF’s connections helped to “exponentially spread the message of the importance of the census and helped us to educate the public early. And most importantly, gave us the trusted voices in the community that we needed to support our efforts.”

One partner noted that the Fund’s request for letters of interest in 2019 itself served as a powerful engagement tool, noting that, “All of those little and big organizations who are then researching to see if they can get the funding, they are being educated about how the census is important, safe, and easy just by the fact that they are thinking of how their organization could best utilize these extra funds to serve their community…whether they receive the funding or not, the fact is that they were more likely to put [census] into their messaging.”

As one partner observed, ultimately, these connections to community make foundations particularly effective. “The philanthropic organizations know who is effective and who isn’t, and that’s the edge they have over other people who were starting from scratch. They can take a smaller value of money dollars and actually put it to really good use.”

Source of Expertise

Partners also valued NYSCEF members as thought partners who brought both local knowledge as well as a birds-eye view of the nonprofit landscape.

One government partner shared, “It was nice to have a sounding board. And they certainly brought up issues that I had not thought about. The local knowledge was extremely important, knowing where the really tough spots are. That’s something we never could have figured out from Albany.”

A grantee partner stated, “I would say my conversations, particularly with Maria and Lisa, always were so incredibly thoughtful. They always helped me gain a new perspective or helped me problem-solve when I was trying to figure my way through a particular issue. I also feel like they [brought] in new relationships and new introductions. That was super helpful [and] a value-add.”

Open Lines of Communication

Multiple partners also praised the Fund members’ accessibility and their openness to ongoing communication as key to why their partnerships were successful and productive. One partner, reflecting on their interactions with Patricia Swann, shared, “Pat is such an incredible example of being so open and generous with her time and expertise. This is something she has very consistently demonstrated in any interaction that I personally have had with the Fund. It just made the partnership so easy and so wonderful.”
STATE FUNDING
In interviews, funders were especially vocal about the challenges of procuring state funding. While funders felt they established positive relationships with representatives from the Governor’s office (a sentiment that was echoed by government representatives), funders had many frustrations with New York State. One funder summed up her frustration with the following reaction, “One thing that was surprising was the degree to which New York State failed to follow through on its own promises. We all felt that we had a good relationship with New York State and that we’d made the case.”

In December 2019/early January 2020, much of the frustration was associated with the State’s timeline for distributing funding. The State was slow to roll-out its process, initially indicating funds would be released in 2019 and eventually announcing they would be released March 2020, right before the start of census enumeration efforts, giving nonprofits little time to ramp up. A number of funders were working closely with their local complete count committees to help states disburse funds, yet right as the process was to begin, funds were put on hold due to the coronavirus pandemic. While funders understood the rationale for this, there were many fits and starts in the ensuing months to determine if/when funds would be disbursed, creating uncertainty for both funders and their grantee partners. By the time the Fund got word in August that there would in fact be state funds available, the funding was cut in half and some grantee organizations would be ending GOTC activities right as the funding would have arrived.

Several members of the Steering Committee were in regular contact with the State, demonstrating the benefit of working in a collaborative. One of the funders in close contact with the State shared, “We just looped in other foundations who were in a similar space who might be able to benefit from being a part of the conversation…and we’ve continued to share information in that way.”

Better communication about timelines from the State, funders said, would have been helpful, given that the State’s actions had negative effects on communities that were dependent on those dollars. Although the timeline and communication challenges were due in part to the pandemic, many of the concerns expressed by funders on this front preceded the pandemic.
GRANTEE EXPERIENCES & LESSONS

LEARNING & EVALUATION QUESTIONS

• What are the organizational characteristics of CBOs supported through the NYSCEF?
• What strategies were used by grantee partners to increase participation in the 2020 census?
• What strategies were the most fruitful?
• What challenges did grantees face in implementing their outreach efforts?
• How were grantee partners’ organizational capacities strengthened (if at all) through the Fund?
• What were grantee partners’ experiences with the NYSCEF?

DATA SOURCES

• Grantee survey (86 of 120 grantee partners responded; 72% response rate)
• In-depth interviews with 24 grantees
• Grantee reports

KEY FINDINGS

• Eighty-one percent of grantee partners identified service delivery/human services as one of their primary areas of focus; followed by advocacy (57%) and community organizing (35%).
• Fifty-six percent of grantee partners had no prior experience with the census; 71 percent had started preparing for the census before receiving their grant, some for as long as a year.
• Two-thirds (64%) of grantees conducted census outreach with modest support – $50,000 or less from all funding sources.
• Grantee partners focused primarily on the following hard-to-count populations: people living in low-income neighborhoods (84%); families with children 0-5 (77%); older adults (71%); and immigrants and refugees (70%).
• Seventy-four percent of grantees conducted outreach in a language other than English. Outreach was conducted in at least 39 different languages.
• Grantee partners made significant pivots to digital and virtual strategies due to COVID-19 but still perceived relational strategies, such as the use of trusted messengers and coalition-building, to be more effective.
• Limitations on in-person outreach and the Census Bureau’s changing timeline for completion posed major challenges for groups’ GOTC efforts. Protests for racial justice, as well as the racial inequities surfaced by the pandemic, created powerful messaging opportunities.
• Eighty-three percent of grantee partners said they built or deepened their expertise on the census. A similar percentage said they built or deepened their communications skills as well as their connections with community constituencies through their census work.
• Grantee partners reported overwhelmingly positive experiences with the NYSCEF (4.4 or higher on a five-point scale on 8 out of 9 items) and especially appreciated the Fund’s flexibility and early awards.
ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The NYSCEF funded a wide variety of organizations to support GOTC efforts in New York State, from libraries and community action agencies that served as community anchors to smaller community-based organizations serving specific geographic areas and/or population groups. In addition, the Fund supported a number of organizations that worked statewide or regionally and often times played a coordinating or technical assistance role engaging other grantee partners.

Of the 86 grantees who responded to the survey, the vast majority (81 percent) identified service delivery/human services as a primary area of work. Organizations also indicated advocacy (57 percent) and community organizing (35 percent) as primary areas of work.
CENSUS EXPERIENCE AND MOTIVATION

The majority of grantee organizations (56 percent) had no prior experience with the census. Thirty percent had participated in the previous census, while the remaining 14 percent had participated in the previous two census counts.

Grantees strongly endorsed the following goals for their work on Census 2020:

• Increase the count of historically undercounted populations (92 percent)
• Increase the voice and representation of their community (83 percent)
• Increase the resources available to their community (82 percent)

A smaller proportion of respondents indicated broader organizing objectives as goals:

• Expand our organization’s base (29 percent)
• Advance our organization’s power-building strategy (23 percent)

In open-ended responses and in-depth interviews, many organizations also mentioned the importance of educating their community about the importance of the census. Because so many organizations were engaged in the census for the first time, many noted that these efforts started among their own staff. As staff became more steeped in the importance of the census, they shared their knowledge with family members and friends.

Notably, a full 71 percent of grantee partners had engaged in planning, organizing, and/or strategizing efforts prior to receiving an award from the NYSCEF, some more than a year in advance.

“ If we don’t have a complete count, that will minimize the support that we get in our community. The implications of losing congressional seats are not getting adequate funding for education, for health care, and for all of the other quality of life issues that hit home [for our community.]”

