



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FAYETTE COUNTY 2020 CENSUS UNDER WAY

Uniontown, PA – Fayette County recently received a \$10,000 grant to support its efforts in promoting the 2020 Census, which officially begins today.

Awarded by the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development, the grant is intended to assist the Fayette County Commissioners and Census Complete Count Committee in bolstering outreach and advertising strategies for hard-to-reach citizens in our communities.

Last year, commissioners formed the committee, which has been tasked with promoting the Census' importance and ensuring all goals are met by the end of the Census cycle.

As mandated by the U.S. Constitution, the nationwide Census, an official recording of the country's population, is conducted via a distributed survey form every 10 years.

The Census allows federal, state and local governments to conduct fair redistricting, provides statistical support for grant applications, helps communities plan for future needs and more.

According to state Department of Community and Economic Development Secretary Dennis Davin, every citizen not counted is equivalent to a \$2,100 deduction from the overall funding earmarked for Fayette County.

Chief Community Development Specialist Art Cappella of the Fayette County Office of Planning, Zoning and Community Development said county officials are "concerned about undercounting citizens."

"Therefore, implementing an outreach strategy is a key component to our approach," Cappella said, adding brochures and posters distributed throughout the county, especially in high-traffic areas; potential newspaper advertising and public service announcements will be part of those efforts.

Cappella said the committee plans to host community events in April and May to spread Census awareness. However, no details of those events have been finalized, due to the unexpected outbreak of the worldwide Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

As of Tuesday, Fayette County had 14 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Commissioners have been working closely with local, state and federal officials to take all necessary precautions to mitigate the virus' potential spread.

Fayette County is closely adhering to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's pandemic guidelines. However, COVID-19 has affected both commercial and government operations on an international level, including Pennsylvania's primary election - which has been postponed until June 2 - and the upcoming Census.

While those completing their Census forms by mail or online should not be affected, the U.S. Census Bureau has postponed all field work and follow-up canvassing activity for the foreseeable future.

Cappella said both local and federal officials hope to fulfill all requirements in delivering the 2020 count on time, while protecting citizens' health and safety. He encouraged all citizens to take the Census survey online, if possible.

"Completing the Census online is easy, trouble-free, safe, secure and confidential. Your information and privacy are protected," Cappella said. "It's also the least expensive way to respond to the survey, because it helps conserve paper."

Fayette County benefits the most when the Census count is accurate, because our communities then receive their fair share of more than \$675 billion in annual federal funding, Cappella added. That funding benefits schools, hospitals, roadways, public works, agriculture and other vital programs.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, commissioners urge citizens to participate in the 2020 Census, as that funding is more vital now than ever before. Fayette County remains in a state of emergency and updates will be issued when available.

To complete the 2020 Census online or for more information, visit www.2020census.gov.

For more information on the Coronavirus, including symptoms, treatments and outbreak updates, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov. For regular updates, visit www.facebook.com/fcema911 or www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/Pages/Coronavirus.aspx.

To learn more about Fayette County, visit www.FayetteCountyPA.org.

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