

# FINAL REPORT

Alaska's Statewide Education Initiative for the 2020 U.S. Census

## Alaska Counts

2020 Census



## A Letter from Alaska Counts Leadership (2021)

When members of the Alaska Census Working Group began planning for the 2020 Census almost five years ago, there was nothing to guide our work but a set of coffee-stained, chicken-scratched notes from a single meeting of the 2010 Alaska Census advisory group. **This report recaps our work in Alaska leading up to the 2020 Census, with the hope that this information will preserve critical knowledge and inform future Census-related efforts in our state.**

Through this report, the Alaska Census Working Group intends to document our strategies and leave a repository of materials and information for future Census champions. Alaska is a difficult state to count, and we cannot afford to start from scratch every ten years. **We hope to help close major knowledge and historical gaps in 2030.**

When we began preparing for the 2020 Census, no one could have predicted its timeline or the historic hurdles this constitutionally-mandated, nationwide exercise would face between historically low budgets and the COVID-19 pandemic. The Alaska Census Working Group adapted to a changing landscape after months of preparation and executed a multi-pronged approach to statewide Census outreach. Its work prioritized extensive consultation with the U.S. Census Bureau directly, identifying gaps in the Bureau's capacity that it then filled, and engaged affected stakeholders along the way to ensure strategic adaptations based on Hard-to-Count populations.

The Working Group's tactics focused on how best to engage and empower local advocates, who served as trusted community leaders in working towards an accurate and complete count. Some accomplishments and lessons worth noting:

- We dedicated energy early on to distilling and communicating the tangible community impacts on local funding as a result of the Census (i.e. a visible hospital project, or affected community programs like childcare or food assistance)
- We filled gaps in the Census Bureau's recruitment effort by frequent communication about which rural communities were struggling to recruit Census workers in advance of the Census launching, coordinating with partners on the ground to assist with efforts
- We hired paid phones to directly patch Alaskans through to complete the Census by phone (special emphasis since pandemic increased response challenges at the door)
- We launched a mini grant program for organizations to conduct census outreach tailored to their own community, using Alaska Counts materials and resources. Activities ranged from hosting lunch and learn events, to sponsoring a student-led Census art project to raise awareness

We hope that this overview will help inform future Census efforts in the Last Frontier, enabling future generations of census champions to rocket out of the gates.

***May your count be complete and accurate!***

Gabe Layman  
*Chair, Alaska Census Working Group and  
Executive Vice President, Cook Inlet Housing Authority  
and President, Cook Inlet Lending Center, Inc.*

Laurie Wolf  
*Member, Alaska Census Working Group and  
President & CEO of The Foraker Group*

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# Summary

**Alaska is one of the most difficult states to count in the constitutionally mandated decennial U.S. Census.**

With the lowest population density of any U.S. state—spread across a land mass the size of Texas, California, and Montana combined—the Census Bureau has its work cut out in counting Alaska. A limited road system covers only a portion of its 586,000 square miles, including over 240 remote villages. Barriers include limited internet connectivity, varied language access, and the prevalence of historically hard-to-count populations only adds to the challenges of counting every Alaskan.

**The Census is critical for Alaska.** As of 2017, Alaska receives over \$3.2 billion in federal funding each year based on Census data. This is funding for housing and healthcare, roads and other critical infrastructure. Census data is also critical for organizations to plan for the future, from government entities to nonprofits to businesses. And Census data are also used to draw legislative districts and local political boundaries that affect political representation.

**Certain groups are especially at-risk of undercount in the Census.** We know from past U.S. Censuses that low-income Alaskans, non-English speakers, renters, children under age 5, and non-white Alaskans, especially Alaska Native people, are at-risk of being undercounted.

**The Alaska Census Working Group formed in 2017 to lead statewide advocacy and communications efforts for the 2020 Census.** The Alaska Census Working Group formed in 2017, as a group of nonprofit, philanthropic, private, local government, and Alaska Native entities committed to the 2020 Census in Alaska. The cross-sector, nonpartisan Working Group led the statewide advocacy and communications efforts around the 2020 Census. The Foraker Group, Alaska’s statewide nonprofit association, and Cook Inlet Housing Authority, the largest regional housing authority in Alaska and the tribally designated housing entity for the Cook Inlet Region, organized and staffed the Alaska Census Working Group.

**In 2019, the Alaska Census Working Group launched Alaska Counts, a nonpartisan education initiative to help ensure that every Alaskan would be counted in the Census.** As an education initiative, Alaska Counts informed public, private, nonprofit, and Native entities across the state about the 2020 Census. This effort focused on a core message: that the Census is safe, critical, and easy to complete. Alaska Counts officially launched in the summer of 2019, with a website, logo, and communications materials for organizations across the state to use. Over the course of 16 months, Alaska Counts led communications, language access, and direct outreach efforts for the 2020 Census in Alaska.

# Alaska Census Working Group

The Alaska Census Working Group came together in 2017 as a group of nonprofit, philanthropic, private, local government, and Alaska Native entities committed to ensuring a complete count of all Alaskans in the 2020 Census. Two organizations stood up the Working Group: The Foraker Group, Alaska’s statewide capacity-building organization for nonprofits, and Cook Inlet Housing Authority, Alaska’s largest regional housing authority and tribally designated housing entity for the Cook Inlet region.

The Working Group’s Census efforts fell into two main categories, known as the “air game” and the “ground game.” The air game involved early advocacy and education efforts with policymakers to ensure that Census operations would reflect Alaska’s unique counting challenges. The ground game involved direct communication with Alaskans across the state and on-the-ground Get Out the Count efforts in coordination with statewide partners directly prior to, and during, the 2020 Census.

This two-pronged approach relied heavily on working closely with the Alaska State Department of Labor’s Demographer, Eddie Hunsinger, and then after his departure, Liz Brooks, Alaska State Data Center Lead, Research and Analysis Section, Population and Census Unit. Their help was essential to fact checking the numbers that supported the storytelling we used across media in our education and Get Out the Count efforts; distilling core talking points and answering questions like, “How do we accurately explain – in numbers – how responding to the census results in support for thousands of Alaskans each year?”

## **Census Air Game: Advocacy**

The Alaska Census Working Group’s air game included three main priorities:

- 1 Educate policymakers on the importance of accurate census data for Alaska and advocate for the commitment of sufficient federal and state resources
- 2 Connect with the Census Bureau regarding critical tribal issues
- 3 Educate the Census Bureau on the impact of specific technical and methodological issues and recommend specific solutions that promote an accurate count/estimate in Alaska

The Advocacy section of this report explains in further detail how members of the Alaska Census Working Group pursued these original priorities to educate and engage with policymakers and the Census Bureau.

## **Census Ground Game: Communication, Translation, Outreach**

As the 2020 Census approached, the Alaska Census Working Group began a concerted “ground game” effort—shifting from not only reaching policymakers and the Census Bureau to also reaching Alaskans directly about the importance of the 2020 Census.

The Group's goals included ensuring full awareness and opportunity for participation of the 2020 Census through a campaign that reached every Alaskan through strategic partnerships, community outreach, and traditional and new media. This plan outlined opportunities for partners to access and understand Alaska Counts' broad messaging timeline, strategy, and the variety of tactics that they may adopt and implement in partnership with their specific audiences in the most appropriate channels.

This effort included Communications, both the development of resources for partners to use as well as a direct communications campaign; Language Access, to make Census materials accessible to non-English speakers, and especially to Alaska Native language speakers for whom the Census Bureau did not translate any materials; and Outreach, including a mini-grant program as well as a series of events focused around the Census.

## **Alaska Census Working Group Members**

A complete list of Alaska Census Working Group members can be found in the "Thank You" section of this report.

# Advocacy

The Alaska Census Working Group began with an early focus on advocacy and education for policymakers at the Census Bureau and across all levels of government. These efforts focused on the importance of the census for Alaska, as well as the unique risks of an undercount in our state. This early advocacy and education turned the Alaska Census Working Group into the go-to trusted source for information related to the Census in Alaska.

## Advocacy at the National Level

### *National Advisory Council to the U.S. Census Bureau*

Carol Gore, President/CEO of Cook Inlet Housing Authority, served on the National Advisory Council (NAC) to the U.S. Census Bureau from 2013-2019, including as Chair of the NAC beginning in 2018. At the end of Carol's term, Nicole Borromeo, Executive Vice President and General Counsel for the Alaska Federation of Natives, was selected to serve on the NAC. As the only representatives of Alaska to sit on the 27-person body leading up to the 2020 Census, Carol and Nicole were strong advocates for ensuring that Census Bureau operations and policies took into account Alaska's unique needs.

### *Working Directly with the U.S. Census Bureau*

Members of the Alaska Census Working Group also liaised directly with representatives from the U.S. Census Bureau. U.S. Census Bureau staff visited Alaska a number of times, beginning with tribal consultation visits in 2015, 2016, and 2019 and also including a visit to Dillingham, Alaska, in October of 2019 as well as a visit to Anchorage and Toksook Bay in January of 2020 to mark the official start of the 2020 U.S. Census.

The Bureau held a consultation Session during AFN on October 14 & 15, 2015. There was a significant focus on the potential harm that would be done in Alaska by moving from an AIAN race question to a tribal enrollment question. There was a follow-up consultation session a year later, in September 2016, in Anchorage. The Bureau brought back changes to the proposed tribal enrollment question that tribes and tribal service providers explained would only make things worse. **It was these conversations that led the Bureau to drop the proposed tribal enrollment question, which could have cost Alaska tens of millions of dollars in funding for Alaska Native people.**



U.S. Census Bureau Director Steve Dillingham (*top*) and Alaska Census Working Group Chair, Gabe Layman (*bottom*) speak at the kickoff event for the 2020 U.S. Census on January 18, 2020.

