



# COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE

## Meeting Summary

July 7, 2020, 11:00 a.m.  
Virtual Teleconference  
(804) 316-9457, ID 700 945 152#

**Members present:**

Will Palmquist, Chair	Felicia Cosby (for Dr. Allia Carter)
Tavares Floyd (for Ellen Robertson)	Reggie Gordon
Dr. Catherine Howard	Sam Patterson (for Dr. Cynthia Newbille)
Karla Ramos	Patrice Shelton (for Dr. Danny Avula)
Steve Wilborn	Michel Zajur

**Members absent:**

Andreas Addison	Scott Blackwell	Bill Harrison
Dr. Michael Jones	Jason Kamras	Mark Olinger
Dr. Leo Whitaker		

**Other Attendees:**

Justin Beck, U.S. Census Bureau	Fred Bravo, U.S. Census Bureau
Ron Brown, U.S. Census Bureau	Donna Lewis-Clayton, U.S. Census Bureau
Marianne Pitts, City of Richmond	Robin Pulkkinen, U.S. Census Bureau

Mr. Will Palmquist called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. and welcomed Committee members to the third virtual meeting of the RVA Counts 2020 Complete Count Committee due to limits on in-person meetings because of COVID-19. 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 June 2<sup>nd</sup> which took place via teleconference and noted that the meeting summary could be found at the RVA Counts 2020 website.

Mr. Palmquist provided an update on current response rates to the 2020 Census, noting that as of June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, the national response rate was 61.9%, the statewide response rate for Virginia was 66.7%, and the citywide response rate for Richmond was 57.0%. 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.

Mr. Justin Beck provided an update on the Census operations and outreach activities. He stated that the Group Quarters program for all locations that elected for in-person counting will be starting back up with a soft launch in late-July. Group Quarters locations still have the option to respond online.

He also stated that the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA) program would be starting in mid-July and running through late September. These would consist of two Census representatives at each location and will encourage residents to complete the Census then-and-there, preferably on their own devices. He asked for the Committee's help with identifying good locations in low-count areas of the city, preferably smaller events or businesses that see a lot of foot traffic. Tracts of particular concern continue to be the Southside and the East End of the city of Richmond.

Mr. Beck stated that the Non-Response Follow-Up phase of the Census, where enumerators go door-to-door to collect Census responses from those who have not responded yet, will have a soft launch on July 16<sup>th</sup> with full operations by August 11<sup>th</sup>. This phase of the Census must be completed by October 31<sup>st</sup>.

He stated that there are also on-going Census surveys such as the ACS, Consumer Expenditure, National Health Interview, and Survey of Construction which have resumed operations and outreach and follow-up is being conducted over the phone in Virginia.

Mr. Beck provided an update on media operations on behalf of Tasha Chambers whom is the Media Specialist at the Richmond Area Census Office. In May and June, an opinion piece and editorial ran in the Richmond Times-Dispatch: *Opinion Completing the 2020 census is vital for our schools*; Richmond Times-Dispatch [VA] – Emily McMillen, May 25 and *Editorial: Turning a corner in how we count our population*; Richmond Times-Dispatch [VA] – Staff Writer, June 10.

He also explained that launching later this month, the Media Specialist, along with the Census PR agency of record, will focus on Richmond, Newport News and Norfolk in the second phase of our PR campaign focusing on a "final push to be counted". Major Richmond outlets will be targeted such as Richmond Times-Dispatch, Richmond Free Press, local broadcast television, and multicultural radio such as Radio Poder. If there are any hyperlocal outlets that might be overlooked, he asked to please reach out to let him know the information, and he will forward them to Tasha Chambers. If any members of the CCC are willing to be interviewed to help us amplify the importance of census participation, let me know and I will connect you with Tasha Chambers.

He also described how partnership specialists with the Census will ride the GRTC Pulse this Thursday, July 9<sup>th</sup> to encourage census participation and they anticipate generating media from that event. Clovia Lawrence is one of the first outlets that have agreed to promote this event.

Mr. Beck described some notable outreach activities such as Census flyers going out to all RPS families. Also, there is an opportunity through the Virginia State Complete Count Commission to participate in their text message campaign by providing them a listing of cell phone numbers that would then be texted a reminder to complete their Census. Mr. Beck has set up MQA's at various schools in Richmond including Armstrong, Boushall, Broad Rock, and Miles Jones. Flyers have been distributed to VCU students living off-campus and posters have been displayed in off-campus housing as well.

Ms. Donna Lewis-Clayton provided an update on some of the outreach activities she has been working on. She and other Census partnership specialists have recently placed promotional posters at a number of GRTC bus shelters around the city. She also provided the City of Richmond Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities 20 signs to go up at various City parks.

Ms. Lewis-Clayton also described a parade she is organizing for Saturday, July 18<sup>th</sup> that will begin and end at Southside Plaza in Richmond and will travel through undercounted communities, including RRHA housing courts where they will make stops to help promote the Census and encourage residents to complete their censuses. They will be giving out promotional material and will have radio media covering

the event. The parade will feature Buffalo Soldiers motorcycles, Victory 7 Club cars, and the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority. They plan to arrive back to Southside Plaza around 3:30 p.m. and the event will continue. She plans on inviting Mayor Levar Stoney as well as all City Council representatives.

Mr. Palmquist then provided an update on the mailing of Census flyers to all DPU customers with their utility bills, a strategy that has been employed by other municipalities. He stated that the design was currently at the print vendor and they would be mailed along with utility bills during the month of August. The flyers themselves are 8.5” by 3.5” and provide some basic information about the Census and the website and phone numbers for responding. One side is in English and one side is in Spanish.

Mr. Palmquist noted that he had received a request to help find locations in the city that could host the training of Census enumerators in July and August. Mr. Fred Bravo with the U.S. Census Bureau stated that training locations are being finalized. The requirements for the spaces are that they can accommodate 10 people at a time all of whom can socially distance at least 6’, have adequate lighting, electrical outlets, and Wi-Fi internet.

Ms. Felicia Cosby from Virginia Union University noted that she would be glad to assist with setting up an MQA in August when students are returning to campus, as well as to help locate a training facility at the VUU campus.

Mr. Ron Brown of the U.S. Census Bureau noted that he will work with VUU regarding the Group Quarters program and would be glad to use VUU as a training facility location. He recommended that we consider churches and work force development agencies that might not be actively in us.

Mr. Steve Wilborn asked if the Census was considering engaging people at COVID-19 testing locations to encourage them to complete their census. Mr. Brown stated that they have been advised to not do outreach directly at testing locations at this time, but that they are considering a way of having some other presence or promotional activity there.

Ms. Karla Ramos asked if the Census would want to be present at PPE distribution events and that one is pending in Southside Richmond to be scheduled with the Fire Department. Mr. Brown replied that that would be on target with what the Census is looking for. He also noted that cooling stations would be a good opportunity for outreach as well.

#### **4. Next Steps**

Mr. Palmquist thanked attendees for calling into the virtual teleconference. He noted that the next meeting is scheduled for August 4<sup>th</sup> and will take place via teleconference.

The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:55 a.m.