

Count Me In Census Fact Sheet

WHAT IS THE PROJECT?

Count Me In is giving \$1.2 million (26 grants funding 60 nonprofit organizations) in Chicago and throughout Illinois to conduct public education campaigns, community outreach, special events and other grassroots activities to boost census participation in select hard-to-count communities that had low participation in the 2000 census.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- The once-a-decade survey will help determine how the federal government distributes more than \$400 billion to state and local governments.
- The economic health of Illinois communities will benefit from an accurate census count. The federal government uses census data to distribute approximately \$14.3 billion annually to Illinois. For every person not counted, Illinois will lose \$12,000 during the next 10 years, greatly affecting our entire state, not just underrepresented populations.
- Illinois' budget crisis heightens the importance of an accurate count.
- Accurate numbers affect Illinois' political representation in Washington, DC.
- During every census, hard-to-count populations (low-income, African American, Asian, Latino, immigrant, children, and non-English speaking communities) are at risk for undercounting. Local community non-profits working through established networks complement the on-going efforts of the Census Bureau to encourage hard-to-count populations to participate. There is very little Census Bureau funding for such efforts.
- The *Count Me In* campaign is serving as a model for other funders across the country.

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- *Count Me In* is funded by ten of Illinois' leading philanthropies, including The Boeing Company, the Chicago Bar Foundation, The Chicago Community Trust, the Lloyd A. Fry Foundation, Grand Victoria Foundation, the Joyce Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Polk Bros. Foundation, Steans Family Foundation, and Woods Fund of Chicago. In addition, LISC/Chicago is supporting five New Community Program lead agencies in this effort. The Joyce Foundation has awarded separate grants to the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund, the Illinois League of Women Voters, the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, and Citizens Advocacy Center for census related work in Illinois.
- Grants will be made to a wide range of nonprofit organizations that have established relationships with different hard-to-count groups. In some cases, grants will go to coalitions of community-based organizations with deep roots in and trust with their communities.

WHERE DOES IT HAPPEN?

- The *Count Me In* campaign will be funding in 37 hard-to-count communities: 25 communities in Chicago; 12 cities/towns outside Chicago.
- Funders selected communities with sizable populations, low participation rates in the 2000 census, and at least two or three strong nonprofit organizations prepared to do census work. The goal is to “flood the zone” with census outreach to produce measurable increases in the mail response rate in those communities.

HOW IS IT EXECUTED?

- 60 organizations working on a multi-faceted, multi-layered campaign using a variety of strategies and tactics with their established community networks to increase participation in the census. The campaign will complement and leverage activities performed by the U.S. Census Bureau.

NOTE: SEE PRESS RELEASE FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION ON ORGANIZATIONS, TARGETED COMMUNITIES, AND STRATEGIES.