Members of the Working Group also met with Census Bureau staff directly while in D.C. in the years leading up to the 2020 Census, ensuring that the Census Bureau kept Alaska's unique context in mind while planning its operations.

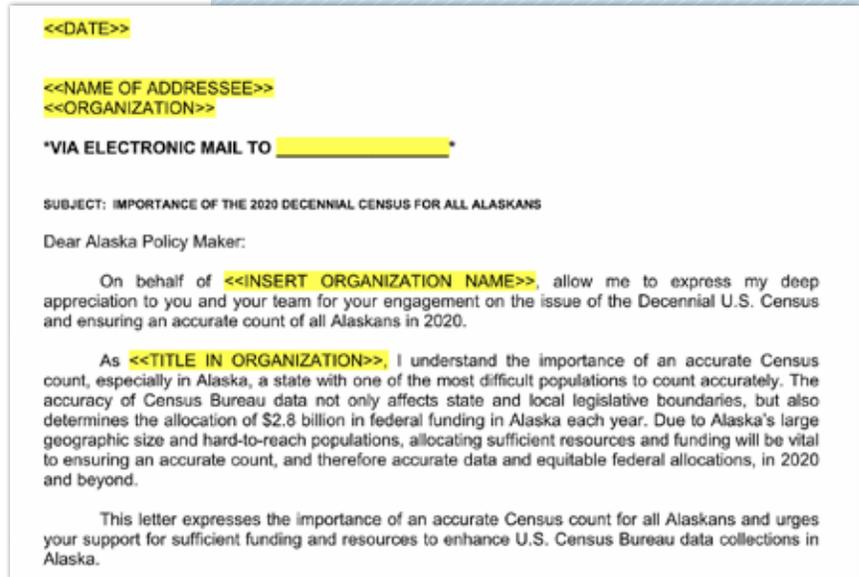
The Alaska Census Working Group also led early advocacy efforts to ensure that sufficient resources were allocated to the Census Bureau to conduct the 2020 Census. This included creating letter and resolution templates for organizations to highlight the importance of the 2020 Census and advocating for sufficient resources to conduct it.

### **Beginning of 3-page letter template shared with partners:**

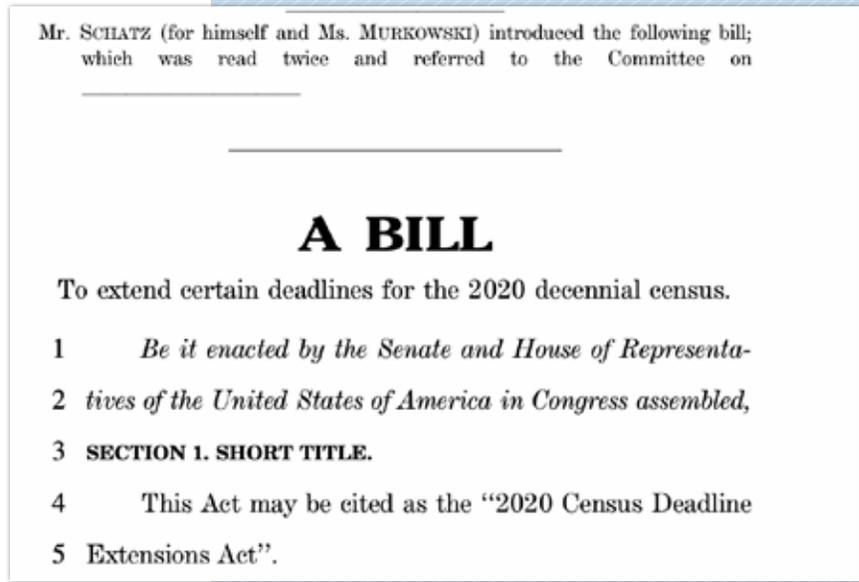
### **Working with Alaska's Congressional Delegation**

Members of the Working Group, led by The Foraker Group and Cook Inlet Housing Authority, also made it a point to meet with and educate Alaska's congressional delegation early on about the importance of the 2020 Census, and the unique risks for an undercount in Alaska.

This ongoing communication resulted in engaged and productive relationships with Alaska's congressional delegation, especially with the offices of Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan. Both Senators highlighted the Census in key public addresses. Senators Murkowski and Sullivan were the only Republican Senators to sign on with 46 other U.S. Senators to call for an extension to the deadline for reporting Census data, which could have allowed an extension to the data collection efforts as well.



## **Murkowski, Sullivan are the only Republicans to call for census extension**



After the Census Bureau and Trump administration pulled back the Census deadline from October 31 to September 30, Senator Murkowski (R-AK) and Senator Schatz (D-HI) co-sponsored a bill to extend the deadline for data reporting for the 2020 U.S. Census:

Senators Murkowski and Sullivan continued to be ambassadors for the importance of the 2020 Census in Alaska, and around the country.

### **Regional Collaboration**

Members of the Alaska Counts team also joined the regional “Census Counts: Get Out the Count Conference held in Los Angeles in September of 2019.” The Census Counts GOTC Summit in LA brought together representatives from 7 states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, along with some partners from New York and Washington, D.C. States Count Action Network (S-CAN) put on the two-day summit in coordination with the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and the NALEO Education Fund.

Representatives of the Alaska Counts effort, along with partners from the state legislature and nonprofit entities in Alaska, attended the two-day conference to learn about best practices and share updates on Alaska’s efforts as part of a keynote panel.

## **Advocacy at the State Level**

### **Working with Alaska’s State Legislature**

The Alaska Census Working Group, led by The Foraker Group and Cook Inlet Housing Authority, also focused on advocacy and education at the state level. This resulted in multiple presentations to legislative committees, as well as a \$250,000 appropriation from the State of Alaska to support 2020 Census efforts through the Governor’s Alaska Complete Count Commission. Working Group members also made a concerted effort to educate individual state legislators on the importance of the Census, and the importance of communicating about the Census to their constituents.

### **Presentations to the state legislature included:**

- January 24, 2019, Lunch & Learn
- February 26, 2019: Alaska Senate Committee on Community and Regional Affairs: 2020 Census Hearing
- Lunch & Learn, April 2019, with Foraker Group and Alaska Public Interest Research Group (AKPIRG) to share about general Census updates and language access information



Photograph taken by Alaska Census Working Group team during Alaska Counts presentation to the Alaska Native Health Board during the organization’s board meeting in the summer of 2019. This photo shoot included the collection of testimonials from Alaska Native leaders from all corners of the state for creation of shareable graphics in an online toolkit.

## ***Collaborating with the Alaska Complete Count Commission***

The Alaska Census Working Group worked to collaborate with Alaska's Complete Count Commission, originally authorized and populated by Governor Bill Walker's Administrative Order 301 in October of 2018. When Governor Michael Dunleavy took office following Governor Walker, he re-populated the body but kept it in existence. Ultimately, the Alaska Complete Count Commission was allocated \$250,000 to do their own Census communications and outreach. A significant portion of this funding was used in partnership with the Alaska Census Working Group to run digital ads sharing Alaska Counts information and linking to the Census form.

Gabe Layman, Chair of the Alaska Census Working Group, penned a letter on behalf of the full group, speaking to the Alaska Complete Count Commission's unique position to help the state prioritize count efforts. Having discussed complementary roles with representatives of the ACCC, the Alaska Census Working Group respectfully offered the following list of opportunities it saw as essential to a successful count, considering the ACCC's advantageous position to make those ideas happen with little to no financial investment.

## ***Potential State of Alaska / Alaska Complete Count Commission Actions:***

- **Promote the 2020 Census on the 2020 Permanent Fund Dividend landing page application, and receipt**
- **Use Alaska Counts materials to help promote a consistent, unified, non-partisan messaging about Census engagement throughout Alaska**
- **Leverage trusted voices, including the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and agency leadership to promote the Census**
  - Support and promote the 2020 Census during speaking events
  - Issue an official proclamation in support of a complete count
  - Send an email to all state employees urging them to be counted in 2020
- **Ask agency heads to communicate to their departments, via email and otherwise, about the importance of being counted in 2020**
  - Request that agencies publicize the Alaska Counts mini-grant program with their internal and external email lists
  - Use executive branch social media accounts to promote a complete count
    - Ask agencies with social media accounts to post about the importance of being counted in 2020. They can develop their own content or use content already developed through Alaska Counts
    - Publicize the Alaska Counts mini-grant program
  - Introduce Public Information Officers in each department to Alaska Counts materials and request they take action
    - Include the Alaska Counts logo or similar Census 2020 branding in their e-signatures;
    - Hang posters at public places in their departments, particularly public waiting areas and employee gathering spaces;
    - Share 2020 Census information via department social media pages, newsletters, email lists, stakeholder engagement opportunities, and other outreach opportunities
  - Ask directors of State boards and commissions to email board and commission members about the importance of being counted in 2020

- Ask boards and commissions to consider opportunities to promote 2020 Census response to their stakeholders
- Allow any State agencies and offices to apply for Census mini-grants from Alaska Counts to host a Census outreach event
- **Direct state agencies, including the Division of Community and Regional Affairs (DCRA), Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), Department of Health and Social Services (HSS), and Department of Transportation (DOT) to utilize public facilities and communications to promote the Census, especially in remote and hard-to-count communities. Examples include:**
  - Designate a standard Census poster or flyer to be printed and hung in:
    - Job centers
    - Public schools and school district offices
    - State libraries and museums
    - Public assistance and health services offices
    - Marine highway vessels and terminals
    - LIOs
    - DMVs
  - Add 2020 Census messaging to:
    - Fishing and hunting licenses
    - Public assistance disbursements, like Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
    - State employee pay stubs
    - State websites
    - Print material in agency offices
  - Add links to Alaska Counts and/or other Census resources to agency websites and electronic newsletters
- **Coordinate with the U.S. Postal Service to display census materials, including Alaska Counts, in the ~300 post offices in rural Alaska**
- **Continue to collaborate with Alaska Counts and the U.S. Census Bureau to avoid duplication of efforts and maximize collective impact.**