NEW YORK CITY GRANTEE PARTNER

For example, some grantee partners got involved with local coalitions prior to their award; others began regular meetings with their local Census Bureau representatives and helped form local Complete Count Committees; some started to plant the seed among members of the media to ensure coverage of GOTC efforts; and still others had already started getting the word out to the communities they served.
CENSUS FUNDING

The vast majority of organizations (64 percent) conducted their GOTC efforts with modest support, receiving $50,000 or less from all funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TOTAL AMOUNT OF FUNDING</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ORGS</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 or less</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,001 - $50,000</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50,001 - $100,000</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100,001 - $200,000</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,001 - $300,000</td>
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<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than $1 million</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not respond</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

64% of grantees conducted their outreach with total funding of $50K or less
GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

The largest proportion of survey respondents (24 percent) indicated that their GOTC efforts included Long Island, while 21 percent indicated their outreach included Western New York.

Among the five boroughs of New York City, 15 organizations targeted Brooklyn in their outreach and 13 targeted Queens.

Data from open-ended responses, grantee interviews, and grant reports show that in many cases, grantee partners were highly targeted in their outreach, focusing on specific zip codes, neighborhoods, and even “micro-neighborhoods” with hard-to-count populations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GEOGRAPHIC AREA (Select all that apply)</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ORGS</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Long Island</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western New York</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hudson Valley</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City - Brooklyn</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital Region</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City - Queens</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central New York</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finger Lakes</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City - Bronx</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City - Manhattan</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York City - Staten Island</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohawk Valley</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Tier</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Country</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
People living in low-income communities (84 percent), families with children under the age of 5 (70 percent), older adults (71 percent), and immigrants and refugees (70 percent) were the population groups most frequently cited as the focus of organizations’ GOTC activities.

Given the large focus on immigrant and refugee communities, many grantee partners highlighted the importance of culturally and linguistically tailored GOTC strategies. Nearly three-quarters of organizations surveyed indicated that they conducted census outreach in languages other than English.

When asked to specify which languages, respondents identified 39 unique languages. Spanish, Arabic, and Haitian Creole were among those that were the most frequently cited.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HARD-TO-COUNT GROUP</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ORGS (N=86)</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People living in low-income neighborhoods</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Families with children, ages 0-5</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors/Older adults</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigrants and refugees</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with limited English proficiency</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young adults</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinx</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People living in rural areas</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People experiencing homelessness</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People with disabilities</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ+ individuals</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern and North Africans</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans and Tribal Communities</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pacific Islanders</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
GET OUT THE COUNT ACTIVITIES

In their grant proposals, organizations proposed a variety of outreach strategies, many of which relied on in-person engagement. The top three outreach strategies planned were: community education (55 percent), social media outreach via Facebook (48 percent), and the use of trusted messengers (36 percent).

COVID-19 required organizations to change their outreach strategies quickly. As one grantee partner put it, “Everything was a pivot.” In the end, the top three outreach strategies used were: social media outreach via Facebook (81 percent), community education (81 percent) and email outreach (61 percent).

Not surprisingly, in-person events, such as door-to-door canvassing, were conducted at lower levels than originally anticipated.

The degree to which groups had to pivot is evidenced by the percent difference in activities planned versus activities conducted. The percentage of organizations using digital and virtual forms of outreach, such as social media outreach, text banking and phone banking increased 15 percentage points or more.

As a grantee partner in Erie County shared, when the first stay-at-home directives began in March, “People were not thinking about the census, people were thinking about what was going on in this world.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUTREACH STRATEGY</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ORGS</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>NUMBER OF ORGS</th>
<th>PERCENT</th>
<th>DIFFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social media outreach via Facebook</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email outreach</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>61%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community education</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media outreach via Instagram</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text banking</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census outreach coupled with direct services</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition-building</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone banking</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual town halls</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media outreach via Twitter</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid media</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabling</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train the trainer services</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trusted messengers</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned media</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door-to-door canvassing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person town halls</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance centers</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grantee organizations themselves had to adjust quickly, transitioning staff to remote operations and adjusting their own home lives to care for children and elders, while also responding to the immediate economic and health needs of their communities.

As organizations got their bearings, they sought to figure out where people were and what they needed in such challenging times. A number of grantee organizations used NYSCEF grants to purchase and distribute personal protective equipment (PPE) and pair that with census outreach, with some even creating census-branded PPE. Many integrated census outreach with wellness checks and food distribution. Even organizations that did not typically provide direct services figured out ways to do so and/or partner with organizations engaged in such efforts.

As communities across the state slowly re-opened, organizations started to integrate more in-person outreach while following public health guidelines. Community action agencies, which provide services such as childcare, Head Start, and employment services, and already had long-established relationships with community members, were especially well-poised to integrate GOTC efforts through their existing relationships and set of services.

For many organizations, the biggest shift in GOTC efforts was the transition to digital and virtual outreach, via social media, Zoom, and phone banking. At the same time, a critical mass of organizations serving communities with limited broadband access (rural areas, as well as internet deserts in urban areas) did not have this luxury and instead doubled down on analog approaches, such as door hangers, lawn signs, and local newspaper and television advertising.

It is clear that organizations adapted in innovative ways to the new normal. Here are a few examples:

- SEPA Mujer in Long Island organized a census caravan on the East End of Long Island to “make some noise” about the census among Latinx communities.
- In an effort to meet people where they were, Opportunities for Otsego forged a new partnership with a birthing center and distributed census-branded burp cloths.
- The Buffalo-Erie County Public Library system encouraged its branches to do online story times for children that focused on counting and at the end of those story times, asked children to bring in their parents and guardians to remind them to complete the census.
- To reach children and families, the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes spearheaded an effort in which volunteers hand-delivered hundreds of candy goody bags in census tracts with low response rates and a high population of young families. The goody bags included coloring sheets and crayons with census themes.
PERCEIVED EFFECTIVENESS OF GET OUT THE COUNT ACTIVITIES

There is no way to know for certain which GOTC activities resulted in increased rates of census completion. However, as a proxy, we asked organizations to rate their perceptions of how effective strategies were on a four-point scale (not at all effective; slightly effective; moderately effective; very effective).

All strategies, except for outreach via Instagram, were rated as a 3 or higher. Interestingly, relational strategies such as the use of trusted messengers, coalition-building, and connecting census outreach with wellness checks and other direct services ranked the highest in their perceived effectiveness, while digital and virtual approaches tended to rank lower, even though they were employed at higher levels due to social distancing considerations.

Trusted Messengers/Youth Ambassadors

Across regions, grantees stressed the importance of engaging trusted messengers, such as faith leaders, elected officials, librarians, and even radio station DJs. One grantee partner shared, “I think one of the biggest lessons learned [was] about the importance of that trusted messenger that’s a local partner. We said it, but we didn’t do enough of it. It needs to be super hyper-local and identifying who your partner is going to be [needs to happen] way, way earlier in the process. We cannot be sitting around while the questionnaires are going out and [asking], ‘Who are the trusted messengers?’”

