

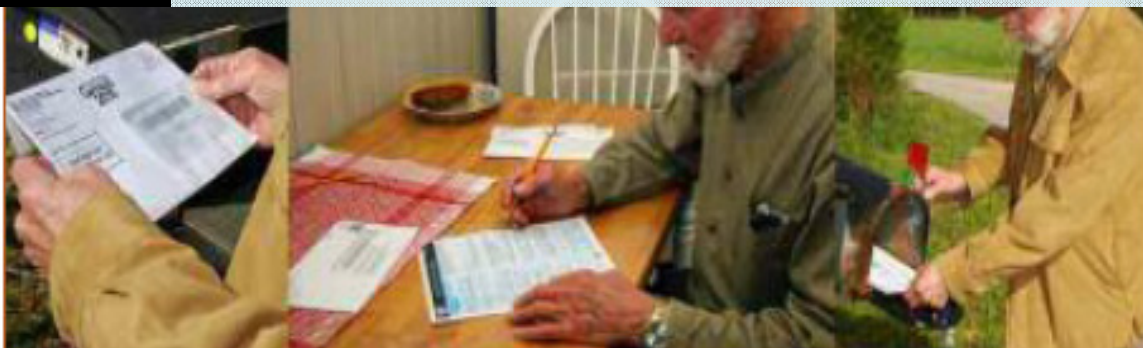
# MAKING PHILANTHROPIC DOLLARS COUNT

## A HISTORY OF THE FUNDERS CENSUS INITIATIVE DURING THE 2010 CENSUS



**FUNDERS  
CENSUS  
INITIATIVE**

**Including a Timeline for Philanthropic  
Involvement in the 2020 Census**



Courtesy Southern Coalition for Social Justice

Warren Goldstein | Hagedorn Foundation | May 2011

FINAL REPORT



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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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INTRODUCTION.....	1
BACKGROUND: 2000 CENSUS.....	3
PHILANTHROPIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE 2010 CENSUS.....	5
I. <b>Overview</b> .....	5
II. <b>Important New Philanthropic (FCI) Activities in the 2010 Census Cycle</b>	
A. Infrastructure .....	9
B. Coordination .....	9
C. Technical Assistance .....	10
D. FCI and the Census Bureau .....	12
E. FCI and the Media .....	13
III. <b>Strengths, Achievements and Weaknesses of Philanthropic and Nonprofit Efforts</b>	
A. Strengths and Achievements .....	15
B. Weaknesses .....	16
IV. <b>A Timeline for Philanthropic Involvement in the 2020 Census</b> .....	19
Timeline [Table].....	23
APPENDIX: Resources Archived on the FCI Website.....	24

*This report is part of a larger evaluation of the  
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## INTRODUCTION

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A fair and accurate count of the United States population lies close to the heart of much philanthropic, social service, and social justice work in this country. As the Ford Foundation's *2010 Census Funders Toolkit* puts it, "An accurate census count facilitates the flow of public, private, and philanthropic resources to constituencies and regions most in need." Most census experts believe that historically the constituencies most likely to be undercounted include people of color (especially young black men and children), low-income people and renters, immigrants and those with limited English proficiency, those receiving public assistance, the unemployed and homeless, people in "nontraditional" households, and people displaced by economic, environmental, and natural disasters. In short, the very constituencies most dependent on human services and philanthropic support are also those in greatest danger of being overlooked, undercounted, and rendered even less visible in the social fabric of the United States.

Once philanthropic and nonprofit staff grasp the fundamental, linchpin significance of a fair and accurate count, they are frequently eager to engage the issue. That said, given the complexities of the census process and the philanthropic community's general lack of knowledge of census operations, it is frequently not at all clear—even to motivated staff—what that engagement might look like. The first questions are "how can we get involved?" and "when should we do so?" In the case of this extremely peculiar once-in-a-decade event, the latter question may even be more important.

This guide is meant to answer both questions. In four specific ways it will provide:

- **An overview** of the very substantial philanthropic involvement in the 2010 Census, including specific decisions with regard to staff, funding, and the structure of the philanthropic efforts.
- **An analysis** of the strengths and weaknesses of the philanthropic and nonprofit efforts on behalf of a fair and accurate count in the 2010 Census, including a range of opinions and viewpoints.
- **A proposed timeline** for philanthropic engagement in the 2020 Census, including explanations for each step and noting substantive differences among participants in the 2010 campaign.
- **A list of key documents** electronically archived on the Funders Census Initiative (FCI) webpage.



## BACKGROUND: 2000 CENSUS

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Before discussing philanthropic activity organized around the 2010 Census, it would be helpful to briefly summarize activities of nonprofits and philanthropic organizations with respect to the 2000 Census. The key project in philanthropic work for the 2000 Census was the Washington DC-based Communications Consortium Media Center's (CCMC) Census 2000 Initiative. Serving as lead consultant to the project was former Congressional staffperson Terri Ann Lowenthal, possibly the single best-informed individual in the country (outside of the Census Bureau itself) on policy matters relating to the decennial census. Begun with a grant from the Annie E. Casey Foundation in 1996 (with the assistance of then Program Officer William O'Hare, a demographer with a long-standing interest in the Census), the Census Initiative had two principal goals: (1) to involve stakeholders in census activities earlier in the cycle than in years past, and (2) to make information regarding the Census, especially at the federal level, more readily available to the public and to the media. This initiative was widely viewed as successful, illustrated by the fact many Census Bureau employees told Program Officer O'Hare that they relied on the good and timely information from Lowenthal's newsletter on the census.

