

Minutes from the Dutchess County Complete Count Committee Meeting on Aug. 18, 2020

The Dutchess County Complete Count Committee held a virtual meeting on Aug. 18, 2020. Attending were committee members John Penney, Mario Johnson, Seema Rizvi, Tom Lawrence, L'Quette Taylor and Nathan Briggs representing Christine Sergent of the North East Community Center

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 said census officials have finished using Poughkeepsie City Hall to conduct training sessions, and field operations are in full swing. He has been receiving more calls directly from people inquiring about the census and has passed this information along to the Census Bureau.

Penney said the County Executive expressed his displeasure in [an interview](#) about the shortening of the census deadline. Complete Count Committee member Jonathan Bix was quoted in that story as well.

The county also put out a [news release](#) notifying the public that census workers were going door to door.

Penney said the state has finally released money for census outreach. The county could receive as much as \$165,000 (about half of what was expected earlier this year) but there is a tight turnaround time to get the money approved. Seventy-five percent of the funds must be allocated to state-approved nonprofits. Among those receiving funds will be the Community Action Partnership, ABC Latino, the United Way of the Dutchess-Orange Region, the Art Effect and the Child Care Council of Dutchess and Putnam, Inc.

Wrafter said he is working with these organizations to finalize the details. The county will spend a portion on the state money on Facebook-sponsored advertisements in hard-to-count areas. Wrafter said more census trifold have been printed in English and Spanish and the county is working on updating flyers with the new census end date.

Barnes said Gabriela Vega Matthews helped coordinate an event with the Mexican Consulate to increase the Latino population's participation in the census.

She also said the census has had success using Mobile Questionnaire Assistance in some areas. At MQAs, respondents can receive assistance from trained staff, and they can answer the census utilizing the staff's iPads to access the Internet Self-Response instrument.

Lawrence suggested the Poughkeepsie Public Library District could utilize the bookmobile to help with census outreach.

Eddy said she has been focusing on disseminating census information at food drives and smaller community events that have taken place during the COVID-19 crisis. She also wants to reach out to drive-ins to see if they will share census-related videos before or between movies.

Briggs said the North East Community Center has been concentrating on food distribution and reacting to the COVID crisis but also is raising awareness about the census with promotional materials.

Rizvi has an "One for All" event planned in Poughkeepsie on Sept, 27 that will center around a food drive. She asked Penney to provide trifolds that can be stuffed in the food bags before the event. She also is working with Vega Matthews to give gift cards to people as part of the food distribution program and as an incentive to fill out the census.

Taylor unveiled a video he produced involving community members urging people to fill out the census. Community Foundations is financially supporting that project. The video, which committee members are encouraged to share, can be seen [here](#).

Johnson said Nubian Directions II will utilize iPads to conduct street-level census outreach in the hard-to-count areas. Community Foundations is financially supporting that project as well.

Benitez said the Poughkeepsie Complete Count Committee continues to meet and is doing some outreach at events but also over the phone. Benitez also works at Planned Parenthood, which has done considerable census outreach and also hands out safety kits to the community that include census information.

Penney said he will be setting up two meetings in September — one earlier in the month, the second toward the middle — so the committee can finalize its work before the census count ends at the end of that month.