



CITY OF CHICAGO • OFFICE OF THE MAYOR



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MAYOR LIGHTFOOT ANNOUNCES PLANS TO INVEST \$500K TO BOOST PARTICIPATION IN THE 2020 U.S. CENSUS

City partners with Forefront to distribute grants for community-based outreach to ensure a full, accurate count for Chicago in the 2020 Census

CHICAGO—Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot today announced a strategic initiative to distribute \$500,000 in funding for community-based organizations to assist the City in educating and engaging residents about the upcoming 2020 U.S. Census. Working in partnership with Forefront's [IL Count Me In 2020](#) program, the City will allocate grant funding to several community organizations to support an effective and comprehensive census outreach strategy focused on ensuring a complete and accurate count.

The City is partnering with Forefront, a non-profit and leader in preparing Illinois for the 2020 Census, to disperse city grant funding for community organizations through a Request for Proposals (RFP), launching December 16. These grant funds will be used to support targeted community outreach and other initiatives to help increase participation for historically-undercounted communities

“While only two-thirds of Chicagoans participated in the last census, we know that we must do better to ensure we engage those populations who are hardest to reach for 2020,” said Mayor Lightfoot. “With the help of our community-based partners, Chicago will fund efforts to fill in the gaps with historically undercounted communities and ensure a complete and accurate count next year. We are eager to partner with Forefront to build a successful and collaborative process to distribute much-needed funds to hard-to-count communities and encourage our partners to apply to the RFP later this month.”

The RFP, administered by Forefront, will help the City to administer a transparent process for releasing a portion of its 2020 Census investment earmarked specifically for community-based efforts—including community events, social media campaigns and other outreach designed to build momentum and awareness around a complete count. Overall, the City is committing \$2.7 million investment in next year's budget to 2020 census efforts—the largest amount of funding Chicago has ever committed to the census.

For community providers to apply, Forefront will release an online Request for Proposal (RFP), which will remain open until midnight on January 15, 2020. The goal of the RFP is to provide support for communities who have not yet received funding around the Census to



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ensure a full count of the City of Chicago. Organizations with budgets of \$1 million or less that represent historically undercounted communities (both demographically and geographically) are encouraged to apply and will be given first preference.

"Forefront is honored to partner with Mayor Lightfoot's team and the City of Chicago to further ensure Illinoisans are counted in the 2020 Census," said Forefront President and CEO Eric Weinheimer. "Forefront's successful statewide Illinois Count Me In 2020 campaign will be enhanced through this relationship, supporting communities not yet reached through our statewide Illinois Count Me In 2020 Funders' Collaborative, state funding, or funding from Cook County to educate and activate around a complete count. As the convener of census work in Illinois, Forefront is ready to bring our expertise to bear on how funds can best be allocated to maximize the count in our State's largest city."

For those seeking more information on the RFP criteria and eligibility, Forefront will host two free webinars for interested organizations to learn more about the process. The first webinar will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, December 17, 2019, and the second webinar will be held on January 7, 2020. Grant applications will be reviewed and vetted by representatives from the IL Count Me In 2020 Funders' Collaborative, with decisions committed by January 31, 2020. Funds will be disbursed by Forefront in mid-February 2020.

Nearly half of Chicago's 2.7 million residents are considered "hard-to-count" by the U.S. Census Bureau. This includes families of color, children under five, the elderly, veterans, returning residents, individuals with high rates of mobility and housing instability, residents with disabilities, those with limited access to the Internet, and those who may be afraid to participate. Alongside the \$2.7 million investment in census efforts for next year, the City also formed a Complete Count Committee and a Special Legislative Committee on the Census, both of which are tasked with ensuring an accurate count of Chicago's population with a focus on hard-to-count communities.

"Every Chicagoan deserves to be counted and have their voices heard in the 2020 Census," said Alderman Ariel Reboyras, 30th Ward and Chair of the Special Legislative Committee on the Census. "For every resident missed, the City of Chicago stands to lose \$1,400, and our federal representation in Congress is also on the line. By engaging with community-based organizations, we will ensure that our city's residents not only are encouraged but also feel comfortable participating in this vital process, and I look forward to working with our community partners in the months ahead."

The City of Chicago has also engaged award-winning advertising agency FCB Chicago to build a city-wide communications campaign pro bono for the 2020 Census. In partnership with FCB, the City launched the first phase of its campaign in November with new digital billboards, bus shelter ads, dedicated social media channels, and census signage in City Hall.

An accurate count is vital for Chicago as it determines whether the City receives an appropriate level of representation in Congress, as well as the funding that is instrumental to maintaining infrastructure, public safety, public health, and other City services. Funding



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for many programs benefitting Chicagoans is allocated based on the census, including Medicaid, Head Start, SNAP, Section 8, Title I and Special Education Grants. The City of Chicago stands to lose \$1,400 for every resident missed in 2020, with other adverse implications in redistricting.

To learn more about the City's 2020 Census efforts, please visit census2020.chicago.gov to find up-to-date information on how to participate in the census, city resources aiding to ensure a full count, and what's at stake for next year's count. For more information about the RFP process being administered by Forefront, please visit myforefront.org.

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About Forefront:

Forefront is Illinois' statewide membership organization for nonprofits, foundations, advisors, and their allies. Through its Democracy Initiative and IL Count Me In 2020 program, Forefront has mobilized hundreds of institutional stakeholders and organized the pooling of \$1.7 million in funds to support Census outreach and education across the State.