

## **What Funders Can Do Right Now (April-June 2018) to Reduce the Likelihood of Undercount in Census 2020**

### **Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) Program Overview**

From March 1-June 30 of this year, state and local governments around the U.S. will review and correct the Census Bureau's master address list for their jurisdictions. The list defines the universe of homes that receive census materials and, if they don't self-respond by Internet, telephone, or paper questionnaire, a visit by a census worker to follow-up. This current phase of census preparation is known as the LUCA (Local Update of Census Addresses) operation.

Local governments that registered to participate in LUCA can verify the preliminary address list and add missing housing units by checking the Bureau's information against their own administrative records. But these local records can be incomplete, as well. They often fail to include the unconventional, sometimes-concealed, housing units where low-income families of color and immigrants live.

Funders can have a major impact on work toward a fair and accurate Census 2020 by supporting partnerships between city or county governments and local grassroots community-based organizations to identify and add to the Master Address File (MAF) the unconventional housing units that are missing from both Census Bureau and local records—e.g. converted garages, backyard mobile homes, add-on living quarters, basements, sheds, and cottages.

Pilots of community-based canvassing in San Jose, San Francisco, and Fresno, California showed that teams of community canvassers could **add 2% to 6% to the listed housing units in hard-to-count neighborhoods.**<sup>1</sup> **This is important!** The 2010 Census net undercount was 2.1% for Blacks and 1.5% for Hispanics. (While the net undercount for Asian Americans was not significant, it is likely that some subgroups in this diverse population group had disproportionately high undercounts.)

### **The Time to Act is NOW**

Time is short. The "window of opportunity" presented by LUCA only remains open until mid-July 2018 at the latest. But canvassing hard-to-count neighborhoods doesn't take very long. Canvassers for the pilot projects were trained in 3 hours. The canvassing proceeded rapidly—covering 20 hard-to-count

---

<sup>1</sup> The community canvassing we are recommending should not be confused with another census operation, Address Canvassing (AdCan). The Census Bureau does a complete review of its Master Address File before each census. For the 2020 Census, ~70 percent of addresses were reviewed "In Office" using satellite imagery, administrative records and USPS files, and third-party commercial data. Census workers will canvass the remaining ~30 percent of addresses in the field in 2019, to verify and update the address file in areas undergoing change or where quality databases and imagery are not available. Updates from all sources, including the LUCA program, will be included in the final Master Address File used to mail or hand-deliver census materials when the census starts.

census tracts in San Jose in one day and the same number in the Fresno area in a little more than a week.

**Community canvassing is affordable. Census tracts vary in size, but the pilots showed that the actual cost for doing the canvassing can be as low as \$1,000 per census tract.** Given the extremely short time line, we recommend that you identify 10-20 census tracts/hard-to-count neighborhood areas to canvass and immediately launch a small initiative to do the canvassing. The pilots show that investment of only \$20,000 is almost certain to result in millions of dollars per year in more-accurately allocated federal funding during the post-census decade.

CommunityConnect Labs and the WKF Fund have developed a “targeting tool” based on Census Bureau planning data that provides a quick idea of how much canvassing might make sense in a particular community. The WKF Fund can provide you with a short list of census tracts on which to focus your efforts in for any county, or you can review the HTC Census 2020 map developed by CUNY, which identifies hard-to-count census tracts for the entire U.S.

<http://www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us>

CommunityConnect Labs has developed, in consultation with the Census Bureau, a wireless app that runs on a mobile phone or tablet and that canvassers can use to submit the information needed to add a newly-identified housing unit to the Master Address File.

CommunityConnect Labs then compiles reports from canvassing teams and provides them to local government LUCA partners.

Based on the results of the community-based address canvassing pilots, local government LUCA participants in Santa Clara County and Los Angeles County, California, Salt Lake County, Utah, and Central Falls, Rhode Island are working to use the community-based address canvassing strategy as a supplement to their “in office” LUCA efforts.

## What to Do – 7 Easy Next Steps

**1. Identify discretionary/flexible funding that can be deployed immediately to support local “in field” community canvassing.** Community canvassing projects have to be underway by May 15 in order to assure completion by the end of the LUCA operation (around June 30). The ideal rapid-deployment project is one costing about \$20,000—easier to manage; no need for an RFP; ideally implemented with an MOU specifying that the partner organization agrees to train and supervise canvassers to follow project guidelines in collecting data from an agreed-upon number of census tracts (or block-groups).