With half of the state's population residing in the Municipality of Anchorage, the Alaska Census Working Group also prioritized collaboration with the Anchorage Complete Count Committee, which worked closely with the Office of the Mayor (OM). The Office of the Mayor sent designated staff to weekly coordination meetings with the Alaska Counts outreach team, along with monthly ACWG meetings to ensure the MOA-specific strategies and messaging aligned with statewide strategies and messaging. The Alaska Census Working Group provided a list of specific actions the Municipality, Mayor, and Assembly could adopt to help with education efforts and reduce a potential undercount. The resulting Resolution signed by the Mayor's office in September of 2019 included, but was not limited to:

- Add a footer to municipal email signatures
- Include information in utility bills
- Add a banner to the municipal website
- Talk about the Census in public addresses
- Share information using municipal department social media platforms
- Hang census posters in all municipal buildings
- Post fliers at bus stops
- Add graphics on apps related to city services
- Add graphics to computer kiosks starting in March 2020
- Make computer kiosks available in municipal buildings for people to complete the census
- Air regular messages on the Municipality's cable channel
- Advertise census jobs and recruit census workers
- Help with public outreach at municipal events
- Put info up at parking facilities (Anchorage Community Development Authority)
- Post flyers on muni bulletin boards (i.e. library, health department)
- Reach out to partners to help with outreach
- Post materials on People Mover and inside of buses

## **Advocacy at the Local Level**

### ***Alaska Municipal League***

Representatives of the Alaska Census Working Group presented at the Alaska Municipal League conference in both 2019 and 2020. This annual conference brings together mayors and local leaders from across the state, and provides an opportunity to educate trusted local voices about the importance of the Census.

### ***Other Local Partners***

A list of other partnerships can be found in the “Partnership” section of this report, as well as in the “Thank You” section.

# Language Access

Early on, Alaska Census Working Group members recognized that A) non-English speakers are at-risk of going uncounted in the Census, and B) that the Census Bureau would not be translating the Census form or other materials into many languages spoken in Alaska, including Alaska Native languages. In order to encourage response and build trust in the 2020 Census, the Census needed to be made accessible to non-English speakers.

Pre-Census communications were needed to explain the Census is and why it is safe, and to address negative stereotypes of the Census, which are often related to traumatic experiences with government information collection.

An overarching goal drove this effort: to reach people where they are and in their language. Yet different languages face different challenges. Alaska Native languages are spoken by a diverse group around the state, and often new words need to be created when translating official U.S. Government documents into these languages. Currently, there is also no centralized translator hub with standardized rates and quality, so it is difficult to standardize the translation process and ensure that needed information is transmitted to communities through the proper channels.

World languages face different challenges. There are identified translators for most languages, but language communities are often small and can be difficult to reach. And, like with some Alaska Native languages, some of these languages are oral and so information must be created and transmitted differently.

Recognizing the diversity of language groups across the state, the Alaska Census Working Group worked to provide census materials to individuals whose primary languages weren't English through developing materials, building partnerships to disseminate them, and in some cases, translating the Census into a language for the first time ever.

## Translating the Census into Alaska Native Languages

The Alaska Census Working Group helped translate the Census through a partnership with the Alaska Public Interest Research Group (AKPIRG). AKPIRG's language access team of three convened 25 language experts from around the state to translate the 2020 Census into seven Alaska Native languages, for the first time ever. These languages were: Bering Straits Inupiaqtun, Central Yugtun (Yup'ik), Hooper Bay Yugtun (Yup'ik), Chevak Cup'ik, Denaakk'e (Koyukon), Gwichyaa Zhee Gwich'in, and Neets'aai Gwich'in. This included a week of in-person work, hosting cross-cultural dialogues between language groups, and subsequent follow-up projects, including translating COVID-19 information into those same languages.



Language experts from across the state convened in Anchorage to translate the 2020 Census into 7 Alaska Native languages for the first time ever. (Photo by Berett Wilber)

# Language access materials in world languages

The Alaska Census Working Group, with the Alaska Public Interest Research Group (AKPIRG) as lead, worked with community organizations to analyze the greatest concerns of communities speaking English as a Second Language.

Conversations with organizations serving primarily non-English language communities, like Refugee Assistance & Immigration Services (RAIS), led to priority assessments, co-created messaging, and language events. This included a “Census Know Your Rights” card, which was ultimately translated into 11 languages: Arabic, Burmese, Hmong, Korean, Nepali, Russian, Samoan, Somali, Spanish, Swahili, and Tagalog.

Additionally, with partners such as the Municipality of Anchorage, Alaska Literacy Program, Alaska Institute for Justice—Language Interpreter Center, and many others, the Alaska Census Working Group distributed literature and talked with translators who understood the concerns of their communities and could help to communicate about the Census.

Page from the Inupiaqtun Census Language Guide

Hmong 'Know Your Rights' Card

# Communications

Alaska Counts adopted both an organic and paid approach to statewide communications, creating resources and materials for partners across the state to use to conduct their own outreach campaigns, while also engaging in direct communications through mail, radio, and digital presence.

## 1 Resources for Statewide Partners

In 2019, the Alaska Census Working Group established core messages; a brand—Alaska Counts; and a series of resources and materials for partners across the state to use to learn and educate others about the 2020 Census in Alaska.

### Core Messages

The Alaska Counts campaign centered around a core message, that the 2020 U.S. Census is:

- **Safe and Confidential:** Responses cannot be used to harm individuals in any way. It is a federal crime for the Census Bureau to share census data with any other group or agency. Violations may result in a \$250,000 fine and a prison sentence of up to 5 years.
- **Easy to complete:** Takes only 10 minutes with benefits that last for the next 10 years.
- **Critical to ensuring that every community gets its full share of funding for local public services:** Census data determine the allocation of over \$3.2 billion in federal funding to Alaska, for everything from highways and hospitals to schools and public safety.

### Alaska Counts Brand

The Alaska Counts team worked with a talented local graphic designer to develop a brand for the Alaska Counts effort. The goal was not to create a flashy logo to sell a product, but rather to create a consistent set of values and visuals that reflected those values, so that Alaska Counts would become a recognizable and trusted source of information about the 2020 Census. The brand values included:

<b>WHAT WE ARE ABOUT</b>	
THE ALASKA COUNTS CAMPAIGN IS GUIDED BY A MISSION AND VALUES THAT INFORM EVERYTHING WE DO AND SAY.	<b>The Alaska Counts campaign is</b>
OUR BRAND FUNCTIONS TO SHARE OUR IDENTITY WITH THE WORLD; WE COMMUNICATE POWERFULLY AND CONSISTENTLY.	<b>TRUSTWORTHY</b> <i>honest, straightforward</i>
	<b>INCLUSIVE</b> <i>non-partisan, nondiscriminatory, equitable</i>
	<b>RESOURCEFUL</b> <i>collaborative, complementary</i>
	<b>ACCESSIBLE</b> <i>open, approachable, welcoming</i>
	<b>The Alaska Counts campaign's goal is</b>
	<b>TO ENSURE A COMPLETE AND ACCURATE COUNT OF ALL ALASKANS</b>

The Alaska Counts website served as a one-stop-shop for all resources and materials created under the statewide Alaska Counts effort. Starting with just a few simple fact sheets about the Census, the Alaska Counts website grew to include a

- full FAQ section,
- translated materials and information about language access that the Census Bureau did not otherwise provide,
- a social media graphic toolkit, and
- a variety of print-ready materials.

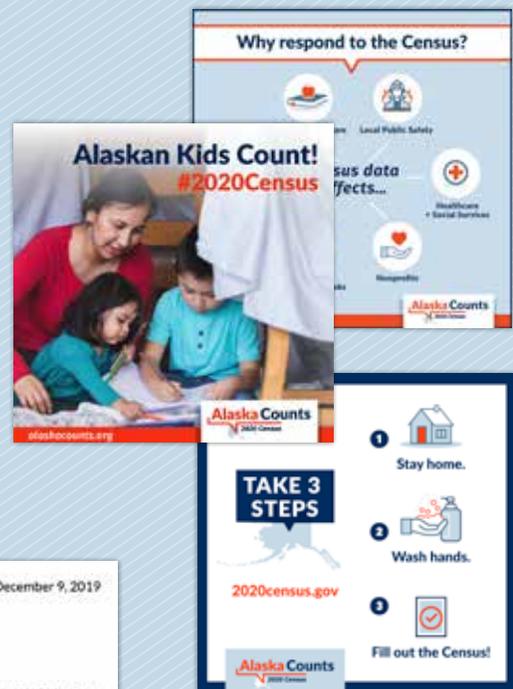
The site also featured the Working Group’s support to local organizations through mini grants. Moving forward, this website can serve as a place to store materials for use in future census efforts.

### Newsletters

The Alaska Counts team also sent a series of 12 newsletters to partners across the state, beginning in the fall of 2019. These newsletters included operational updates, upcoming events, and mini initiatives—such as the “12 Days of Census” communications challenge in December 2019. The newsletters were an opportunity to engage partners with specific ideas for how they could get involved in spreading Census messaging to their stakeholders.



Website: [www.alaskacounts.net](http://www.alaskacounts.net)



Sample social media graphic toolkit



## Announcing Alaska Counts

Alaska Counts officially launched on September 4, 2019. Follow up calls to all major outlets and smaller regional newspapers established the Alaska Census Working Group's initiative as a go-to source of information on all things related to the 2020 Census, outside of direct questions going to the U.S. Census Bureau, which proved helpful to local reporters.

