



Ivy Hood -2020 Census Grant Program Manager

### Greetings!

Welcome to the third issue of *CensusConnection*, our newsletter created to keep our partners informed and up-to-date on all the great things going on in our community as we work toward ensuring a complete and accurate 2020 Census count for our region. In reflecting on the recent

happenings going on in our community and around the world, the one word that comes to my mind is - Wow. The COVID-19 crisis has changed the way we live, work, and play. With a new world comes new words and new phrases. We now have a new norm. Shelter in place, essential workers, quarantine, ventilators, masks, Zoom, working remotely, hand washing, social distancing, and deep cleaning - all are now part of our daily dialogue. No hugging. No gathering. No fun? The coronavirus has also forced us to think and work differently; to be flexible.

### Being Agile is Key: Revamping Census Outreach Efforts

Since last fall, we have been gearing up to roll out our 2020 Census marketing and outreach plans throughout our five-county region. Last year, the Region 1 Planning Council (RPC) applied for and secured a **\$920,000** state Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) grant and awarded sub grants to 12 cities, counties, and organizations to target hard-to-count outreach in Northern IL. These Census partners developed marketing plans, scheduled outreach events, and secured “trusted messengers” to help spread-the-word about the importance of completing the Census.

In addition to the original funding, this past March, RPC was excited to be awarded **\$95,000** to further expand our outreach efforts and activities. Then, the coronavirus hit. All in-person outreach efforts ceased. Our sub grantees scrambled to get creative and submit revised work plans and budgets. Our Field Reps ramped up their problem-solving skills, while we reached out to IDHS to brainstorm and share alternative outreach ideas and plans.

### Let the Census Begin: We are Ready!

So today, we are excited to see the fruits of our efforts. Our media campaigns rolled out in mid March and will continue through June. We are implementing our new social-distanced outreach plans. Wow (that word again). We are proud to be a part of this community-wide initiative and have one shot every ten years – let’s make this one count.

### 2020 Census: Local Outreach/Promotion Plans

While working with our 12 grant sub-recipients, there have been many efforts and successes across the five-county region of Winnebago, Boone, Ogle, Stephenson, and DeKalb counties.

### By the Numbers: (Oct – Feb)

- **449** - # of events
- **32,121** - # reached via events
- **281** - # of locations where info is disseminated
- **60,550** - # of flyers/education materials distributed
- **1,017** - # of Trusted Messengers trained
- **1,029,149** - # of persons reached through various activities

**Response Rates are In: Region Performing Above State and Nation** - Daily Response Rates are now **LIVE** and updated daily @ <https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates.html>.

Local promotion efforts are paying off with area-response rates **performing above state and national** numbers: (as of 3/31/20)

| Country and State               | % Response |
|---------------------------------|------------|
| National Average Response Rate: | 34.7%      |
| State of IL Response Rate:      | 37.6%      |
| Cities                          | % Response |
| City of DeKalb                  | 36.1%      |
| City of Rockford                | 39.0%      |
| City of Belvidere               | 41.4%      |
| City of Rochelle                | 42.3%      |
| City of Freeport                | 43.3%      |
| Counties                        | % Response |
| DeKalb County                   | 40.5%      |
| Winnebago County                | 42.5%      |
| Boone County                    | 43.9%      |
| Stephenson County               | 44.7%      |
| Ogle County                     | 44.9%      |

## How can I promote the Census with COVID-19 Impacting Engagement?

### Social Media

- *Now has never been a better time to get into digital marketing! Use Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to share the #815Counts!*
- *Ask friends and family to share with their network! Reshares help promote!*

### Posters and Flyers

- *Print off posters and share with essential services!*

## Radio, Television, and Billboard Campaigns Launch: Newspaper Ads to Run During Phase II

Letters from the U.S. Census Bureau were mailed out beginning March 12, 2020 inviting households to complete their Census survey online, by phone, or by mail. That same week, our local radio, television, and billboard campaigns were launched. Media partners include: Lamar Advertising Co., WREX, WTVO/WQRF, WIFR, Comcast, Townsquare Media, Midwest Family, LaBamba Radio, and BigRadio. Local newspaper partners include: Rockford Register Star, Rock River Times, El Sol, El Tiempo, Freeport Daily Standard, Rochelle News-Leader, DeKalb Daily Chronicle, to name a few.

## Buses and Billboards

Check out a few of the static and moving billboards placed throughout the region.



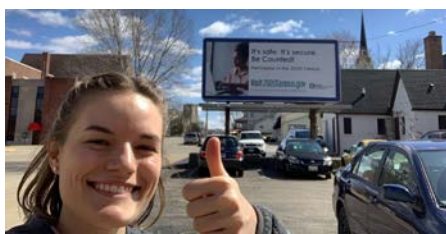
Wester Wuori, City of Rockford Chief of Staff appears on Channel 17's Good Day Stateline morning show. (Click to view.)



WIFR/Channel 23 produced a series of television commercials using on-air personalities. One included Andy Gannon.



RMTD donated ad space on one of their buses and on their downtown Rockford bus shelter for our billboards. What a great Census partner!



Freeport Assistant City Manager/Census Grant Field Rep Kirstin Hinds gives a thumbs up to the new billboard recently-installed in downtown Freeport.

# Census Timeline

### STATUS OF CURRENT OPERATIONS

| Activity/Operation                                      | Planned Schedule  | Adjustment             | Revised Schedule   |
|---|-------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| Self-Response Phase (online, phone, mail)               | March 12–July 31  | Extended               | March 12–August 14 |
| Update Leave  | March 15–April 17 | Delayed                | March 29–May 1     |
| Update Enumerate  | March 16–April 30 | Suspended and extended | March 16–May 14    |
| Mobile Questionnaire Assistance                         | March 30–July 31  | Delayed                | April 13–August 14 |
| Early Nonresponse Followup (NRFU)                       | April 9–July 31   | Delayed                | May 7–August 14    |
| Nonresponse Followup (NRFU) and NRFU Reinterview        | May 13–July 31    | Delayed                | May 28–August 14   |
| Group Quarters Enumeration                              | April 2–June 5    | Delayed                | April 16–June 19   |
| Service-Based Enumeration                               | March 30–April 1  | Delayed                | April 29–May 1     |
| Census counts people experiencing homelessness outdoors | April 1           | Delayed                | May 1              |
| Enumeration of Transitory Locations                     | April 9–May 4     | Delayed                | April 23–May 18    |
| Deliver apportionment counts to the President           | By December 31    | On schedule            | By December 31     |
| Deliver redistricting counts to states                  | By April 1, 2021  | On schedule            | By April 1, 2021   |

For more information on how you can get involved in ensuring a complete and accurate count in your community contact:

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### COVID-19 and the Census

The Census Bureau has been making adjustments to their operational schedule due to the impact of COVID-19. We are taking extra precaution by scaling back on direct engagement activity and pushing for more social media content. Follow us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/R1Planning/>

