

Complete Count Assistance Strategy
Adopted July 26, 2019
by the Regional Complete Count Committee
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Introduction

The KC Regional Complete Count Committee's efforts will focus on communicating with the public, especially with potential undercounted populations. The work has three elements: (1) inform the public about the upcoming census and its importance; (2) educate the community and target populations on how the census will be carried out and what to expect to build trust; and (3) motivate residents to answer the survey when they receive it and know where to go for assistance if needed.

Once residents are informed and motivated, it will be important for the community to have an infrastructure in place to assist those who have additional questions to be able to get answers, and once motivated, to complete the survey. There are a number of reasons that residents that are motivated, or at least willing, to complete a survey may find it difficult to do so. These reasons include:

- There are a number of ways that residents can file a survey so some people may be confused about just how to do it.
- Although the questions on the census are relatively straightforward, it can be difficult for respondents who are not used to filling out forms or surveys. Questions may arise, so how will residents get answers to those questions? Some of the questions might include:
 - How to determine who is person 1 with responsibility for filling out the survey for the rest of the persons in the household?
 - What if two families live within a household, who should be filling out a survey and for which members of the household?
 - How do you determine if college students living away from home should be counted at home or should be filling out their own survey based on their college residence?
 - If a person does not receive a valid census identification number how can they obtain one and what proof of residency will be required?
- Some residents may not feel comfortable using online access to fill out the survey.
- Some residents may not have access to technology to fill out the survey online.
- Some residents may have language or literacy barriers in understanding the survey questions and how to answer them.

For these reasons and others, it is necessary for the community to have a well-developed strategy and partners to make sure that metro area residents can get answers to questions and receive assistance in filling out the census survey.

There are three basic premises that this assistance strategy is built on:

1. **Understand Census Bureau and local complete count committee efforts.** The Census Bureau, although short on funds for the 2020 census, will provide information to help answer respondents' potential questions. The Census Bureau will provide toll-free numbers to answer questions. The Kansas City regional complete count assistance effort has to fully understand what the Census Bureau and local complete count committees are doing, must coordinate with their efforts, and must build upon, not duplicate, those efforts.
2. **Coordinate with, and supplement Census Bureau and local complete count committee work.** The KC Regional Complete Count Committee will coordinate its communications and outreach with others dedicated to a complete count. Communications work, partner outreach and assistance for residents will need to be coordinated and focused on the hard-to-count populations and neighborhoods.
3. A successful respondent assistance effort will require **close partnerships with trusted organizations** to provide assistance to a wide variety of populations. Individuals needing assistance will most likely turn for assistance to organizations they trust and are familiar with.

STRATEGY ACTION STEPS:

- **Coordinate with the US Census Bureau:**
 - Identify potential questions that respondents may have and clarify with the Census Bureau the appropriate response for each question. (Summer-Fall 2019)
 - Clarify with the Census Bureau the kinds of assistance they will be providing. (Summer-Fall 2019 and update through census timeframe)
 - Clarify with the Census Bureau the extent of assistance that a third party can give to a census respondent. For example, can they directly assist someone to fill out the census form online? (Apparently assisters will have to be sworn in; will the Census Bureau do that?) (Summer-Fall 2019)
 - Clarify with the Census Bureau how they will validate a respondent that has not received an appropriate Census identification code. What kind of proof of residence will be acceptable and how will they present this to the Census Bureau? (Summer-Fall 2019)
 - Clarify with the Census Bureau how they will address target populations such as college students, the homeless, and group homes? How can the Complete Count Committee assist to make sure these efforts are successful? (Summer-Fall 2019)
- Prepare **FAQs and fact sheets** such as those listed below aimed at both those who will assist respondents and respondents themselves: (Summer – Fall 2019)
 - FAQ answering questions that respondents may have when filling out the census
 - FAQ on how to file online, by phone, by paper
 - FAQ on how to get a valid census identification code if you do not get one in the mail
 - FAQ on how to avoid fraud
 - List of local resources where respondents can get assistance

- **Develop a network of census assistance locations** that is geographically distributed and focused on target neighborhoods or where target populations may be concentrated or where they go for services. Each site should be accessible, open at convenient times, have access to one or more computers connected to the Census Bureau, and be staffed with volunteers (which may come from organizations other than the host). The following steps will need to be taken to establish such a network:
 - Identify and contact organizations that can potentially provide assistance at their locations as a part of the assistance network (Fall 2019). Potential organizations that may be able and willing to provide locations include:
 - Libraries: KCMO, KCK, JoCo, Mid-Continent, Olathe, other local libraries
 - Churches and other congregation locations
 - Local government city halls, community centers and senior centers
 - Safety net clinics
 - Other public locations
 - Identify organizations that can provide staff or volunteers to census assistance network locations (Fall 2019). Potential sources of volunteers include:
 - Organizations hosting assistance sites
 - Agencies that assist those wanting to apply for health insurance under ACA (they are already familiar with helping residents with complicated Federal government filings)
 - Network that assists low income and older adults fill out their annual taxes – VITA sites - (they are already familiar with helping residents with complicated Federal government filings)
 - Organizations employing Community Health Workers
- **Host meetings with key organizations representing or working with target populations.** The purpose of the meetings is to share messaging particular to that target group, discuss potential partners, develop specific outreach strategies and inform these organizations of Complete Count strategies and resources, including the census assistance network. Recruit volunteers to staff census assistance centers in target population neighborhoods. (Fall 2019)
 - Based on community meetings, implement strategies for each target population including:
 - Establish and promote the location of census assistance centers
 - Share and encourage consistent use of key messaging for specific populations
 - Identify and share list of trusted organizations and speakers for each target population
 - Identify ways to use the United Way volunteer database and other outlets to identify staff and volunteers for census assistance centers
- Work with the Census Bureau to **prepare a training program** and set up training schedule and locations (Fall 2019 – Spring 2020)

- For organizations (Fall 2019)
- For staff and volunteers (Spring 2020)
 - Review FAQs
 - How to file online, by phone, by paper
 - Level of assistance that is permitted
 - How to get valid id code if a person does not receive one
- **Develop toolkits** for staff, volunteers, and location sites (Fall 2019 – Spring 2020)
- Prepare information for and contact **target population service providers** to provide information to clients prior to and during the census survey period (Fall 2019 – Spring 2020)
- **Establish central coordination for implementation** – place where locations, staff and volunteers can call with questions, check assignments (Spring 2020)

Strategy Outcomes

- List of assistance locations with times available, who is providing assistance, whether computers are available, contact information
- List of staff and volunteers that have been trained, availability and contact information
- Set of FAQs and fact sheets
 - Questions that may arise in filing census survey
 - How to file – online, mail in survey, by phone
 - How to obtain a valid census id code
 - Locations, times, assistance for census assistance network
 - Be aware of and avoid scams

Implementation

- Establish process to coordinate with assistance locations, staff and volunteers. (March – August 2020)
- Monitor use of locations in providing assistance and adjust volunteers and staff as appropriate. (March – August 2020)
- Monitor returns of census surveys through Census ROAM website and work with partners to adjust focus of efforts to promote participation. (March – August 2020)
- Monitor potential false claims and stories and potential identity theft scams and work with law enforcement, local public information officers and others to counter them. Pass on facts to census assistance network. (March – August 2020)