## 2 Paid Communications Campaign

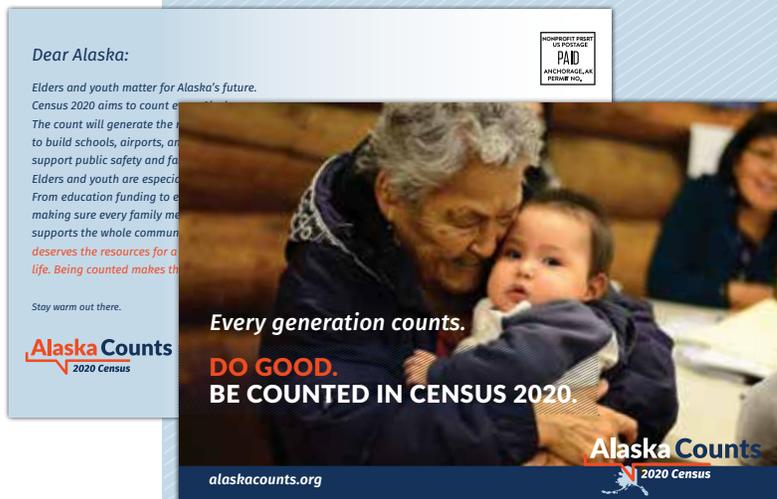
In addition to creating resources and materials for shared use, Alaska Counts engaged in a multi-modal, paid communications campaign to reach Alaskans directly. These efforts focused on direct mail, radio ads, digital ads, peer-to-peer texting, and direct phone calls.

### Mail

In total, direct Alaska Counts mail pieces reached almost 100,000 Alaskans across the state encouraging response to the 2020 Census. Alaska Counts sent out a series of mail pieces to communities at-risk of being undercounted in the 2020 Census. Specifically, this effort began with a recognition that the Census Bureau would not be sending out reminders to PO box holders in Alaska, which is a critical means of receiving mail, especially in rural parts of the state. A series of three mailers were sent to PO box holders and residents of historically hard-to-count communities in the state (88,593 people). Two additional mailers went to rural hub communities in September, when these communities were identified as especially at-risk of undercount (5,334 people). A sixth mailer was sent to all Anchorage residents in partnership with the Municipality of Anchorage.



Mailer 1: Sent to PO box holders in Alaska in December 2019



Mailer 2: Sent to PO box holders in January 2020

## Radio

Alaska Counts ran 30-second radio PSAs across the state highlighting the “Safe, Easy, and Important” Census messaging. These ads ran on the following stations:

- Alaska Public Media: 26 radio stations across the state, including extra placement with:
  - KSKA: Anchorage, Mat-Su, Turnagain Arm
- Koahnic: KNBA (Native America Calling; National Native News)
- Coast Alaska: 7 radio stations in Southeast Alaska (KRBD, Ketchikan; KSTK, Wrangell; KTOO, KXLL, KRNN, Juneau; KFSK, Petersburg; and KCAW, Sitka)

## Sample Radio PSAs:

### “Safe” PSA

*The 2020 Census is here! The Census is safe. Census data is confidential and protected by law. Your responses can't be shared with any landlord, employer, or agency, including immigration or law enforcement. The Census asks for less personal information than your PFD application. You count. Be counted!*

*This message is from Alaska Counts, an initiative by Alaskans for Alaskans to get a complete count in 2020.*

### “Important” PSA 1

*The 2020 Census is here. Remember: the Census is critical for our communities. Alaska receives more than \$3 billion a year based on our count to fund schools, public safety, hospitals, housing, construction, roads, family benefits, and much, much more. Do good: be counted.*

*This message is from Alaska Counts, an initiative by Alaskans for Alaskans to get a complete count in 2020.*

**The 2020 Census is confidential.**

Responding to the Census is safe. It asks for less personal info than the PFD application. Your responses are confidential and protected by law. No employer can see your responses.

**The 2020 Census is good for our economy.**

Census data powers our economy. It helps small businesses to set prices, grow whole industries. An accurate count helps our economy, and the information we collect helps us grow Alaska.

**THE 2020 CENSUS HAS ARRIVED AND WE'RE COUNTING ON THE WHOLE TEAM.**

Don't drag your paws: online response starts March 12.  
2020census.gov

alaskacounts.org

**Alaska Counts**  
2020 Census

Mail 3: Sent to hard-to-count zip codes in early March 2020 around the start of the Iditarod

**TO COMPLETE THE 2020 CENSUS**

Go to: [www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov)  
Or call: 844-330-2020

There are only a few days left to be counted in the Census and our future.

**CENSUS 2020 ENDS ON SEPTEMBER 30.**

Be counted today for your community, your family and for your future.

Respond now to be counted.

Respond today at  
2020census.gov or 844-330-2020.

**Alaska Counts**  
2020 Census

Mail 4: Sent to four rural hub communities (Utqiagvik, Kotzebue, Nome, and Bethel) in early September 2020, when these communities were identified as especially at-risk of undercount.

**2020 CENSUS Respond Today!**

**Alaska Counts**  
2020 Census

There is not much time left to be counted in the Census, for our families and our future.

Alaska receives about \$3.5 billion a year based on our count to fund schools, public safety, hospitals, housing, construction, roads, family benefits, and much, much more. Do good: be counted.

1-844-330-2020  
or  
2020census.gov

Answers are confidential and protected by federal law.

**We're at the tail end of the 2020 Census.**  
**RESPOND NOW TO BE COUNTED**

2020census.gov  
or 1-844-330-2020

**Alaska Counts**  
2020 Census

Mail 5: Sent to the same four rural hub communities in late September.

### “Easy” PSA

The 2020 Census is here. Remember: the Census is easy. Ten minutes of your time to answer ten Census questions generates 10 years of funding for our communities. Alaska is counting on you: ten questions, ten minutes, ten years of impact. Be counted!

This message is from Alaska Counts, an initiative by Alaskans for Alaskans to get a complete count in 2020.

### “3 D’s” PSA

The 2020 Census is here. It ensures Alaska has the three D’s: data, dollars, and democracy. It generates data we rely on to build and plan Alaska’s future, it brings in billions of dollars of funding, and it gives each of us an equal voice. Every Alaskan counts—be counted!

This message is from Alaska Counts, an initiative by Alaskans for Alaskans to get a complete count in 2020.

### Native Nightly News 15-second PSA

Native Nightly News is supported by Alaska Counts, encouraging every Alaskan to respond to the 2020 Census from home. Go online to respond at [my2020census.gov](http://my2020census.gov) or call 1-844-330-2020. Do your part for our community: Be counted.

### Spanish language PSA

Through a collaboration between AKPIRG, the Municipality of Anchorage, Enlaces (a 501c3), and Sol de Medianoche, a Spanish language video was produced as well as several Spanish language radio spots.

Sept. 30 **DEADLINE TO BE COUNTED**

2020 CENSUS Respond Today!

1-844-330-2020 or 2020census.gov

Answers are confidential and protected by federal law.

**10 MINUTES + 10 QUESTIONS = 10 YEARS OF FUNDING FOR ANCHORAGE**

Questions? Email [info@alaskacounts.org](mailto:info@alaskacounts.org)

**LESS THAN ONE WEEK TO COMPLETE THE 2020 CENSUS.**

Anchorage is counting on you. **RESPOND BY SEPTEMBER 30 TO BE COUNTED.**

Responses shape the next 10 years of local funding for schools, hospitals, public safety, roads, and airports.

Anchorage Counts 2020 Census

Note: The Municipality of Anchorage, in partnership with Alaska Counts, also sent a series of mailers to all Anchorage residents in September 2020.

## Print Ads

Alaska Counts also ran a series of print ads in newspapers around the state in March, including:

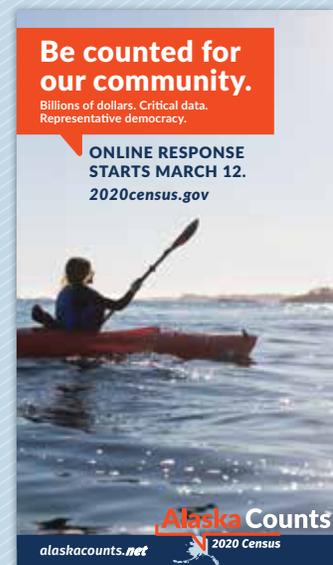
- Anchorage Daily News
- Daily Sitka Sentinel
- Fairbanks Daily News-Miner
- Juneau Empire
- Ketchikan Daily News
- Kodiak Daily Mirror
- Peninsula Clarion and Homer News
- Arctic Sounder
- Bristol Bay Times/Dutch Harbor Fisherman
- Chilkat Valley News
- Cordova Times
- The Delta Discovery
- Delta Wind
- Mat-Su Valley Frontiersman
- The Nome Nugget
- Petersburg Pilot
- Seward Journal
- The Valdez Star
- Wrangell Sentinel
- Sol de Medianoche
- Skagway News
- SitNews

## Video

Alaska Counts worked with Alaska-based videographers Peak 3 LLC to develop a series of short videos featuring Alaska and Alaskans encouraging Census response. The three main video shoots took place in Toksook Bay, the small community of roughly 500 people where the Census began; Dillingham, AK, a rural hub community in southwestern Alaska; and Anchorage, AK, the state's largest city with over 40% of the state's population.



Sample print ads.





**Video 1: Toksook Bay ft. Byron Nicholai**, 60 second video  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W-559lvcJ1U>

By Alaskans, for Alaskans, this first video featured musician Byron Nicholai, a homegrown musician from Toksook Bay, Alaska, where the 2020 Census count began. This video had 34,600 views on Facebook and over 600 people reacted to it. 52,000 people watched it on Youtube. Byron’s partnership was critical—he used his platform not only for this video series, but to communicate about the Census across others events in 2019 and 2020.



**Video 2: Toksook Bay ft. Byron Nicholai**, 30-second video

Peak 3 also cut a 30-second version of the first video to amplify on social media and through our collaboration with Strategies 360, who helped to boost this video across digital platforms. The 30-second cut was viewed over 346,000 times, with over 400 reactions.



