



Legislation Text

File #: 19-5234, Version: 2

Title:

Establishment of the Mecklenburg County 2020 Census Complete Count Committee

Summary

ACTION:

Adopt a resolution establishing the Mecklenburg County 2020 Census Complete Count Committee

Staff Contact: Deborah Goldberg, County Manager's Office

Presentation: Yes (Verbal)

BACKGROUND/JUSTIFICATION:

The 2020 decennial census will officially begin one year from April, 2019. Getting an accurate count of people living in Mecklenburg County is imperative because census results are used in many ways that affect our daily lives and work from political representation to distribution of government resources such as Medicaid funds and Section 8 housing vouchers. Yet only 75 percent of people living in Mecklenburg County participated in the 2010 Census. The most common reasons reported for why people do not participate in the census or do not accurately report their information include

- fear and misinformation about privacy and confidentiality;
- language barriers;
- not understanding the purpose of the census and who should be counted; and
- instability in living arrangements.

The 2020 census will be online, so we anticipate that lack of internet access or lack of internet proficiency will be an additional barrier for some people. Also, the addition of a citizenship question is likely to be another complicating factor.

To address these barriers and increase participation, the U.S. Census Bureau is asking states and local governments to establish Complete Count Committees (CCC). The goal of a CCC is to increase participation of those individuals who are less likely to respond or who are often missed by the decennial census, such as young children, homeless individuals, residents with unstable housing, immigrants, non-English speakers, renters, and college students. We

are forming a committee that includes individuals from local government, the business and education community, and other community leaders from across the county. They will develop an outreach plan tailored to the unique characteristics of the different communities in Mecklenburg County. They will begin meeting within the next month and will continue to meet through May of 2020.

PROCUREMENT BACKGROUND:

N/A

POLICY IMPACT:

Census results determine state representation in the U.S. House of Representatives, where our state is projected to gain an additional seat, redistricting at federal, state, and local levels, and distribution of critical federal funds. Census data also drives many local business and policy decisions including business locations and expansions, transportation, other infrastructure projects, and projections for facility and operating needs for public schools and healthcare. An accurate census count is imperative for informed policy decisions.

FISCAL IMPACT:

According to the George Washington Institute of Public Policy, in fiscal year 2016, the federal government allocated more than \$883 billion back to tribal, state, and local governments using census-derived data. North Carolina received about \$23.7 billion. Failure to count everyone can result in loss of our share of these federal funds.