

## **CENSUS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN, STAMFORD**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The importance of a complete and accurate Census cannot be overstated. Mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the Census count impacts our most fundamental rights and ability to adequately plan for our collective future. The Census determines how we will be represented in Congress, in the legislature and Board of Representatives. It directly affects the allocation of over \$675 billion per year in federal assistance for neighborhood improvements, public health, education, social services, transportation, and much more. For Stamford, it is estimated that \$2,900 in federal funding per resident, per year is allocated based on Census data.

Census data serve as the basis for how we characterize and understand our community and its needs. Community leaders in both the public and private sectors rely heavily on the accuracy of Census data to make important decisions affecting the future of Stamford. Indeed, the importance of Census data pervades nearly all forms of decision-making. Government leaders rely on it for a host of local decisions, businesses rely on it in evaluating markets and choosing where to locate development, residents rely on local data in choosing where to live, and foundations and other philanthropic organizations rely on it as a primary basis for the funding decisions that enable many important community improvement efforts to succeed.

### **GOALS AND STRATEGIES**

With its highly diverse population and size, Stamford faces tremendous barriers to ensuring an accurate count and thus receiving an equitable, fair share of funding and representation. The goals of this communications/outreach plan are to:

- Develop and present a creative brief to local advertising agencies
- Coordinate and streamline the communication for all items contained in this plan with project stakeholders.
- Educate and increase awareness about the 2020 Census and its benefits to residents and manage expectations.
- Ensure the city's messaging aligns with the state and federal messaging goals.
- Ensure areas of greatest impact, communities historically undercounted in past census counts, are reached.
- Apply for and secure state, private and/or philanthropic grant funding to support Census outreach events and marketing

### **KEY MESSAGING**

The purpose of key messaging is to ensure key points of the 2020 Census are conveyed to project stakeholders and residents. Although individual stakeholders or categories of residents may require additional messaging, the key points below should be relayed to everyone. - The value of the census and its importance to the nation and our democracy, as well as to every state, community, and neighborhood— particularly the impact on local schools, health care, emergency response, and other community services

## COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

1. Stakeholder Relations: The city will engage stakeholders to solicit feedback and help raise awareness of the 2020 Census, ensuring open and effective lines of communication throughout the campaign development and execution phases.

2. Advertising and Media Buying: A new digital environment will present challenges and opportunities for this crucial area, including for the first time the expanded ability to directly drive response through digital ads that connect viewers to the online response tool. As with many of these areas, the city should use campaign data to continuously refine our approach.

3. Public Relations, Events, and Crisis Communications: The city's strategy will help drive education and awareness efforts, particularly among hard-to-count audiences. Crisis preparedness and communications will be more important than ever before, with information (and, regrettably, misinformation) spreading faster in this new digital environment.

4. Website Development and Digital Activities: The city will take a mobile-first approach to developing web properties that support the campaign. Using dynamic content, the city will tailor the experience for its Hard-to-Count populations and adjust the approach as campaign data become available.

5. Social Media: Social media outreach offers a unique opportunity to personally engage with the public. The city will leverage existing Census channels and develop innovative approaches to promote recruiting efforts, enhance customer service, support digital and on-the-ground events, raise awareness, drive response, and disseminate data.

6. Field Recruitment Advertising and Communications: The city will leverage various media channels, deploy hyperlocal and national campaigns.

7. Grant: The city is soliciting public, private and foundation funding to help support all goals and strategies. These funds will be used to procure necessary technology, disseminate information and marketing, and if possible, to provide for sub-grants to local organizations to promote the Census via events and questionnaire assistance.