**Video 3: Alaska Counts featuring Dillingham**  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vudyyktMPgg>

Our friends at Peak 3 put together another 60-second video featuring Dillingham, AK, and its residents talking about the importance of the 2020 Census with the message “Be counted, Alaska.” This video was viewed 1,600 times on Facebook, and another 6,700 on Youtube.



**Video 4: Alaska Counts**, March → April  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LnaBbRNQ4ik>

This video featured regular Alaskans doing regular Alaska things and talking about the importance of the Census in the process. The video came out in April of 2020, when COVID-19 had shut down Census field operations. Peak 3 creatively used existing pre-COVID footage to encourage response online while also sharing the pause in field operations. This video was viewed 1,400 times on Facebook.

### Additional Videos

Alongside videos shot by Peak 3, Alaska Counts also supported the creation and sharing of other video content. From short videos created by each language group at the 2019 Language Panel, to short PSAs by students at Mt. Edgecumb High School, to audio guides in Alaska Native languages, the Alaska Counts Youtube page features a series of other videos used to make the Census more accessible:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC3UsTZ-TfecWf0BxkkyhgQ/videos>

### Digital

Beginning in early 2020, Alaska Counts hired Strategies 360 to run a paid digital campaign across several platforms. One large digital push happened in the spring of 2020, and another in the fall of 2020, when the enumeration deadline was extended. These ads served the entire state, with a specific focus on targeting people in hard-to-count zip codes.

Sample Facebook ads.

Sample social media content.

Display ad.

## Facebook Ads

Targeted Facebook ads reached Alaskans in hard-to-count zip codes, with over 3.7 million total impressions and over 23,000 clicks. These ads used the Alaska Counts branding and mirrored organic social media content on the Alaska Counts Facebook page. The ads linked directly to the online Census form at 2020census.gov. The majority of impressions and clicks came in Anchorage, followed by statewide non-urban areas, then Fairbanks, then Juneau.

## Display Ads

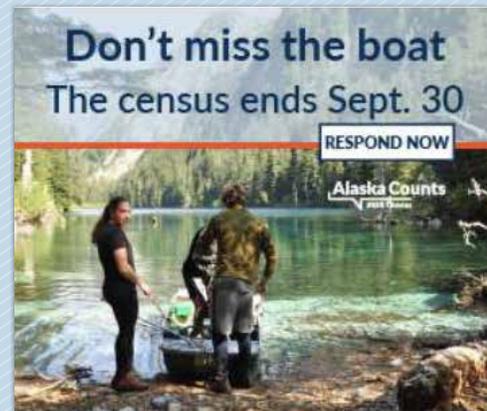
Strategies 360 ran display ads—so that online users would see Alaska Counts ads displayed throughout their content. These display ads had over 1 million impressions and over 1,110 clicks directly to the Census form.

## Google Search

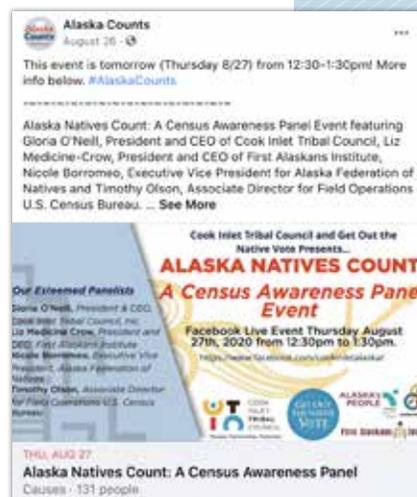
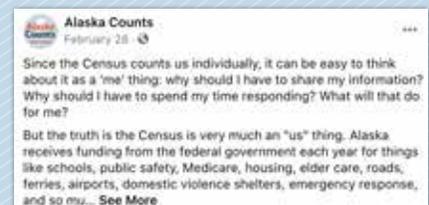
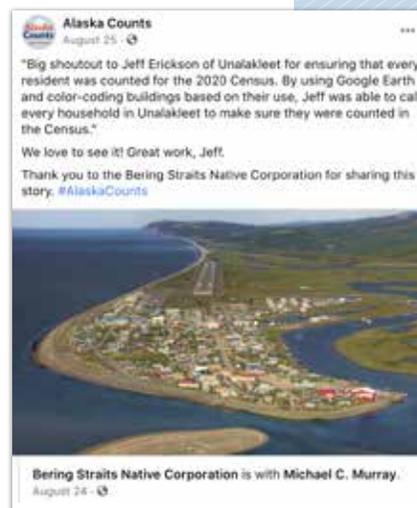
Strategies 360 also ran Google Ads, so that people in Alaska conducting an online search would see a banner about the 2020 Census pop up. People who searched one of the following keywords would receive results linking directly to the Census form at 2020census.gov.

These ads served over 31,000 impressions and delivered 874 clicks directly to the online Census form.

**Keywords:** Census; 2020 census; census info; census information; united states census; census importance; how to take the census; census resources; what is the census; census data; alaska census; where to take the census; census in alaska; alaska counts



Google search ad.



Sample Facebook posts.

## Connected TV

Alaska Counts video spots ran on Connected TV—so that people in Alaska using streaming platforms like Hulu would see video content about the 2020 Census between episodes and during commercial breaks. These video PSAs included the Byron Nicholai video, the most popular video to run on Alaska Counts Facebook and Youtube pages as well.

## Social Media

Alongside paid digital content, the Alaska Counts team also shared organic social media content across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

### Facebook

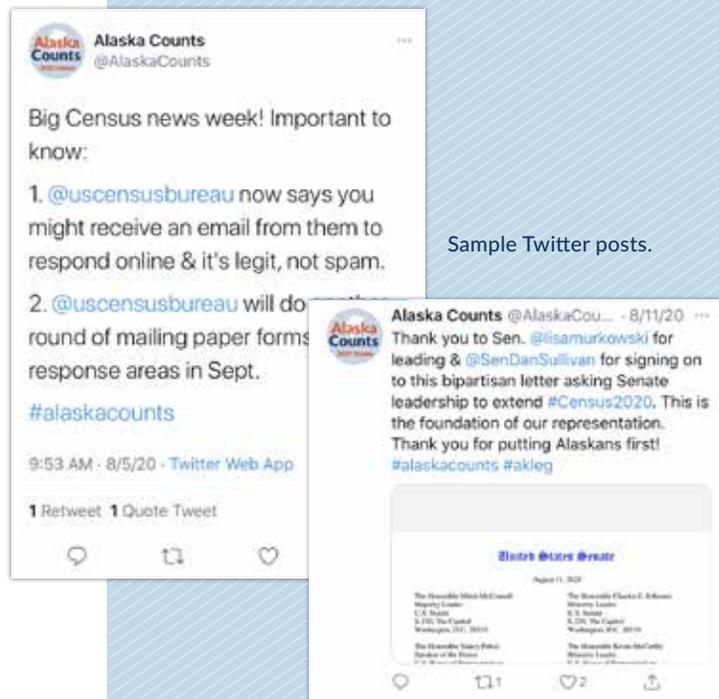
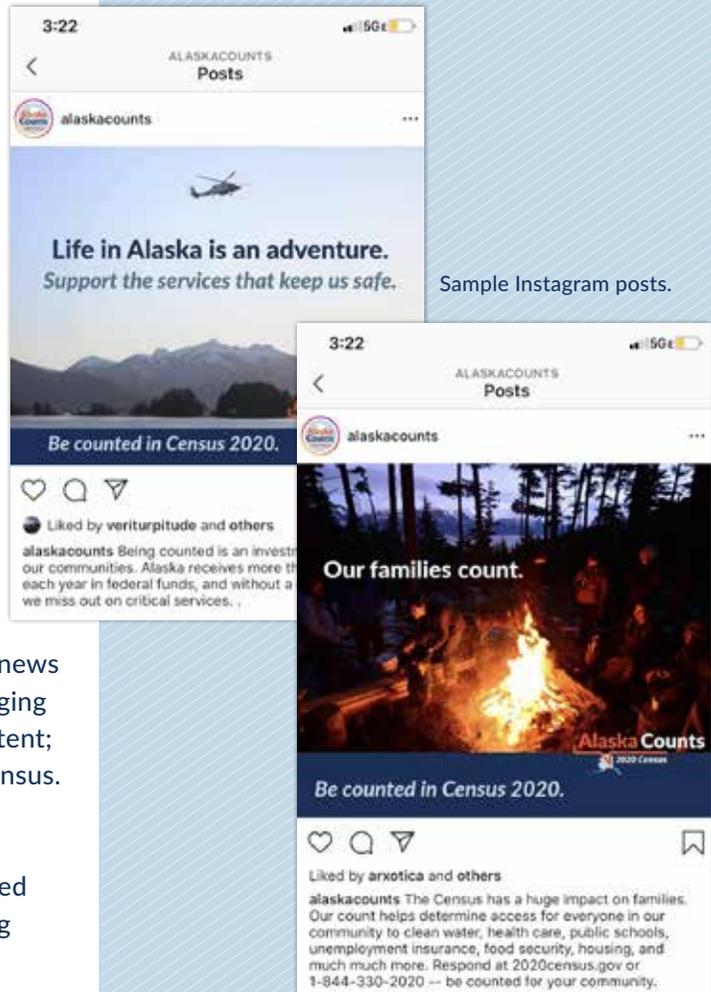
Organic messaging on the Alaska Counts Facebook page served several purposes: Sharing news content; Sharing Alaska Counts graphics encouraging response; Sharing and engaging with partner content; and sharing and creating events related to the Census.

### Instagram

Messaging on the Alaska Counts Instagram focused on visual content by and for Alaskans encouraging Census response.

### Twitter

Messaging on the Alaska Counts Twitter focused more on operations and policy updates related to the Census, for policymakers, journalists, and Alaskans generally to keep up with the latest.



