

NEW YORK STATE GRANTMAKERS FOR CENSUS EQUITY

Nine months ago, a small group of funders came together to create a learning community about the upcoming 2020 census, and to consider ways in which philanthropy could play a role in ensuring a fair and accurate census count. Several months later, an expanded group of funders and philanthropic member associations established New York State Grantmakers for Census Equity, a collaboration through which funders can coordinate the allocation of resources towards census-related activities, including the creation of a pooled fund from which grants are distributed to organizations and institutions throughout the state.

WHY A STATEWIDE FUNDER COLLABORATIVE?

#1 – New York State checks all the boxes on “hard-to-count” communities

Immigrants and refugees, black males aged 18 to 49, single mothers and children under five, homeless people, migrants and others without a permanent address, Native Americans and isolated rural communities – New York has many of the hardest-to-count people all across the state. With funders working together, we can help inform the Census Bureau’s New York strategy for resource deployment.

#2 – The imperative to prevent losing federal funds and political representation

A slight increase in the response from hard-to-count communities in the upcoming 2020 census could mean the difference between the state losing one congressional seat or two, not to mention billions of dollars in federal funds.

#3 – We can lay the groundwork for a fair and inclusive redistricting process

Apportionment—allocating 435 Congressional seats among the fifty states—is done at the federal level. Redistricting determines political district boundaries within states. It has become a tool for the entrenchment of political power instead of an opportunity for civic engagement.

#4 – Greater leverage in pursuing government and philanthropic resources

Coordinating philanthropic efforts statewide now can signal broad-based public concern about the Census and help leverage essential resources from Albany, and may also help in the competition for financial support from national funders.

JOIN THE FUNDER COLLABORATIVE!

Our goal is to have a statewide census fund, hosted at The New York Community Trust, and called the NEW YORK STATE CENSUS EQUITY FUND, operational and disbursing grants by the spring of 2019. We invite all interested funders to join us in fleshing out all of the above, and sharing their perspectives on how philanthropy can help ensure a fair and accurate census count.

For more information, please contact any of these initiative leaders:

Patricia Swann, The New York Community Trust, pas@nyct-cfi.org

Maria Mottola, New York Foundation, mmottola@nyf.org

Sol Marie Alfonso-Jones, Long Island Community Foundation, sjones@licf.org