

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

DATE: APRIL 6, 2009

TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF THE CITY COUNCIL

FROM: JAMES K. HARTMANN, CITY MANAGER

SUBJECT: BUDGET MEMO # 78: FUNDING COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE FOR THE 2010 CENSUS

In a separate docket item for the March 24, 2009 City Council meeting, staff recommended that the City Council approve a resolution establishing a "Complete Count Committee" for the 2010 Census Council approved this recommendation. The U.S. Bureau of the Census requests that local governments establish these committees to encourage local residents to participate in the census. Staff recommended establishing Alexandria's Complete Count Committee because of the Census Bureau's request and because the City has been undercounted in the past.

Meaningful funding from the Census Bureau for the work of a complete count committee cannot be expected since, at this time, the U.S. Census for 2010 is seriously underfunded. The Washington Post recently reported that the "Census Bureau plans to cut spending on advertising and community outreach by at least a fourth compared with the 2000 census." The Post also reported that "congressional staffers said increasing the bureau's marketing budget would prove a tall order in the current economic climate." In an editorial on December 4, 2008, The New York Times also noted that the then current administration had "shortchanged and delayed financing for the Census."

Currently the regional Census office in Charlotte indicates that all that may be expected from the U.S. Census Bureau in terms of financial support is a dollar amount of not more than \$2,499 for a specific purchase by Alexandria's Complete Count Committee. This is the same amount that the Census Bureau provided in 2000.

For the 2000 Census, City Council provided a budget of \$25,000 for the Complete Count Committee. In 2000, printed materials included 35,000 postcards mailed to households that were statistically least likely to respond and 20,000 copies of education materials (in comic book format) for Alexandria school children. There were also some minor expenses associated with

several public events around the city to raise awareness about the importance of the Census to Alexandria. The following chart details the 2000 expenses as well as 2010 estimated expenses, should the City decide to fund additional outreach.

2000		2010	
\$8,050	Printed Materials	\$16,100	(2 times the previous cost of printed materials)
\$12,435	Outreach/Education	\$9,950	(Anticipated cost based on different marketing plan)
\$4,515	Postage	\$3,950	(Only one mailing; cost increased by 75% to reflect the cost of postage and greater number in mailing)
\$25,000		\$30,000	

Since the 2010 Complete Count Committee has yet to be appointed, a work program has not yet been developed. The Committee's projects may include programs similar to those of 2000, but should rely less on printed materials and more on electronic communications. For instance, this program might include new technology such as YouTube which would be effective in reaching younger people and is free. Not all of the City's 2010 Complete Count Committee's activities can be expected to be free, which means that once the Committee is appointed it will need funding. A targeted work program must be developed that fits a budgeted amount since at the moment there is no work program to price. Given the City's difficult fiscal situation, as well as the importance of an accurate census count, \$30,000 could be considered for inclusion in City Council contingent reserves for FY 2010. Up to this amount would be released by City Council once an acceptable work program is developed by the Complete Count Committee and approved by City Council. Council could fund this contingent reserves designation by redirecting a portion of FY 2009 contingent reserves that will be carried forward into FY 2010.

Attachment: Complete Count Committee activities – 2000 U.S. Census

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Major Public Events:

1. Landmark Mall, Center Court, February 20, Census awareness information and activities for adults and children
2. Potomac Yard at north end, March 11, Census awareness information and activities for adults and children
3. League of Women Voters unit meeting on Census 2000, February 5 (committee co-sponsored with League of Women Voters)

Information Meetings:

1. Chamber of Commerce, breakfast, February 10
2. Chamber of Commerce reception, February 17
3. Chamber of Commerce workshop, March 7
4. Alexandria Technology luncheon, March 17
5. Holmes Run Association, March 2
6. Del Ray Civic Association, March 13
7. Lenox Place at Sunnyside Association, March 14
8. Wakefield Tarleton Civic Association, March 20
9. City Council community meeting at Cora Kelly, March 16
10. Mount Jefferson Civic Association, March 20
11. South Port, March 30
12. Religious, Charitable and social Service organizations subcommittee invited 250 groups to send representatives to its two Census briefing meetings in January and February
13. Delta Sigma Theta Census Forum, T.C. Williams, January 23
14. Census briefing for ministers, March 6
15. Briefing meetings with Hispanic Orientation and Education Program, Hopkins House, Inner City Civic Association, Bienvenidos and Seasons Condominium Association.

Presentation and Distribution of Census Awareness Materials

1. City Council Census 2000 Proclamation, February 22
2. Displays in George Washington Birthday parade, February 21
3. Displays in St. Patrick's Day parade, March 4
4. Census as in INOVA Alexandria Hospital newsletter, February
5. Census ad in Recreation Department newsletter mailed to all households, Fall, Winter and Spring
6. Census awareness material in Alexandria Redevelopment and Housing Authority newsletter
7. Census comic/coloring books sent home with elementary school, Head Start and pre-school students.
8. Census flyers distributed to secondary school students
9. T.C. Williams students produced and aired Census video
10. Presentation to T.C. Williams Project Discovery students
11. Census information mailed to 250 religious charitable and social service groups
12. Census comic/coloring books and posters distributed to health centers, recreation centers, stores and other target sites

13. Posters on Dash buses
14. Compagna Center materials for clients
15. Watergate at Landmark, four buildings, census materials for residents
16. Mark Winkler units, posters in laundry and recreation rooms
17. Mt. Vernon Laundromats, posters
18. Essex House, census brochures in mail slots
19. Mount Jefferson, brochures distributed door-to-door
20. Arlandria, distributed comic/coloring books, brochures and posters
21. Warwick Village, distributed census materials
22. Joan Gaskins, distributed census materials to clients
23. School Board candidates distributed census pencils
24. Presentation to City employee Senior Management Group
25. Presented Census Awareness facts on five-minute segment of Successful Aging program on Jones Cable TV
26. Jones Cable rebroadcasted the LWV and Successful Aging Census programs many times
27. Contractor mailed 35,000 Census Awareness post cards to target neighborhoods on April 4 to remind residents to return questionnaires
28. Sponsored advertisements in two Spanish language newspapers and on Africa-American newspaper requesting Alexandrians to cooperate with Census enumerators.