**Section 1500.20 Grant Application – Encouraging Census Participation**

a) Applicants for these grants shall use the grant application format prepared and made available by SOS for this purpose. The applications will be available on the Secretary of State's website (www.cyberdriveillinois.com (under "Sections")) or by calling 312-814-7242. Public agencies and private sector entities shall be eligible to apply for these grants. Each applicant shall describe itself and shall state whether it is a public agency or private sector entity. Each private sector entity shall describe its legal status (corporation, partnership, not-for-profit, etc.) and its mission. All private sector entities must be authorized to do business in the State of Illinois or, if a not-for-profit entity, authorized to conduct affairs in Illinois. Applicants shall designate the amount of grant funds being requested. Each application shall include a detailed, narrative statement describing the proposed use of the grant funds. Each applicant also shall provide:

1) Project Director Name, with Contact Information

2) Description of Ability to Administer the Grant

3) Project Title

4) Project Description

5) Target Audience and Need

6) Project Schedule

7) Methods for Evaluating Outcome

8) Proposed Budget, Details and Explanation of Expenses

b) Grant applicants must demonstrate in their grant applications that they have satisfactorily met all requirements set forth in this Section, and that they possess the administrative capacity to perform the program, fiscal and reporting functions stipulated in this Section.

c) SOS may deny a grant application if the requirements of this Section are not met or are inadequately met. SOS will not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, age, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status in the awarding of grants.

d) Grant applications not submitted in the required format by the deadline date set forth by the Secretary, or not completed, shall not be considered for funding by SOS.

e) This shall be a competitive grant application process. A grant review committee will review all grant applications and make recommendations to the Secretary regarding grant awards.

1) The grant review committee will consist of SOS personnel and, at the discretion of the Secretary, additional qualified reviewers.

2) Any additional reviewers will be selected based on their academic qualifications or on their vocational or volunteer experience related to encouraging census participation.

3) No person shall serve on a grant review committee if that person is an applicant for the grant, is employed by an applicant for the grant, has an ownership interest in or receives income from an applicant for the grant, or is related more closely than the fifth degree of consanguinity to an owner or employee of an applicant for the grant.

4) Members of the grant review committee shall independently consider the following criteria, and assign weighted scores up to the total amount of points indicated:

A) Abstract: Does the project overview appropriately communicate the proposed project? (50 points)

B) Administrative Capacity: Does the applicant have adequate experience and qualifications to accomplish the proposed project of encouraging census participation? Is the applicant a known and trusted voice in the community to be served? (100 points)

C) Project Description: Has the applicant provided a comprehensive description of the project, including details about methods, activities and services to be used to encourage census participation? If the applicant is partnering with any other entity, is that partnership fully explained, and are those entities known and trusted voices in the communities to be served? (250 points)

D) Target Audience and Need: Has the applicant identified the intended audience and its need for the services proposed? Noting that, "based on the latest census estimates, approximately 16% of Illinois' current population (or 2,019,331 people) lives in hard-to-count neighborhoods" (see www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us), has the applicant set forth a plan for identifying and working in these hard-to-count neighborhoods? (250 points)

E) Project Schedule: Does the applicant's timeline clearly illustrate appropriate scheduling of proposed actions and activities? (100 points)

F) Evaluation: Is the methodology and strategy that the applicant will use to evaluate the success of the project reasonable? (50 points)

G) Budget: Is the proposed budget reasonable, necessary, appropriate and adequate to perform the proposed services? (200 points)

5) For purposes of this grant application and review process, the term "community provider" shall mean "an entity that has the capability to provide services or goods to designated communities as necessary to complete the requirements of the grant"; and the term "census participation" shall mean "the act of responding to the census questionnaire by mail, phone or online".

f) The total sum appropriated for grants to encourage census participation may be awarded to a single applicant, or that sum may be divided into awards to multiple applicants. If grants are awarded to multiple applicants, each selected application will be funded according to the amount of funding available based on the comparative demonstrated need, experience executing the proposed program or plan, and projected outcomes.

g) All grant applicants will be notified whether or not their application has been approved. The decision of the Secretary of State regarding the award of grants under this Section is final. Decisions made pursuant to this Section are subject to the Administrative Review Act [735 ILCS 5/Art. III].

h) SOS will notify the submitting entity when an application is approved. All approved applicants shall enter into a Grant Agreement provided by SOS before any grant funds will be distributed.

1. Anticipated Timeline for Review of Proposals and Issuance of Grants

1) Grant proposals will be due 2 weeks after publication of the request for grant proposals. (2 weeks)

2) After the deadline for filing of grant proposals, all proposals will be copied and distributed to members of the grant review committee. (Approximately 3 days)

3) Members of the grant review committee will individually review and evaluate each grant proposal. (Approximately 2 weeks)

4) The grant review committee meets as a whole to discuss grant applications and make recommendations regarding awarding grants. (Approximately 1 week)

5) Recommendations of the committee are reviewed and grant recipients are announced. (Approximately 1 week)