



Census 2020 Complete Count Outreach Grants FAQs

Question: What are eligible budget activities under this program?

Answer: NOTE: 75% of the grant proceeds must be allocated to approved not-for-profits. For Libraries that are not incorporated as 501(c)(3) status, the counties or the designated cities can elect to treat libraries incorporated under a different status as part of the nor-for-profit allocation with a reasonable explanation in their application.

Examples of eligible budget activities include, but are not limited to:

- Community outreach
- Distribution of literature
- Door-to-door conversations
- Conducting informational sessions about the census and process
- Conducting special events and census mobilizing
- Development of digital media capped at 5% of the budget
- Interpretation and translation services
- Implementation of developed targeted media campaigns
- Informational kiosks and presentations
- Development of outreach materials (brochures, fliers, newsletters, and other targeted advertising such as billboards and other outlets with broad reach)
- Other specific activities to increase 2020 Census participation
- Purchase of goods and services that directly support eligible budget activities
- Purchase of consumable electronics limited up to \$500 per item and not to exceed \$2,500 in aggregate
- An administrative expense of a rate of up to 5% of the grant funding

All costs incurred must be reasonable and necessary for the performance of work within the scope of Project.

The State funds should leverage and build on State and regional efforts, create new and innovative local efforts, and should not be used to supplant or replace other funding for census activities. Travel costs included in the budget will be reimbursed based on approved NYS rates and per diems outlined by the US General Services Administration (<https://www.gsa.gov/travel-resources>).

An administrative rate of up to 5% may be applied to this grant. This will allow the Respondent to receive funding for administrative costs associated with service delivery and grant management, such as outside contract management services.

Administrative Expenses are those expenses authorized and allowable pursuant to applicable agency regulations, contracts or other rules that govern reimbursement with State funds or State-authorized payments that are incurred in connection with the Respondent's overall management can be attributed directly to the provision of program services. Please note that the Respondent must retain backup documentation detailing how administrative funds were spent and submit with required reports.



Question: What activities are considered ineligible expenditures for this program?

Answer: Funds for the following expenditures will not be allowed:

- Purchase, lease, or rental of any equipment or operational software
- Political activities of any kind
- Electoral activities of any kind
- Acquisition of voter registration data, voter profiles or similar programs or data commonly used in political campaigns
- Awards of cash, gift cards, trophies or the like
- Purchase, lease, and/or rental of: computers, mobile computing devices such as iPads, tablets etc., cellular telephones and related devices that exceed \$500 per item and are more than \$2,500 in aggregate
- Audit services
- Acquisition, construction, or renovation of buildings or other real estate
- Entertainment
- Religious activity
- Alcohol
- Expenses incurred prior to March 10, 2020 or ESD Award letter date, whichever sooner
- Costs of organized fundraising
- Interest, taxes and penalties
- Overhead expenses
- Any other cost incurred in violation of the terms of the GDA as defined in the agreement

Question. - It is indicated that 75% of grant proceeds must be allocated to not-for-profit organizations. Can you please explain why this is a requirement?

Answer: A key recommendation from the Complete Count Commission's report is to "maximize the use of trusted voices in the communities" to reach the hard-to-count communities. To ensure that these communities are reached to be counted, we are asking each county and municipality to partner with not-for-profits to help develop and implement a robust census outreach strategy. Applicants will describe all contractual services in detail, including cost per item and allocation per provider indicated on the Project Activity Description attachment in the narrative box labeled Contractual Services on the Budget Summary Census 2020 attachment.

Question. Where can I find information on eligible not-for-profits?

Answer: The state will directly notify the county when not-for-profits have been approved. Each county is free to select their NFP partners and determine funding level within the pre-determined allocation to the county.

Question: Do the libraries need to register through the NFP portal?

Answer: Libraries do not have to go through the NFP portal.



Question: Can a County give 100% of the grant funding to non-profits (instead of the minimum 75%)?

Answer: Yes

Question: We are interested in getting a waiver for the 75/25 requirement. What would we need to do to get such a waiver?

Answer: There are no waivers in this program.

Question: Is \$2,500 the max for consumable electronics statewide?

Answer- Yes.

Question. Are Tablets an allowable expense up to the \$2,500 aggregate?

Answer. Yes

Question. Would purchasing or renting “mobile hotspots” be allowable to enable web-access in the field or at events, and would this fall within the \$500/\$2500 consumable electronics cap?