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*One important legacy of the 2000 census effort was that this unusual assemblage of stakeholders continued their interest in the census in succeeding years.*

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The initiative was a loose coalition of what turned out to be a very wide variety of stakeholder groups representing a broad range of interests in the census, running the gamut from civil rights organizations to demographers, state and local government organizations and religious groups. CCMC managed to assemble such organizations as the American Jewish Committee, the Arab-American Foundation, the civil rights community, and the American Statistical Association—groups that had never worked with one another in any organized fashion—to hold joint press conferences and briefings, and to sign onto letters to Congress. Lowenthal helped lead stakeholder meetings and conference calls, and distributed regular email briefings on census matters. Funders (in addition to Anne E. Casey) included the Carnegie Corporation of New York, the Kauffman Foundation, the Ford

Foundation, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

One important legacy of the 2000 census effort was that this unusual assemblage of stakeholders continued their interest in the census in succeeding years. Several times during this period the American Community Survey (ACS) (the successor to the census “long form”) was on the verge of losing all of its annual Congressional funding; these stakeholders' advocacy on behalf of the ACS may well have made the difference in keeping it a key, ongoing component of the U.S. Census.

Large national foundations—such as the Ford Foundation, Carnegie Corporation of New York, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and the AT&T Foundation—also made grants to national nonprofits during the 2000 Census cycle, including the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund (LCCR/EF), the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials Education Fund (NALEO), the NAACP, and the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (NAPALC, predecessor to the Asian American Justice Center), all of whom undertook major census campaigns. Regional foundations such as PacBell and Joyce made grants as well. Some philanthropic activity focused on supporting an analysis of the “census experience” in 2000, which resulted in a book, *The Hard Count: The Political and Social Challenges of Census Mobilization*, by D. Sunshine Hillygus, Norman Nie, Kenneth Prewitt, and Heili Pals (Russell-Sage, 2006). This 2000 work served as a model for similar Census Bureau work related to the 2010 Census.

On the other hand, the philanthropic community did not create a cross-foundation infrastructure to help coordinate philanthropic and nonprofit efforts, or to build stronger bridges between the scientific community, policy-makers, Congress, stakeholder organizations, and the funding community. This limited their overall effectiveness.

Following the 2000 Census, and some Census Initiative-led education of foundations and nonprofits on how to use the data, most census-related funding diminished rapidly. The Annie E. Casey Foundation, for example, had supported CCMC with \$200,000 per year from 1996 – 2001, and with a small number of \$25,000 grants in subsequent years. Lowenthal continued to keep stakeholders and foundation staff informed through email briefs on what is, in reality, a decade-long administrative process of gearing up for the next census—as well as a legislative process of providing funding and oversight for the Census Bureau. CCMC continued to provide a web home for the Census Initiative.



## PHILANTHROPIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE 2010 CENSUS

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### I. Overview

Three sources of philanthropic involvement in census work emerged in the latter part of the decade.

First, Terri Ann Lowenthal had continued to staff the Census Initiative on a substantially volunteer basis, and William O'Hare had continued his affiliation with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, while maintaining his strong interest in the census. There was a small amount of occasional funding in the "in between" years for an occasional letter to the Hill or op-ed draft. (O'Hare also serves on the Census Advisory Committee as representative of the Association of Public Data Users.) In 2006 after Congress had finally approved funding for nationwide implementation of the ACS in 2005, and the 2010 Census began to loom as a larger issue on the nonprofit horizon, the Annie E. Casey Foundation renewed support for the Initiative (though at a lower level than during the 2000 Census), which took on the new name: The Census Project.

Second, in the summer of 2008 Joyce Foundation Executive Director Larry Hansen began internal staff discussions at Joyce focused on the census. (Joyce had been an important funder of nonprofit census work in the 2000 Census.) Around the same time the Funders' Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP) started a larger conversation within the affinity group, and initiated the idea of a meeting on both the census and redistricting. Because of the important work on the issue that Hansen had already done, FCCP staff asked to co-sponsor a meeting with the Joyce Foundation and hold it in Chicago. As a result, the Joyce Foundation hosted a cosponsored funders' conference in September 2008. Attendees included national funders (most of who were members of FCCP), local funders, leaders of national nonprofits such as the LCCR/EF, NALEO, AAJC, the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF), Bill O'Hare, and Terri Ann Lowenthal.

Third, and concurrently, the Carnegie Corporation of New York and Hagedorn Foundation had been working to pull together funders in New York City to discuss philanthropic involvement in the 2010 Census. Geri Mannion, Carnegie's Director of the U.S. Democracy Program and of the Special Opportunities Fund, had supported 2000 census work. Hagedorn Foundation Executive Director Darren Sandow was trying to build the group (which included FCCP members) into a national collaborative. Ultimately, FCCP staff and Sandow came to the conclusion that instead of working on separate tracks, all of the funders ought to merge their activities into one effort. As a result, FCCP, the Ford Foundation, and the Hagedorn Foundation convened a meeting in New York City (at Ford) in early July 2008. Attendees included representatives of the Ford, Hagedorn, Annie E. Casey, MacArthur, Gates, and Knight Foundations, as well as the Carnegie Corporation of New York, Open Society Foundations (OSF), Pew Charitable Trusts, and Atlantic Philanthropies.

