

**INDIAN RIVER COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

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**TO:** Jason E. Brown  
County Administrator

**FROM:** Roland M. DeBlois, AICP  
Interim Community Development Director

**DATE:** October 15, 2019

**SUBJECT:** Establishment of a Census 2020 Complete Count Committee

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It is requested that the Board of County Commissioners formally consider the following information at the Board’s regular meeting of October 22, 2019.

**DESCRIPTION AND CONDITIONS**

As mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the United States Census Bureau is required to take a census every ten years. Since the last census was conducted in 2010, the next census must be undertaken in 2020. Besides enumerating all people in the country, the census count will determine the amount of federal and state funds that local governments may receive over the next ten years and will affect future redistricting and representation at the state and federal government levels. For those reasons, it is important for each local government to ensure that every resident of its community is counted.

To encourage all residents to participate in the Census 2020 count by returning their completed questionnaire, the Bureau of the Census recommends that each local government establish a Complete Count Committee.

▪ **Complete Count Committee**

A Complete Count Committee is a major vehicle for planning and implementing local, targeted census related efforts that will uniquely address the special characteristics of a community.

Overall, the role of a Complete Count Committee is to plan and implement a locally-based promotion to publicize the importance of Census 2020. The ultimate goal of the committee is to achieve widespread participation in the census for the betterment of the county and its residents. The committee can also provide community benefits beyond the census. According to the Census Bureau, a local Complete Count Committee should:

- Actively involve leaders from a cross-section of the community, including those segments of the population that are most difficult to enumerate, in order to stimulate response to the census.
- Make government employees aware of the census through an internal promotion campaign.
- Localize and augment the various national outreach and publicity projects, activities and events conducted by the Census Bureau.
- Coordinate local promotional activities with the timing of various Census Bureau field operations and keep local promotion and participation alive through all phases of the census.

Established by the local elected body, a Complete Count Committee should be comprised of key influential community leaders, including representatives from government, education, media, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, and businesses. A Complete Count Committee should reflect the importance of cooperative efforts between state and local governments, and the Census Bureau. Unlike previous years, there are no funds related to this effort.

- **Role of a Local Complete Count Committee**

The goals of a Complete Count Committee are to:

- Make everyone in the community aware of Census 2020.
- Motivate the community to participate in the census by filling out the census form and returning it immediately.

The objectives of a Complete Count Committee are to:

- Use highly visible and well-respected local figures to increase community support for and response to the census.
- Promote the census to community residents through government departments, particularly those agencies with extensive public contacts.
- Implement activities that will improve census participation by all residents, especially undercounted segments of the population.
- Emphasize the Census Bureau's commitment to confidentiality to further increase participation in the census.
- Augment media programs, publicity, and promotions conducted by the Census Bureau.
- Provide local knowledge and intelligence that will assist the Census Bureau's operational activities and programs.
- Support the Census Bureau's programs and activities that promote and improve the census.
- Support the Census Bureau's recruitment of employees needed to conduct the census.

▪ **Sample Activities of Local Complete Count Committees**

**October – December 2019**

- Develop a list of barriers or concerns that might impede the progress of the 2020 Census in the local area, such as recent immigrants, non-English speaking groups, high crime areas, and communities with gated residents. Explore ways/activities to address or overcome those barriers.
- Create ways to dispel myths and alleviate fears about the privacy and confidentiality of census data.
- Place census messages in water bills, property tax bills, and other correspondence generated by the jurisdiction.
- Develop and implement activities to involve local government employees in 2020 Census awareness campaign.
- Encourage corporations to become official sponsors of census activities.
- Have census banners, posters, and other signage placed in highly visible public locations.
- Include the 2020 Census logo and message on bus schedules, brochures, newsletters, and the local jurisdiction Web site.
- Sponsor a census booth at county fairs, carnivals, and festivals (especially cultural or ethnic celebrations).
- Have census information available during voter registration drives.

**January – March 2020**

- Add a census message to all meetings, events, and correspondence.
- Provide information on federally funded programs that have benefited the community.
- Plan a major promotional event around the mail-out of census questionnaires.
- Saturate public access areas with easy-to-read and understandable census information customized for the community.
- Ask elected officials to encourage residents to complete and return questionnaires immediately.
- Place a census message on all municipal marquees urging residents to complete and return their questionnaires.

**April 2020**

- Place public service announcements in local media encouraging residents to cooperate with Census workers.

- **Chairperson and Committee Members**

According to the Census Bureau, members of a Complete Count Committee should be well-respected and influential leaders and “gatekeepers” from all segments of the community. For example, members should represent business; labor; local government; homeless, religious and educational organizations; neighborhood associations; and ethnic and minority organizations. All of the people appointed to the committee should be willing to invest time, resources, and energy in this project.

- **Period of Service**

The Complete Count Committee should be active through June 2020, with the peak impact of the committee targeted toward April 1, 2020.

## **ANALYSIS**

It is important for the county to ensure that everyone is counted as part of Census 2020, so the county can receive its fair share of federal and state funding. Nationally, the Census Bureau has scheduled many activities, such as advertisements on TV, radio, and in newspapers, as well as awareness programs at schools and other venues to publicize the importance of the census and to encourage participation. A local committee will enhance the Bureau of the Census’ promotional and awareness activities.

While the activities of this committee will not require any local funding, the Board could, however, provide funds for local advertisements on TV, radio, or newspapers. In fact, some local governments choose to spend money promoting participation in the census count, viewing this money as an investment with the benefit of receiving additional state and federal funds. The principal purpose of the committee, however, is to coordinate with grass roots organizations such as local churches, local businesses, and other similar local organizations in order to encourage local residents to participate in the census 2020 count.

- **Funding**

These activities will not result in the county incurring any out-of-pocket costs. Instead, the Census Bureau will provide promotional materials to the County at no costs while the County will provide staff support to the committee.

## RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Board of County Commissioners establish a Complete Count Committee with the following characteristics:

- The local committee should be called the “Indian River County Census 2020 Community Action Committee”.
- The committee shall be active until June 2020.
- The committee shall have fifteen members, and members should consist of:
  - One representative from the Board of County Commissioners
  - Five leaders from areas of the county with a high percentage of minorities
    - \*two representatives from the Gifford area
    - \*one representative from the Oslo area
    - \*one representative from the Wabasso area
    - \*one representative from the Fellsmere area
  - One representative from the School Board
  - One representative from the City of Vero Beach appointed by the city council
  - One representative from the City of Sebastian appointed by the city council
  - One representative for City of Fellsmere appointed by the city council
  - One representative for Town of Indian River Shores appointed by the town council
  - One representative from Town of Orchid appointed by the town council
  - One representative from a local business
  - One representative from a local faith-based organization
  - One representative from the local media