



COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE

Meeting Summary

February 4, 2020, 11:00 a.m.

Virginia Union University

Living & Learning Center, Seminar Room 1

1500 N. Lombardy St, Richmond, VA

Members present:

Will Palmquist, Chair	Dr. Allia Carter	Dr. Catherine Howard
Mark Olinger	Karla Ramos	

Members absent:

Andreas Addison	Dr. Danny Avula	Scott Blackwell
Doug Dunlap	Reggie Gordon	Bill Harrison
Dr. Michael Jones	Jason Kamras	Dr. Cynthia Newbille
Ellen Robertson	Dr. Leo Whitaker	Steve Wilborn
Michel Zajur		

Other Attendees:

Ron Brown, U.S. Census Bureau	Tameka Jefferson, U.S. Census Bureau
Linda Russano, U.S. Census Bureau	Marianne Pitts, City of Richmond
Sam Patterson, Richmond City Council	

Mr. Will Palmquist called the meeting to order at 11:08 a.m.

1. Committee and Subcommittee Updates

Mr. Will Palmquist briefly summarized the last Committee meeting on December 3rd and noted that the meeting summary could be found at the RVA Counts 2020 website. Mr. Palmquist welcomed Ms. Linda Russano whom is a Recruitment Specialist with the U.S. Census Bureau and introduced members of the Committee to her. Mr. Palmquist stated that it was good to see a few of the Committee members at the Area Census Office Open House on January 30th and that it was a well-attended event with a number of great speakers, including Governor Northam, Mayor Stoney, Ron Brown, and Timothy Maddaloni who is the Assistant Regional Census Manager for the Philadelphia Regional Office.

Mr. Palmquist gave an update on the work of the Committee. He stated that he, Mr. Reggie Gordon, and Ms. Sharon Ebert (DCAO for Planning & Economic Development with the City of Richmond) met with Mayor Levar Stoney in December to discuss Census outreach efforts. Mayor Stoney shared his ideas for promoting the Census and increasing the 2020 count which he would like the City and the Committee to pursue. Mr. Palmquist stated that he has some materials in effect to that which he would be sharing later in the meeting.

Mr. Palmquist stated that he has been in contact with the members of the various subcommittees. He stated that he will likely not schedule in-person meetings going forward, given the limited time between now and Census Day 2020, but would rather communicate electronically and one-on-one about outreach efforts and continue to leverage them as trusted voices within the larger Richmond network.

Mr. Palmquist asked the chairs of the subcommittees that were present if they had updates regarding any activities they have been undertaking. Dr. Allia Carter, Chair of the Education Subcommittee, stated that universities have been speaking to one another about the Census and how the universities should best participate to help deliver an accurate count. Dr. Catherine Howard asked what the Census has been doing in regards to universities, and Mr. Ron Brown stated that partnership specialists have been reaching out to establish contacts for the Group Quarters program, which will conclude by March 6th. Ms. Linda Russano stated that she has been doing recruitment activities at local universities as college students represent a great applicant pool for the Census effort.

2. Census Bureau Update

Mr. Palmquist asked Census staff present to provide updates on their activities and the larger Census effort. Mr. Brown stated that the target recruitment goal for the city of Richmond is at about 70% which is a significant increase from prior weeks. There remains a need for more Spanish-speaking applicants, especially in the Southside of Richmond. Recruitment events there, specifically at Southwood Apartments, will be taking place. The recruitment event at the Area Census Office Open House was largely successful in turning out a number of applicants. Recruiting efforts overall will finish by the end of March, at which point recruitment specialists with the Census will likely transition into other roles as the Census effort advances. Ms. Tameka Jefferson added that phone interviews for the temporary Census positions were beginning to occur now.

Mr. Brown stated that the Census is seeking assistance with establishing Mobile Response Questionnaire Units, which will be located throughout the community and allow residents to fill out their Census form and receive any necessary assistance. The City and the Committee can assist with this effort by suggesting locations for these units to be located.

Mr. Brown provided an update on the general timeline of the Census effort. He stated that Census mailers will be received by residents in mid-March at which point they can respond online to the questionnaire. Enumerators will be sent out to addresses that did not respond in mid-to-late April, and will last until early June. Any final efforts needed by the Census to get a full count will take place in July. The results of the Census will be delivered to the President by December 31st 2020.

