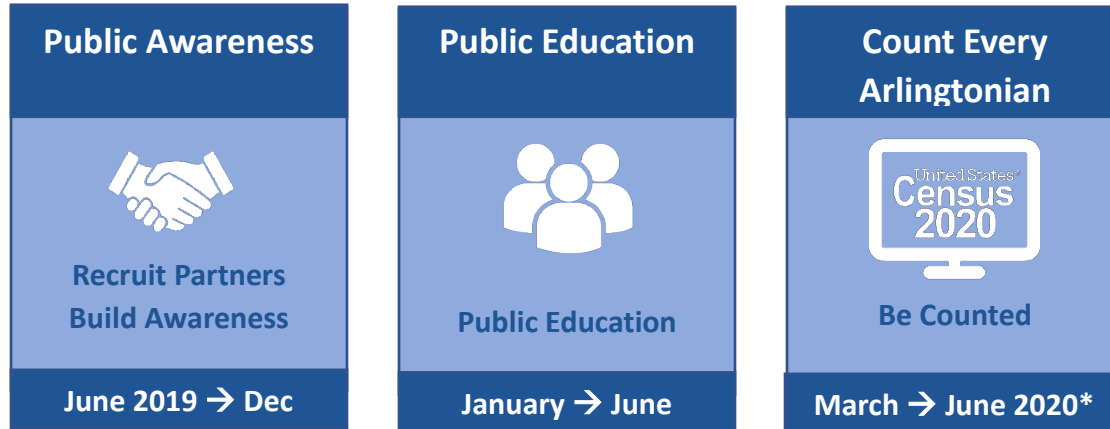


## Communications and Engagement Strategy

The Complete Count Committee with help from the Core Team created three key phases: Public Awareness (Fall 2019), Public Education (Winter 2020), and Be Counted (Spring 2020).

Figure 17: Engagement Strategy Timeline



\*End date pre-COVID-19.

During the Public Awareness phase, the Complete Count Committee focused on planning, recruiting and training partners, and identifying strategies for reaching hard-to-count segments throughout Arlington.

Once Public Education started, CCC members were making presentations to organizations, partnering with Arlington Public Schools to integrate lessons into science, math, and social studies; working with regional partners to place signs on buses and Metro; and sharing news stories to ensure that everyone understood the impact of the 2020 Census and the importance of participation for the Arlington community. The CCC also participated in the Arlington County Fair to educate residents about the 2020 Census and hosted an MLK Day of Service Census event – posting information in businesses across the County.

All during the Public Awareness and Public Education phases, the CCC and the core team were planning for the public launch of the 2020 Census. Together with 2020 Census partners, there was significant planning to ensure that residents who might not have internet access would have the opportunity to take the Census online during pop up events across the County. In the end, over 50 in-person events were planned for once the Census was available for online, phone, or mail in participation.

In March 2020, just after the first Census Palooza event, where CCC members and volunteers spent a weekend getting information out across the County, the Governor declared a public health emergency due to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, followed by a stay at home order. This created a significant shift in strategy for the CCC and core team in order to ensure that every household in Arlington participated in the 2020 Census.

When COVID-19 forced closures of community centers and schools, the core team turned to Microsoft Teams to host online CCC meetings and to hold community town halls broadcast to the County’s Facebook and YouTube pages and cable TV channel.

This also made it easier for partners and CCC members to participate, as they didn’t have to rush to travel to join in the evenings and could simply log in from home. Partners shared links for their networks to join on their own social media channels, which reached those community members who weren’t following Arlington County’s accounts.

Once the Census Bureau started outreach in communities through mobile questionnaire stations and follow up enumerator visits, the Arlington CCC joined the Census Bureau to conduct outreach with safe social distancing pop ups at key locations in hard-to-count and low response areas of the County.

### *Outreach Strategies for Hard-to-Count Communities*

The Complete Count Committee focused on a range of key strategies to build participation in the 2020 Census across the County. Early planning included over 54 in-person events in multi-family buildings, health centers and clinics, childcare centers, assisted living and other key locations around the County. Plans were underway to provide Census coloring books, a Census story book, flyers and take-home activities for students, and pop up events at congregate meal sites -- just as the Governor issued the state of emergency and stay at home order. Although some of the in-person activities were curtailed as a result of the pandemic, the CCC and core team stepped up to the challenge with greater creativity and created connections with community leaders who had direct and ongoing contact with hard-to-reach families throughout the pandemic.