## Texting

Alaska Counts hired a contract to execute a direct text campaign to deliver a series of text reminders that included a link to the online form or the direct phone response line, depending on the message. These text reminders went out to a list of over 18,000 Alaskans.

### Sample text reminders:

**Text 1:** First Name: from snow plowing to firefighting, family benefits + civil rights, Census responses support OUR community. Complete by phone: 1-844-330-2020.

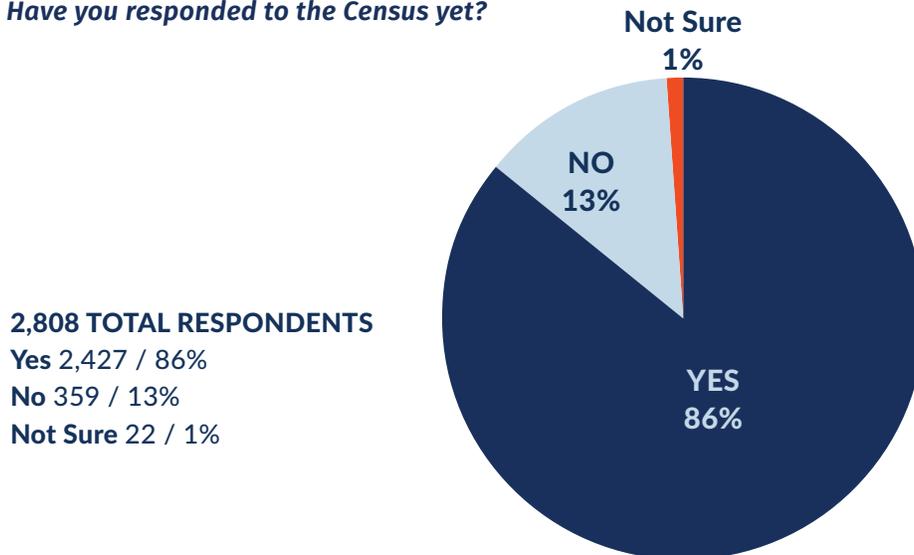
**Text 2** (*sent in early September when the deadline was set to be Sept. 30*): Hi [Name], the Census ends this Wednesday: Sept 30. It's only 10 questions + takes 10 min, but the impacts last 10 years. Call 1-844-330-2020 to respond now.

## Phone Banking

With in-state options booked to capacity during election season, Alaska Counts contracted with a phone vendor (Stones Phones) to make direct calls to Alaskans in low-response tracts in September 2020. These were patch-through calls, meaning that the caller could patch respondents who hadn't yet answered the Census directly to the Census phone response line. Our efforts are responsible for ensuring that 238 people responded to the census on the spot!

Of the 359 people who had not responded, 238—or 66 percent—agreed to be patched through directly to the Census response line to answer the Census.

### Have you responded to the Census yet?



# Media Coverage

Alaska Counts and the Alaska Census Working Group worked hard to ensure that local media had the information it needed to cover the census and assist the public in understanding the weight of its importance. The group earned media at the local and national levels throughout 2019 and 2020. The following captures some highlighted media clips:

## Print

- **Anchorage Daily News**, 5/5/19: As Census nears, groups work to ensure accurate numbers in hard-to-count Alaska
- **The Washington Post**, 6/14/19: Census, tribal leaders push for American Indian participation in 2020 Census
- **Kodiak Daily Mirror**, 9/4/19: Census beginning in Alaska
- **Sol de Medianoche**, 1/17/20: 2020 Census and You!
- **New York Times**, 1/19/20: On the edge of America, Census begins in a tiny Alaska town
- **Juneau Empire**, 4/1/20: Happy Census Day: Did you respond yet?

## Radio

- **KNBA**, 1/8/20: There's \$3.2B at stake in the 2020 Census
- **BBC News**, 1/21/20: BBC 21 Jan 2020 News
- **Alaska Public Media**, 4/6/20: Alaska lags far behind rest of country on Census response
- **Alaska Public Media**, 7/17/20: There are billions dollars at stake in the 2020 Census, but Alaska response rates are low

## TV

- **KTVA**, 1/5/20: Alaska Native language workshop aims to boost 2020 Census participation
- **KTVA**, Frontiers, 1/13/20: Frontiers: Why Alaska Counts
- **KTUU**, 1/17/20: 2020 Census kicks off in Alaska where Toksook Bay residents will be first to be counted
- **ABC News**, 1/21/20: Census kicks off in Alaska as outreach teams work to reach remote residents
- **KTUU**, 4/7/20: Alaska residents urged to complete census online, by phone

# Mini Grants

The Foraker Group established and facilitated Alaska Counts mini-grants program to provide individual non-profit organizations across the state with up to \$250 to conduct their own local Census outreach. Alaska Counts awarded Census mini-grants to 78 organizations across the state to support local Census outreach in 2019 and 2020. Mini-grants reached 83% (24 out of 29) of Alaska’s Census Areas/Boroughs. 20 mini-grants went to Anchorage-based organizations, many of which have regional or statewide reach. The other 58 mini-grants went to organizations based outside of Anchorage, with recipients from Ruby, Alaska (population 166) to Juneau (Alaska’s state capital with a population of 33,000).

The following is a rough breakdown of the types of organizations that received mini-grant funding to conduct local Census outreach:



Locations of mini-grant recipients pictured above.

Type of Organization	# of Recipients
Direct Service Organizations	33
Tribe/Tribal Service Organizations	14
Local Municipalities/Boroughs	11
Local Complete Count Committees	6
Libraries	4
K-12 Schools	4
Housing Organizations	3
Early Education Entities	2
Universities	1

## Uses of Mini-Grant Funding

From localized “I Count” buttons to engaging local artists to hosting Census-themed events, mini-grant funding provided the flexibility for local organizations to do census outreach in the way that made the most sense for their community. Some examples include:

“I saw on the Alaska Counts Facebook page the buttons provided at Alaska Federation of Natives with phrases like, “I’m Tlingit I Count.” I contacted Alaska Counts and they generously shared the template for the buttons. **Klukwan is a Tlingit village within our borough and so I designed a button that says “Klukwan Counts.” We will deliver these to Klukwan**, along with posters and other outreach materials we’ve had printed. We also plan to have the “I’m an Elder and I Count”, the “I’m Tlingit and I Count” and the Tlingit language buttons printed. We plan on distributing these to other Native organizations and the Senior Center in town.”

- Haines Borough and Klukwan Village

"We will be producing a **bilingual calendar with local artist artwork** and also voter information. Adding Census information as well as educational pieces to the calendar seems to go hand on hand with our mission to inform and educate our community."

- *Enlaces (Anchorage, AK)*

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"We would like to have our Tribal Members come in to make buttons with **"We matter" in Alutiq on it and to write down Native Village of Afognak on their Census document.** Meanwhile, enjoying some refreshments. Cookies and or Fry Bread."

- *Native Village of Afognak*

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**"Engage with Head Start families, pre-schools, and playgroups to inform families about the importance of the census and access to census...**Create office hours at elementary school for people needing assistance with census."

- *Sitka School District (Sitka, AK)*

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"RAIS hosts quarterly refugee health fairs and has one upcoming on Saturday, January 11th. During the health fair clients engage in a number of activities and this health fair will feature flu shots from DHHS, a nutrition workshop, substance abuse education, Census 2020 table and more...Grant funds will be used to purchase **winter hats as part of the health prize pack and printing costs for "every head counts" flyers in Spanish, English, Swahili, French, Arabic, Somali, Russian, and Ukrainian.**"

- *Refugee and Immigration Services (Anchorage, AK)*

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**"Purchase iPad to keep in City Hall lobby so households could conveniently fill out the Census online.** Also, host a "Census Party" to encourage family participation in the Census and have volunteers available to help participants complete the Census online."

- *City of Saxman (Saxman, AK)*

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"We want to have a **series Census Sundays in March and early April once the census is mailed out so that people can come in learn about the census, fill out the census,** get their Denali Borough Census buttons, and then tell all of their friends that didn't come in to get counted. We will have pizza and root-beer floats for people to enjoy while filling out the census."

- *Denali Borough (Denali, AK)*

# Community Outreach

## ***Anchorage Complete Count Committee***

The Anchorage Complete Count Committee was established through Assembly Memorandum No. AM 435-2019. Commissioners comprised of:

- Bill Popp - Anchorage Economic Develop Corporation
- Mary Jo Torgeson - Anchorage Public Libraries
- Kirsten Schultz - Providence Health & Services
- Carol A. Gore - Cook Inlet Housing Authority, Alaska Census Working Group
- Monique R. Martin - Alaska Regional Hospital
- Laurie B. Wolf - The Foraker Group, Alaska Census Working Group
- Gabriel D. Layman - Cook Inlet Housing Authority, Alaska Census Working Group
- Robin Bronen - Alaska Institute for Justice
- Darrel W. Hess - Municipality of Anchorage Ombudsman
- Tanya Dumas - Rasmuson Foundation
- Sonya Hunte - Anchorage School District
- Veri di Suvero - Alaska Public Interest Research Group (AKPIRG)
- Felix Rivera - Anchorage Assembly (Assembly Chair)

Co-chairs Gabe Layman and Sonya Hunt led the ACCC as it worked to identify and reach out to community leaders, getting good information into trusted hands. The group used two primary tactics: 1) emailing trusted leaders to ask for their support and to boost the Census—particularly naming their trust in the privacy of responses, and 2) host a community night with other leaders to talk about what the Census was, and address issues like language access. The Municipality of Anchorage’s Assembly appropriated funds for translators, and the Alaska Institute for Justice—Language Interpreter Center was able to bring those translators to learn about the Census. This was doubly effective, as it provided accessible information to those present, and the translators themselves—many who are well known in their community—were able to speak knowledgeably about the 2020 Census. One key organizational document created was the ‘Rainbow Document’, or list of all community contacts within different segments of Anchorage’s community. This document served as a reference for these two ACCC strategies and beyond.