## NEIGHBORHOODS AND RELEVANT GEOGRAPHIES

The hard-to-count populations are not in a single geography and are spread throughout the city. There will be an increased effort in the low income and high rental areas. That said, there are a number of neighborhoods that have been identified hold the highest concentration of our hard-to-count populations. The Complete Count Committee (CCC) subcommittees are focused on our hard-to-count populations, and using data from the Census Bureau, we have mapped several key features within these neighborhoods or sets of neighborhoods. With the hard-to-count populations as a base map, we will identify nodes where residents gather as places to spread census outreach and education. These include

our libraries, recreation and senior centers as well as dozens of salons, barber shops, and laundromats to reach as many members of these communities as possible. To fully encompass the city as a whole, we will partner with Connecticut Transit and our major educational institutions to add marketing to the shuttles, buses, and rail stops and lines. Finally, we will spread marketing and outreach throughout corner stores, and will be holding pop-ups at the city's farmers' markets (may be too early in the season) which accept SNAP and WIC. To effectively meet the city's residents where they are, we have identified several key community groups, media outlets, and other organizations in an immediate vicinity to our Hard-to-Count populations. We will work with key city agency neighborhood liaisons to effectively train them on the upcoming Census campaign.

## HART-TO-COUNT

### MISSION

Ensure a complete and accurate count of Stamford's Hard-to-Count populations by engaging trusted messengers, identifying motivating messages and facilitating the completion of the Census form in 2020 in HTC households and communities. We will identify trusted messengers for each target population, equip them with the knowledge, messaging and outreach materials they need to motivate their community members to participate in the 2020 Census

### STRATEGIES

The recent data hacks, the current political environment, the hostility present toward immigrants, the fact that the Census will take place in the middle of presidential campaigns and the general distrust in government pose huge challenges for a complete and accurate count in 2020. These difficulties compound the constant difficulties of reaching young children and hard to count populations. The strategies adapted by the CCC take these challenges into account and make trusted messengers key to the overall strategies to improve the count:

- Build trust with individuals, families and communities.
- Educate individuals, families and communities on the importance of the Census and motivate them to participate--provide concrete examples (e.g., how the count impacts their communities and their children).
- Need to develop and test messages with different communities
- Provide outreach materials and opportunities for one-on-one outreach and community engagement.
- Provide access so individuals and households with different needs so that they can easily and fully complete the form. Educate them about their options (can fill it out without using the identifier number online and by phone, possibly wait until they get a paper form, if they don't want to use the Internet)

These strategies are consistent across all target populations, although the partners and avenues to reach each of the groups will differ. The CCC has also identified the following additional barriers to Census: illiteracy, digital illiteracy, no Internet access, transience/non-permanent residence, language barriers, fear of how data will be used and lack of understanding of the purpose and function of the Census.

## TARGET POPULATIONS

The CCC will target census activities to the following hard-to-count populations:

- African American males between the ages of 18 to 29
- Young children under the age of 5 (particularly those in complex households such as young children in foster placement, homeless families “couch surfing”)
- People with disabilities and special needs (i.e. blind, hard of hearing and deaf)
- Homeless (shelters, hotels, streets)
- LGBTQ Youth
- Older Adults from traditionally hard to count populations
- Immigrants and non-English speakers

We must build relationships, rely on trusted voices and community partners, and leverage our relationships and outreach channels to get information out and motivate those who are hard-to-count to complete the form in 2020. There must be efforts to ensure they return their census form with **all** members living in the household at time of completion, including young children.

Because young children are missed for unique reasons, the committee must incorporate strategic outreach that addresses the undercount of young children into all outreach efforts. In addition, the other Census subcommittees must include messages and strategies particularly around the undercount of young children, since they each have a role to play in ensuring that children are counted.

## STRATEGIES PER TARGET POPULATION

**Young Children Under 5:** Young children have the highest net undercount of any other age group. They are the most likely to be missed in 2020. The undercount of young children is a little different from other populations. Research has shown that 4 out of 5 young children are missed because the person filling out the form does not include them on it. Understanding why this happens and developing messaging and materials based on those findings is key.