Hagedorn made a \$185,000 grant to CCMC in December 2008, which, among other things, underwrote Lowenthal’s and O’Hare’s ongoing census work. Hagedorn made the first pledge of support to FCCP, which underwrote the work of Mario Lugay (Program Director) and Deb Ross (Executive Director) coordinating the new Funders Census Initiative.

A subsequent meeting at Ford on January 30, 2009 brought together funders and FCCP staff to work out the specifics of launching the Funders Census Initiative (FCI). Participants decided that it made sense to house FCI—a working group for funders interested in the census—within FCCP, an already established funder affinity group committed to increasing civic participation and which was actively working on bringing the philanthropic community together around the 2010 census. (Lowenthal’s direct involvement in FCI had to wait until her service on the Obama Administration Transition Team ended in January 2009.) In spring 2009 a group of funders made year-long grants to FCCP—through Public Interest Projects, the affinity group’s fiscal sponsor—which secured funding for staffing, facilitation, organizing, programming, advocacy, website development, and the like, through the census itself. FCI began weekly conference calls, developed a sophisticated website, and provided links to census reports and work around the country. Relying on pre-existing relationships, staff also began working to educate, organize, and support other affinity groups interested in census issues, and to help develop state- and area-based census initiatives. The group also began scheduling webinars and producing material to post on the FCI website.

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FCI became the organizational vehicle for sharing information and expertise, providing technical assistance to funders and grantees, and facilitating funders’ collective involvement in the 2010 census. With two part-time dedicated coordinating staff (at FCCP), two part-time consultants with deep knowledge and experience of the census, census issues, and the Census Bureau, FCI was able to energize the philanthropic and nonprofit community in many regions around the country, and to serve as the key liaison between those communities and the Census Bureau itself.

***Nevertheless, nearly all FCI principals agree that they started late.*** Most felt that with an additional year or two to plan their collaboration, develop an infrastructure, and deliver technical assistance, they could have been much more effective at generating and pooling resources, helping nonprofits to expand their capacity to make census promotion and outreach a priority for their organizations and their target audiences or constituencies. To take one important example, key FCI members funded an important, new, sophisticated interactive census-tract mapping capability, but the fact that it only came online in January 2010 limited the effective use nonprofits could make of its remarkable features. Starting earlier, in other words, would likely have translated into a higher rate of mail-in census form returns, better

counts in hard-to-count (HTC) areas or among HTC populations, and a smoother census process.

That said, the philanthropic community:

- Either made or helped leverage more than \$33 million in census-related grants to nonprofits eager or willing to promote a fair and accurate census in HTC areas and among HTC populations (usually among their constituencies).
- Produced a wealth of census information for funders, nonprofits, media, and public officials.
- Funded a Brookings Institution report demonstrating the importance of census figures in federal funding formulas.
- Helped raise the profile of the census.
- Helped the Census Bureau shape its use of media to reach HTC constituencies.
- Supported a unique interactive mapping website to help funders, grantees, and others target their census activities to HTC communities and constituencies.
- Served as an indispensable link between the nonprofit world and the Census Bureau.



## II. Important New Philanthropic (FCI) Activities in the 2010 Census Cycle

### A. Infrastructure

1. **FCI hired two staff experts** (Lowenthal and O'Hare) dedicated to helping any funder who wanted to understand the census; deployed them to funders, groups of funders (RAGs, Council on Foundations, grantmaker affinity groups), individual nonprofits and groups of nonprofits. Lowenthal provided ongoing briefings to FCI principals through her e-newsletter, *Census News Brief* (including *Census News Flash* for breaking news), and blog, *The Census Project Blog*. These included analysis of legislative, regulatory, and policy developments with regard to the census, as well as collections of important census-related news and editorials from around the country.
2. **FCCP Program Director Mario Lugay and Executive Director Deb Ross coordinated weekly, then bi-weekly phone calls** among staff and funders. Participants shared information regarding relevant legislative and other Congressional developments, national and regional census news, regional funding initiatives, upcoming local trainings, briefings, conference calls, and webinars, and meetings between FCI and Census Bureau staff.

### B. Coordination

1. **FCI staff helped coordinate philanthropic activity with the work of large national nonprofits** working on census matters including the Leadership Conference Education Fund (formerly the LCCR/EF), NAACP, NALEO, AAJC, NCAI, and NVEN, to name a few. FCI members and staff consulted on and publicized their campaigns and materials. FCI staff served as an ongoing liaison between these national grantees and the funding community, and to a lesser but still important degree, local nonprofits in targeted areas. For example, Lowenthal provided information to Open Society Foundations (OSF) on census advocates in the Gulf Coast (New Orleans, especially) and helped OSF to identify key challenges that nonprofits would need to address.
2. **FCI members organized or supported statewide or regional funder collaboratives**—pooling millions of dollars but making funds available to local organizations working with HTC populations and/or in HTC areas. Such areas included Massachusetts, Long Island, North Carolina, Midwestern states (IL, MI, WI, MN, OH), Oregon, California, the Rio Grande Valley, New York State, New York City, and Washington, DC.
3. **FCI principals worked with state, county, and municipal governments** to make funds available to nonprofits working to increase participation in the census, particularly in HTC areas and among HTC populations. In some cases (New York

City, Long Island, California, Portland, OR), they helped nonprofits collaborate in response to local, regional, and statewide RFPs for public funding for census work.