Answer. Yes

Question: What happens to the consumable electronics, if an organization chooses to purchase them?

Answer: In your plan, you should describe how the consumable electronics will be put to public use after the conclusion of the grant.

Question: Are promotional items (swag) allowable costs? For example, pens, bookmarks, pins, stickers –

Answer. No

Question: Are food and drink allowable costs?

Answer: Yes. All costs incurred must be reasonable and necessary for the performance of work within the scope of the Project.

Question: Would the performance by a local band fall under the definition of entertainment?

Answer: The performance of a local band is considered entertainment and is not an eligible expense. The County is free to hire a band to perform at an event but cannot seek reimbursement for this expense.

Question: Is postage an allowable expense?

Answer: – Yes. Postage for census material only can be considered an allowable expense.



Question: Are organizations allowed to offer gift cards to incentivize the community?

Answer: No, incentives are not allowed budget activities.

Question: Can funds be used for religious activities?

Answer: Funds cannot be used for religious activities i.e. church services, sermons. But 501(c)(3) Faith Based Organizations can host outreach events to support census outreach.

Question: Can the County hire someone to conduct the outreach program?

Answer Yes. The County's' 25% of the grant funds can be used to hire someone to oversee the program. This categorized as a director expenses or cost to the project.

Question: Are state MWBE requirements applicable?

Answer. For purposes of this Program, the Census Agencies encourages the use of Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises ("MWBE") participation. However, MWBE goals are not assigned to this Program.

Question: Is this supposed to be filled out for the county grant as a whole – one singular budget? Or is each piece of the grant – namely each NFP's – supposed to be a separately budget summary?

Answer: The grantee should fill out the budget template for the county grant as a whole.

Question: How much detail should municipalities include in our applications? (i.e. should it include specific activities and amount of funding for each organization?)

Answer: In general, you should provide enough detail that we can understand how much money you expect to dedicate to specific parts of your plan and who you expect will carry it out. For instance, you might say that you expect to allocate \$20,000 for door to door canvassing and list the organizations that you expect will do it. You can be overly inclusive with the list of orgs and still choose to fund only some of those orgs.

Question: What is the deadline for applications?

Answer: Applications must be submitted through online portal by March 2, 2020 by 5:00 PM. The Census Agencies reserve the right, in their sole discretion, to receive late applications, to withdraw or modify this RFA and to reject any application as being non-responsive.

Question: When can municipalities expect an award letter/funds to be disbursed?

Answer: Award letters will be sent after a plan is approved. Plans will be approved on a rolling basis. If your plan is submitted by the March 2 deadline, you will receive your award letter by March 10.



Question: Are counties bound by their RFP with the census spending?

Answer: The county legislative body might have to vote to accept the state grant and likely will have to do a budget amendment to authorize the expenditure unless the county has resolutions in place that allow the acceptance of unexpected state grants and the expenditure of the same pursuant to state grant guidelines.

Question: What is the process for receiving funds?

Answer: Upon execution of the Grant Disbursement Agreement and receipt of required documentation, 70% of approved award will be disbursed in advance. The next 20% advance will be funded based on documentation of eligible expenditures of 50% of initial advance, submission of progress report, as well as the projection of how the next 50% advance will be spent and deployed. The final 10% will be disbursed upon documentation of 100% of approval award spent on eligible expenses and the submission of a final report. Expenses must be incurred between ESD Award Letter and August 31, 2020 to be considered eligible project costs.

Question: For the 20% disbursement, can we provide documentation for costs through invoices? Or must we provide proof of payment?

Answer. The next fifty percent (50%) of the grant shall be disbursed as an advance upon supporting documentation of eligible expenditures of 50% of initial advance. Supporting documentation may include copies of invoices as well as proof of payment (e.g., bank statements, paid credit card statements, or other proof of payment), contracts or letters of intent.

Question: How will municipalities be expected to report back? How about nonprofits?

Answer: Municipalities will have to submit a report when requesting the second draw of grant funds. The disbursement schedule is now 70% upon execution of the GDA, 20% upon request and evidence that 50% of the first draw has been spent, and 10% upon grant closeout in October. For the second draw and the closeout, the municipalities will be required to submit proof of how the money was sub granted and how it was actually spent (credit card receipts, invoices, time sheets, etc.). The NFPs will not have to submit a separate report to us, but we expect that you will have to rely on evidence of spending from the NFPs in preparing your reports.