Several grantees, across different regions, lauded the engagement of young people in their GOTC activities, crediting them with bringing social media savvy, as well as fresh energy, to the effort, and proving to be effective in reaching young people, as well as elders, in their communities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOTC ACTIVITY</th>
<th>AVERAGE RATING</th>
<th>(1 = not at all effective, 4= very effective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trusted messengers</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coalition-building</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Census outreach coupled with direct services</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train the trainer services</td>
<td>3.52</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance centers</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community education</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual town halls</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical assistance</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned media</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tabling</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid media</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-person town halls</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone banking</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Door-to-door canvassing</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Digital outreach via email</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media outreach via Facebook</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text banking</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media outreach via Twitter</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media outreach via Instagram</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grantees rated all their strategies as highly effective, but relational strategies were rated more effective than digital and virtual approaches.
Targeted & Customized Messaging
Data from interviews with grantee partners showed that they were deeply attuned to crafting targeted census messaging that spoke to the needs and interests of their communities, whether it was translating materials into specific languages and dialects or pointing out the relevance of census resources to their particular areas of concern (such as housing, health care, or education).

One group in Central New York created 10 different versions of its radio ads, with the understanding that “[census messaging] means nothing to people, unless you frame it in a way that does mean something to them.” Likewise, another grantee based in Brooklyn worked with graphic designers to integrate the use of culturally competent images. In Long Island, one grantee partner created videos specific to each of the Native American tribal communities residing on the Island so that each tribe had a sense of a message that “was speaking directly to them.”

Importantly, a number of grantee partners stressed the heterogeneity within the communities they serve. One grantee said, “Even within our community, you can stratify [individuals] into smaller groups by need, by capacity, by skill, by vulnerability, by disadvantage.” Another group focused on getting out the count in African-American communities designed specific outreach for different segments of their community: men, women, immigrants, seniors, LGBTQ+, etc.

Community Education
With respect to community education efforts, many organizations noted the misinformation surrounding the census, including fears that completing the census could affect housing, child support payments, immigration status, and so on. Some organizations found that conducting a tutorial of completing the census and showing them the actual information collected, along with assurances from lawyers and other experts, quelled fears.

“...The order of success always goes from an in-person conversation, to phones, to texts. We were planning to do as much door knocking as possible and then we could not do that anymore. We pivoted exclusively to phone banking and text banking, and then the little bit of socially distancing in-person eventually, but the crux of what we did was really text and phone banking.

We ended up reaching far more people than we would have if we had only been able to do in person, which is interesting. Given the wide geography, [text and phone banking] let us have more success, even though we used less effective contact methods because we were just able to do so much more of it.”

Hudson Valley Grantee
**Digital Strategies**

Although most groups pivoted to digital outreach strategies, and a number of them had great success with it, these were generally perceived to be less effective. Several grantee partners also noted that though groups pivoted effectively, initially the pivot happened almost entirely in English, even though grantees’ originally planned outreach strategies had accounted for linguistic diversity. That shifted over time, but some noted that the pivot could have occurred earlier.

For some who were new to phone and text banking, they started to see new possibilities for their work. As one grantee partner described, “It’s difficult to describe, but [text banking] is like organizing on steroids. It is such an exponential communicating device. It’s unbelievable the number of people you can reach that we could never have the capacity to reach with phone banking.”

**Partnership with Businesses**

The survey did not ask directly about partnerships with businesses, but several partners identified this as a bright spot in their outreach, with potential for partnering with both larger corporate entities to local mom-and-pop stores. For example, organizations partnered with local grocery stores, banks, and restaurants in their communities to get the word out.
GET OUT THE COUNT CHALLENGES (AND OPPORTUNITIES)

The limitations placed on in-person outreach due to COVID-19, by far, presented the biggest challenge for grantee partners. In rural areas, staff of some grantee organizations did not have reliable broadband access, limiting their ability to transition to remote work.

The Census Bureau’s changing timeline for completion and the corollary legal challenges, was also a major challenge.

In May 2020, George Floyd, an unarmed Black man died in Minneapolis after he was pinned to the ground by a police officer’s knee. His death sparked nationwide protests for racial justice. Though many organizations supported and participated in these protests, this work generally did not pose challenges to census outreach and in fact created opportunities to underscore the importance of the census.

As one grantee partner noted, “[The protests] opened up so much more conversation about the role of white supremacy and the way structural racism operates to minimize access to political power and resources for nonwhite groups. [The protests] opened up a very organic community wide discussion about what a just society actually looks like.”

For some, the protests reinforced the importance of viewing the census through a social justice lens. A New York City-based grantee partner reflected, “A lot of us knew [the census] was a civil rights issue, but we weren’t fully leaning into the language. And the lesson from that moment was, the language is here and we need to use it.” A Long Island grantee partner saw this in action at a march in Long Island, where protest leaders were telling people, “We have to vote, and we have to be counted.” As the grantee partner observed, “The counting piece was really moving to me because it spoke to the fact that the message had really gotten out there in an important way.”

In both the case of the pandemic and the uprisings, grantee partners indicated it was a powerful way to reinforce the importance of the census and to activate volunteers, particularly around phone and text banking, who felt a desire to contribute in a meaningful way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOTC CHALLENGES</th>
<th>AVERAGE RATING (1=Not at all to 4=Very Much)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Limitations on in-person outreach due to COVID-19</td>
<td>3.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The census Bureau’s changing timeline for completion</td>
<td>3.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing organizational priorities due to COVID-19</td>
<td>2.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of staff capacity due to COVID-19</td>
<td>2.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of technological infrastructure for virtual outreach</td>
<td>2.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of adequate funding to complete census outreach</td>
<td>2.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing organizational priorities due to protests for racial justice</td>
<td>1.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competing organizational priorities due to GOTV commitments</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

As organizations sought to GOTC, the biggest challenges they faced in getting community members to complete the census were related to lack of trust in government and fear among immigrant communities. These fears were generally related to how the government would use the data and how it might affect housing, child support payments, and immigration status. Many grantees reported that their communities received significant misinformation about the census.

One grantee partner shared this anecdote to illustrate the level of misinformation in her community: “I was doing a radio interview, and this woman called in. And she said, ‘During the last census cycle, 2010, the enumerator came to my door twice. The second time they came, I ran them, not just off of my floor, I ran them out of my apartment complex because I didn’t want them harassing my neighbors. I thought they were there to cause harm.’”

In some communities, both urban and rural, the lack of broadband access and the online nature of the census were also challenging. Even in cases where connectivity exists, lack of comfort or skill with technology, another facet of the digital divide, also served as barriers to census completion for community members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHALLENGES FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS</th>
<th>AVERAGE RATING (1=Not at all to 4=Very Much)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of trust in government</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear among immigrant communities</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of broadband access</td>
<td>2.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficulty navigating the online (versus paper) format of the census</td>
<td>2.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ORGANIZATIONAL SKILLS & CAPACITIES

Census Expertise
Given that more than half of grantee organizations had no prior experience with the census, it is not surprising that 62 percent of organizations said they built new expertise around the census, while 21 percent said they deepened or leveraged existing capacity.

A grantee partner in Central New York shared, “Even though we thought we knew how important the census was, I don’t think any of us fully understood until we dove into how the census impacts us. I think doing this work will, for the next ten years, keep the census very much in the forefront for us.” Another grantee partner, whose focus is on public housing, echoed a similar sentiment, “The census work allowed us to open our eyes to the process and to the tentacles of how government works.”