4. **FCI staff helped coordinate nonprofit responses to legislative efforts to undermine the census.** FCI members and grantees mounted a substantial campaign to defeat what became known as the Vitter Amendment, which would have added a last-minute question on citizenship and legal status to the Census, for the later purpose of excluding noncitizens from the state population counts used for congressional apportionment, counter to centuries-old practice. Staff and members activated networks to educate lawmakers on important policy matters that would affect the accuracy of the census, ranging from efforts to delay ratification of the appointment of the Director of the Census Bureau, to efforts to reduce the Commerce Department's budget for the census.
5. **FCI staff and consultants prepared and delivered congressional testimony** on behalf of FCI members, highlighting philanthropic and nonprofit community involvement in the 2010 census. This opportunity represented the first time foundations have directly engaged Congress in discussions about the importance of an accurate census to the communities these funders serve. This testimony provided the first opportunity for FCI to raise the idea of developing a federal government funding stream to support community groups to help promote the census in 2020.

### **C. Technical Assistance**

1. **FCI staff initiated, organized, coordinated, publicized, facilitated and led regional and national briefings and trainings** (face-to-face, conference call, video-conferencing, webinars) throughout the country for nonprofits and the philanthropic community on how to engage the 2010 Census. For instance, Lowenthal conducted roughly a dozen webinars for the National Voter Engagement Network (NVEN) alone, as well as briefings for regional census initiatives for Long Island, Illinois, and Massachusetts. O'Hare made a number of presentations to philanthropic affinity groups and regional grantmaker associations about the importance of an accurate census to their ongoing work.

The Funders' Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP) organized a series of funder briefings in early 2009 designed to inform and spark interest among issue funders. These briefings were co-sponsored with Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families (GCYF), Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR), Hispanics in Philanthropy (HIP), and the Women Donors Network (WDN).

2. **FCI principals provided critical targeted technical assistance** expertise in the form of:

- The Brookings Institute report authored by Andrew Reamer, *Counting for Dollars: The Role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds*, which publicized the centrality of census data to federal funds received by states, counties, and municipalities. This report, underwritten by the Hagedorn Foundation, became a critical source for media covering the census and local efforts to promote a full and accurate count. It also served as a critical resource for nonprofit and philanthropic census advocates, as well as public officials advocating on behalf of the census.
- The innovative, extraordinarily detailed, user-friendly, timely and accessible mapping services and data analysis supplied by Center for Urban Research at the City University of New York (CUNY) Graduate Center, under the direction of Steven Romelewski, and underwritten by the Hagedorn Foundation. The Center developed census-tract level interactive online maps of the entire country so that the media as well as census partners, foundations, and other nonprofits working for a full count would have up-to-date and reliable demographic data regarding relevant geographic areas and populations. The LCCR/EF, an FCI grantee, used its working relationship with Google to make the connection between the Center for Urban Research and Google.

During the mail-in period of the census, the Center for Urban Research produced weekly analyses of response rates by census tract, municipality, and demographic character; FCI staff coordinated dissemination of the reports to the media and stakeholders. Employed for the first time in a decennial census, the mapping services proved an invaluable tool for numerous stakeholders and advocates.

- Obtaining publicity for these data and services, gaining unprecedented press and public attention for the reports and results. FCI members circulated key information and links through funder and nonprofit networks, including their grantees.
3. **FCI principals**—Ford Foundation and Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR)—**developed important “toolkits”** for funders and for nonprofits seeking involvement in census work.
4. **FCI staff and members helped develop and share strategies to enlist support of different constituencies**, such as the business community, young African-American men, children, and Latino youth. FCI members and staff wrote, supported, shared, and helped disseminate reports by nonprofits on the census, such as:

- *Nonprofits Count* by the Nonprofit Voter Engagement Network
- *The Next Economic Imperative: Undocumented Immigrants and the 2010 Census* by the Drum Major Institute
- *Counting in the Wake of a Catastrophe: Challenges and Recommendations for the 2010 Census in the Gulf Coast Region* by LCCHREF (Terri Ann Lowenthal was one of two principal authors)
- FCI consultant William O'Hare authored two reports: *Why Are Young Children Missed So Often in the Census?* publication of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, and *Rural Areas Risk Being Overlooked in the 2010 Census*, a publication of the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire.

#### **D. FCI and the Census Bureau**

FCI staff and members served as extremely active, indispensable liaisons between the nonprofit community and the staff of the Census Bureau, both prior to launching the census, and during the mail-in and door-to-door phases of the census itself.

