



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FAYETTE COUNTY IMPROVES STATE CENSUS RANKING**

**Uniontown, PA** – Fayette County is now ranked 27<sup>th</sup> in population out of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties, according to 2020 Census results.

County officials received Fayette’s final statistics data in September and have been working with state legislators to finalize Census requirements heading into 2022. Fayette ranked 28<sup>th</sup> after the 2010 Census, which Fayette County Chief Community Development Specialist Art Cappella said demonstrates the various shifts in state population demographics.

“Pennsylvania’s population rose 2.4 percent between 2010 and 2020. Our county population dropped from over 136,000 to just below 129,000 over the course of that decade, yet we were still able to improve on our ranking,” Cappella said. “That tells us that, while people may be moving away from rural areas, the state’s overall population is growing every year, leaving us optimistic for future growth.”

Cappella also noted that neighboring Allegheny County ranked second overall, just behind Philadelphia County, with just over 1.25 million citizens.

“Having Allegheny County to our north also gives us an advantage as we look ahead to 2030,” he said. “Growth in Allegheny’s more densely populated urban areas tends to stimulate growth throughout the entire southwestern Pennsylvania region, including here in Fayette.”

According to federal data, the Census guides an average of \$30 billion to Pennsylvania annually, with counties standing to receive an average of \$2,100 per person. Some federal programs that use population and income data as factors when determining funding allocations include:

- Medicaid
- Unemployment insurance
- Highway planning and construction
- Supplemental nutrition assistance
- Temporary assistance for needy families
- Federal pell grant program
- Title 1 grants for local educational agencies
- Special education grants to states
- National school lunch program
- Headstart
- And many more!

Fayette County is currently a fourth-class county. Due to the temporary change in Census regulations, which temporarily halts any changes in county class rankings unless formally accepted via passing of

county resolutions due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Fayette County will remain a fourth-class county until the next Census in 2030.

Fayette County Commissioner Scott Dunn said maintaining the fourth-class county status is “vital,” as it affects operations, state and federal funding.

“The Census results help determine how much money not only county government will receive through this decade; it also impacts things such as school lunches, plans for highways, public transit, support for firefighters, families in need and so on,” Dunn said. “Fayette County is growing and fast becoming an area of interest to many. It’s our hope that our Census results will be a marketing tool in our pursuit of economic development, tourism, health and education services that can only improve the quality of life already experienced here in our area.”

Commissioner Vince Vicites praised the U.S. Census Bureau and the Fayette County Complete Count Committee for their hard work and dedication to ensuring an accurate count, despite the challenges of the pandemic.

“I don’t think the pandemic helped our chances of reaching all of our Census goals, but we’re proud of the progress and growth we’re seeing every day,” Vicites said. “It’s time to start looking to 2030 so we can keep moving Fayette County forward.”

Commissioner Chairman Dave Lohr said getting an accurate count “always presents a challenge,” and doing that during a pandemic increases that challenge “exponentially.”

“That being said, I want to thank those who worked hard to ensure that our count was as accurate as possible, and I especially want to thank everyone who ‘stood up’ to be counted. It’s so important that everyone be counted, because our population figures affect so many things that affect quality of life in Fayette County,” Lohr said. “Census figures also help businesses to decide where to build factories, offices and stores, while developers use Census data to plan new neighborhoods and revitalize old ones. All of this benefits the area by creating local jobs and fueling the local economy.”

Cappella said a variety of efforts are already under way to promote Census participation for 2030, including the creation of a Statistics in Schools Ambassador Program. Spearheaded by Albert Gallatin School District Superintendent Phil Savini, the program aims to spread awareness among youth in our school districts by teaching students about the importance of the U.S. Census between survey years.

“The program is designed to help us leverage the reach of our 2020 Census and improve on it for 2030 by getting kids excited to participate and, hopefully, take the information home to their families,” Cappella said.

For more information about the Census and Fayette County’s results, visit [www.census.gov](http://www.census.gov).

To learn more about Fayette County, visit [www.FayetteCountyPA.org](http://www.FayetteCountyPA.org).

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For more information, contact Kristi Rooker Kassimer, Public Relations Specialist, at 412-691-0262, [kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info](mailto:kkassimer@fayettecountypa.info) or Kaylie Moore, Community Relations Coordinator, at 724-430-1200 Ext. 1611, [kmoore@fayettepa.org](mailto:kmoore@fayettepa.org).