Build trust with individuals, families and communities (need trusted messengers and messages). Identifying trusted messengers and the organizations that can reach them:

- Pediatricians, nurses, hospitals, federally qualified health centers, OB-GYNS, maternity wards, teen pregnancy programs
- Teachers, cafeteria workers (or other school personnel that live in the community)
- Childcare providers and preschools
- Faith based congregations- members
- Home visiting providers
- Barber shops and hair salons
- Businesses that sell diapers, baby food, and other young child items
- Libraries
- WIC offices and Other government agencies that serve young children in particular (such as early intervention programs)
- Parenting communities

Educate trusted messengers - get them onboard

- Educate trusted messengers (webinars, meetings, one-on-one conversations); get them to think about their networks and outreach vehicles and how they can leverage relationships and current vehicles to disseminate and reach HTC communities.
- Make resources available to better understand what is at stake.

Educate individuals, families and communities about the importance of the Census and motivate them to participate

Develop messaging targeted to parents, guardians and caregivers of young children. Make sure to include concrete examples that show how the Census benefits their young children, families and communities.

Develop materials that trusted messengers can easily disseminate through outreach vehicles and that they can make available where they connect with families.

- Develop videos: Videos can be played in waiting rooms, doctor's offices, emergency rooms, urgent care centers, OBGYN offices, and hospitals.
- Produce posters and ads: Materials can be posted on buses. They can also be posted in schools, social service offices and government buildings.
- Produce fliers that can be made available at WIC offices and other places where parents of young children go.
- Social media messages to reach youth and young parents.

Make materials available to government offices and local partners to disseminate to places where parents of young children frequent.

- Foodbanks, diaper banks, WIC offices, supermarkets, convenience stores
- Partner with education providers: schools, early childcare centers, Early Head Start, Head Start. They can share census Statistics in Schools program materials and access parents and siblings who can provide reminders that young children should be included.
- Libraries and Bookmobile. Can provide an education and outreach vehicle and places where they can complete the form.
- Partner with health care providers: Pediatrician offices, hospitals, urgent care centers, community clinics, home visiting providers.

Provide access so individuals and households with different needs can easily complete the form.

- Set up stations in local libraries that are manned by staff that can help individuals complete their forms. Bookmobiles can increase access to technology for those who do not have access to technology.
- Establish Census technology stations/kiosks in places that parents frequent: clinics, schools, churches, community corner store, recreation centers, etc.
- Provide mobile technology, like tablets and in-person assistance in government offices, WIC services and other places frequented by people with young children.
- Provide support for those who need help completing the form. Having folks who can provide support in-language is going to be critical. Schools may be helpful here.

- Share anticipated Count All Kids fact sheet on the logistics of when and how to fill out the form.

Youth over the Age of 5 from Complex Households (Foster youth, LGBTQ youth, homeless or unstably housed, etc.)

- Build trust with individuals, families and communities.
- Engage community groups
- Incorporate into targeted street canvassing and other youth-led outreach
- Educate individuals, families and communities on the importance of the Census and motivate them to participate- provide concrete examples

African American Youth ages 18-29: African American young adult men also have a very high undercount rate.

Build trust with individuals, families and communities. Identify trusted messengers and organizations that can help reach them. Engage youth through existing networks and discuss with them the best channels for connecting with their colleagues.

- Engage organizations to get their youth on board for outreach efforts.
- Educate trusted messengers - get them onboard
- Engage youth on civics and train them to do census engagement. Get them to educate their peers and communities on the importance of the census and why they should make sure to complete the form and include everyone living in the household.
- Reach out to mentorship programs and other volunteers in the high schools as well as resource centers at the colleges in the City.

Educate individuals, families and communities on the importance of the Census and motivate them to participate- provide concrete examples.