1. **FCI staff trained nonprofits throughout the country** in the nuts-and-bolts of the census process: the nature of the questions, the confidentiality of the answers, and when and how the census bureau would be hiring door-to-door staff so they could give accurate information to their constituents. Many nonprofits only received grants to work on the census with a month or two to prepare their staffs and volunteers. FCI staff and consultants hired by FCI members (such as Ford) provided essential education and training for nonprofits throughout the country. FCI staff and consultants produced fact sheets and training materials (such as “best practices”) effectively adapted for nonprofit use—in many cases more useful than the materials provided by the Census Bureau. Ford consultant Kim Crews distributed a weekly e-newsletter to Ford grantees engaged in census work, sharing news of census operations, useful resources, and best practices among grantee campaigns.
2. Prior to the census forms being mailed out, **FCI members and staff consulted closely with Census Bureau** staff on a range of census issues, especially those related to the Bureau’s proposed media campaigns. FCI principals and staff reviewed Bureau materials, offering critiques and suggestions, used their own media consultants or supported nonprofits hiring media consultants to produce campaigns on behalf of a more complete count, particularly among HTC populations. In some cases, FCI members put their organizational media expertise at the disposal of the local nonprofit community; in other cases (such as Long Island), an FCI member obtained public funding for collaborative media efforts on behalf of increased rate of response.
3. **FCI staff worked carefully with Census Bureau staff—at local, regional, and national levels**—to help guarantee that nonprofit community partners could



play a genuinely effective role (supported by the Census Bureau) in promoting the census, particularly since the Census Bureau staff did not anticipate the level of nonprofit engagement that these organizations sought. FCI staff developed guidelines for nonprofits to help them understand what they could do, and could not do, to assist their constituents in completing the census.

4. In an unusual, possibly unique, public-private partnership throughout the census itself, **there was unprecedented, close, ongoing contact and collaboration between FCI staff and Census Bureau staff** at the local, regional, and national levels. FCI staff and members' consultants (such as former Census Bureau staffperson Kim Crews, who consulted for Ford during part of the process) served as critically important troubleshooters between the nonprofit community and Census Bureau staff.

Many Census Bureau staff, particularly the 3,000 short-term "partnership specialists" knew little about the Bureau and its operations, and could provide limited guidance to nonprofits eager to get into the nitty-gritty details of census promotion. FCI members and staff were in many cases able to bridge the disconnect between what Census Bureau employees were trained to do, and what nonprofit partners needed from the Bureau.

FCI staff and consultants at once had broad knowledge of the Census Bureau as well as relationships with Census Bureau staff, in some cases going back decades, which enabled them to break through bureaucratic barriers and obtain critically important information for nonprofits. At the same time, they were able to provide reliable information about the nonprofit world to Census Bureau staff—which in many cases had little experience with this world, and the different expectations of nonprofit staff.

#### **E. FCI and the Media**

1. **FCI staff and consultants provided timely, critical, reliable information to reporters and organizations** about which districts would receive a second mail-back questionnaire.
2. **FCI staff acted as a clearinghouse for national and local news and developments regarding the census**, such as the census boycott proposed by a Latino preacher and the story about a Wisconsin Latino Census Bureau employee harassed by local police. FCI staff also responded to numerous media inquiries about philanthropic support for the census and nonprofit census outreach activities. National Public Radio aired a segment specifically on foundation support for the 2010 census; the segment included an interview with an FCI member and included background information provided by FCI staff.

3. **FCI's activities on behalf of the census drew occasional attacks** from those who worried that, as claimed in a piece from *The New American*, FCI "intends to use the census drive as a huge tax-supported venture in radical political organizing."

### III. Strengths, Achievements and Weaknesses of Philanthropic and Nonprofit Efforts

#### A. Strengths and Achievements

1. **Without the efforts spearheaded by FCI staff, members, and grantees, it is extremely unlikely that the rate would have been as high.** It may be little short of miraculous that the overall national mail-in rate was roughly the same as 2000, given the enormity of the recession, extremely high foreclosure rates, trust in government at a nearly all-time low, and an enormous undocumented population facing public hostility, police harassment, and unprecedented levels of federal raids.
2. **The Census Bureau appears to have a fuller appreciation of how important the public-private collaboration between the philanthropic, non-profit, and public sector is to a successful census** as a result of FCI staff, member, and grantee relationships with the Bureau. So does the philanthropic community, which may be in a position to advocate for modestly increased funding for the partnership program over the next decade—which could dramatically improve relationships between the Bureau and the nonprofit community during the 2020 census.
3. Evaluations are still underway around the country, but **many grantees and regional grant programs reached their goals of increasing mail return rates.** On Long Island, for instance, overall, the local FCI was hoping for a 2-3% increase in mail-return rates, which grantees achieved in their targeted communities.
4. Having dedicated staff at FCCP, The Census Project, and Annie E. Casey and Ford Foundations meant that **FCI had access to an unusually high level of expertise (in Lowenthal, O’Hare, and Crews) and contacts**, which could keep funders and nonprofits from making mistakes, explain arcane census procedures, and navigate within the Census Bureau.
5. While the case for philanthropic and nonprofit engagement with the Census is extremely compelling, and the cost-benefit calculus has extraordinary clarity, it appears to have taken FCI to make that case more persuasively than it has ever been before, among funders and among grantees. **Precisely because census cuts across all issue areas, foundations were able to see—more clearly than ever—how their constituencies, grantees, issues, and potential grantees are affected by the census.** That is one reason why funders were able to leverage over \$33 million in more than 600 grants to nonprofits across the United States.

