

Creating Complete Count Committees

State and local advocates and community-based organizations can help make sure everyone is counted in the 2020 Census by helping to form Complete Count Commissions and Committees (CCCs), securing funding for CCCs to support outreach efforts, making sure hard-to-count populations are represented on these committees, and providing information to help make CCCs more effective.

What is a Complete Count Commission or Committee (CCC)?

The CCC model was developed by the [U.S. Census Bureau](#)¹ to coordinate state and local efforts to get out the count. CCCs can be created by the state or local legislative bodies, by tribes, or by elected leaders at the state, city, or county levels. Nongovernmental CCCs can be set up by community members such as nonprofits, businesses, and foundations.

CCCs can help support get out the count activities by:

- Researching the most important areas for census outreach;
- Identifying particular needs and barriers that must be addressed to make sure all children and adults in the community that the CCC covers are counted in the 2020 Census, as well as strategies to address those needs and barriers;
- Distributing allocated funding to local community groups and trusted partners to support census outreach efforts;
- Designing systems and activities to facilitate robust census participation; and
- Creating and implementing messages and tactics for persuading households to fill out the census and to count everyone in their residence; including young children, temporary residents with no permanent address, and other individuals often left off census forms.

Find a CCC in your community:

The Census Bureau maintains a [map of committees](#)² with points of contact. You can add a CCC directly to the map. Your local Census Bureau partnership specialist may be able to connect you to your communities' CCC. You can find information about your state or local partnership specialist and how to contact them here:

<https://www.census.gov/about/regions.html>.

Find out if your state or locality has allocated census funding:

The National Conference State Legislatures maintains a [list of the states that have allocated funding to support census outreach](#).³

How to Form a Complete Count Committee (CCC)

CCCs can be created by state or local legislative bodies and tribes. Community members such as nonprofits, businesses, and foundations, can create nongovernmental CCCs.

The Census Bureau has produced [a guide on Complete Count Committees](#).⁴ Advocates should note that the guide suggests organizing the committee into subcommittees by type of participant, rather than by various hard-to-count groups. When the committee is organized into subcommittees along the lines recommended by the Census Bureau, advocates need to make sure that every subcommittee is educated about the ways to reach all the hard-to-count groups. Many states have developed different structures for their CCCs, so advocates will need to identify how their committee is structured and how they can best ensure that their committee and any subcommittees are considering all hard-to-count groups in their plans.

Committee members can include, but are not limited to: government officials; tribal representatives; representatives from hard-to-count groups; representatives from the early childhood community, K–12 schools and universities; business and regional associations; media; representatives of faith communities; libraries; the extension office; the health department; clinics and hospitals; community organizations; social service providers; nonprofits; and foundations.

Because we know that outreach to historically undercounted communities is most effective when it's done by people from those communities, CCCs should actively recruit people of color, low-income people, parents of young children, recent immigrants, people with disabilities, and other trusted messengers who can speak directly to the lived experience of people whom the Census Bureau has missed in the past.

How Much Funding Does a Complete Count Committee Need?

The Census Bureau does not provide funding for state or local CCCs and does not provide any advice about how much funding CCCs should have. CCC costs will vary by state or community, since states and communities differ by population size, population diversity, numbers of hard-to-count areas, numbers of people living in hard-to-count areas, and media market costs, among other things. Factors to consider in developing a CCC budget include:

- Staffing costs
- Committee meeting costs
- Event costs such as press briefings and community briefings
- State-specific message research. States may want to fund their own message research or may be willing to rely on the message research conducted by the Census Bureau and [the research funded by national funders](#)⁵
- Materials development, printing, and distribution
- Translation and/or multilingual services both for outreach materials and for support to help fill out the census, particularly for states with large foreign-born populations

- Media ad buys, including ethnic media and press targeting families with young children
- Media grants for ongoing coverage and reporting
- If a state CCC budget, financial support for local government efforts
- Financial support for community-based organization efforts
- Costs of setting up internet access sites for populations with little access
- Costs of using census real-time data on the response rates by neighborhoods, and of providing this information and additional resources to outreach campaigns, to make their efforts more effective. The Census Bureau has confirmed that the 2020 Census website will have a page with real-time response rates by tract level
- Compensation for the time of committee members from historically undercounted groups that are not participating in the committee as an organizational representative

The Leadership Conference, the New York Fiscal Policy Institute, the Central University of New York, and State Voices have [developed a budgeting tool](#)⁶ to estimate [community outreach costs](#). This will help you determine how much money a CCC will need to allocate to community-based groups in addition to the funding needed by the CCC for its statewide work.

The Census Bureau has contacts in all 50 states that are part of the [Federal-State Cooperative Program for Local Population Estimates](#).⁷ They may be able to help estimate costs or recommend people who can work with the CCCs. The Census Bureau State Data Center Network (SDCN) is also a good place to get this kind of state-level information. More information about SDCN members can be found on the [Census Bureau website](#).

How to Work with a Complete Count Committee

Once a state or locality establishes a CCC, the next step is to make sure the committee members understand the specific challenges of reaching all the hard-to-count groups in the community. This can be accomplished by having representatives from these communities on the committee, or by reaching out to these communities to provide technical assistance and information.

Below are some of the activities that advocates should encourage and help Complete Count Committees to do:

- Make sure counting hard-to-count populations such as young children and specific racial and ethnic groups is a priority. CCCs should develop specific strategies and activities to engage these groups, including a specific strategy for counting young children since families often leave them off the census form.
- Identify areas in the state or community with high numbers of hard-to-count groups at risk of being missed. The [CUNY Hard-to-Count map](#)⁸ and the [Census Bureau's ROAM map](#)⁹ can help identify hard-to-count neighborhoods.
- Make sure CCCs use the best messaging resources (see the section in this toolkit on messaging). Consider deploying earned or paid media campaigns in partnership with key partners.
- Bring in allies that are trusted by the various hard-to-count populations to work with the CCC. Encourage trusted messengers and key stakeholders that support hard-to-count communities to engage in census outreach by providing resources and grants to local community-based organizations to conduct outreach.

References

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