Table 4: Outreach Strategies for Hard-to-Count Communities

Audience	Activity
Low Income Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pop Ups at AFAC distribution</li> <li>• APAH sites</li> <li>• AHC locations</li> <li>• AFC</li> <li>• CPN outreach</li> <li>• REEP outreach</li> </ul>
Seniors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pop Ups at senior congregate meals</li> <li>• Meals on Wheels</li> <li>• Pop Up at senior AFAC distro</li> <li>• Group quarters count for nursing homes</li> </ul>

People with Disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Group quarters count for group homes</li> <li>• ECVN outreach</li> <li>• CSB</li> <li>• Other</li> </ul>
Kids Under 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Day care providers: Count story book, flyer, take home for parents</li> <li>• Tot classes through DPR</li> <li>• Children's library story hour</li> <li>• Pre-K and Kindergarten info nights</li> <li>• Virginia Hospital Center outreach with pediatricians</li> </ul>
Latino/Hispanic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buckingham</li> <li>• Live stream event with Guatemalan community (from Mega Mart and Gates of Ballston )</li> <li>• Bu-Gata connections</li> <li>• Translation at pop ups</li> <li>• Telemundo</li> </ul>
Other LEP Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translation contract in place for pop ups</li> <li>• Work with DHS and other non-profits</li> <li>• Work with ERGs for ideas</li> <li>• ECDC - significant outreach for Amharic speakers</li> <li>• Arabic community - explored connections</li> <li>• Asian community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ AAPI Chamber outreach</li> <li>○ Asian faith-based organizations</li> <li>○ Asian Organization of Arlington</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Faith Based	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interfaith Council presentation</li> <li>• Increased faith-based partners</li> <li>• Presentations at churches/synagogues</li> <li>• U.S. Census Faith in Action</li> </ul>
Millennials/Young Professionals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outreach to employers (see Business Community)</li> <li>• Outreach to property managers (see Renters)</li> <li>• Fun social media (e.g., Pet Census, Count Backwards)</li> <li>• DC Frey (sports leagues)</li> <li>• Animal Welfare and other dog walking groups</li> <li>• Census trivia facts - work with trivia companies</li> <li>• Consider coasters/napkins in bars</li> </ul>

Renters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BID hosted meetings with property managers</li> <li>• Flyers in multi-family buildings</li> <li>• Meetings with big companies (Ditmar, JBG)</li> </ul>
Business Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flyers in public-facing locations and/or for employees</li> <li>• Take a Break and Take the Census campaign</li> </ul>

### *Outreach to Residents in Multi-Family Buildings*

Because access to residents living in multi-family buildings is an ongoing challenge in Arlington, members of the CCC also focused on strategies for reaching residents directly and through property managers. Strategies included recruiting properties as Census partners, sharing information, posting flyers in mail/laundry rooms, yard signs, and door hangers. Members of the County Board and the County Manager made calls and sent letters to property managers to encourage them to help elevate visibility about the 2020 Census for their residents. When COVID-19 forced many multi-family properties to limit outside visitors and deliveries in their buildings, this also impacted visits from Census enumerators. Census enumerators were determined to have access, which caused some friction in several properties and locations. A call with Census staff offered new strategies and messaging, bringing property managers into the process rather than alienating them, leading to a much more successful strategy for building a complete count.

### *Media and Social Media*

#### *News stories*

The communications and social media team prepared and shared 56 weekly news stories about the Census (see Appendix 10). Each story was posted in the County’s online newsroom and a link to it was included in the weekly *Inside Arlington* newsletter, which reached 136,932 subscribers. Thirty-two of the news stories were translated into Spanish and sent to 2,677 Spanish News list subscribers.

The news stories were also posted to the County’s social media accounts along with a graphic and catchy post to tease the story, discussed further in the social media section below.

