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Census Outreach Efforts Receive \$1.5 Million to Support a Full and Accurate Count in Washington State

Philanthropy Invests to Ensure All Communities are Counted Amidst Concerns Over Census Questions, Testing and Funding

SEATTLE - With more than \$16 billion of federal funding for critical state infrastructure at stake in the 2020 Census, philanthropic partners announced \$1.5 million in total grants to enable community-based organizations to conduct effective outreach in communities across Washington state.

The [Washington Census Equity Fund](#), a statewide pooled fund managed by Philanthropy Northwest, announced \$800,000 in funding to 28 organizations and tribes supporting communities across Washington. In addition, the [Regional Census Fund](#), established by Seattle Foundation, King County and City of Seattle, is investing \$710,000 through 21 grants to nonprofits serving historically underrepresented communities in King County.

“This unprecedented partnership lays the groundwork for future joint philanthropic efforts, with a proven model of more inclusive collaboration that can be nimble and responsive to community needs,” said Kiran Ahuja, CEO of Philanthropy Northwest.

Promoting a collaborative grantmaking strategy ensures organizations and tribes throughout Washington receive early funding to catalyze census planning and mobilization in hard-to-count communities.

Washington State received a total of [\\$16.7 billion](#) from 55 federal spending programs in 2016. Each person counted leads to significant resources to support critical programs and services including transportation, health care, education and housing.

Risks to the success of the 2020 Census include a new online format, a lack of testing and a shortage of federal funding for outreach. The new online innovations increase the potential to omit residents where housing has grown or changed, to overlook those with less computer literacy or broadband access, and to undercount young children, people of color, rural populations, low-income residents and other [hard-to-count communities](#).

An overwhelming number of Washington organizations and tribes are ready to engage their communities on the 2020 Census with early funding to support census planning and mobilization in hard-to-count communities.

“While we know that the \$1.5 million released is not nearly enough for communities to continue this important work, we hope that this funding will catalyze strategies within communities and set them up to apply for additional funding through other avenues, including [applying for state funding](#),” said Ahuja.

A robust and accurate census matters to philanthropy, a sector committed to promoting vibrant and equitable communities, and relies on data to better direct resources to the most critical populations and issues in the region.

Philanthropic partnerships are also supporting the release of nearly \$15 million in state funding this summer to effectively reach hard-to-count communities. Cross-sector partnerships with the state [Office of Financial Management](#), [communities](#) and tribes allow for thoughtful collaboration to ensure a complete and accurate count in Washington.

“These awards are a huge step forward for Washington’s 2020 Census efforts,” said Marc Baldwin, lead for census activities at the Office of Financial Management. “The collaboration with these organizations, and the fact that these grants came out before the state funds, has provided incredibly valuable insights about how to make the overall state effort more effective.”

The Washington Census Equity Fund and Regional Fund will engage in a second round of funding in the Fall. Grantees and applicants are encouraged to utilize both the state and private funding opportunities to engage, participate and lead localized efforts within communities on the importance and benefits of an accurate count.

Grantees from the Washington Census Equity Fund include: Clark County Latino Youth Leadership Conference, Communities of Color Coalition, Community to Community Development, Consejo Counseling and Referral Services, Council on American-Islamic Relations Washington, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, Entre Hermanos, Hmong Association of Washington, Innovia Foundation, Korean Community Service Center, Latino Community Fund of Washington State, Latino Educational Training Institute, Lummi Nation, More Equitable Democracy, Northwest Kenyan Community Association, NW Native Census Alliance, Passages Family Support, Refugee & Immigrant Services Northwest, Refugee Connections Spokane, Shoalwater Bay Indian Tribe, Spokane Immigrant Rights Coalition, The Noble Foundation, Tri-Cities Counts, Washington Census Alliance, Washington Nonprofits, Whidbey Community Foundation, Yakama/Yakima el Censo 2020, Youth and Family Link.

Washington Census Equity Fund

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation seeded the fund with its initial investment to Philanthropy Northwest, fiscal manager of the Washington Census Equity Fund. The Equity Fund partnership currently comprises 25 partners and has \$1.8 million in philanthropic investment. Launched on April 1, it prioritizes funding for outreach in hard-to-count communities and supports education, community outreach, regional communications, policy advocacy and other “Get Out the Count” activities by community-based organizations and tribes.

Regional Census Fund

Seattle Foundation contributed \$500,000 to this effort and is administering the fund. The City of Seattle and King County each invested \$250,000, and City of Bellevue invested \$50,000 for a total of \$1.05 million. Launched on April 15, it supports trusted community-based organizations to conduct effective outreach in hard-to-count communities including organizing, educating and activating residents in historically

underrepresented communities, including communities of color, immigrants and refugees, native people, LGBTQ residents and others.

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About Philanthropy Northwest

Founded in 1976, Philanthropy Northwest is the region's largest convener of funders and grant makers in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Washington and Wyoming. Philanthropy Northwest promotes, facilitates, and drives collaborative action by community investors to build resilient, equitable and inclusive communities.