



COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

August 11, 2020, 11:00 a.m.
Virtual Teleconference
(804) 316-9457, ID 740 015 274#

Members present:

Will Palmquist, Chair	Bill Harrison
Patty Parks (for Reggie Gordon)	Sam Patterson (for Dr. Cynthia Newbille)
Karla Ramos	Patrice Shelton (for Dr. Danny Avula)
Matthew Stanley (for Jason Kamras)	Steve Wilborn

Members absent:

Andreas Addison	Scott Blackwell	Dr. Allia Carter
Dr. Catherine Howard	Dr. Michael Jones	Mark Olinger
Ellen Robertson	Dr. Leo Whitaker	Michel Zajur

Other Attendees:

Justin Beck, U.S. Census Bureau	Donna Lewis-Clayton, U.S. Census Bureau
Marianne Pitts, City of Richmond	

Mr. Will Palmquist called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. and welcomed Committee members to the fourth virtual meeting of the RVA Counts 2020 Complete Count Committee due to limits on in-person meetings because of COVID-19. He noted that this meeting was rescheduled from its original date of August 4th due to the City being closed as a precaution to Tropical Storm Isaias. Mr. Palmquist then asked committee members and other attendees to introduce themselves.

1. Committee and Census Bureau Updates & 2. Outreach Strategies

Mr. Palmquist briefly summarized the last Committee meeting on July 7th which took place via teleconference and noted that the meeting summary could be found at the RVA Counts 2020 website. He noted that at the last meeting a number of Census initiatives were taking place or starting, including the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA) program, a regional media campaign, the Non-Response Follow-Up phase, and several outreach events such as the GRTC Pulse ride-along and Census Ride through low-response areas.

Mr. Palmquist provided an update on current response rates to the 2020 Census, noting that as of August 9th, 2020, the national response rate was 63.3%, the statewide response rate for Virginia was 68.0%, and the citywide response rate for Richmond was 58.2%. He noted that some areas of Richmond have much lower response rates than other parts. Areas with the lowest response rates include Central Richmond near VCU, and parts of Southside, specifically along Hull Street Road and Rt. 1. He noted that the overall responses rate has been steadily increasing citywide as well as in these low-response areas.

Mr. Justin Beck provided an update on the Census operations, outreach activities, and response rates. He stated that areas of Richmond with the greatest potential improvement in responses rates include Southside along the I-95 and Route 1 corridor, south of Belt Blvd between Midlothian Tnpk and Hull Street Rd, Downtown around VCU Monroe Park Campus to VCU Medical Center, and Church Hill/Fulton.

Mr. Beck stated that the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA) programs has been focused on Southside and the I-95/Route 1 corridor, as well as at Richmond Public School facilities. The Census team has conducted MQA's at all RRHA housing developments and all four food distribution sites for RPS three different times. There has also been strong Spanish-speaking outreach, including through Diversity Richmond where 1,500 Spanish-language handouts were distributed during a food distribution event. More Spanish-language handouts and promotional items went out through the Sacred Heart Center in Southside, as well as the Latinos en Virginia Empowerment Center. He stated that they have set up nine MQA's with RPS to get Census Response Representatives out in the "Community Walks" taking place to share information about Schools from August 17th to September 3rd. He explained that the Richmond MQA program by the Richmond Area Census Office is by far the most successful in their "Lane", with over 1,500 interactions with residents and with about 10-12% of them completing the Census on-site. The MQA program will continue until September 30, 2020.

Mr. Beck noted that residents in Richmond whom have not responded yet to the Census may have received an email inviting them to respond. The email comes from 2020census@subscriptions.census.gov and provides a link to complete the 2020 Census.

Mr. Beck stated that the Non-Response Follow Up phase of the Census began on August 11th, where enumerators will go door-to-door to collect censuses from households that have not responded yet. They will be wearing PPE and maintaining social distancing guidelines. This phase of the Census, during which time residents can still self-respond, will end on September 30, 2020.

Ms. Donna Lewis-Clayton provided additional updates on Census operations and outreach. She stated that the Census team will be placing yard signs in low-response rate areas of the city, and invites Councilmembers and liaisons to help with identifying potential locations for them. She also requested to be notified of any event or activity taking place that would be a good opportunity for an MQA. Ms. Lewis-Clayton also described an event she is planning for this Saturday, August 15th, to invite Mayor Stoney to ride through various low-response areas of the city to promote the Census.

Mr. Palmquist discussed the final stage of the Census and the work of the Committee, and asked what Committee members and Census team members thought should be the focus of the Committee's work from now until the end of September. Mr. Beck suggested that it was still very important that the messaging about the Census comes from local leaders and Committee members and stressed the need to get the message out there in English and Spanish, whether in traditional media formats, social media, or press briefings.

4. Next Steps

Mr. Palmquist thanked attendees for calling into the virtual teleconference. He noted that the next meeting is scheduled for September 1st and will take place via teleconference. It will likely be the final meeting of the Committee unless interim meetings before September 30th are needed.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:35 a.m.