## ***Anchorage Direct Outreach***

The Mayor’s office appropriated CARES Act funding to do a last push for the Census. AKPIRG was the main point of contact within Alaska Counts, and with the Municipality, coordinated printing and distribution of yard signs, door hangers, and tabling staff at community events. The main points of contact at the Municipality were Shannon Kuhn and Camilla Hussein.

Yard signs were printed for communities with the lowest response rates. AKPIRG used the ACCC’s ‘Rainbow Document’ to coordinate with community partners, including schools and community councils, to put up yard signs in visible places.

Door hangers were printed and distributed by the Alaska Center’s Mobilization Center. When the Census’s date changed, AKPIRG printed stickers to update the door hangers with the new Census end date. Because of the unusual timing changes of the Census’ end, not all of these hangers were distributed.

AKPIRG and Alaska Counts partnered with Alaska Census Working Group members like the Alaska Center and Alaska Poor People’s Campaign for a ‘Parade to the Polls’ event, where AKPIRG staff answered Census questions and used Alaska Counts iPads to help people answer the Census on the spot. In addition, Census Working Group partners asked event participants to help do a ‘lit drop’, hanging door hanger and census information on nearby Mountain View doors. In addition to this event, AKPIRG staff tabled weekly at farmers markets around Anchorage—including the Hmong market—where they distributed Census information and helped facilitate people taking the Census in real-time.

# Partnership

The Foraker Group and CIHA originally established and stood up the Alaska Census Working Group in 2017. But numerous partners along the way made this work possible and greatly extended the reach of the Alaska Counts operation. A list of Alaska Census Working Group members and other partners can be found in the “Thank You” section of this report. Some key partnerships and efforts are listed below:

## **AKPIRG**

- Led translation efforts for Alaska Native languages, resulting in the Census form being translated into 7 Alaska Native languages for the first time ever
- Wrote and translated ‘Know Your Rights’ cards into 10 world languages, and collated translated materials in over 15 languages
- Coordinated dissemination of translated materials, including Census forms, guides, and graphics to Alaska Native and immigrant language groups and speakers
- Led direct outreach in the fall of 2020, including attending community events, farmers markets, and one-on-one outreach to organizations to encourage Census response and share information, especially about the changing Census enumeration timeline

## **Alaska Federation of Natives**

- Stood up the Alaska Native Census Working Group, and the Alaska Natives Count efforts, in partnership with First Alaskans Institute
- Made the Census a core theme of the 2019 AFN convention
- Led an extensive outreach operation in remote and rural Alaska: Hiring and training people in Alaska’s rural villages to share Census information and encourage response locally

## **First Alaskans Institute**

- Stood up the Alaska Native Census Working Group, and the Alaska Natives Count efforts, in partnership with the Alaska Federation of Natives
- Hosted Alaska Counts at Elders & Youth, including a workshop where the AKPIRG language access team facilitated the translation of the “Alaska Counts” logo into four Alaska Native languages: Tlingit, Neets’aii Gwich’in, Inupiaqtun, and Unangam tunuu.

## **Municipality of Anchorage, Office of the Mayor**

- Established and populated the Anchorage Complete Count Committee, and provided direct support to the both the ACCC and
- Directed CARES Act resources to support Census communications and outreach in Anchorage when COVID-19 disrupted operations and extended the enumeration timeline, including but not limited to:
- Creating a list of international markets, and dropping off translated materials at international groceries and the Halal markets.

- Direct outreach with many shop owners and customers who still had questions about the Census, focusing on limited English proficient speakers
- Tabling at farmers markets, providing translated materials to limited English proficient speakers
- Reaching out to community councils in historically hard to count (and lower income) neighborhoods for help distributing neighborhood-specific yard signs
- Attempted to work with JBER to get JBER-specific census yard signs on base (but follow through was not successful)
- Gave census-related children's books and coloring books to the Alaska Literacy Program, along with Spanish Immersion schools
- Contacted the school district to disburse the leftover children's books with the free lunches

### **GCI**

- Promoted the Census and shared Alaska Counts information at GCI-sponsored events
- Shared Alaska Counts digital graphics and video content on in-store signage

### ***The Alaska Center's Mobilization Center***

- The Mobilization Center, a fiscally sponsored project of the Alaska Center, phonebanked for Alaska Counts to get out the count in historically hard-to-reach neighborhoods in Anchorage. Over the course of two weeks, the Mobilization Center dialed 7802 phone numbers and spoke with 943 people. In that same time, Mob Center staff dropped 4943 pieces of Census Literature in Anchorage.

# Events

## 2017

- December 19, 2017: Alaska Census Working Group Meeting

## 2018

- May 1, 2018: Meeting with Alaska Census Working Group and Coastal Villages Regional Fund
- July 11, 2018: Alaska Census Working Group Meeting
- November 14, 2018: Alaska Municipal League Annual Conference Presentation
- November 21, 2018: Meeting between Census Bureau and Alaska Census Working Group re: CCC Training

## 2019

- January 17, 2019: Meeting with Regional Census Bureau Staff in Anchorage
- February 1, 2019: Presentation at Tikahtnu Forum, CIRI
- February 4, 2019: Alaska Census Working Group Meeting
- February 26, 2019: Alaska Senate Committee on Community and Regional Affairs: 2020 Census Hearing
- April 22, 2019: Meeting between Alaska Census Working Group members and Census Bureau National & Regional Staff to discuss communications and outreach
- May 30, 2019: Meeting with AFN, Foraker, and CIHA to discuss 2020 Census and AFN's plans for the 2019 AFN Convention
- June 27, 2019: Meeting with ANCSA Communications Group re: 2020 Census
- July 31, 2019: Alaska Census Working Group Meeting
- August 7, 2019: Presentation to Alaska Native Health Board re: 2020 Census
- August 9, 2019: Presentation to Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) Board re: 2020 Census
- August 12, 2019: Meeting with Mayor's Office re: 2020 Census Language Access
- August 28, 2019: Alaska Census Working Group Meeting
- September 2019: Regional Census Conference in Los Angeles
- October 16, 2019: 8th Annual AFN-NCAI Tribal Conference: Tribal Consultation facilitated by Census Bureau, including Director Dillingam, and introduced by Carol Gore
- November 27, 2019: Alaska Census Working Group Meeting
- December 6, 2019: Kick-off Meeting with Strategies 360 re: digital campaign
- December 10, 2019: Alaska Native Complete Count Committee Meeting
- December 19, 2019: Alaska Census Working Group Meeting

## 2020

- January 16, 2020: Meeting with GCI re: partnership between Alaska Counts and GCI
- January 17, 2020: 2020 U.S. Census Kick-Off Event at the Alaska Native Heritage Center, featuring U.S. Census Bureau Director Dillingham, Census staff, Alaska Census Working Group members, and more
- January 30, 2020: Presentation to the ANCSA Education Group re: 2020 Census
- March 25, 2020: Meeting with Regional Partners, organized by California's Census effort
- July 13, 2020: Meeting with the Alaska Municipal League and Census Bureau representatives
- August 24, 2020: Alaska Census Working Group Meeting with Census Bureau Officials

# Lessons Learned & Recommendations for 2030

The 2020 Census marked the first time a single entity has brought together such a diversity of partners in Alaska to educate, produce, and distribute a body of collateral and resources for organizations and individuals in support of a complete count. Some core lessons emerged from this historic effort:

## **For Working Group and Census Advocates**

**By far, our greatest successes and our greatest lessons came from the opportunities that opened up to Alaska from establishing a single, statewide hub organization** that worked with partners, raised funds, and facilitated a network of people and organizations dedicated to supporting a full Census count. The Alaska Census Working Group will live on but it will need full participation from everyone interested in a full count in Alaska. If you are reading this from outside Alaska, we encourage you to start or join a statewide, multi-sector, nonpartisan effort.

**While the work has different stages – many of which last the whole decade – activating a working group needs to start at least four years before the count, or 2026 for the 2030 Census. It is never too early to start preparing for the next Census.** Relationship and trust-building exercises take time and represent essential groundwork for successful outreach and a robust Get-Out-the-Count effort. For outreach work to escalate quickly, coalitions must be in place and dollars must be raised to support activity. Start these activities early:

- **Identify and cultivate relationships** with local trusted community leaders.
- **Recruit community organizations and businesses** in hard-to-count communities first.
  - Example: CDQ organizations serve gravel-road communities with established internet cafes and have a shared understanding of the importance of the Census. Engage them early.
- **Organize and maintain communications** regarding the Census and its value with all organizations and partners between decennial Census counts.
  - Consolidate examples and provide educational materials for prospective partners that demonstrate in tangible ways how Census data is used.
- **Engage school districts** at least one year in advance for approval to incorporate Census education into curriculum and lesson plans.
- **Engage local Census workers early and often**, communicating planned outreach efforts so coordination becomes the norm.
- **Recommend to the Census Bureau early on that barcoded paper versions of the Census will prove a core part of operations in rural Alaska and roadless communities.** Keep remote community disparities in mind – there was barely 3G in many parts of the state in 2020 and it is unclear how much that will improve by 2030.
- Tailor the outreach budget to reflect the importance of **in-person outreach from local trusted voices**, a critical part of reaching rural communities.
- **Keep the mini-grant program** to spur local leadership and creative place-based solutions.
- Use the same process to **narrow down the issues for the Working Group** that we used in 2020 – see earlier sections for more information.
- **Consider supplementing in-person, mail, and digital outreach** with people hired to patch Alaskans through to phone banks to complete the Census in real time.

- **Be welcoming, open, and ready to partner with state and local governments and tribes** even if or when they create their own working groups. We recognize that the Census Bureau established its own structure through the creation of the CCCs, and the State also adopted its own structure with a statewide CCC. The Working Group's job, regardless of other structures, is to find the right path to partner and to help members get ready and willing to find that path together - even if others are not open to it. Open collaboration by all parties is essential.

