

Lessons Learned and Considerations for 2030

Administration and Management

Interdepartmental Core Staff Team: With the support of the County Manager and Department heads, pulling together an interdepartmental team to form a core staff team was essential for organizing this countywide effort. The core staff team allowed for direct access to County programs and facilities. This team was dedicated to staffing all work of the CCC, managing and implementing all of the activities, communications, programming and other needs to ensure a complete count. In addition, there was a great benefit in having this team co-led by the Assistant County Manager for Communications and Public Engagement and the Demographer from Community Planning, Housing and Development.

Consideration for 2030: Develop a core staff team with 5-7 members starting in Fall 2028. The first duties of the core staff team should be self-education on the 2030 Census, developing branding for Arlington promotions, and recommending members of the CCC.

Dedicated Funding in Budget: Financial support is essential for conducting a complete outreach campaign to touch every resident. The County Manager dedicated \$100,000 for the 2020 Census effort for the purposes of public education and awareness which was instrumental for materials, printing, translation, educational materials, signage, outreach events and more.

Consideration for 2030: Secure dedicated funding (\$100,000) for use from January 2029 – October 2030.

County Board and School Board Liaisons: Members of the County Board and School Board were instrumental in serving as key ambassadors and providing high level leadership throughout the 2020 Census season.

Consideration for 2030: Appoint a representative from the County Board and School Board to work with the CCC and further the Census messaging throughout the community.

CCC and Partnership

Complete Count Committee: The Census 2020 Complete Count Committee was one of the most diverse committees in Arlington County history, with residents representing diverse experiences, backgrounds, race, ethnicity, ages, housing types, and geography. This diversity furthered the reach of the Census 2020 messaging into the hard-to-count populations.

Consideration for 2030: Develop a Manager-appointed CCC with influential Arlington residents who represent the hard-to-count population.

CCC Grass Roots Campaign: The CCC kicked off on April 1, 2019, and worked for an 18-month period, meeting monthly to develop and implement an outreach strategy. In the spring and early summer of 2019, the CCC went through several meetings for education on the Census. During the summer and fall, the CCC developed an outreach strategy to target the hard-to-count populations, while simultaneously volunteering at events to promote the Census. Starting the CCC one year earlier than the actual Census began provided a long lead time for organization, planning, partner recruitment and training before beginning public awareness and education.

Consideration for 2030: Start CCC operations one year from the count with the phases of education, grass roots campaign development and campaign implementation.

Arlington Census Partners: Part of the CCC grass roots campaign was to recruit Arlington Census Partners to pass along the messaging of the Census throughout their network. The CCC recruited hundreds of Census partners that included nonprofit organizations, businesses, community organizations, civic associations, the faith community, and others who were trusted advisors and connectors to some of Arlington's hardest to count residents. County staff led Census educational trainings with partners and produced weekly newsletters to keep partners engaged.

Consideration for 2030: Establish an Arlington Census Partners program that begins at the Census Kickoff and continue to add partners throughout the engagement process.

Partner with Census Bureau: The U.S. Census Bureau provides support to local jurisdictions and CCCs through Partnership Specialists who provide a link between the Census Bureau and County operations.

Consideration for 2030: Establish a relationship with the local Partnership Specialists and include them in CCC meetings, planning, and outreach.

Communications and Outreach:

Outreach Schedule: Arlington's outreach campaign was divided into three areas: Public Awareness (Fall 2019), Public Education (Winter 2020), and Be Counted (Spring 2020). This schedule worked well and followed the official schedule from the Census Bureau. Census 2020 outreach was added to previously planned events which allowed for deep reach into hard-to-count communities. Throughout the campaign, County staff evaluated the current operations and made changes when necessary. For example, during COVID-19, a poster was created with a large QR code which allowed for social distancing while capturing the link to the online 2020 Census questionnaire.

Consideration for 2030: Establish a timeline for the campaign that allows for public awareness, education, and be counted operations. Weave Census education and promotions into previously planned events. Remain flexible to adjust operations to reach the hard-to-count communities.

Arlington 2020 Census Branding and Materials: It was important to develop a look and feel of outreach materials that are similar to the Census Bureau promotions but have an Arlington focus. Logo, slogan and Arlington-centric materials were essential to promoting the 2020 Census in Arlington. The Census Bureau continued to release factsheets, graphics, and other publications throughout the year leading up to the Census. Arlington developed an online toolkit which allowed anyone to access and distribute the materials.

Consideration for 2030: Develop an online toolkit that has graphics, talking points, newsletters, videos, and links to Census Bureau materials.

Census in Schools: Arlington Public Schools were part of the CCC and partners that interweaved Census messaging into the curriculum, lesson plans, letters to parents, events, and much more. APS provided a critical link to families with young children and those that spoke languages other than English at home.

Consideration for 2030: Partner with APS in early 2029, and work with them to integrate the Census in Schools program.

Language Translation and Interpretation: Arlington's diverse community required that materials, such as the palm card, be translated into a range of languages. County staff relied on members of the CCC and professional translation services to translate materials. All Census-related news articles released by Arlington were translated into Spanish. Interpreters that spoke Spanish and Arabic were contracted for in-person events.

Consideration for 2030: Secure funding for translation and interpretation services and determine the most needed languages for translation.