6. **FCI's collaborative structure allowed for a level of flexibility** that could easily deploy staff as needed.
7. **There will be exponentially more people prepared to work on the 2020 census than there were for the 2010 effort** due to the fact that staff in dozens of philanthropic organizations and nonprofit staff in hundreds of organizations gained expertise in census funding, operations, and outreach work. There is also a much larger group of stakeholders prepared to follow census developments in the years when most census activity will take place either inside the Census Bureau or in interactions between the Bureau, its Advisory Committees, and Congress.
8. **Census related work and advocacy has a far stronger internet presence** as a result of the 2010 effort, including *The Census Project Blog*, an ongoing, highly readable, indispensable source of reliable information on census matters.

## B. Weaknesses

1. **FCI and its activities began late.** As a result, staff consultants, foundation staff, and nonprofit staff were often improvising strategy and tactics, instead of having had enough time to map out a full plan of action in advance. Nonprofits frequently received grants just before the census began. Many difficulties flowed from this original weakness. Approaches to broader affinity groups, and the Council on Foundations, could have had greater effectiveness if undertaken earlier. Since some of the nation's largest and best-known foundations played key roles in FCI (Ford, Carnegie, OSF, Annie E. Casey), if they had expressed that interest earlier, they could have wielded broad influence in the national philanthropic community on behalf of census funding. (Eventually, the community recognized the importance of their work, but it could have been far more influential earlier.)
2. **FCI principals seriously underestimated the difficulty of tracking census-related grantmaking across the country.** Many funders apparently did not know of FCI activities, and therefore did not report their census-related funding. As a result, even FCI principals did not have a reasonably complete picture of what was going on around the United States, and therefore could not offer truly comprehensive coordination to the nonprofit and philanthropic effort.
3. **The lack of knowledge and coordination occasionally led to genuine operational difficulties.** In the Rio Grande Valley, notably, there were a number of organizations being funded by some FCI members and some

non-FCI members, which FCI staff discovered extremely late in the process. The Census Regional Office had failed to adequately communicate information about alternative census methods being used in much of the area to nonprofits, nearly derailing the census when the nonprofits discovered they did not fully understand the correct process. FCI staff and a national FCI grantee (NALEO) had to bridge the resulting trust gap, acting as mediators and the only trusted source of information for local nonprofits, which felt betrayed by the Census Bureau. The local nonprofits could have benefited tremendously from FCI webinars and other resources much earlier in the process. But since FCI staff did not know these groups and their networks existed, the philanthropic community missed a real opportunity to inform and support the work of local nonprofits effectively.

4. **Relationships between Census Bureau staff and the philanthropic and nonprofit communities were often strained, difficult, or nonexistent.** The different expectations between Census Bureau staff and nonprofit staff made for a very large gap, one not always surmounted in practice.
5. **Public funds to support census promotion suffered badly from the recession and subsequent state budget cutbacks.** Public officials often seemed unaware of the importance of the census to their own budgets.
6. Despite what ought to have seemed a compelling case, **members of funders' organizations, such as the Council on Foundations, appeared uninterested in census matters until 2009** (if then).
7. **The Census Project itself was underfunded.** Its original goal was to be a communications project with the capacity to work closely with media to make sure media had correct information regarding the census. FCI had, therefore, a relatively weak communications strategy, and was unable to correct massive media misinformation regarding the census. While numerous reporters received the Census News Briefs, Lowenthal was also spending significant time troubleshooting difficulties between the nonprofit community and the Census Bureau once census operations began in earnest in February 2010.
8. **While the FCI website was useful, it was not particularly well integrated into an overall communications strategy.** Additional staff would have helped FCI do a better job of developing its website and mobilizing funders. A number of principals believe that the design and use of the website will require considerably more upfront consideration, and that whatever group assembles to carry forward the philanthropic effort will need to develop a strategy or plan for publicizing the website as a resource to the broader

philanthropic and nonprofit community—as well as for more general media.

9. As an issue, the census remains peculiar: it does not fit neatly into any program area, and cuts across so many program issues, and is so episodic, that **no foundation has a category for census funding.**
10. **FCI did very little collaborative strategic funding**—which it had intended at the beginning of the Initiative—due to a number of factors including reduced foundation portfolios, some foundations’ preference for doing census funding “in house,” and the “lateness” question. As a result, there was no national coordination of census funding. However, Public Interest Projects (PIP) did create a Census Community Outreach Fund (CCOF) that received support from the Ford Foundation and Open Society Foundations. PIP then re-granted these funds to hard-to-count communities around the country. CCOF also participated in the New York Funders’ Census Initiative to coordinate its grantmaking in New York. In addition, initiatives popped up where individual foundations had constituencies (MA, the Midwest, CA, LI, NYC) or existing program criteria. There may be disagreements about this lack of collaborative funding within FCI—whether it could have worked, whether it was really desirable—but some members of FCI believe strongly that a more targeted effort directing funds to strategically critical areas and populations would have increased the effectiveness of the FCI effort.
11. **FCI conference calls diminished in frequency and, according to some principals, importance.** Instead of making policy or strategic decisions, they became regional reporting mechanisms, which could have been handled either by ground-level program staff or email.
12. **FCI was starting more or less from scratch in the 2010 cycle** because there was no systematic evaluation of census funding in 2000.