Communications
Perhaps due to the pivots required, 83 percent of organizations said they either built new capacity or leveraged existing capacity related to communications. Several grantee organizations indicated that though the census was the impetus, they were already using these new skills for other work within their organizations. One organization was able to translate the text banking it did via the census into a new approach to fundraising, while another group was able to transition its base of 500 text banking census volunteers to other GOTV and civic engagement campaigns.

Organizational Capacity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expertise on the Census</th>
<th>Leveraged existing capacity</th>
<th>Built new capacity</th>
<th>Did not leverage or build in this area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deeper Connections with Constituencies Our Organization Serves</th>
<th>Leveraged existing capacity</th>
<th>Built new capacity</th>
<th>Did not leverage or build in this area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>44</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to Collaborate with a Diverse Group of Actors</th>
<th>Leveraged existing capacity</th>
<th>Built new capacity</th>
<th>Did not leverage or build in this area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to Work with State and/or Local Govt</th>
<th>Leveraged existing capacity</th>
<th>Built new capacity</th>
<th>Did not leverage or build in this area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communications Expertise</th>
<th>Leveraged existing capacity</th>
<th>Built new capacity</th>
<th>Did not leverage or build in this area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to Work with National and/or Regional Orgs</th>
<th>Leveraged existing capacity</th>
<th>Built new capacity</th>
<th>Did not leverage or build in this area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Leadership Development
A number of organizations hired community members and/or young people to engage in their census outreach. These individuals often developed or deepened their public speaking and organizing skills as result, thus creating new capacities for the organization and new capacity for the community at large, by creating meaningful roles for them.

Relatedly, several organizations noted that the census work helped them mobilize volunteers and create new systems for managing and supporting volunteers in the ongoing work of the organization. One grantee organization created a Slack channel for census volunteers, a system that has now been integrated into other campaigns, allowing the organization to “reach thousands of people, way more than we could have done if just our staff was doing direct outreach alone by themselves.”

A grantee partner in Long Island spoke to the ways in which leadership capacity was built in her community, “The [NYSCEF] funding didn’t just lift up the census. It really lifted up awareness, education, and leadership regionally. So many people that I met two years ago who were in certain communities, they just blossomed and became these powerhouses of information and these powerhouses of passion.”

Connection to New Constituencies
Because of the unique nature of the census – it is literally relevant to everyone – it lent itself to a wide range of partnerships that might not have occurred otherwise, seeding new opportunities to come together for future civic engagement efforts, as well as community betterment activities more broadly. More than a third of organizations said they were able to build new relationships with constituencies they serve and with allied stakeholders. This included relationships with Census Bureau representatives, who provided resources and guidance. Some organizations also partnered with the Bureau to hire people from their communities as census workers.

A grantee partner in Long Island shared that the census work brought together the Tribal communities in a way that helped break down some of the tensions of the past, with agreement that they would like to continue working together in the future. One grantee partner in Queens, though it does not identify as an advocacy group, has since co-hosted candidate forums and engaged in voter registration efforts as an outgrowth of its work on the census. A Long Island grantee with deep roots in the Latinx community developed new partnerships with school districts, which it now hopes to work with more closely to support the families they serve.

Many grantee partners reported that their work on the census helped connect them to a variety of informal groups in their communities, from cultural associations to block clubs, that were not necessarily formal 501c3 organizations. Grantees were able to share resources and information with these smaller, informal groups, while expanding their outreach capacity. For grantee partners who were involved with local Complete Count Committees, this was also a way to forge new, meaningful relationships with partners, given that many met for a year or more prior to the census.

Confidence in Own Capacity
Because the census was such a significant undertaking, one that often required hiring new staff and/or mobilizing volunteers, several organizations reflected on the confidence it gave them in their own capacity. A New York City-based organization shared, “We’ve learned a lot about ourselves, of what we as an organization can take on. And it is really because we got this opportunity to be able to do this kind of work and see that we can do it.”

“The census was this beautiful inspiring project that brought people together in a very special way. It’s not just about how we benefited from it in terms of relationships. It’s really been a tremendous vehicle for cross-sector collaboration, communication, respect, and understanding each other’s struggles, and challenges, and assets in a better way.”

LONG ISLAND GRANTEE
COLLABORATIONS

One of the hopes for the 2020 census work was that it would bring organizations into deeper partnership with other organizations. Nearly 60 percent of grantee organizations indicated they had collaborated or planned to collaborate on COVID-19 response, while 45 percent indicated they had done so or planned to do so around get out the vote and other civic engagement efforts.

Relatively few organizations planned to collaborate on census related advocacy efforts or redistricting.

We built an army, quite frankly. We built this army of census ambassadors. And we now have incredible cross-sector relationships in our region across business, government, education, faith-based leadership, you name it. People are working together in Long Island in a way they haven’t before because of the census.”

LONG ISLAND GRANTEE

COLLABORATED (OR PLAN TO COLLABORATE) ON THE FOLLOWING: NUMBER OF ORGS (N=86) PERCENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>COVID-19 response</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>59.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GOTV and civic engagement efforts</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy related to shifts in census operations</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy against inclusion of the citizenship question on the census</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>27.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing policy changes affecting the 2020 census</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(for example, creating a citizenship database from administrative records)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redistricting</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocating for changes to census questions for the next census</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Census Bureau efforts, such as the American Community Survey</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jeff Behler, Regional Director at the US Census Bureau, presented at the New York Counts 2020 conference in Syracuse in January 2020 which attracted census partners from across the State.

Children under 5 years of age are one of the identified hard to count populations.
EXPERIENCE WITH NYSCEF
Grantees were asked to rate their level of agreement on a series of statements about the NYSCEF on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Grantee partners gave NYSCEF high marks on all aspects of the fund, with most indicating that they would not have been able to do this work otherwise.

Flexibility
In interviews, grantee organizations across the board consistently noted the value of the Fund’s flexibility, responsiveness, and rapid distribution of funds, all of which helped support their success amid a difficult set of conditions.

The Fund’s flexibility, particularly compared to other funders who had more rigid requirements, stood out. Grantee partners were able to pivot nimbly without much bureaucracy. In addition, grantee partners gave the Fund high marks for responsiveness, noting that any questions or concerns they had were addressed quickly.

Early Funding
First and second round grantees emphasized the importance of receiving grant funds early, several months prior to intensive GOTC efforts. This allowed organizations to hire staff, train staff, and make preparations to hit the ground running without having to advance funds that they may not have. Although survey respondents gave mixed responses about the extent to which NYSCEF funding helped them leverage additional grants, those that received funding earlier tended to indicate that they were, in fact, able to procure additional funding by being able to demonstrate the work they had already done through the NYSCEF grant and make their case for building on those efforts.

Many also indicated that they found briefings, resources, and information shared by the Fund early in the process to be helpful in generating ideas for outreach and getting a lay of the census landscape.

