

## **Minutes from the Dutchess County Complete Count Committee Meeting on March 4, 2020**

The Dutchess County Complete Count Committee held a meeting March 4 at the Dutchess County Mental Health Center, 230 North Road, Poughkeepsie.

Committee members attending were: Jennifer Drake, Danny Hairston, Mario Johnson, Tom Lawrence, Gabriela Vega-Matthews and John Penney. Also in attendance were: Eoin Wrafter, Commissioner of Dutchess County Planning and Development; Isis Benitez, Community Health Promoter at Planned Parenthood of Greater New York; and Linda Eddy of the Community Action Partnership for Dutchess County.

Penney updated the committee on outreach efforts since the last meeting, which included presentations to various municipalities as the committee gets closer to presenting to all 30 municipalities in Dutchess County. Penney said outreach efforts will include forums; there is one set for the City of Beacon on March 5 and another in Poughkeepsie on March 10. Penney noted that both of these forums are in “hard to count” areas. A U.S. Census representative will be at both forums. He urged other committee members to attend if possible and said Danny Hairston would represent the committee at the Beacon forum. Penney said he and Wrafter would present to the Dutchess County Government Services & Administration on March 5.

Penney said he also would distribute Census information at two events this coming weekend – the Brown Bike Girl of Brooklyn event at the Family Partnership Center on Saturday, March 7, and the Mid-Hudson Islamic Association's “All for One, One for All, United We Stand, Divided We Fall” event on Sunday, March 8, at the Fishkill Recreation Center.

Vega-Matthews said she is continuing her outreach efforts. She has done a number of radio interviews, including with ABClatino, IHeart and Kingston stations. She has done presentations to an English as a Second Language class in Rhinebeck, at an immigration meeting in Millbrook, at several churches, the Poughkeepsie Library and for Hudson River Healthcare, among others.

Lawrence addressed how the library will handle patrons who are concerned about security when completing their 2020 Census. He pointed out that for

those responding online, there are secure internet connections on the computers at iCommons and at Reference at the Adriance Memorial Library. In the Marcotte Computer Lab, there is a secure Wi-Fi connection that can be used for patrons who would like to complete their 2020 Census with some assistance and/or more privacy than at iCommons and Reference. Patrons can come to any scheduled Computer Lab to complete their 2020 Census. There also will be times available at the Boardman Road Library. Lawrence also reiterated that all libraries in Dutchess County are on board with providing public access to computers for the purpose of completing the Census survey starting on or about March 15.

Johnson continues to work in the schools to raise awareness about the Census. He said the Poughkeepsie Public School Teachers' Association has agreed to distribute the Census 101 flyers in the classroom as well as going over it during the homeroom time period. He has printed out 1,000 fliers for Poughkeepsie High School students. He also participated in a Census Ambassador webinar that focused on the self-response and non-response follow-up periods of the Census and how to take the Census online, among other aspects. Johnson also is working with Nubian Directions II, Inc., which has received a grant to do Census outreach.

Benitez said Planned Parenthood continues to do outreach, and she is awaiting on new outreach material for her organization. She says she has been tabling at some events and will do door-to-door outreach as well.

Regarding funding, Drake said mini-grants of up to \$500 are available. She also said funders have started talking about what will be one of the next steps after the Census count is over – the redrawing of congressional and other political lines. She said outreach and awareness about these matters also will be required.

Wrafter said the county has gotten its application in for state funding -- \$331,163, the lion's share of which has to go to nonprofit organizations working on the Census. Wrafter said all eligible nonprofits were supposed to be approved by the state before the county submitted the application, but that the state is behind on the approval process. Wrafter said nonprofits have applied for funding, and he has reviewed them and replied with questions to the state about appropriate uses of money and to the nonprofits to get more details in some cases. He said once the state approves the county application and the eligible nonprofits, he will finalize

these applications and send the nonprofits separate contracts. Wrafter also reiterated that Census materials are being distributed by a number of county departments, including the Office for the Aging, the Department of Behavioral & Community Health and the Department of Community and Family Services. Census materials also are available at the Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) Offices.

Eddy said she will help Penney reach out to see what organizations are already compiling lists of “Census hub” sites. Libraries across the county and Community Action Partnership offices will be among those places.

The local United Way also is working with its 2-1-1 database to compile a list of locations where assistance will be provided for completing the Census forms. The state also is supposed to be compiling of list of state agencies where people can get help.