## IV. A Timeline for Philanthropic Involvement in the 2020 Census

[See table at end of section]

### 2010-2015

#### Evaluation

Individual foundations and local Census Initiatives are beginning the process of evaluating the effect of census-related funding for the 2010 Census. At the national level, consultants are planning a debriefing for funders and key NGOs in March 2011. They plan to bring a ground-level analysis to that debriefing, including specific summaries about what nonprofits were able to accomplish; best practices that emerged; where grantees had problems or difficulties, and how they either were, or could have been dealt with; what grantees did well, what they did not do so well, and why. At that session, consultants will make some suggestions about how they envision possible futures of FCI in its next phase.

*A number of FCI staff and principals argue that some level of census activity in the nonprofit and philanthropic community needs to be ongoing...*

A number of FCI staff and principals argue that some level of census activity in the nonprofit and philanthropic community needs to be ongoing, covering the 5-6 years of apparent “down time” during which period the Census Bureau conducts key research, development, and testing with the involvement of Advisory Committees—and the general public appears relatively uninterested. Moreover, the American Community Survey keeps going continuously, at the rate of 250,000 household units per month, three million per year. The ACS produces much of the in-depth data that most stakeholders in the business and nonprofit communities are interested in. So anything that stakeholders could do to keep their constituencies aware of and participating in the ACS would increase the quality of the data. The Obama administration has proposed a long-awaited increase in the ACS sample size, an improvement without which ACS data will lose its precision and usefulness over time. There is also a proposal in front of Congress to make the Census Bureau Director a five-year fixed term. Adoption of this change would help de-politicize the census.

If the Census Project were ongoing, it could take the lead role in convening and coordinating activities among nonprofits to monitor and address key policy issues during the earlier part of the decade (such as ACS developments and racial classification questions), though probably not in convening foundations. Census work can be conceptualized as the third leg of civic engagement, after voting and redistricting.

As a practical matter, FCI consultants suggest that some FCI members might fund particularly experienced and capable national nonprofits to monitor and get involved in the key policy

debates on an ongoing basis. Rather than FCI itself having staff or consultants, in other words, its members could fund individual organizations to hire FCI's 2009-2010 consultants.

While it is important for funders to be monitoring census developments, it is just as important for stakeholder leader organizations to be involved in this work as well. Funders and grantees would benefit going forward from a list of activities in which stakeholder organizations should engage throughout the decade in order to be genuinely involved in the overall census process.

It has also been suggested that a smaller subset of FCI members might convene to support particular grantees especially interested in the research and advocacy questions around the census, such as Caribbean groups wanting to change the form to reflect their populations more accurately. For example, it could be useful to host a webinar for nonprofits and the philanthropic community on the use of mapping in census work: indicating how it was helpful on the census, and how it can be used for a wide range of philanthropic, education, and advocacy work.

It will be critical during the early years of this period for the philanthropic and nonprofit communities (as well as the public sector) to evaluate the FCI and overall nonprofit effort on behalf of the census, and to digest those evaluations and their suggestions for future initiatives.

## **2016**

There is some difference of opinion regarding when census-oriented work should start up, but most key current participants suggest that no later than 2016, meetings should begin among principals for the 2020 effort. These meetings ought to determine which organizations would be interested in bringing resources to the table, as well as those potential grantees working in civic engagement, and those who might be able to launch outreach and awareness and promotion campaigns. These include representatives of large national foundations (Ford, Carnegie, Gates, OSF), national civil rights organizations (LCCHR, AAJC, NALEO—even though their status as “interested parties” may work against their perceived objectivity), and regional or local foundations who were involved in the 2010 Census.

During 2016 there should be at least one full-time staff person housed within philanthropy working on census issues.

**A large, unanswered question remains: who can, or will, convene such a group? FCI staff, members, and consultants have made the following suggestions:**

- **FCCP, since it has a nearly 30-year history and housed the FCI.** FCCP is in the process of beefing up its census webpage now and intends to house all evaluations of 2010 census work, where they will be available to interested parties. Most, if not all, of the major players in the 2010 census are FCCP members, which also makes FCCP a place where census issues will continue to stay alive. According to FCCP's Deb Ross, early 2016 organizing can be easily initiated in conjunction with 2010 Census veterans.



- **Terri Ann Lowenthal**, who suspects she “has one more census in her” and who believes census work should be ongoing, so will likely continue to assist and advise The Census Project as funding permits, as well as her Census News Briefs for stakeholders and the media.
- **Larry Hansen’s successor at the Joyce Foundation**, since Hansen and Joyce were key to developing FCI, and managing the regional funders’ collaboratives in the Midwest.
- **The Census Bureau itself**. By 2015 the Census will be in full gear for 2020, and could invite executives or representatives of the 20 largest foundations in the country. The Census Bureau is one of the few institutions with a 10-year calendar. Since Bureau principals appear to have been happy about the emergence and growth of FCI, perhaps they should be approached now to put such a meeting on the 2015 calendar.
- **The Leadership Conference Education Fund (LCEF, previously LCCR/EF)** was a major grantee in 2000 and 2010. That reality may make the organization less able to convene a national funders’ meeting; at the same time, pure organizational self-interest should keep the issue on the organization’s calendar.

