



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
COLORADO'S FIRST

Board Summary Report

Date: May 14, 2020

To: Board of County Commissioners

From: Internal Census Committee: Michelle Halstead, Chris Henning, Nancy Sonnenfeld, John Christofferson, Jessica Gapuzan, Larry Mugler and Linda Haley

Subject: Census 2020 Update

Request and Recommendation:

The purpose of this drop-in session is to provide a brief update on current and upcoming activities associated with Arapahoe County's 2020 Census planning efforts and to answer any questions.

Background

The U.S. Census Bureau is required by Article I, Section 2 of the U.S. Constitution to conduct an accurate count of the population every 10 years. Census data is critical to the County in several areas, most notably in determining how many seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as determining the redistricting of state legislatures. Having an accurate and complete census count is important in determining Federal and State aid and grants, economic development, housing assistance, transportation improvements and many other programs that residents depend upon. Maintaining or increasing non-property tax revenue is necessary to provide more than 240 statutory services in alignment with resident expectations.

Arapahoe County's service area includes diverse populations and geography which pose unique challenges to obtaining an accurate count. The county's internal census working committee is focusing on communities that have been historically undercounted by the decennial census. According to County data, these group total 161,519 individuals, representing 25 percent of Arapahoe County's population.

The temporary coordinator position approved by the board is strategizing and leading the County's efforts in obtaining an accurate count, designing plans to engage hard-to-reach populations and coordinating efforts with internal and external stakeholders.

Adaptations to census work plan and operational timeline

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a deep effect on national census operations, as well as national, state, and local outreach efforts.

- The Census Bureau plans to resume “Update Leave” operations the week of 5/18 in Colorado. This is the way that residents without “city style” addresses will receive the paper questionnaire: left at their doorstep, inviting self-response online, by phone, or by mail.
- Census “enumerators” (door knockers) plan to start mid-August, to follow-up with households that have not responded on-line, by phone, or by mail.
- The self-response period has been extended through October 31, 2020
- The Census Bureau has requested extensions of final reports due to the President, and subsequent reports of counts returned to the States, which is pending Congressional approval.
- The County continues to pursue “safe” engagement strategies to promote self-response to the 2020 Census and has adapted plans for the DOLA census engagement grant. All grant funds must be encumbered by 6/30/20.

Internal Activities

- More than 61,000 text messages were sent to Human Services clients in April with reminders to take the census. The messages had a 4.4% “click-through” rate, which is considered very effective. A second text campaign will take place in late May.
- Arapahoe/Douglas Works! will include a census response reminder in their weekly emails in the latter part of May, along with notification of virtual hiring events and rapid response events (to newly laid-off workers).
- The County’s moviegoer campaign was modified to all digital ads, targeting additional hard to count populations. Mid-campaign reports indicated a click-through rate of .34%, well above the industry average of 0.09%.
- County volunteer recruitment efforts were modified to solicit digital promotion, engagement and support with social networks, and posted on statewide volunteer sites.
- Census awareness messaging continues to be included in telephone town halls, *The County Line* eNewsletter, on the County website, and on social media accounts. The County has also supported virtual census “dance parties” held in the region to reach different target audiences.
- Follow-up messages have been sent to education stakeholders and school foundations, encouraging digital promotion and collaboration at meal and supply distribution sites
- A new digital ad campaign with a different vendor, targeting different HTC populations is planned for June, as well as a postcard mailer in hard-to-count areas.
- Additional printing and re-orders of census-themed giveaways are being made to support additional promotion efforts across the County.
- Continued monitoring of self-response rates, strategic planning for areas where responses are lagging.

External Activities

- Continued collaboration with organizations and DOLA grantees serving hard-to-count populations in the metro area, including older adults, young children, Asian/Pacific Islander, African-American, Latino, persons with disabilities, LGBTQ, mobile and transient populations, along with rural residents.
- A few private businesses have offered to include flyers with food pick-ups from their sites, and many places of worship and nonprofit organizations are incorporating census promotional materials with their efforts to help meet the needs of community members.
- The Arapahoe County Early Childhood Council (ACECC) is providing census tote bags, flyers, and coloring books to providers and families across the County in conjunction with the distribution of emergency baby supplies expected from FEMA.
- Efforts in the Town of Deer Trail include banners in visible locations, partnerships with local school meal distribution sites, community food bank messaging and working with faith centers to include census messaging and giveaways.
- The Town of Bennett is hosting four “Take-out Tuesdays” to support local restaurants and community members providing food to go; Adams and Arapahoe County will co-sponsor an additional night with census support grant money and include census tote bags and flyers.
- A Spanish-speaking Sheridan resident will be featured in a new statewide public service announcement. Other Sheridan activities include sponsorship of a “Take out Tuesday” with a local business, and producing door hangers for the two neighborhoods with the lowest response rates in the city.

Reviewed By:

John Christofferson, Deputy County Attorney