**2. Identify current grantees who can do the canvassing.** Given the very short LUCA timeline, it makes sense to recruit current grantees or well-known local organizations to do the canvassing. A key requirement is that the organization can mobilize canvassers with knowledge of local hard-to-count neighborhoods who will feel comfortable walking the streets to conduct the canvassing and

answer questions that neighborhood residents might ask. Depending on grantee size or resources, plans can be made to do the canvassing as a major civic engagement event in one day—the model, Cities of Service and the City of San Jose used—or to deploy a small team of 5-10 canvassers working over a week, as in Fresno.

**3. Discuss with grantees their willingness to take on a canvassing initiative.** Organizations need to be willing and enthusiastic to take on a community address canvassing project. Given the timeline, implementing the project will require rapid and decisive implementation.

**4. Confirm local community or state LUCA partners' willingness to accept and pass on to the Census Bureau information on newly-identified housing units.** Newly-identified housing units proposed as additions to the Census Bureau's Master Address File must be submitted by a local (municipal, county, or state) government participating in LUCA. It is to their advantage to have improved address files (since a more accurate census translates into more equitable distribution of federal program funding), but they may be unfamiliar with the idea of community-based address canvassing. Some of the partners in the pilot—e.g. from the City of San Jose—or other counties or cities, as well as the WKF Fund, are willing to share valuable training materials on LUCA (e.g. a webinar led by Dr. Joseph Salvo, Chief Demographer, New York City Planning Department; the Census Bureau's slide deck on LUCA; the WKF Fund evaluation report on the address canvassing pilots).

**5. Secure technical assistance, as needed, to train canvassers, collect, and compile data.** The community-based address canvassing pilots developed training materials for community address canvassers, as well as the user-friendly mobile phone app for submitting data to CommunityConnect Labs to review, compile, and submit to local or state government LUCA partners (who, in turn, transmit the data to the Census Bureau). WKF Fund and CommunityConnect Labs can provide free advice about census tracts in any local community most likely to have significant amounts of unconventional housing omitted from the MAF.

**6. Conduct canvassing and submit the data to local government partners before the end of the LUCA operation (June 30 in most communities, or 120 days from when local governments received their address list to review).** If a project uses the CommunityConnect Labs app to collect data, and makes arrangements with them for management support, data can be de-crypted, cleaned, and compiled rapidly. If a project takes another approach to recording and managing data (e.g. simple forms for canvassers to fill out for each newly-observed unconventional housing unit proposed as a "MAF add-on," data must be submitted via the Census Bureau's GUPS software or whatever information-transfer the local government LUCA liaison is using for "in office" LUCA efforts.

**7. De-brief with community partners about their canvassing experiences and observations about hard-to-count neighborhoods.** Community-based address canvassing in 2018 is a way to highlight the importance of a fair and accurate census and to demonstrate trusted local organizations' support for census participation. It is, at the same time, a good early investment in subsequent phases of Census 2020 implementation. Communities that have conducted their own "in field" address canvassing can provide useful insights to the Census Bureau about neighborhoods needing attention when it begins

its own address canvassing efforts. At the same time, the pool of community canvassers involved in local efforts in 2018 are a valuable resource for the Census Bureau when it comes time to hire local field staff for address canvassing in 2019 and for the enumeration in 2020.

## Resources

- An [overview and easy guide](#) to community-based address canvassing is available online from Census Outreach
- The [WKF report](#) on the outcome of the successful pilots of community-based address canvassing
- New York Times coverage of the [San Jose pilot](#)
- Mother Jones coverage of the [Fresno pilot](#)
- [Information](#) on Cities of Service volunteer model for community canvassing and use of CommunityConnect Labs' mobile canvassing technology

## For More Information

- Ed Kissam at [edkissam@me.com](mailto:edkissam@me.com) to
  - Discuss community-based address canvassing with a fellow funder, the WKF Fund has worked toward implementing this strategy for the past two years and led the pilot projects.
  - For advice on determining the census tracts in your city or county where community-based "in field" canvassing is most needed
- Jacob Model at [jacob@communityconnectlabs.com](mailto:jacob@communityconnectlabs.com) to learn more about the mobile phone app for community canvassing or a (remote) demonstration of the app
- Cindy Quezada [cindy.cviic@gmail.com](mailto:cindy.cviic@gmail.com) for information on the experiences, insights, and lessons learned using the small-team community canvassing model developed by Central Valley Immigrant Integration Collaborative in Fresno

**Connect and Stay Informed** - Join the [Funders Census Initiative Working Group](#) to connect with and learn from other funders organizing at the national, state, and local level as well as receive updates on resources and webinar or in-person learning opportunities.

*Published on April 9, 2018*

***A Note from the FCI Working Group:*** Thank you to Ed Kissam and Terri Ann Lowenthal for your generous time, energy, and expertise to put this resource together.