



**TO:** Gary C. Peters, Chairman  
Senate Committee on Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs

**FROM:** Kelley J. Kuhn, President & CEO  
Michigan Nonprofit Association

**DATE:** July 25, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Reviewing the 2020 Census: Local Perspectives in Michigan

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### **Introduction**

Good morning. My name is Kelley Kuhn, president and CEO of Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA). Founded in 1990, MNA is a 501 c (3) statewide membership organization that serves nonprofits through advocacy, training, and resources. MNA is dedicated to promoting anti-racism and social justice in the nonprofit sector.

The 2020 census was more than a population count – it was an opportunity to make a difference and to shape Michigan’s future.

MNA and the Council of Michigan Foundations, with financial support of more than 40 foundations and the State of Michigan, launched an ambitious campaign to mobilize nonprofits and help Michigan get a complete and accurate count in the 2020 Census. The campaign raised more than \$10 million and engaged hundreds of nonprofits in a nonpartisan, multi-racial coalition with for-profit organizations and government.

### **Focus on Historically Undercounted Populations**

Nonprofits invested energy, time, and commitment in the Michigan Nonprofits Count Campaign to ensure a fair and accurate census for all communities – particularly Michigan’s historically undercounted populations - people of color, immigrants and their families, young children, seniors, people who live in poverty, and people experiencing homelessness. The undercount has led to inequality in political power, government funding, and private-sector investment for these communities; thus, the Nonprofits Count Campaign was developed, leveraging nonprofits as trusted outreach partners, with a specific goal to reach these undercounted groups.

### **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion**

To reach diverse populations and encourage completion of the census, as well as serve as champions of the campaign, MNA entered into a partnership with New Michigan Media, a network that includes more than 140 ethnic and non-traditional media outlets across Michigan. Dr. Hayg Oshagan, president of New Michigan Media, convened three minority media summits that informed the messaging directions of the campaign.

The campaign’s intentional focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion in grantmaking resulted in all grants being awarded to organizations serving historically undercounted populations.

## **Collaboration**

The campaign worked with government officials at all levels to maximize effectiveness. This cooperation primarily resulted in avoiding duplication of efforts and enhancing outreach. We received regular updates from Michigan's state demographer, collaborated with the Census Bureau's partnership specialists, and held specific training sessions and webinars on how to engage local government entities so they were ready for the 2020 Census.

While getting the census count has never been an easy task, when we started this journey in 2017 we couldn't have predicted what was to come in 2020. We faced multiple challenges, including confusion over the late addition of a citizenship question, disinformation, misinformation, and a global pandemic that caused shifting deadlines and wreaked havoc with our get-out-the-count plans.

With Michigan under a stay-at-home order and suffering one of the highest COVID-19 rates in the nation in the spring of 2020, the Nonprofit Counts campaign had to quickly retool. Nonprofits were creative and flexible, yet still sensitive and safe, given the crisis. The campaign adjusted by expanding digital outreach, creating videos for children now that kids were at home, expanding texting campaigns and identifying new partners. Nonprofits also had a presence in the few places people were still frequenting in person such as food banks. Filling out the census online, by mail or over the phone was not an option for some due to a lack of internet access, language and reading barriers and other concerns.

## **Results**

Thanks in part to nonprofits' hard work, Michigan finished eighth in the U.S. in self-response rate. On June 17, 2020, we became the first state in the nation, to have exceeded its 2010 self-response rate. We also ranked third-best in the nation for the largest gain in statewide response from the 2010 census, rising from 67.7% to 71.3%.

Most importantly at the local level, in every census tract where the nonprofit campaign was active, the self-response rate averaged 7% higher than in census tracts where the campaign was not active.

## **Lessons for 2030 Census**

Going forward, we are sharing concrete examples of ways our partners can engage in census work throughout the decade. Underlying the activities are the policy and advocacy work that needs to be done all decade long to ensure adequate funding for the Census Bureau; advocacy for updated questionnaires (including revised race/ethnicity questions and sexual orientation and gender identity questions); and input on operational changes and any legislative recommendations resulting from the experiences and aftermath of the 2020 Census.

MNA regularly communicates with the network that was built in 2020. We include results of the census data, webinars on using the data, opportunities for advocacy, and much more. By investing our time now, we can lay a strong foundation for those who will work to get our communities counted in 2030.

## **Conclusion**

The success that Michigan had in the 2020 Census couldn't have happened without nonprofits. Nonprofits are trusted entities serving as catalysts for continued civic and community engagement.

The Nonprofit Counts campaign built a strong foundation for a fairer and more equitable Michigan where everyone counts, and every voice is heard.

I'd like to thank Chairman Peters and his staff for the opportunity to speak today. We are grateful for your work on the Census and for everything you do on behalf of Michigan's nonprofits.