### **For the Census Bureau**

We recognize the persistent and consistent efforts of the U.S. Census Bureau in doing a remarkably hard job even without a global pandemic to attend to. That said, and with much respect for all the positive work they did in Alaska and specifically with the Working Group, we offer this summary of concrete suggestions for 2030. We encourage the bureau team covering Alaska to read our full report.

- **Include PO boxes** in any mailed reminders or communications about the Census. Excluding people who receive mail at PO boxes denies critical communication with a significant portion of Alaskans in rural parts of the state, making efforts to reach those in hard-to-count communities more challenging, time-consuming, and expensive. The Working Group was able to send a handful of PO box mailings to augment the lack of communication from the Census Bureau but it would have been far more effective to use our resources as an addition to the work, not as a replacement.
- **Retain funding for the local champions** with travel stipends or honorariums for remote enumerators. These people serve as critical liaisons to villages across the state. Additionally, recruitment should begin much earlier.
- **Understand the power of paper-based data collection** for Census takers when conducting Remote Alaska/Update Leave/Update Enumerate and Non-Response Follow Up to ensure accuracy, timeliness, and validity of data collection, particularly in areas where broadband and cellular connectivity is a challenge. This ensures data is gathered sufficiently, accurately, and in a timely manner given the challenges of access/equity where PO box mailers to households is insufficient. At the same time it adheres to privacy and encryption measures that preserve personal information.
- **Ensure enumerators feel safe and secure as they conduct the count and execute non-response follow up** – that includes funding for compensation to hosts of nontraditional lodging options outside communities with hotels, B&B's, etc. especially for Remote Alaska/Update Leave/Update Enumerate operations in remote regions of the state.
- **Diversify media consultants** to ensure visuals effectively reach American Indian/Alaska Native populations. For example, a Hawaii-based firm was retained to reach Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islanders in Hawaii but not in Alaska. Localized efforts are more effective because they feel more authentic to Alaskans and thus build the necessary trust for better participation.
- **Set translation goals high and include Alaska Native languages!** Expand translated materials into more than the 60 languages that were included in 2020. Adopt Indigenous and diverse language updates to modify existing documents that Alaska Counts created in 2020. Consider tribal areas or Indigenous language adoption as its own separate page in translation materials.
- **Encourage schools and school districts in urban areas to adopt the Statistics in Schools curriculum** far in advance of the decennial count to ensure students are aware of the Census. This is especially true for hard-to-count populations where language barriers often occur. The result will be more engagement that reaches across generational and digital divides.

- **Activate Mobile Questionnaire Assistance.** While the COVID-19 pandemic was a major challenge during the 2020 Census, this program presented an opportunity to explore new ways to reach hard-to-count individuals. The use of the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance was critical at outreach events and with partners like food banks. It should continue in 2030.

Overall these recommendations focus on meeting Alaskans where they are during the Census enumeration rather than only focusing on a physical home or in a second language. Building trust with staff who are familiar with hard-to-count areas and urban diverse populations is essential. Providing language assistance to Census enumerators is also an essential recommendation. Overall the staffing was not adequate for a state like Alaska and every effort should be made to remedy this early for 2030.

We look forward to working with the U.S. Census Bureau and all entities that are interested in ensuring a fair and accurate count of Alaskans in 2030.

You will also find helpful information including the national evaluation and list of state-based reports and lessons learned from the Funders' Committee for Civic Participation. It is available online: [Together We Count | Assessing Efforts to Support a Fair and Accurate 2020 Census](#).

# Thank You

Thank you to the members of the Alaska Census Working Group, the Alaska Counts team, our statewide partners, and our funding partners for making this effort possible. Thank you especially to The Foraker Group and Cook Inlet Housing Authority (CIHA) for coordinating this effort and providing in-kind donations of staff time to support it.

## **The Alaska Counts Team**

Staff at The Foraker Group, Cook Inlet Housing Authority, and AKPIRG led the Alaska Census Working Group and Alaska Counts efforts:

Carol Gore, CIHA

Gabe Layman, CIHA

Katie Scovic, CIHA

Chris Kolerok, CIHA

Greg Bringhurst, CIHA

Laurie Wolf, The Foraker Group

Mike Walsh, The Foraker Group

Griffin Plush, The Foraker Group

Veri di Suvero, AKPIRG

Erin Willahan, AKPIRG

Rochelle Adams, AKPIRG

From developing and launching the Alaska Counts brand to communicating with statewide stakeholders and managing communications vendors, an all-star team led the creative and communications efforts of Alaska Counts:

Claire Pywell, Alaska Counts Project Manager (2019)

Berett Wilber, Alaska Counts Project Manager (2019-2020)

Tiffany Creed, Alaska Counts Communications Coordinator (2020)

Karen Larsen, Graphic Design

Billy Finley, Web Design

## **Our Funding Partners**

None of this work would have been possible without:

Alaska Airlines

Alaska Children's Trust

Alaska Community Foundation

Mat-Su Health Foundation

Municipality of Anchorage

Native American Rights Fund (NARF)

Providence Health & Services Alaska

Rasmuson Foundation

The Census Equity Fund

## **Our Vendors/Partners**

Thank you to the creatives and project managers at these Alaska organizations that helped the Alaska Counts team spread our message across Alaska:

Peak 3 LLC, Video Production

PIP Printing, Direct Mail

Strategies 360, Digital and Direct Text Campaigns

## **The Alaska Census Working Group**

Last but certainly not least, a huge thank you to the members of the Alaska Census Working Group, who committed their time and organizational resources to amplifying the importance of the 2020 Census across Alaska. This early support and consistent buy-in of Working Group members made this effort possible.

The Foraker Group  
Cook Inlet Housing Authority  
Alaska Public Interest Research Group (AKPIRG)  
AARP  
Agnew::Beck  
Alaska Airlines  
Alaska Children's Trust  
Alaska Federation of Natives  
Alaska Municipal League  
Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium  
Alaska Public Interest Research Group (AKPIRG)  
Alaska State Libraries  
Anchorage Economic Development Corporation  
Anchorage Press  
ANCSA Regional Association  
Coastal Villages Region Fund  
First Alaskans Institute  
GCI

Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District  
Koniag, Inc.  
Mat-Su Health Foundation  
McDowell Group  
Municipality of Anchorage  
Native Peoples Action  
Nine Star Education and Employment Services  
Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest  
Providence Health & Services Alaska  
Rasmuson Foundation  
Sealaska Corporation  
State of Alaska Department of Labor  
State of Alaska Division of Public Health  
The Office of Governor Michael Dunleavy  
The Office of U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan  
The Office of U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski  
thread Alaska  
The University of Alaska Anchorage

# Budget

Cook Inlet Housing Authority, The Foraker Group, and several generous foundations dedicated slightly more than \$1M dollars to this first-of-its-kind, cross-sector campaign. This total reflects the cumulative costs of staffing, travel, advertising, outreach, material and printing generation, direct outreach, mini grants, and administrative support.

ITEM List each project component	BUDGET
<b>Staffing</b> ( <i>Project management/communications coordination</i> )	\$175,000
<b>Travel</b> ( <i>Team member travel to support advocacy efforts in Juneau and D.C., as well as in-state outreach</i> )	\$15,000
<b>Radio Ads</b> ( <i>radio PSAs run across 35+ radio stations across the state</i> )	\$25,000
<b>Print/Newspaper Ads</b> ( <i>series of print ads in 22 newspapers across the state</i> )	\$20,000
<b>Videography</b> ( <i>series of videos featuring Alaskans encouraging Census response</i> )	\$27,000
<b>Digital Ads</b> ( <i>consistent digital ads over a year, including static and video ads, encouraging response</i> )	\$130,000
<b>Phone Banking</b> ( <i>direct phone calls directing people to the phone response option</i> )	\$20,000
<b>Text Reminders</b> ( <i>direct text reminders to cell phones across the state</i> )	\$30,000
<b>Graphic Design</b> ( <i>design of all online resources, mail pieces, digital ads, etc.</i> )	\$25,000
<b>Web Design/Updates</b> ( <i>including preservation of materials</i> )	\$10,000
<b>Printing and Materials</b> ( <i>printing and items for events, including flyers, buttons, etc</i> )	\$15,000
<b>Mailers</b> ( <i>series of five mailers to PO Box holders and hard-to-count tracts</i> )	\$80,000
<b>Language Access</b> ( <i>Creation and dissemination of translated materials in Alaska Native and immigrant languages; language panel featuring 25 Native language experts translating the Census into 7 Alaska Native languages for the first time ever</i> )	\$175,000
<b>Events</b> ( <i>in-person events held before March 2020, including hosting the Census Bureau and Director for the official start of the Census in January 2020</i> )	\$10,000
<b>Canvassing/Direct Outreach</b> ( <i>lit dropping at Anchorage houses in hard-to-count tracts</i> )	\$5,000
<b>Mini-Grants</b> ( <i>direct mini-grants to organizations across the state</i> )	\$20,000
<b>Alaska Fellow</b> ( <i>fellowship position through the Alaska Fellows Program and The Foraker Group to coordinate the mini-grant program and other outreach</i> )	\$30,000
<b>Subgrant to AFN</b> ( <i>subgrant to AFN to support direct outreach in rural Alaska</i> )	\$20,000
<b>Materials Preservation</b> ( <i>organizing and storing files from 2020 Census effort to support future census efforts in Alaska</i> )	\$10,000
<b>Alaska Census Working Group Coordination</b> ( <i>coordination of the ACWG from 2017-2020</i> )	\$25,000
<b>Administration</b> ( <i>administration/staff time for The Foraker Group and CIHA, which each provided hundreds of thousands of dollars in in-kind staff time and administrative support for the ACWG and Alaska Counts</i> )	\$150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,017,000</b>