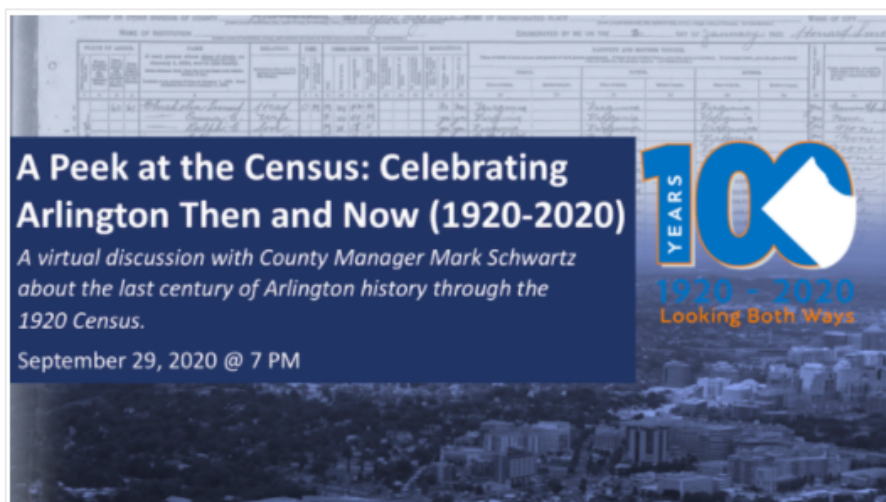
The communications team wove information about the Census into as many news stories as possible to present residents and stakeholders with compelling reasons to take the Census. For example, a story about LGBTQ Pride Month noted that the Census included a question about same-sex relationships; a story about Halloween asked which Arlington neighborhoods will see the most trick-or-treaters, and stories about the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the naming of Arlington County reflected research done by the County Manager and leveraged interest in this historical

event. Each news story included a footer explaining why it's important to take the Census and information on how to take it online, by phone or via mail.

Figure 18: Census News Story

## Census 2020: Celebrating 100 Years of Arlington History

September 25, 2020 | News Release



Join us on [Tuesday, September 29 at 7 PM](#) for a conversation about the last 100 years of Arlington history through the lens of the Census.

County Manager Mark Schwartz will be sharing insights from his extensive research into Census data from 1920 and reflecting on the many changes in the County over the last century. We will also be celebrating the work of Arlington's Complete Count Committee, Census Partners & Champions, and community volunteers during this event.

In addition, selected news stories were distributed to the County's news release list of 15,838 subscribers. For example, the following stories, among others, were also issued as news releases: Arlington County Board Plans to Join Legal Actions Against President Trump on the 2020 Census, Race and Origin Questions Help Everyone in Arlington Count, stories related to COVID-19 and emergency management, the above-mentioned stories on Halloween, Pride Month and similar news releases, and Thank You, Arlington when Arlington reached 99.98% counted.

The news stories were frequently picked up by hyper-local news outlets such as Arlnow.com, InsideNova and Arlington Patch, and occasionally served as inspiration for larger Census stories covered by WTOP News, the Washington Post and other media outlets. The team regularly made preliminary and follow-up contact with local media to pitch Census stories and the availability of subject-matter experts to discuss different aspects of taking the Census. See Appendix 10 for news stories, media coverage and videos.

## Social Media

The communications and social media team developed an overall media strategy, which leveraged Arlington’s existing social media channels.

## Graphics

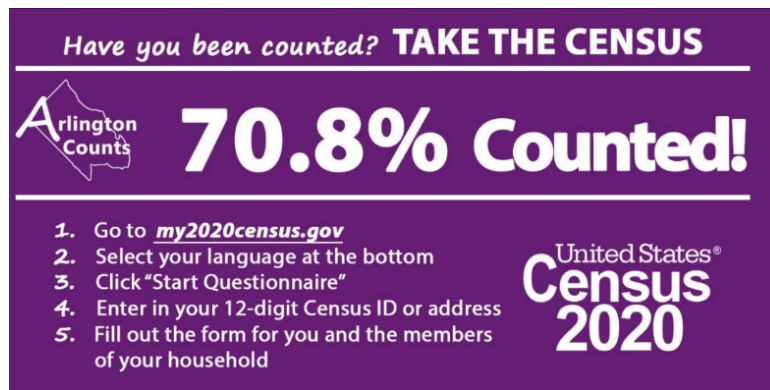
Whereas the 2010 staff core team created new social media accounts for Arlington’s Census efforts, the 2020 team opted to take advantage of Arlington County’s strong existing social media (Facebook and Twitter) presence and created a separate branding scheme for Census content.

Arlington Census branding centered around a white outline of Arlington County, with “Arlington Counts” written across the outline, all against a purple background. This color scheme and logo was used in all communications from Arlington County about the Census. See these and other social media graphics in Appendix 11.

