



Alabama Census Bowl for Schools Program

Summary of program

The Alabama Counts! Census Bowl for Schools program is designed to encourage greater self-response rates in the 2020 Census for households in the 32 lowest performing counties in Alabama. The state funds made available to the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs (ADECA) will serve as the grant money through the program.

Goal: Increase 2020 Census self-participation rates in lowest 32 counties by organizing a grant competition where winning counties receive funds to distribute to all public-school systems within the county. The incentive for the county governments and school systems to promote and encourage competition is the ability to earn up to \$65,000 in grant money for local public schools by increasing census self-participation throughout the whole county, not just among the families of students.

A program kickoff will be held the week of Aug. 17 to review details with eligible counties.

Grant for promotional materials

The county government will act as the fiscal agent and apply for participation in the program by completing and signing an application form stating that they understand the program rules and requirements and that they will adhere to the funding requirements.

\$1,500 per county to help promote contest - Each of the 32 participating county commissions will receive \$1,500 in August to help administer/promote the contest and census participation locally. While the county will be the fiscal agent, all school systems within the county are strongly encouraged to advocate for participation among students, teachers, parents/guardians and in the community as a whole.

Along with the form, the eligible counties will supply the following information to ADECA/Big:

- Name, contact information and signature of County Commission Chairperson or other executive authorized to sign on behalf of the county.
- Name and contact information for person at the county who will be the primary program contact.
- Listing of all public-school systems and charter schools in the county along with total enrollment numbers for each school system.
- Letters of support from the county and public-school systems within the county.

Competition format

- The 32 lowest-ranking counties in census self-participation rates will go head-to-head in a bracketed competition for four weeks starting on Wednesday, September 2, 2020 and ending on Wednesday, September 30, 2020.
- The state will be divided into 2 brackets: East Alabama (16 counties) and West Alabama (16 counties)
- The brackets as well as guidance and suggestions for promoting the contest locally will be posted to the website www.alabama2020census.com.
- Each week, counties will be paired with another county within their bracket having a similar response rate to compete head to head.
- Big Communications will prepare a graphic and post it to the Alabama Counts Facebook, Twitter and Instagram about the weekly match up.
 - o Week 1 Announcement
 - o Week 2 Announcement
 - o Elite 8
 - o Final 4
 - o Runner Up/Champion
- The county with the highest week-over-week increase in self-participation, based on Census Bureau self-participation data, will move on to the next round.
- In the event of a tie, a poll will be posted on the Alabama Counts Facebook, Twitter and Instagram Story for 24 hours. The county with the most votes will move forward to the next round.
- Results will be tabulated by the Alabama Census Bowl team on Wednesdays based on the Census Bureau's weekly Self-Response rate data report issued at 2 p.m. the prior Monday. ADECA/BIG will announce the weekly winners and set the next week's round by 10 a.m. each Wednesday during the contest at www.alabama2020census.com. Primary contacts for each county will also receive the results via email.
- Those counties that do not move on to the next round will be provided with the Program Closeout Documents.

See bracket below.

WEST

EAST



Winners

- The competition will continue for four rounds and prizes will be awarded in October. Those eligible for prizes are the counties that win the first two rounds. After the third round, the counties not moving on but finishing in 3rd and 4th place in their bracket will win \$20,000 each. (4 prizes of \$20,000 = \$80,000)
- The final four counties in competition round 4 will compete for their bracket grand prize of \$45,000! The second-place county in each bracket will win \$30,000. (two second place for \$60,000 plus two bracket Champions for \$90,000)
- The bracket-winning county with the highest self-participation increase during the four-week contest period (Sept. 2 – Sept. 30) will win the State Championship and an additional \$20,000 with statewide bragging rights for 10 years.
- This means the state champion wins \$65,000 total and the runner-up still gets \$45,000.

Distribution of funds

ADECA will award the prize funds to the County Commission. The County Commission determines the distribution of funds among K-12 public school systems in their county based on the number of students. School systems allocate funds to support activities, equipment, programs or upgrades to benefit students at schools within that system. The school systems then report use of funds to county, and the county reports to ADECA for grant close-out purposes.

This method allows local control of the prize money to go where county and school systems deem it most needed to benefit students.

Eligible uses of funds

School systems must use the funds for programs or projects that directly benefit students. Eligible items include classroom supplies and materials, equipment upgrades, new technology or learning software. The funds cannot be used for salaries, central office equipment or upgrades. The grant funds will be supplied to the winning counties once appropriate paperwork is completed, returned to ADECA and reviewed by the grant program manager, including a detailed breakdown of how much the county will distribute to school systems. Counties will be required to turn in a simple report of grant expenditures by school systems no later than May 1, 2021.

Timeline

August 6 – Eligible counties notified of participation in the program by ADECA and receive invitation to Program Kickoff via email to County Commission Chairs.

August 17, 2 p.m. – ADECA/BIG to host virtual kickoff meeting via Zoom to review rules, website and promotional materials developed. Anticipated deadline for grant documents to be turned in.

August 18 – Target date for release of \$1,500 to counties who have completed application document.

August 18 – September 1 – Counties and schools formulate promotional ideas and strategies to maximize count

Wednesday, September 2 – Contest begins

Wednesday, September 9 – Week 1 results announced, Week 2 begins

Wednesday, September 16 – Week 2 results announced, Elite 8 begins

Wednesday, September 23 – Elite 8 Runner Ups announced, Final 4 begins

Wednesday, September 30 – Final 4 Runner Ups announced, Second Place announced, and Census Bowl Champion crowned (based on overall increase of response rate during total contest period).

Wednesday, September 30 - Deadline for expenditures from \$1,500 grant payments, 2020 Census ends