Mr. Brown stated that the count of people experiencing homelessness will take place during the last two days of March and the Census will be partnering with individuals and organizations that are familiar with the locations of where such persons may be found. He also stated that the Census has engaged in a national media campaign which involves a number of different types of media in hopes of reaching a broad array of the country's population. He also requested that the Committee share any upcoming events at which a Census representative could be present to share information. Members can reach out directly to Tameka Jefferson and/or Justin Beck.

In regard to the Census positions, Mr. Palmquist asked if there was a weekly limit to the number of hours a Census employee could work and whether or not they paid overtime. Mr. Brown stated that there was no limit, and if there was a need for employees to work more than 40 hours per week, overtime rates would be paid.

4. Census Week Events

Dr. Howard asked if there were events planned for Census Week or Census Day 2020. Mr. Palmquist stated that the Mayor was enthusiastic when they met with the idea of hosting an event around that time, but the details of which would need to be settled on and coordinated with the Mayor's Office.

Mr. Ron Brown stated that in the past the City hosted a block party around City Hall that featured music and promotional giveaways. He suggested doing an event each day of Census Week 2020 (the week of April 1st 2020), as well as on March 14th which kicks off when residents are able to respond online to the Census questionnaire. Ms. Jefferson suggested hosting events in low-response areas and to invite local media to provide live broadcasts of the events.

Mr. Brown suggested looking at upcoming sporting events during that time which would be a good opportunity to promote the Census. He specifically mentioned March Madness events around university basketball games. Dr. Howard suggested promoting the Census at Flying Squirrels Double-A baseball games, which could even feature Mayor Stoney throwing out the first pitch in promoting the Census.

3. Outreach & Advertisements

Mr. Palmquist stated that there will be three avenues for printed promotion of the Census. The first is the flyers and handouts that have already been developed by the Committee and have been distributed around the city and through the network of subcommittee members and other partners. The second is on-bus advertising along GRTC local bus routes, and the third is yard signs to be displayed at City facilities such as libraries and community centers, as well as at major intersections and prominent entry points to City neighborhoods. The prior two methods were suggested by Mayor Stoney.

Mr. Palmquist shared the draft version of the GRTC on-board bus advertisement, which would be located above the windows on the interior of GRTC buses. The Committee provided some feedback on the design of the advertisement, including tweaking the illustration to be more diverse, and simplifying the language to be less wordy. The Committee liked the advertisement overall, and Ms. Karla Ramos suggested that it could be turned into a banner sign that could be displayed at the upcoming Census events.

Mr. Palmquist then shared the draft yard sign that was developed in conjunction with Office of the Press Secretary staff. Ms. Ramos suggested making the language on the sign into a call for action, such as filling out the Census questionnaire, instead of directing people to the Census website. Ms. Jefferson suggested putting the Census questionnaire response 1-800 phone number on the sign instead. She also suggested different language on the sign, specifically, “When RVA counts, RVA benefits,” or, “When you respond, RVA benefits.” The Committee liked this messaging and suggested that it be incorporated.

Dr. Howard suggested displaying these signs at college campuses as well. Dr. Carter suggested reaching out to the dean of students or the student activities office at respective universities in order to get permission to display the signs, or to provide them the signs and allow the university staff to place them around campus.

5. Next Steps

Ms. Jefferson asked if Richmond Public Schools has talked about the Census Art Contest that has been developed. Mr. Palmquist stated that he has reached out to Matthew Stanley at RPS and that he had some follow-up questions. Mr. Palmquist stated that he would connect Ms. Jefferson and Mr. Stanley via email to discuss the contest and next steps. Ms. Jefferson also mentioned that Chesterfield Public Schools is hosting a Statistics in Schools session on March 13th, in conjunction with Chesterfield Libraries, and suggested that Richmond Public Schools could host similar events.

The meeting adjourned at 12:11 p.m. The next meeting of the Complete Count Committee is scheduled for March 3rd, 2020 at 11 a.m., location TBD.