

Census Community Partner Engagement: A Call to Action

Amidst the backdrop of the unprecedented global pandemic, the U.S. Census Bureau is still hard at work to ensure a complete census count in every community. To make that happen, staff from the state census program continues to rely on assistance from community partners such as local governments and their affiliated complete count committees.

Last month, S.C. Association of Counties staff attended a virtual meeting of the Governor’s Complete Count Committee. Useful information for community partners was provided by the S.C. Lieutenant Governor, State Census Program staff, and other members of the statewide census team. Here are some key takeaways:

- The Census is very important to the future of our state. 2010 Census data is being used right now, during this time of crisis, to allocate federal resources to programs like school meal programs, small business assistance loan funding,

and disaster relief. An analysis of how the 2020 Census Count could impact disbursements of



federal monies in South Carolina can be found online at https://census.sc.gov/files/IPP-1819-3%20CountingforDollars_SC.pdf. Table 1 lists examples of federal programs that directly impact South Carolina communities, along with their FY 2016 census-based statewide allocations.

- Community partners are encouraged to tap into state census marketing resources to help deliver the message. A state census logo (fea-

tured with this article), brochures created to target hard-to-reach or disengaged populations, and content for websites and social media are located online at <https://www.emarketinggroup.com/file-share>.

- South Carolina’s statewide completion rate is 43.5 percent as of April 12. A “Response Rate” map that can be filtered by county and city, along with other useful resources can be found at <https://census.sc.gov/>.
- “Census Hard to Count Maps” provide census tract level detail so that localities can see where to concentrate efforts. These online maps, found at <https://www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us/>, provide census tract level detail regarding completion rates and the mechanism by which people are choosing to respond.
- Census grants are available for community partners through the SC Grantmakers Network. County government officials can join the SC Grantmakers Network online at <https://scgrantmakers.com/>.
- The Census deadline has been extended, but partners are encouraged to stay engaged now! The Census Bureau is seeking statutory relief from Congress of 120 additional calendar days to deliver final apportionment counts. Under this plan, the Census Bureau would extend the window for field data

Table 1

<u>Program</u>	<u>Department</u>	<u>FY 2016 Obligation</u>
Water and Waste Disposal Systems for Rural Communities	USDA	\$73,616,300
Highway Planning and Construction	DOT	\$691,516,916
Crime Victim Assistance	DOJ	\$33,495,173
Health Care Centers	HHS	\$80,447,823

collection and self-response to October 31, 2020. While the extension may ensure a more complete count, community partners are asked to stay focused and not lose their sense of urgency. In-person activities and field operations are suspended, but partners can still be highly engaged via phone, email, web conference, websites and social media. Citizens

can go online or call the phone number to complete the census. To participate in the census, the census ID provided to each household in the mail is not necessary—an individual will just need their household address.

A Call to Action for Every County Official

You can have tremendous impact on census completion within your own personal network by reaching out to those you know and those with whom you interact:

- 1.) Start with yourself by completing the census for your household,
- 2.) Remind your coworkers and direct reports to complete the census for their households, and
- 3.) Encourage your friends, neighbors, and community to participate in the census count.

For more information about the South Carolina Census Count program, including information for community partners, complete count committees, and Census Bureau operations impacted by COVID-19, please visit <https://census.sc.gov/>.



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SOUTH CAROLINA
ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES

Purpose of the SCAC

- To promote more efficient county governments
- To study, discuss and recommend improvements in government
- To investigate and provide means for the exchange of ideas and experiences between county officials
- To promote and encourage education of county officials
- To collect, analyze and distribute information about county government
- To cooperate with other organizations
- To promote legislation which supports efficient administration of local government in South Carolina

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