



## Complete Count Working Group

Date: Friday, November 8, 2019  
Time: 9:00 – 10:30am  
Location: Town Hall Annex 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conference Room

### Minutes

Attendance: *Adam Chapdelaine, Kelly Lynema, Erin Zwirko, Anna Litten, Susan Carp, Shannon Murphy, Karen Foley, Brucie Moulton, Lauren Ledger, Adam Kurowski, Ellen Lawton, Christine Bongiorno.*

#### 1. Introduction (9:00 - 9:15AM; 15 minutes)

Kelly welcomed everyone to the meeting and initiated an icebreaker. The goals of the meeting were to:

- Get CCWG members thinking and excited about the 2020 Census
- Identify ways to reach Arlington residents and hard-to-count populations, as well as potential partners for implementing outreach
- Identify events, activities, and outlets for communicating with Arlington residents about the census
- Identify ways each of us can help / actions

#### 2. Census 101 (9:15 - 9:35AM; 20 minutes)

Kelly gave an overview of what the census is, the census timeline, and why participation matters.

The census has been conducted every ten years since 1790. It is a headcount completed by the Census Bureau of everyone in the US and its territories. For the first time ever, residents will be able to respond online. Phone and mail are also options for responding.

To date, the town has participated in several preparatory programs: Adam Kurowski explained the work he did to update local addresses as part of the Local Update of Census Addressing operation. The Town has also completed the statistical areas program to recommend changes to census tract and block group boundaries, participated in the New Construction program to submit new addresses to the Census Bureau. The Census Bureau has conducted on the ground address canvassing operations in August, and had a table at Town Day to talk about the upcoming census.

Going forward, the timeline is as follows:

- November: Census Bureau communication campaign begins
- March: residents begin receiving census mailers inviting them to respond online or by phone or mail. Responses allowed March through June.
- April 1, 2020: Census Day
- April: reminder messages sent to households who have not yet responded.
- May – June: Non Response Follow Up efforts begin, with Census Bureau enumerators going door to door at households who have not yet responded. The goal is to get people to respond between March and April so they can avoid having people knocking on their doors to follow up in person.
- Population numbers are due to the President by 12/31/2020

Participation matters, as it determines the distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funds, data from responses helps forecast transportation needs, it informs redistricting even at the precinct level, and determines which areas are eligible for housing assistance, rehabilitation loans, CDBG funds, and programs and services, particularly for people with disabilities, elderly, children.

Because the census will be administered online for the first time ever, additional outreach will be important with Arlington's senior population and households who lack access to a computer. Additional barriers include distrust in the government and the misinformation spread by the presidential administration's attempt to add the citizenship question to the questionnaire.

Questions for the regional census office (answers in red):

- Will the online questionnaire be mobile friendly? Yes.
- Can staff bring technology to the community, such as helping people take the census on a tablet or laptop? **The Census Bureau does not recommend that we submit someone's answers for them. Census Bureau employees take a lifetime oath to protect personal information. If we wanted to have a response event, the Census Bureau could arrange to have a worker there to help with the response event. Any of us can help people get TO the website or answer a question about the process, but because we haven't take the oath it's recommended that we leave assisting with answers to the enumerators/workers. The Bureau recommends that we could plan events or places where people can get HELP to respond, i.e. someone who knows who can get to the census website and find the forms in a specific language.**
- Will we know the results in real time? **Right now, the Census Bureau's plan is to have a section on their website where the public can see real time results (by Census blocks – appropriately**

anonymized), likely starting after April 1, 2020. Other municipalities are planning to post a fundraiser-type thermometer in a public location and update it every few days as a public reminder to respond.

- Can the Library and the Senior Center get a box or two of paper forms to keep on hand for individuals who prefer to respond in analog? Carly said this is not allowed per Census Bureau policy. She recommends giving people the phone option and having a list of phone numbers for people to call. People will be speaking to humans – it's not just a robocall.
- Can we calculate how much is at risk locally, i.e. how much federal and state funding each Arlington resident receives on average due to their response to the census? Making the financial impact relevant at the level of the individual will make a bigger impression. Carly said this can be hard to calculate, although we could start by checking with the state's website. There was a study done by George Washington University that broke it down by state and we could use that to identify funding categories. Kelly will see if Sandy Pooler from the Town Manager's Office can help us get close to a specific number.

### **3. Developing our CCWG Action Plan (9:35 - 10:20AM; 45 minutes)**

The group brainstormed a list of ways to reach out to Arlington residents as a whole, as well as Arlington's hard to count communities.

- a. Communication ideas and opportunities:
  - Conduct a local analysis of money that is at risk to drive home the message about why responding to the census is so important to individual residents
  - Add census branding and messaging to outgoing communication whenever possible
  - Invest in translation services for census messaging materials and events; in particular, Mandarin, Russian, French Creole. For materials with limited space, include a link where people can read materials in their native language
  - See if we can have a "Census Corner" column in the Advocate, YourArlington.com, Arlington Patch, etc. to spotlight messages about the census
  - Work with ACMi to develop videos about the census, including featuring segments led by non-English speakers
  - Invite representatives from Arlington High School's student government to a future meeting
  - Work with the schools to get messaging into school newsletters
  - Look into how to set up program to credit students with community service hours for help staffing census kiosks
  - Attend Arlington business district merchant meetings, share materials with local businesses

- Get announcements about the census on Select Board agendas
  - Share messaging with Town Meeting Members, particularly as they reach out to their neighborhoods through precinct meetings in advance of spring Town Meeting
  - Develop a “Countdown to Completion” timer to convey urgency of responding before a certain date
  - Billing inserts
  - Ask local leaders of faith communities to add messaging to their newsletters and bulletins
- b. Upcoming events or venues for census outreach
- Kiosks
  - Arlington Community Education
  - Senior Center event
  - EcoFest
  - High School computer lab
  - Census Party!
  - Stickers
  - Early voting
  - DPW recycling events
  - Arlington Family Connection
- c. Reaching Arlington’s hard-to-count communities
- Working with bilingual students and seniors to engage non-English speaking residents
  - Student government
  - Reach out to real estate community and leasing agents to reach renters
  - Post materials in bus stops, laundromats, local bulletin boards
  - Place sandwich boards with census messaging in high-traffic pedestrian areas
  - Reach out to Arlington Housing Authority
  - Boys and Girls Club and Fidelity House

#### **4. Meeting Schedule and Next Steps (10:20 - 10:30am; 10 minutes)**

Next meeting: Thursday, December 5 at 5:00pm, Town Hall Annex Second Floor Conference Room.

This meeting will focus on a social mapping exercise and developing a concrete communication plan and schedule to prioritize the ideas generated above and plan for their implementation. Kelly will invite Joan Roman, the Town’s Communication Officer, so the group can benefit from her expertise in this matter.

Members should come prepared with a list of ideas for community leaders or members trusted by Arlington residents (particularly those

who are part of our hard to count communities) so we can organize our outreach efforts.

Groups / Focus Areas:

- Seniors and Health and Human Services: Susan Carp, Shannon Murphy, Christine Bongiorno
- Schools / Arlington Family Connection: Lauren Ledger, Julie Dunn
- Families with young children: Anna Litten / Libraries
- Communications: Ellen Lawton, Brucie Moulton (working with Joan Roman)
- Businesses: Kelly Lynema and DPCD

Meeting adjourned at 10:30am.