I would love to work with them all the time. I really wish all donors were like that.”
NEW YORK CITY GRANTEE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EXPERIENCE WITH NYSCEF</th>
<th>AVERAGE RATING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grant funds allowed us to do work we would not have been able to do otherwise.</td>
<td>4.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The application process was simple and straightforward.</td>
<td>4.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fund was flexible and adaptive in light of changing conditions.</td>
<td>4.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant funds were received promptly.</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reporting requirements for the grant were manageable and reasonable.</td>
<td>4.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There was a clear point of contact for questions and concerns.</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant funds gave us the freedom and flexibility to try new outreach strategies.</td>
<td>4.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communications from the Fund were informative and helpful.</td>
<td>4.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The NYSCEF grant helped our organization leverage funding from other sources.</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Suggestions for Improvement

In interviews and open-ended questions, grantee partners offered several suggestions for improvement. The most substantive and consistent comment was a recommendation to start even earlier. Indeed, more than 70 percent of grantee partners reported working on census-related activities before receiving funding from NYSCEF, with many of them starting a full year ahead of the actual count. Getting started earlier would allow for a more fulsome effort with ample time to plan and prepare for GOTC efforts.

A critical mass of smaller, grassroots organizations also implored the Fund to double down on its commitment to community-based organizations who are closest to community. They noted that some of the larger organizations that received funding from the Fund and/or other sources did not seem to have much of a footprint on GOTC efforts. As one grantee partner said, "Giving money to a capacity building effort or a statewide table can actually be less efficient at a certain point. Ultimately, what makes a difference in stuff like this is on-the-ground, direct outreach, and I think there could be more investment in that."

In New York City, there were multiple funders that were operating somewhat independently, requiring duplication of efforts by grantee organizations who were applying to multiple streams of funding for similar purposes. Grantee partners suggested greater coordination among funders to help make the overall GOTC effort more efficient and effective.

Grantees also believed funders could support their work by helping to convene grantees for information sharing.

Some grantees also advocated for larger grants, resources permitting. One grantee in Long Island stated, “All the funding we got, which was great, probably ran out in the first four months for the amount of work we did. It did not stop us from doing the work, of course. But it was a tremendous undertaking, to do it right is a tremendous undertaking.”

In addition, a few minor suggestions for improvement were offered:

- For grantees that received funding in one round, but not another, it would have been helpful to have more clarity on the criteria for selection.

- One grantee expressed a desire to see a more structured reporting format because in her words, “when you have a million things to do, it’s so much easier just to say, ‘tell me what you want.’”

- In some localities, there was competition between hiring being done by CBOs and the U.S. Census Bureau, with the U.S. Census Bureau offering higher rates of pay. To support their grantee partners better, funders could ensure that their grant funding allows for comparable rates of pay.
EXPERIENCE WITH NYS FUNDING

Forty-eight survey respondents indicated they pursued or applied for NYS funding, with 29 indicating they received funds. Those that received funding were asked to rate their level of agreement on a series of statements about the NYS on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Organizations gave high marks for ease of completing the application process, while they gave mixed ratings to the remaining items.

In interviews, grantees expressed frustration with the late disbursement of funds, with some also indicating they ultimately did not apply for state funding because of the timing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AVERAGE RATING</th>
<th>(1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once we completed the pre-qualification process, the application was easy to complete.</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organization had a clear understanding of what activities the State would fund.</td>
<td>3.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We were notified of the status of our application in a timely fashion.</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The pre-qualification process was straightforward.</td>
<td>3.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds were received quickly once the contracting process was complete.</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The contracting process was easy to complete.</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We have a clear understanding of reporting requirements.</td>
<td>3.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York State was explicit about which organizations would be eligible to receive funding.</td>
<td>3.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication about the availability of funds was clear and timely.</td>
<td>3.29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Funders present at the New York Counts conference in June 2018 in New York City to discuss philanthropy’s role in supporting a fair and accurate census count.

Fund members, particularly Steering Committee members, lauded their experience with the Fund, with many describing it as eye-opening and transformative. Not all, perhaps not even most, funder collaboratives inspire such enthusiasm. In many ways, the NYSCEF as a test case for potential of statewide collaboration was a resounding success. Indeed, almost everyone came away with an increased interest in statewide collaboration.

One funder observed, “What a smart play to use census every 10 years to build a bunch of collaboratives because then once you build a collaborative, once you get to know each other and trust each other, you start saying, ‘Oh, you’re doing work on that thing. We do a little of that too.’ You start the conversation with census and then you go deeper. Every 10 years, philanthropy should take as much advantage of census for relationship building as possible.”

Another member said, “Ultimately, at the end of the day, all we wanted to show was the power of philanthropy coming together to do something positive. For us, the fact that people can see that their place matters, but that state matters too.”

Successful collaborations require head and heart.

Fund members were asked what contributed to such a positive experience with the NYSCEF. The responses reflected a combination of both values and operational practices that contributed to a collaborative, warm, and adaptive culture rooted in trust.

Even Fund members who joined later in the process reported feeling connected to the group, which speaks to how deeply rooted the identity and culture of this collaborative became engrained in such a short amount of time.

And while values such as respect and honesty grounded the work of the Fund, many also flagged the importance of creating operational processes that helped the group accomplish its goals, from a commitment to honoring deadlines to making sure there was clarity on action items. Fund members demonstrated a high level of engagement to the Fund and its goals, with one member stating it was full of the “A’ squad”—people who were smart, talented, and committed to getting things done.

"The work is important and it’s serious and it’s complicated and it has a deep impact on the state of our lives, and in the midst of that, there was still time for memes.  

But you know, it makes a difference. That’s a cue to humanity, right?  

We are people doing this work and when it gets stressful, when it gets complicated, when we lay out these amazing, well thought out plans, and then they go to crap because the world is on fire, we need to be able to break the tension with a laugh, regroup quickly, and come up with a new plan. 

Something as simple as a meme or a joke, or just like a light intro into a meeting helped to establish that nimbleness.”

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER
Use Engage New York as a springboard for future collaboration.

Some funders observed that it was sometimes hard to know where the NYSCEF ended and Engage New York began, given the shared goals of the two entities and the overlap in membership. Though not all NYSCEF are members of Engage New York, given Lisa Fasolo Frishman’s leadership role with both entities, many observed that Engage New York became stronger because of the census work and should be used as the natural point of entry for future statewide collaboration.

As one Steering Committee member shared, “I am mindful that if everybody walks away, we will have to rebuild it again. And I am always mindful that rebuilding something take a lot more time, energy, and money than trying to keep something going.”

Collaborative Characteristics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>VALUES</th>
<th>OPERATIONS</th>
<th>CULTURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mutual respect</td>
<td>Weekly meetings</td>
<td>Strong commitment by all members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment to equity</td>
<td>Clear agendas</td>
<td>High levels of trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honesty</td>
<td>Quick follow-up to meetings with action items</td>
<td>Shared leadership (“An organic way of stepping back/stepping in”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data-Informed decision-making</td>
<td>Adherence to timelines</td>
<td>Humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear purpose with a desire to get the work done</td>
<td>Information and resource sharing</td>
<td>Warmth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of ego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Adaptive and nimble</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Be attentive to which issues are ripe for successful collaboration.

In many ways, census was the perfect issue for statewide collaboration due to its wide applicability to the work of virtually any foundation, regardless of how progressive or mainstream it is and regardless of its issue areas of interest. A Steering Committee member from upstate New York stated, “It’s a great place to build collaboratives because you can be agnostic about how people are going to use the information afterward. You all just want it to be accurate.”

Most issues will not have such broad resonance, and in interviews, funders said they would have to consider the time and staff capacity involved; their board’s interest and support for statewide collaboration; and the potential benefits for their communities. It is expected that other statewide collaboratives might engage a smaller group of funders or require greater sensitivity to navigating different views.