Figure 19: Arlington Counts Logo

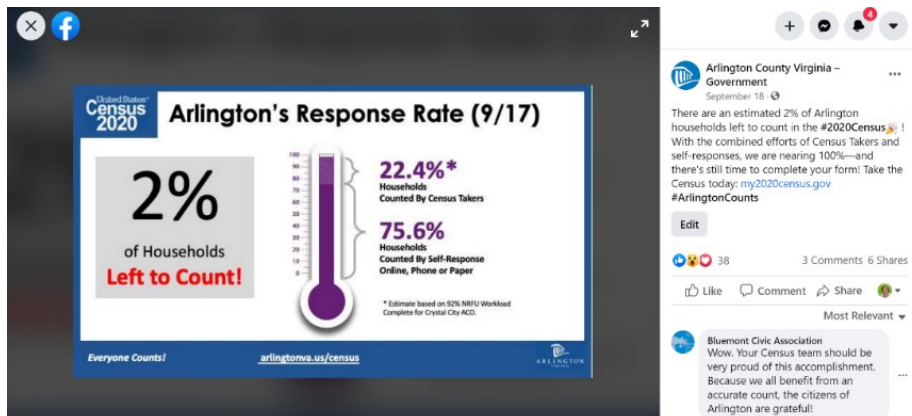


Figure 20: Census Social Media Graphic



The team adapted these colors to run a regular Response Rate graphic showing how many households were left to count. The accompanying post urged households to take the Census.

Figure 21: Census Facebook Post



### *Campaigns*

The social media team crafted numerous social media posts that ran over several months to encourage residents to take the Census. Text and graphics were posted each day, or several times daily, to Facebook (17,177 page likes, 19,148 followers), Twitter (30,900 followers) and the recently launched Instagram feed (4,952 followers).

The team had planned a series of paid social media campaigns around the numerous pop-ups and other Census events, but when the COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of most in-person events, the team opted to use the extensive free social media resources available through the County's existing channels.

Social media posts included links to the weekly news stories, videos prepared by staff or provided by the Census Bureau, event promotions, and content shared by residents, Census Partners and the Census Bureau. The creative yet urgent messages to Take the Census increased in frequency as the deadline loomed.

Social media posts also highlighted specific programs and services whose funding is determined by Census data. They addressed the importance of taking the Census and explained how to take the Census online, by phone or by mail – or via an enumerator if the resident had not yet taken the Census – along with many other messages.

Each post was tagged with #ArlingtonCounts to ensure the greatest reach:

- [Facebook #ArlingtonCounts](#)
- [Twitter #ArlingtonCounts](#)
- [Instagram #ArlingtonCounts](#)

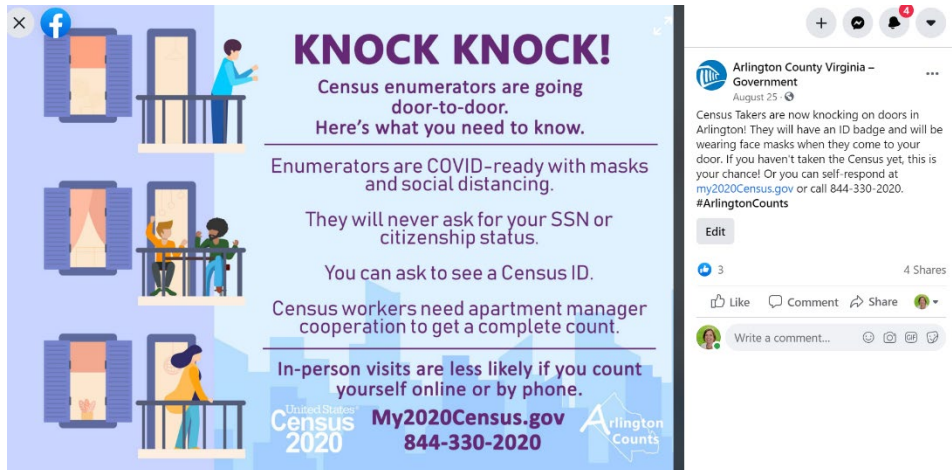
### *Social Media and COVID-19*

The social media posts also addressed the intersection of COVID-19 and the Census. Social media messages were posted on Arlington's channels and provided to Census partners and multi-family property managers to educate residents about how to take the Census, why it's important, and to address concerns about encountering Census takers during the pandemic.

A series of images with information alerting residents about how to identify a trusted Census worker, what to expect when they knock, and to decrease their chances of a visit by self-responding were regularly shared on social media. Messages and graphics conveyed that enumerators going door-to-door would be wearing appropriate face coverings and observing social distancing protocols. Each post was tagged with #ArlingtonCounts.