- Develop messaging that works for this population
- Develop materials that trusted messengers can easily disseminate through outreach vehicles.
- Develop a video that connects the undercount of youth and young adults to their well-being.
- Engage the media on this topic.
- Develop social media content: visual graphics for Instagram.
- Disseminate information through current outreach channels.
- Youth text messaging campaign: Hold a texting campaign and have youth and young adults text their friends and network
- Canvass streets to make sure reach youth and young adults who live on or work the streets are reached.
- Target Mall and rec centers (e.g. Boys and Girls Club).

#### **People with Disabilities and special needs (e.g., blind, hard of hearing, and deaf)**

- Build trust with individuals, families and communities. Educate individuals, families and communities on the importance of the Census and motivate them to participate - provide concrete examples.

- Provide access so individuals and households with different needs can easily complete the form

#### **Homeless:**

- Build trust with individuals, families, and communities.
- Churches that often provide homeless services
- Food banks
- Community clinics, urgent care centers, Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Educate individuals, families and communities on the importance of the Census and motivate them to participate- provide concrete examples.
- Partner with the Police Department Homeless Outreach Team
- Educate organizations that provide homeless services on the Census and the importance of getting an accurate count of Re-entering Citizens

#### **Older Adults**

Build trust with individuals, families and communities.

- Stamford Senior Center
- Meals on Wheels: Health Department
- Educate individuals, families and communities on the importance of the Census and motivate them to participate- provide concrete examples.
- Provide free rides to libraries or other places available to complete the form (Lyft/Uber).
- Provide kiosks at Barbershops/beauty shops and support for Older Adults to complete their forms. Put in kiosks in the lobbies of senior living centers. Have a table at weekly bingo nights or other events that are held for Older Adults.

#### **DIVERSE STAMFORD**

#### **MISSION**

Ensure a complete and accurate count of Stamford's Hard-To-Count populations by engaging trusted messengers, identifying motivating messages and facilitating the completion of the Census form in 2020 in HTC households and communities. The Committee will identify trusted messengers for each target population, equip them with the knowledge, messaging and outreach materials they need to motivate their community members to participate in the 2020 Census. They will also use their networks and relationships to disseminate information and ensure that their partners and the individuals that they serve are aware of the Census and understand what their children, families and communities gain or lose if they do or do not complete the form.

**STRATEGIES** The CCC will implement an engagement strategy to address barriers to completing the online Census questionnaire and support access to alternative formats when needed. The

Subcommittee has identified the following barriers to Census participation: illiteracy, digital illiteracy, no Internet access, transience/non-permanent residence, language barriers, and lack of understanding of the purpose and function of the Census, confidentiality concerns and overall mistrust of the process.

The Diverse Stamford Subcommittee will rely on community stakeholders to increase awareness of the importance of the Census. In addition, the subcommittee will focus on messaging and information dissemination through communication channels such as ethnic media along with social media outlets.

**COMMUNITY STAKEHOLDERS** In an effort to identify trusted community stakeholders to assist with information sharing and outreach efforts, the CCC is compiling a comprehensive list of familiar outlets to New Americans such as ethnic civic groups, places of worship, non-profit organizations and educational institutions.

**Strategies to engage community stakeholders will include the following.** Development of a local network of community stakeholders to support one or more of the following:

- Provision of access to computers to fill out the form
- Assist with information sharing and education by participating on a trainer event to educate residents about the census and encourage them to participate
- Participate in community events to highlight the importance of the Census 2020
- Establish a multilingual Census or volunteer group to help with outreach efforts such as door knocking, attending community events
- Train library staff on how to work with Limited English Proficient seeking questions about the Census
- Coordinate with Stamford Schools ESL department to disseminate information to parents
- Partner with Community School facilitators to assist with outreach.

