



# COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE

## Meeting Summary

September 1, 2020, 11:00 a.m.  
Virtual Teleconference  
(804) 316-9457, ID 670 446 758#

**Members present:**

Will Palmquist, Chair	Reggie Gordon
Bill Harrison	Dr. Catherine Howard
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. Michael Jones	Dr. Cynthia Newbille	Mark Olinger
Ellen Robertson	Ellen Robertson	Dr. Leo Whitaker
Michel Zajur		

**Other Attendees:**

Justin Beck, U.S. Census Bureau	Ron Brown, 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 fifth 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 will likely be the last full meeting of the Committee as the 2020 Census operations plan to conclude on September 30<sup>th</sup>. 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 August 11<sup>th</sup> 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 on-going, including the Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA) program and the Non-Response Follow-Up phase of the 2020 Census.

Mr. Palmquist provided an update on current response rates to the 2020 Census, noting that as of August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the national response rate was 64.9%, the statewide response rate for Virginia was 69.5%, and the citywide response rate for Richmond was 60.2%. He noted that since the last Committee meeting a few weeks ago, these response rates have increased about two percentage-points and are expected to continue to improve.

Mr. Justin Beck provided an update on the Census operations, outreach activities, and response rates. He stated that nationwide, 82.4% of households have been counted, either through self-response, Non-Response Follow-Up, or Mobile Questionnaire Assistance. He also noted that Virginia is one of 11 states that is at or above their 2010 overall response rates. However, Richmond has many Census tracts which are below 50% response. These include areas around Downtown/VCU/Monroe Park, Shockoe Bottom, Mosby/Whitcomb/Fairfield courts, southern Route 1 (Jeff Davis Highway), Warwick Road/Hull Street Road, and Midlothian Turnpike/Belt Boulevard/Jahnke Road. He believes that big improvements to the response rates in these areas would lead to a large increase in the overall city's response rate.

Mr. Beck explained that he was working on outreach in these areas in conjunction with the City of Richmond's Mayor's Office, Office of Multicultural Affairs, and Office of Community Wealth Building. He is also working with Richmond Public Schools and their "Grab 'n Go Meal Program," targeted media outreach from the Area Census Office's Media Specialist, as well as working to set up Mobile Questionnaire Assistance (MQA's) at community centers, parks, flea markets, grocery stores, libraries, and local businesses. He stated that due to the overall success of the MQA program, it has been extended to September 30<sup>th</sup>. He also noted that paper questionnaires and postcards are going out to households whom have not yet responded to the 2020 Census, which will be the 7<sup>th</sup> reminder in total sent directly to households in the region.

Ms. Donna Lewis-Clayton provided additional updates on Census operations and outreach. She stated that the Census team needs assistance with identifying areas where people experiencing homelessness congregate, as well as reaching populations that the City has temporarily housed in hotel/motel rooms during the COVID-19 pandemic. She explained that the Area Census Office plans to canvas these areas to count the population of those experiencing homelessness between September 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Reggie Gordon stated that he had access to that information and that he would follow up with Ms. Lewis-Clayton after the meeting.

Ms. Lewis-Clayton explained that she was coordinating some final outreach activities with the Mayor's Office. This includes another "trolley ride" with Mayor Stoney on September 19<sup>th</sup>, focused on low-response areas of the Hispanic community. She asked if Ms. Karla Ramos could assist with promoting the event on Spanish-speaking radio stations. She also stated that the Census will be hosting an MQA this Saturday (September 5<sup>th</sup>) at Southwood Apartments.

Mr. Beck stated that all regional shipments of Census materials need to be coordinated through the Area Census Office. He and Ms. Lewis-Clayton can ship directly to partners. He also stated that MQA's need at least a 7-day advance notice for set up, so the sooner that he receives information on potential MQA's, the more likely they will be operationalized before the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. Mr. Beck stated that the city of Richmond is only four percentage-points away from its 2010 response number, and that would be a good, achievable goal for the city to reach for the 2020 Census.

Mr. Steve Wilborn asked if City Councilmembers who represent low-response areas have been reached out to yet. Ms. Lewis-Clayton explained that she has been in contact often with Dr. Michael Jones, who represents the 9<sup>th</sup> Council District. She stated that she has not been able to coordinate with Ms. Reva Trammell who represents the 8<sup>th</sup> Council District. Mr. Palmquist stated that he would try to assist with reaching out to her and her liaison.

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

Mr. Palmquist thanked attendees for calling into the virtual teleconference. He noted that this will likely be the final Committee meeting since the 2020 Census is scheduled to end September 30<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Palmquist thanked the Committee members and Census representatives for all their hard work over the past year and

a half, acknowledging that there have been some unexpected challenges presented with the COVID-19 pandemic, but that everyone has been flexible and responsive to changing circumstances. He stated that the partnership between the Committee and the Census team has exemplified the exact reason for the establishment of the Complete Count Committee.

Mr. Palmquist explained that in a more-normal climate, he would like to hold some kind of party to celebrate the hard work of the Committee, but that an in-person get together would not be possible during the COVID-19 pandemic. He stated that once the pandemic is behind us, we could get together perhaps around the time the data becomes available in April 2021, to celebrate and pour over the new Census data.

Mr. Palmquist stated that he would encourage Committee members to continue to share information about the Census, as well as provide potential locations for MQA's in areas of low-response rates ASAP so that they can be set up in time for the September 30<sup>th</sup> deadline.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.