“Engage New York was the cafeteria table in middle school where we all met each other. Census Equity Fund is like the party we threw when we realized we would have fun together.

Giving away the money together, it was energizing. Learning about what folks in Buffalo were doing or Syracuse were doing around the same census work, I think it really built momentum for Engage New York in a tremendous way.”

STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBER
Start early.

“I felt like everything was six months too late all the time,” lamented one grantee partner.

The most consistent recommendation from literally every single stakeholder interviewed for this evaluation was to initiate support for census efforts earlier. Thoughts varied on how early, but many suggested at least five years prior.

By starting earlier, funders could lay the groundwork for their collaboration, including establishing a clear set of goals and activities and determining what kind of staffing is needed for the Fund.

This would help support funder recruitment and education efforts, particularly in regions of the state that are less well-represented, as well as fundraising efforts more broadly. Funders felt it was important to start developing relationships with funders across different regions of the state early to engage them around the importance of the census and get a sense of their potential commitment, even if it is not a monetary one.

An earlier start would also allow for initial grants to be awarded sooner, an act that would align more closely with the census when grantee partners begin planning for the census, given that many in this cycle had started their census planning a full year before they received funding from the NYSCEF.

Support LUCA efforts.
The Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) gives state, local, and tribal governments the opportunity to review and comment on the Census Bureau’s address files. The Central New York Community Foundation supported Onondaga County’s LUCA efforts. Given how critical it is for the census to have accurate address information to conduct its count, foundations can begin connecting with the state and their local municipalities to find out about the status of its LUCA operations and how philanthropy can support their efforts.

How Funders Can Ramp Up Early For Census 2030

- Refine/establish a mission statement and goals for the Fund.
- Begin funder recruitment, especially in less well represented regions of the state.
- Educate peer funders on the importance of the census.
- Identify the skills and expertise needed to operate the Fund. Hire consultants to support those efforts.
- Engage nonprofit leaders to understand the most helpful role the Fund can play in supporting their work.
- Establish timelines and key milestones for the Fund.
- Begin raising money to support the Fund. Fund/support municipalities in their LUCA efforts.
- Make early grants to core infrastructure and intermediary organizations to prepare for the 2030 census.

Keep stakeholders aware of the census and its implications for communities.

Because of its unique circumstances, the 2020 census inspired a burst of engagement, including from many organizations and funders who had no
prior experience with the census. As one grantee stated, as energizing as bursts are, “bursts fade.” With the network and relationships NYSCEF built through the 2020 census, it has an opportunity to keep the conversation and the relationships going by bringing people together for periodic online or in-person briefings, or even email updates, to keep the census on everyone’s radar in “off” years. Representatives for the U.S. Census Bureau interviewed for this report, as well as other anchor institutions focused on civic engagement, were eager to contribute to this type of effort.

For example, the American Community Survey, which is conducted every two years, has significant implications for communities. Decisions about what questions are on the census and how they are worded, including the race/ethnicity question, are up for discussion many years prior to the actual count. As data from the previous census are released, there are different ways in which communities can use that data to inform their decision-making. And there are often ongoing litigation battles around various aspects of the census that have important implications for communities.

**Invest in civic engagement efforts writ large.**

“One of the things that came out of our census work is that we managed to educate so many residents not to take democracy for granted, that we have to work for it. And we have to continue that work to make sure people know that they have to work for it,” asserted a New York City-based grantee partner.

As many grantee partners said, getting counted is one component of sustaining a vibrant democracy. Building an informed citizenry able to make choices about who represents them and how they can have input in how resources flow to their communities is a long-term effort, not something that happens once every ten years.

Many of the hardest to count populations do not trust government and do not understand how the census operates. To be approached, seemingly out of the blue, every ten years, to share data with the government is a non-starter for many.

Organizations on the ground, as well as many allies, advocated for a long-term commitment to civic engagement, building a pipeline of organizations that can support civic engagement and civic literacy writ large and position census efforts for greater success.

As a grantee partner in Long Island explained, “Even if you were to go into 2030 and have a whole lot of great places to start, you still have to build that trust. You still have to build that connectivity. You have to build that energy that is so vital to keeping people engaged and developing leaders in this space. This kind of funding shouldn’t just be project-based because it’s so important that once you develop these infrastructures that it continues and gets transformed into something else that supports the region.”

Some also noted that the census got community action agencies and other direct services organizations – organizations that do not traditionally do civic engagement work – deeply involved and that they expect that at least some of these organizations will integrate civic engagement into their work.

**Strengthen communication and coordination among census stakeholders.**

New York State was fortunate to have many entities support the census – NYSCEF, other philanthropists who operated outside of the NYSCEF, New York City, New York State, New York Counts 2020, nonprofits who were outside of NY Counts 2020, county governments, and Complete Count Committees. Many observed that it would be helpful to have more coordination among the entities and to the extent possible, a centralized repository for information and resources.
What that coordination looks like is up for discussion. Some suggested that NYSCEF exist as a subcommittee of New York Counts 2020. And while New York Counts 2020 had a funder representative, NYSCEF did not have a nonprofit representative at the table, which some thought would be important to signal a more participatory approach, while also maintaining more consistent contact. At the same time, funders noted that there are tensions within the nonprofit ecosystem and that it is mindful to be aware of dynamics that can complicate true partnership and collaboration. Others agreed for the need for more coordination and communication but also felt that funders and nonprofits have distinct roles and that it is important for each to stay in their lane and play to their respective strengths.

In addition, some argued for a table that represented a broad coalition of stakeholders – philanthropy, nonprofit, government, and the U.S. Census Bureau itself to coordinate efforts.

A number of grantees also expressed interest in opportunities to connect with one another more to be able to exchange strategies, as well as tools and resources to minimize duplication of effort. Some grantees were able to get this support via New York Counts 2020, but a critical mass of organizations were not a part of this coalition and felt like they had to figure things out on their own. Although the Fund had hoped to bring together grantees, other entities held convenings to bring together nonprofits and the Fund did not want to be duplicative. In the next iteration of the NYSCEF, the Fund can scan the landscape, make sure the nonprofit organizations on their distribution list (whether they are funded or not) are aware of these opportunities and seek to fill in gaps as needed.

“...There is a three-centuries-long lift as it pertains to the knowledge gap about what the census is, the trust gap as it pertains to having very historically grounded reasons for not wanting to share any information with the government, not trusting the government at all.

If you know someone who’s 57 years or older, they’re older than integration in this country, which means they’re older than our access to these spaces. So, that’s what you’re up against.

It can never just be a census education campaign. It has to be, “How does census fit in with voting rights, fit in with redistricting? Oh, what is redistricting? How does it fit in with holding my elected official accountable? And is that even something that I can do? Are there ways for me to do that?”

So, you have all of these pieces of the Americana body politic that when you understand them, they fit together rather seamlessly. But when someone’s just knocking on your door giving you a census flyer, that’s so easy to ignore. And ignoring it feels like self-preservation.”

NEW YORK CITY GRANTEE
Build relationships with local and county governments; seed Complete Count Committees.

There was wide variation in the strength and efficacy of Complete Count Committees, but a critical mass of both grantees and funders who were deeply involved in such efforts believed that deeper relationships with local government had the potential to strengthen future GOTC efforts in a variety of ways.

