

Minutes from the Dutchess County Complete Count Committee Meeting

Nov. 25, 2019

The Dutchess County Complete Count Committee held a meeting on Nov. 25, 2019 at the Dutchess County Mental Health Center, 230 North Road, Poughkeepsie.

Committee members attending were: Jennifer Drake, Seema Rizvi, Maffy Malaver, Gabriela Owen, Brian Riddell, Christine Sergent and John Penney. Also in attendance were Eoin Wrafter, Carolyn Bennett Glauda, a Beacon resident and Member Services Librarian for Education and Outreach for the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council, and community resident Laurie Sandow.

Penney updated the committee on outreach efforts since the last meeting, which included the committee presenting to the Dutchess County School Superintendents and to the United Way of Dutchess-Orange Region. Penney said he also made presentations to some smaller towns across Dutchess County that were well received.

Penney said he has set up a number of other presentations, including to the Dutchess County School Boards Association on Dec. 5. He has scheduled other presentations with various towns as well.

Greg Bisanz, area census office manager, was expected to speak at the Complete Count Committee meeting, but canceled, citing a busy workload. Penney said Bisanz told him the census is in the process of hiring more workers. Bisanz works out of a Pawling office and covers Dutchess, Ulster, Sullivan, Rockland and Orange counties. He told Penney he is looking to hire about 1,000 workers in Dutchess alone. He said office work pays \$14.50 an hour and field work pays about \$19 an hour. People can apply for jobs at <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs.html>.

At their meeting, the Dutchess County School Superintendents suggested to Penney that the Complete Count Committee develop a checklist for superintendents to use to raise awareness about the importance of the census. Committee members brainstormed some ideas and came up with these suggestions:

- All students should receive some instruction about the census and its importance.
- Districts should designate someone to go through the census' "Statistics in Schools" website to get activities and resources to help spread the word about the census and to use the material in classrooms, <https://www.census.gov/schools>.
- Government classes should be encouraged to do projects about the census.
- School librarians should be informed about the census and should provide information to students and staff.
- Superintendents should share information about the census and its importance with parents.
- Superintendents should use their newsletters and their other forms of regular communication with the district to explain the importance of the census.
- As a reminder, schools should follow up with text messages to parents as the census form becomes available.

Similar information will be conveyed at the upcoming meeting with the Dutchess County School Board Association.

Drake updated the committee on funding issues and sources related to the census. Gov. Andrew Cuomo has announced that New York State will spend as much as \$60 million on outreach and other efforts. The State will leverage resources across dozens of agencies, public authorities, CUNY and SUNY as well as using \$20 million approved in this year's budget to support targeted efforts in hard-to-count communities. Drake noted that many details about how the money will be disbursed have not been revealed.

Drake also pointed to the Hudson Valley Census 2020 Fund, which is supporting efforts to reach hard-to-count communities. Through grant making from a collaborative of funders, funds are being made available to organizations holding events and doing other activities to raise awareness. Grants of up to \$10,000 are available, and applications are being accepted through Dec. 8.

Eoin Wrafter, commissioner of the Dutchess County Planning and Development Department, said he has produced a list of residential units in census tracts that were hard to count in 2010. He said the list is sorted by street name, address number and then subunit. He is going to first forward it to committee member Jonathan Bix of Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson. Bix has expressed interest in this information as part of Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson's outreach efforts.

Wrafter said he is working to identify specific levels of local funding connected to census figures, such as Section 8 Housing, Medicaid, Foster Care (Title IV-E), the Low Income Home Energy Assistance (LIHEAP), Head Start, Title I Grants to Local Education Agencies and Community Development Block Grants.

Gabriela Owen said she is continuing outreach efforts focused on the Latino community. That includes working with Catholic Charities Services of Dutchess County to reach Hispanic immigrants in rural parts of the county.

Christine Sergent said she plans to apply for a Hudson Valley Census 2020 Fund grant, so Northeast Community Center can hold a "community conversation" event in February or March about the census. She also wants to explore having the Community Center be considered a "safe site" where people could come to fill out the census and get help. Penney reminded the group that the county has printed more census fliers in English and Spanish and that they are available for committee members to distribute at upcoming events.