Develop and promote outreach materials in businesses frequented by New Americans

## **TARGET POPULATIONS**

As of 2018, 44,986 foreign-born (35 percent of the city's population) call Stamford home. The largest group, 26,101, of foreign-born individuals comes from Latin America followed by Asia, 8,693 and Europe, 8,302. (Census data from the ACS)

## **MESSAGING AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS**

Messaging targeting New Americans must emphasize Federal Laws protecting the confidentiality of Census responses, which prohibit the sharing of identifiable information to any other individual or agency at any level of government, including immigration enforcement agencies. In addition, messaging should create awareness of the consequences of undercounting and the impact to families and children. Undercounting New Americans in the 2020 Census could impact federal funding to programs such as Head Start, WIC, CHIP, and SNAP to mention a few. Messaging also should make clear that every person living in the U.S./Stamford, regardless of citizenship, immigration or legal status is counted in our census. Lastly, information needs to be made available in the city's core languages: Spanish, French Creole, Ukrainian, etc.



Identifying trusted ethnic media to reach New Americans will be critical to overcome barriers related to language and ease concerns related to confidentiality. To that end, the Communications Subcommittee is compiling a list of ethnic media outlets based on the city's core languages and identified multiple communication channels preferred by immigrant populations such as Facebook, WhatsApp, twitters and others.

#### **STRATEGIES ON MESSAGING AND INFORMATION SHARING:**

Anticipate concerns and fears even though the citizenship question is not included. Messaging should focus on confidentiality laws and how the question is not asking participants to provide information regarding immigrant or legal status.

##### **Highlight:**

- the potential impact on programs geared towards children and the overall well-being of families
- Census Separate Question approach to Hispanic origin and race
- the importance of documenting relationship of each person, including children, in a household. This is particularly important as some groups such as Latinos believe that young children do not need to be reported on the census form.
- how the form has only 10 questions.
- March 2020 as every household will receive a mailing from the U.S. Census Bureau with instructions and an ID number to visit their website. Upon logging onto the Bureau's website, each household will fill out a simple 10-question form.
- confidentiality laws and consequences (up to 5 years in jail and \$250,000 in fines) should Census Bureau employees illegally release information
- how all households will have the option of responding on-line, by telephone, or using a paper questionnaire, and emphasize key dates in 2020

##### **Develop:**

- multilingual messaging that can be disseminated through various media outlets
- multilingual materials and posters for community centers, bus stops, laundromats, businesses
- multilingual PSAs showing people how to fill out the form and contacting the Census Bureau's toll-free lines in 12 non-English languages + English
- social media tools via Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter and text messaging to share information
- a list of social media influencers to amplify information

##### **Partner:**

- With national organizations focusing on minority groups such as NALEO Educational Fund to access additional customized resources to promote participation.
- with additional ethnic media outlets (print, radio, and television stations) to disseminate information.

##### **Leverage:**

Use existing communication channels to disseminate information

## **BUSINESS**

### **MISSION**

The CCC will involve the business community and other institutions in Stamford in the process of raising Census awareness among business owners, employees, customers, students, faculty, and communities in the city. To be able to convey the Census message and increase response rate, the Committee established the following goals:

- Develop processes to get Stamford businesses and their employees engaged in the importance of the Census;
- Develop outreach mechanisms for employers in the City to convey the Census message;
- Connect with vendors that provide services to businesses and institutions in Stamford.

### **STRATEGIES**

Based on these goals, the following strategies and actions were identified:

- Attend monthly/quarterly commerce meetings and job fairs.
- Identify HR contact for businesses and institutions to include Census message on paychecks and direct deposits.
- Allow employees to complete the Census form during work hours and to use work computers and telephones to do so if those are the preferred methods of response.
- Include Census messages in newsletters and e-blasts that are e-mailed or mailed to customers and employees. - Add Census link to businesses & institutions' websites to promote the Census.
- Use Social Media platform to use the Stamford# for census awareness.
- Organize Census Registration Party & Rally. Use signage in buildings to remind people to respond to the census.
- Offer incentives and giveaways for filling out the Census form, such as promotional gifts

Note: This Communications Plan is based, in part on information provided by the Census Bureau and from plans developed in other municipalities.