They believed such partnerships could build and strengthen the local infrastructure for civic engagement, inclusive of census outreach; support counties by helping them move money more nimbly; and make the case more powerfully for the ways in which the census supports community and human services. One Steering Committee member suggested forging a partnership with the New York State Association of Counties could facilitate such partnerships at scale.

Some funders also noted that building relationships with local government is an opportunity to re-imagine the relationship between philanthropy and government, which may simply see foundations as a source of money, rather than partners who have expertise, knowledge, and skills to offer.

Continue to prioritize grassroots organizations, while also supporting larger organizations that can help build capacity.

With the critical role of trusted messengers in GOTC efforts, both grantee partners and funders discussed the importance of prioritizing grassroots organizations who have authentic relationships in the community.

Interestingly, a number of these grassroots organizations partnered with even smaller, informal entities, such as cultural associations and block clubs, with much success. As one grantee partner asserted, “Don’t discredit the little guys, because they can make a big impact. Because they are small and there is a familiarity, they are that trusted voice. You can get a lot of bang for your buck.”

At the same time, organizations like the New York Civic Engagement Table and the New York Immigration Coalition create efficiencies by developing resources, such as toolkits and media, that can be used across the state. These organizations also provide valuable technical assistance and capacity-building resources to smaller organizations.

Invest in digital literacy and broadband access.

Although investments in digital literacy and broadband access may seem tangential, grantees raised these issues with consistency across urban, suburban, and rural regions. For many of the hardest to count populations – people living in low-income neighborhoods, immigrants, people in rural communities – the digital divide is deep.

As the census moves online and as digital outreach strategies are increasingly becoming the norm, improving broadband infrastructure and tackling the problem of internet deserts not only benefits GOTC efforts but benefits communities more broadly, giving them better access to health care and other social services. Grantee partners observed that so many communities are being left behind and the “infrastructure has got to be built.”

Discuss how best to support advocacy efforts.

Given all the threats to the census, the Fund supported a number of advocacy efforts. Indeed, the 2020 census illuminated the various ways in which the census can be compromised, prompting one grantee partner to ask, “How can we create laws that protect the census so it’s untouchable?”

It is unclear to what extent philanthropy made a difference in national advocacy efforts, although there is some evidence that NYSCEF helped keep pressure on the state to release its funding, however belatedly.
Can philanthropy play a productive role in census advocacy? One veteran of policy described the state and federal government milieu as “ruthless,” and that if philanthropy really wants to make a dent, it must be prepared to be much more sophisticated in its approach.

Another funder with deep census expertise argued that ultimately the federal government should be resourcing GOTC efforts. Rather than philanthropy spending its money on supporting these efforts with their relatively modest dollars, funders could make more of an impact by using their collective voice and resources to advocate for greater federal funding. As one Steering Committee member reflected, “I do wonder if more or different advocacy might have been needed.” Although this evaluation does not provide any clear answers, it would behoove the members of NYSCEF to think more deeply from the get-go about whether or not it wants to engage in advocacy and if so, what form will it take? Community foundations, who have more leeway than independent foundations when it comes to advocacy, may be able to play a particular leadership role in such efforts. In addition, a number of nonprofits were at the forefront of advocacy efforts, potentially creating opportunities for funders to work in coordination with nonprofit leaders around advocacy goals.

**FUND STRUCTURE**

**Build on the successes of the existing structure.**

Fund members gave high marks to the structure of the Fund, particularly the Steering Committee, Grantmaking Committee, and Regional Grantmaking Committee. The size of the Steering Committee, about 10-12 voting members, representing a balanced cross-section of the state, worked well. The breakdown of five regional grantmaking committees bringing their recommendations to the overall Grantmaking Committee also worked well. The Trust, as an administrative home, also received high marks.

To the extent that the bureaucracy of a large institution like the Trust can sometimes create complications, adopting a hybrid approach for grants administration with a smaller, more flexible foundation, such as the Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes, represented a nimble response. The next iteration of the Fund can likely use a similar structure with minor tweaks.

**Assess capacity needed and ascribe roles and responsibilities accordingly.**

As one Steering Committee member said of the Fund, “Everyone owns it and no one owns it.” The observation speaks to the value of taking time up front to clarify roles and responsibilities, particularly if the Fund decides to expand or change its scope. Lisa Fasolo Frishman and Michael Remaley provided core consulting support, while Patricia Swann as the Fund chair also carried a significant load. Although things generally ran smoothly, Swann carried a disproportionate workload, and at times, there was duplication in how consultants performed their roles.

For the next iteration of the NYSCEF, it will be helpful to articulate the capacity needed upfront and develop clarity on who is doing what, with an eye toward lessening administrative work for the Fund chair.
Revisit sub-committee structure.
Much of the work of the Education and External Relations Committee phased out over time. In the next iteration of the Fund, these activities could be coordinated more efficiently by the Fund consultant(s) with support from the Steering Committee as needed.

Consider how to engage non-donor foundations.
Some smaller foundations were disappointed they could not contribute more financially, but believed they could contribute in other ways, for example, by helping to recruit and engage funders in their region or providing input on potential grantees in under-resourced parts of the state.

As one Steering Committee member espoused, “Let’s try to bring people into the tent to say, ‘Hey, this is what we’re doing. We want you to be involved, not just your financial contributions, but we want your ideas. We want your connections. We want to make sure that we’re hitting all the corners we need to hit.” To this end, NYSCEF may want to consider ways to meaningfully engage foundations who may not be in a position to contribute financially to the Fund or commit to sitting on the Steering Committee.

Explore evaluation and learning opportunities during the course of the Fund’s work.
The original evaluation workplan included a mid-point grantee survey to help inform the Fund’s grantmaking in the third and fourth rounds. Due to the pandemic, the mid-point survey was scrapped, but some funders felt that in the future it would be helpful to have opportunities to learn along the way to inform their decision-making.

In other states, evaluation teams held learning sessions with grantee partners early in the process and conducted baseline surveys that would allow them to better track process and assess impact. At the same time, the Fund will need to balance any learning and evaluation efforts with the potential time burden on already stretched grantees.

Build in opportunities to learn about different parts of the state.
Before the pandemic hit, there were plans to hold some of the Fund’s meetings in different parts of the state and to combine those with learning opportunities. As part of the ongoing effort to learn about the diversity of the state and its communities, funders were interested in opportunities to do site visits so they could have a better first-hand sense of the possibilities for connection and collaboration, while also gaining an understanding of how local contexts are unique.
# APPENDIX A: GRANT AWARDS

## PHASE 1 GRANTEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Asian American Federation</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
<td>State/Multi-Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Immigration Coalition, Inc.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The New School</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Health and Welfare Council of Long Island, Inc.</td>
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<td>Craig Newmark Graduate School of Journalism CUNY Foundation, Inc.</td>
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<td>Partnership for the Public Good, Inc.</td>
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<td>Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government, University at Albany SUNY</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>$538,000</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