## 2017

Series of monthly phone calls directed toward a meeting focused on organizing foundations to be involved in the 2020 census. Three to six key national nonprofits that will be involved in the census need planning grants to begin mobilizing stakeholders and affiliates. These grants are likely to point toward increased grants in 2018, looking toward the major grantmaking in 2019 and 2020.

Participants will need to decide the question of whether or not a group of foundations involved in the census initiative will create a collaborative fund to pool money and make strategic grantmaking decisions together (or at least funding decisions even if they fund individually) in the two-three years leading up to the 2020 Census. If so, it will be time to begin assembling funds, devising a mechanism for making grants, developing a model for governance (for example, does each participant get a seat on the board?), developing a structure to be in place for more substantial grantmaking to occur in 2018.

Systematic outreach to affiliates and tables of such groups as the Urban League, NAACP, NVEN, and regional associations of grantmakers in many big cities. Outreach to professional demographic community: the Population Association of America, the Association of Public Data Users, Council on Professional Associations on Federal Statistics, American Statistical Association. The National Neighborhood Indicator Partnership (of which Annie E. Casey has been a key funder) began in 1990 with eight groups providing local statistical data for local areas; the network has grown to 40 groups. Many have Washington staff; some have lobbyists. Both could play a role in elevating the importance of the census.

## **2018**

The Census Bureau will begin canvassing addresses in 2019 at the latest, so in order for nonprofit stakeholders to be involved in that process effectively (which most missed in 2009) they will need to be working in full gear by the end of 2018. As a result, funders' decisions regarding fund commitments need to be made early in 2018, and RFPs need to be "out the door" by late spring.

Regional funder collaboratives must also be planning funding commitments, institutional infrastructures, and developing RFPs in order to be prepared to make grants in early 2019.

## **2019**

Funders planning to support nonprofits to work effectively on the 2020 Census should plan to make the majority of their grants in early to mid 2019 *at the very latest*. FCI could then offer its expertise in the census process—through briefings and materials development—to help grantees plan and begin to implement their outreach and promotion campaigns in a timely manner.

## **2020**

Grantmaking should be finished by this time. The funder collaboratives and their staff should be entirely focused on media work, operations, map updating, and trouble-shooting.

## A Timeline for Philanthropic Involvement in the 2020 Census

<b>2010-2015</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Evaluate + digest funder accomplishments, best practices, challenges, solutions</li> <li>➤ Evaluate grantees' successes and challenges</li> <li>➤ Monitor and integrate American Community Survey (ACS) data</li> <li>➤ Fund efforts to monitor and address key policy issues and debates</li> <li>➤ Convene grantees interested in research and advocacy questions</li> <li>➤ Help grantees develop a decade-long timeline for engaging in the 2020 census</li> </ul>
<b>2016</b> (at latest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Begin meetings among core funders to:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify funding resources</li> <li>- Identify potential grantees</li> <li>- Identify communications leaders</li> </ul> </li> <li>➤ Ensure philanthropic community has at least one full-time staffer dedicated to the census</li> <li>➤ Determine who will coordinate the 2020 Funders Census Initiative</li> </ul>
<b>2017</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Begin monthly funder briefings geared toward a meeting focused on organizing foundations to be involved in the 2020 census</li> <li>➤ Make initial planning grants to key national nonprofits to begin mobilizing stakeholders and affiliates</li> <li>➤ Decide if there will be a collaborative fund. If so, put systems in place for substantial grantmaking in 2018</li> <li>➤ Begin systematic outreach to demographers, affiliates, nonprofit tables, state partnerships, and regional associations of grantmakers (RAGs)</li> </ul>
<b>2018</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Make funder commitments by early 2018 to enable nonprofit stakeholders to get into full gear by end of year (Census Bureau canvassing begins in 2019)</li> <li>➤ Regional funder collaboratives: make funding commitments, develop institutional infrastructures and RFPs</li> </ul>
<b>2019</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Award majority of grants by early/mid-year (at very latest)</li> <li>➤ Offer expertise to help grantees implement outreach and promotion campaigns</li> </ul>
<b>2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Complete grantmaking</li> <li>➤ Shift emphasis to media, operations, map updating, and trouble-shooting.</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX

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### Resources Archived on the Funders Census Initiative Webpage

The following list identifies key information that is electronically archived on the FCI webpage, which is housed on the Funders' Committee for Civic Participation's website at [www.funderscommittee.org](http://www.funderscommittee.org). The intention is for this page to serve as an ongoing repository for 2010 Census information and updates so that it may be utilized by funders in the lead-up to the 2020 Census.

- The Funders Census Initiative Participant Contact List
- Ongoing census updates, analysis and results
- Census guides, manuals and toolkits
- Funder briefing topics
- Grant and grantee lists
- Maps
- Media materials (news articles, fact sheets, press releases, ads, PSAs)
- Reports
- Sample Request for Proposals
- Testimonies
- Useful web links: philanthropic, nonprofit and government

*FCCP invites the funding community to contribute to the content of this archive.  
To request that information be added to the site, please contact FCCP at 503.505.5703.*