

Census Outreach and COVID-19 Shelter In Place Budget Recommendations

Background

Staff presented several COVID focused outreach ideas and anticipated costs with the Joint Finance and Outreach Committee on April 27, 2020. The potential ideas included:

- Expand Media Buys
- Postcard Mailings to Update Leave and other targeted mailing lists
- Additional Swag
- Grant Funding
 - Continuing mini-grant program, but shift from events to food distribution and other COVID-19 allowable outreach
 - Expand Grant options to include “special projects” that could include larger grants (\$10,000 - \$20,000). Special projects could include distributing essential need swag, ethnic grocery store outreach, food distribution grant, and a Census “Stronger Together” challenge.

The Joint Committee recommended that staff prioritize food distribution grants reallocating funds from outreach and/or grant funding and come back to joint subcommittee with additional information on logistics on essential needs and Stronger Together Census Challenge.

Staff has developed a draft revised budget, the details of which are provided below.

COVID-10 Budget Realignment

Media Buys: With the extension of the self-response operations into July and non-response follow-up (NRFU) beginning in August, staff recommends expanding the digital media buys through the end of August. The follow are some media buy options and staff recommendations to consider.

- **Digital Media Buys: Additional \$15,000 (approximate)**

The digital media allows ads to be directed to audiences by key factors such as location, language, and age. Initial digital media reports are positive, with over 3,000 click throughs to the Census Bureau’s website in initial 11-day test run. The digital media ads are nimble and can be used to promote special online events or services, reinforce partner messaging, and provide ad content in-language. Monument Optimization (consultant) has provided two estimates for extending digital media buys.

 - **Option 1: \$15,000** – increases ads through mid-August
 - **Option 2: \$25,000** – Increases ads through end of August and includes more ad formats such as video and social media ads.
- **ABC News Spotlight: New allocation of \$4,000**

The spotlight consists of a custom 4-minute segment produced by ABC. The spotlight will run either at 11:30 am on a weekday or at 9 am on the weekend. The County can identify partners to appear in the segment, including Spanish speaking partners. The county will also receive a copy of the spotlight to run on social media and can share with partners. This news spotlight can reach those without broadband access but are watching the news. It is possible ABC can provide a reduced service for as little as \$2,000.

- **Transit Ads: No new allocation proposed**

Census transit ads include the following

- **West Cat (Lamar)** – Current run includes 15 Kind Size displays from 3/16/20 – 6/7/2020. Lamar has extended the run for an additional 8 weeks at now additional charge due to reduced impressions
- **County Connection and TriDelta (Vector Media)** – Current run includes 18 King displays from 3/15/20 – 5/31/20. Vector has added a four-week bonus term through the end of June. Additional run through the end of July estimated at \$4,680.

Printed Material: Printed collateral for various events was estimated at \$26,400 and we spent about 50% for our initial grantee requests. There is a significant amount of printed materials remaining and staff is working on distributing extras to food distribution sites and other locations as needed. Staff recommends retaining \$8,000 for postcard mailings and additional printing needs as identified. The remaining funds can be allocated to media buys.

Outreach Tasks: Outreach tasks includes swag, costs for Census workshops and events, and other miscellaneous costs. Given the current shelter in place trajectory, it is unlikely that government sponsored gathers over 100 people will be allowed in the foreseeable future. Therefore, the Census Event is anticipated to be canceled and associated costs are removed. Given the strong support for additional essential needs census swag, \$10,000 is allocated for additional swag which can include masks, more hand sanitizer, tote bags and other needs as identified.

Translation Services: There is just over \$4,000 remaining in the translation services. Staff recommends no change to this amount. Translation services may be required through NRFU.

Grants: There is \$32,000 (\$12,000 is restricted state funding for Faith Based and other gaps) remaining in Census Outreach and Assistance Grants. Grants applications for outreach continue to be submitted, even during COVID-19 shelter in place. To date, we have entered into contracts, or are in the contracting process, for 92% of our grant funds.

At the April 27th Joint Outreach and Finance Subcommittee meeting, staff presented a concept of identifying partners to implement special outreach projects such as food distribution, ethnic grocery store outreach, and the strong together community challenge. To date, we have identified a grantee that may be able to assist in increasing food distribution outreach and leading the partnership with other community organizations. Instead of developing specific special outreach projects such as Ethnic Grocery Outreach and the Strong Together Community Challenge, staff is recommending a change to the Phase 2 grant criteria. The remaining \$32,000 in grant funding is for Phase 2 grants which have been approved as mini-grants ranging from \$500 - \$3,000. The Steering Committee provided some flexibility to increase awards as needed. However, staff is recommending Phase 2 grant fund be formally increased to \$10,000 to allow for special outreach projects if there is an organization is able implement a larger project such as the Ethnic Grocery Outreach or Stronger Together Challenge.

Non-Response Follow Up (NRFU): There is currently \$5,000 allocated to Non-Response Follow Up. Additionally, the proposed budget specifically includes for media buys to include some non-response follow up. Other budget items such as translations and grants are anticipated to last throughout NRFU.