## PHASE 2 GRANTEES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grantee</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Rural and Migrant Ministries, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buffalo and Erie County Public Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Center for Independence of the Disabled in New York, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Care Council of Suffolk, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Community Voices Heard</td>
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<td>Mekong NYC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ocean Bay Community Development Corporation</td>
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<td>Open Buffalo Inc.</td>
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<td>Pro Action of Steuben and Yates, Inc.</td>
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<td>Staten Island Community Job Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>VOCAL -NY</td>
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<td>Youth Ministries for Peace and Justice</td>
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<td>Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson Education Fund</td>
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<td>United Community Centers, Inc.</td>
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<td>International Institute of Buffalo, Inc.</td>
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<td>Engage New York</td>
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<td>Family Community Life Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>Organization Name</td>
<td>Amount</td>
<td>Region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>Refugees Helping Refugees</td>
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<td>Cattaraugus Community Action, Inc.</td>
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<td>Neighbors Link Corp.</td>
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<td>Yemeni American Merchants Association</td>
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<td>City of Syracuse</td>
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<td>Community Action Program for Madison County, Inc.</td>
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<td>LGBT Network</td>
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<td>Urban Justice Center</td>
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<td>Catholic Charities of Tompkins/Tioga</td>
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<td>Community Action Southold Town, Inc.</td>
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<td>North Fork Spanish Apostolate</td>
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<td>The Rural Outreach Center</td>
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<td>Living Independently is For Everyone at RCIL, Inc.</td>
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<td>Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees</td>
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<td>Haitian American Family of Long Island (HAFALI)</td>
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<td>Hempstead Hispanic Civic Association, Inc.</td>
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<td>Long Beach Latino Civic Association, Inc.</td>
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<td>PHASE 3 GRANTEE</td>
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<td>Literacy Volunteers of Rochester, Inc.</td>
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<td>Rochester Jamaican Organization, Inc.</td>
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<td>The Salvation Army</td>
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<td>Trillium Health</td>
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<td>United Way of Rockland</td>
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<tr>
<td>United Way of the Adirondack Region, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urban League of Rochester, N.Y., Inc.</td>
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<td>VOICE Buffalo</td>
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<td>AccessCNY</td>
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<td>Team H.E.R.O.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RISSE, Refugee and Immigrant Support Services of Emmaus, Inc.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capital Area Urban League</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Salvation Army</td>
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<td>Mozaic</td>
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<tr>
<td>LWVNYS Education Foundation (League of Women Voters Albany County)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saratoga County Economic Opportunity Council, Inc.</td>
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<td>The Father Laurence (Larry) Tracy Advocacy Center, Inc</td>
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<td>People’s Place</td>
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<td>Capital Area Urban League</td>
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<td>Mechanicville Area Community Services Center</td>
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<td>Ramapo Catskill Library System</td>
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<td>Troy Area United Ministries</td>
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<td>Boys and Girls Club of the Capital Area</td>
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<td>The Center for Community Justice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Josephs House and Shelter</td>
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<tr>
<td>East Side Neighborhood Recreation Center Inc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elizabethtown Library Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grafton Community Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>Belden Noble Memorial Library</td>
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<td>NC</td>
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</table>

**TOTAL**                                                        | **$115,825**
**PHASE 4 GRANTEESS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization Name</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Region</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Center for Law and Social Justice at Medgar Evers College</td>
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<td>Chhaya CDC</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
<td>NYC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mixteca</td>
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<td>NYC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COPO aka Council of Peoples Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>Flatbush Development Corp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jewish Community Council of Greater Coney Island</td>
<td>$40,000</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minkwon</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mt. Vernon Complete Count Committee</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAACP (of Long Island)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jahajee Sisters/Center for Transformative Action</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>NYC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson Education Fund</td>
<td>$25,000</td>
<td>HV</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refugee &amp; Immigrant Self-Empowerment</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica Center for Arts and Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family and Children's Association - Hempstead and Freeport</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family Services League</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Policy and Education Fund of New York, Inc.</td>
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<td>Buffalo Urban League</td>
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<td>Interdenominational Health Ministry Coalition</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEPA Mujer</td>
<td>$15,650</td>
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<tr>
<td>Choice for All / Roosevelt &amp; North Freeport Complete Counts</td>
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<td>LI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Buffalo, Inc.</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
<td>WNY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo</td>
<td>$9,200</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TOTAL** | **$641,650** |

Buses with census marketing toured Onondaga County in early 2020 to encourage residents to complete their questionnaires.
### APPENDIX B: SIGNATORIES TO ADVOCACY LETTER

The following New York-based foundations and philanthropic organizations signed on to an August 2020 letter to the Secretary of Commerce, imploring the Commerce Department to not cut the census short.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIGNER / FOUNDATION</th>
<th>SIGNER / FOUNDATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cali Brooks, Adirondack Foundation*</td>
<td>Michael Lord, NEO Philanthropy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deborah Velazquez, Altman Foundation</td>
<td>Roberta Norman, Park Foundation*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda Joyce-Phelps, Allegany County United Way</td>
<td>Ronna Brown, Philanthropy New York*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara Kay, Bernard and Anne Spitzer Charitable Trust</td>
<td>Sarah Williams, Propel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecilia Clarke, Brooklyn Community Foundation*</td>
<td>Christina Baal-Owens, Public Wise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vartan Gregorian, Carnegie Corporation</td>
<td>Paul Di Donato, Proteus Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Dunn, Central New York Community Foundation*</td>
<td>Phil Li, Robert Sterling Clark Foundation*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julie Sandorf, Revson Foundation*</td>
<td>Jennifer Leonard, Rochester Area Comm Foundation*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randi Hewit, Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning &amp; the Finger Lakes*</td>
<td>Stephen Heintz, Rockefeller Brothers Fund*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sally Cross, Community Foundation of the Hudson Valley*</td>
<td>Mike Pratt, Scherman Foundation*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lori Bezahler, Edward Hazen Foundation</td>
<td>Don Chen, Surdna Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darren Walker, Ford Foundation*</td>
<td>Molly Gochman, Stardust Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nora Obrien-Suric, Health Foundation of Western &amp; Central NY*</td>
<td>Bob Falter, Reisman Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Okorn, Long Island Community Foundation*</td>
<td>Denise Sobel, Tikkun Olam Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jay Beckner, Mertz Gilmore Foundation</td>
<td>Taryn Higashi, Unbound Philanthropy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leticia Peguero, Nathan Cummings Foundation</td>
<td>Michael Weiner, UW of Buffalo and Erie County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer Ching, North Star Fund*</td>
<td>Rhonda Jasper, UW of Seneca County</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corinne Ribble, New York Funders Alliance*</td>
<td>Sheena Wright, UW of New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maria Mottola, New York Foundation*</td>
<td>Tom Gabriel, UW of Westchester and Putnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorie Slutsky, New York Community Trust*</td>
<td>Sheri Scavone, Western NY Women’s Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*Members/Partners of NYSCEF</td>
<td>Merryl Snow Zegar, Zegar Family Foundation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NYS CENSUS EQUITY FUND DOCUMENTATION & EVALUATION REPORT

NLMH staff and members tabling about the census outside a community store.

Reusable grocery store bags and “We Count” books were distributed to area libraries for their pandemic book pick-up programs.

Reusable grocery store bags and informational fliers were provided to local food pantries and organizers of pandemic mass food distribution events.
NEW YORK STATE
CENSUS EQUITY FUND
IN THE NEW YORK COMMUNITY TRUST

www.nycommunitytrust.org/results/collaborative-funds