Figure 22: Social Media Post Regarding Census Takers



### *Census in Schools*

In Spring 2019, APS designated Kerri Hirsch, Social Studies Supervisor, as the primary APS representative to participate in the Census 2020 Complete Count Committee (CCC) to ensure that Census information would be shared with APS students by their social studies teachers. Shortly after, School and Community Relations staff formed an internal APS Census Working Group to support the communications and community engagement aspect of the Census partnership with Arlington County Government.

APS' goal was that every member of every family living in Arlington be counted. To that end, APS executed a Census schools action plan to communicate with students, staff, and families and to help educate and encourage all community members to be counted. Schools incorporated Statistics in Schools and other Census lessons into the school curriculum working with APS social studies teachers; recruited 26 schools and five APS departments and affiliates to serve as official Census partners; distributed and promoted Census signage and materials in APS schools; worked through APS parent ambassadors, PTAs, and Bilingual Family Liaisons to reach all families; organized Census information tables at several major events; and utilized School Talk, APS newsletters, social media and other platforms to share Census messages.

Additionally, during the ramp up to key Census dates, APS produced and shared a [video highlighting Statistics in Schools](#) showing a teacher actively engaged with her class in Census lessons to encourage more Census awareness and participation. The School Board regularly promoted the Census through messages in Spanish regarding the safety of completing the Census, as well as ongoing messages about the importance and value of the Census to ensuring funding and support for schools.



## **I. PLANNING (April – July 2019)**

- Drafted and shared APS Census 2020 Communications and Schools Action Plan and Timeline
- Registered APS as an official Census 2020 Partner and recruited 26 individual schools to register as Census Partners
- Shared initial Census launch information with families via APS social media platforms, newsletters, and school events in April/May
- Displayed Census 2020 posters at the APS Welcome Center in the Syphax Education Center lobby and School Board Room
- Engaged with Arlington County Council of Parent Teacher Associations (CCPTA) to secure participation throughout the year in connecting with families
- Linked County’s Census webpage on APS Website under [Quicklinks](#)
- Included Census updates and information in Superintendent announcements and presented to Executive Leadership Team
- Participated in the Arlington County Fair Census Campaign, staffing an APS booth within the “Arlington Learns” cluster
- Provided space for Census tables at the 2019 Administrative Conference and included Census messages in leader remarks to APS leaders in attendance.
- Wove Census messages and resources into the APS Preservice schedule for teachers and included a Census table at Festival of the Minds
- Included Census messages in School Board Meeting remarks by School Board Chair Tannia Talento and Vice Chair Dr. Barbara Kanninen, noting the Census 2020 process, key dates, partnership, and inclusion in APS curriculum
- Included Census message at ongoing Engage 101 and ParentVUE workshops with parents
- Staffed in-person bilingual Census kiosk in front of AFAC (July 16)

## **II. SCHOOL KICK OFF AND MOBILIZING (August – September 2019)**

- Sent immigration letter to all APS families reiterating that schools are safe spaces, and included the importance of the Census count aimed at Arlington’s immigrant community
- Coordinated targeted media for School Board Chair Tannia Talento
- Delivered Census posters/signage to all APS school buildings to help familiarize students and families with the Census effort
- Conducted outreach to school-based Bilingual Family Liaisons for them to share with limited-English speaking families
- Shared curriculum tips and links at the start of each unit in Social Studies

- Shared Census resources with other DTL supervisors so they could also share Census messages with their content teachers
- SCR and County partnered to present Census information at Administrative Council

### **III. EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-BUILDING (October – December 2019)**

- Encouraged schools to sign up as Census partners and designated a Census point person at each school who could post posters and share information with staff.
- Shared Census information with APS school parent ambassadors

#### **Events with Census presence:**

- APS College Fair - October 15
- Middle School Information Night - October 28
- High School Information Night - November 4

### **IV. AWARENESS LEADING TO CENSUS DAY 2020 (January – March 2020)**

- SCR increased communications to families using all APS communications tools, including School Talk, Peachjar, texting, voicemail, social media, and face-to-face communications to encourage families to fill out the Census
- Inquired whether schools could open their computer labs to allow parents to respond to the Census online at their child's school
- Unfortunately, Census Palooza events scheduled to take place in person at schools were canceled after the mandated closing of schools due to the coronavirus pandemic

### **APRIL 1 – CENSUS DAY OBSERVED**

Post April 1, continued to encourage families who had not done so to complete the Census.

- Alerted families that those who do not complete the Census in a timely manner can expect a Census enumerator to knock at their door
- Families continued to receive reminders by email through SchoolTalk and Friday 5 until the extended deadline in Fall 2020