Next year marks the beginning of the Decennial Census, a constitutionally-mandated enumeration of the population of the United States. Enumeration activities will begin in March 2020 and are scheduled to be completed by the end of April 2020. A New Jersey Complete Count Commission has been established to develop, recommend, administer a census outreach strategy to encourage full participation in the 2020 Census. The Commission needs your help to ensure that everyone in your community is counted in 2020.

The decennial census count informs how the federal government distributes about $600 billion in funds annually for infrastructure, programs, and services. Census data determine how federal and state funding is allocated to communities, and decisions are made on matters of national and local importance based, in part, on census data and housing.

Census data also help determine how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives and is necessary for an accurate and fair redistricting of state legislative seats, county and municipal councils, and voting districts.

The 2020 count will be the first one to allow all households to respond online. Paper forms will still be available, and, for the first time, 1-800 numbers will be available to give responses over the phone.

To make sure that New Jersey is completely and accurately counted in 2020, all municipalities are strongly encouraged to:

- Issue a governing body resolution or proclamation in support of Census 2020 complete count efforts. A sample resolution is available in the attachment

- Engage with neighborhood and community development organizations to spread the word about the Census, especially in hard-to-count areas

- Actively encourage residents to complete and mail back their census questionnaires

- Post information about Census 2020 on their municipal websites and on social media (if applicable). Information and materials can be found at the following sites:

  https://2020census.gov/en/partners/outreach-materials.html

  https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/surveyhelp.html

  https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-09/toolkit-state-local-officials.pdf

- Make residents aware of Census 2020 job opportunities:

  https://2020census.gov/en/jobs.html

  https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/factsheets/2019/dec/2020-job-opportunities.pdf

These activities are even more important in municipalities with at least one Census-designated hard-to-count area (census tract), listed in the attachment. 108 municipalities have at least one of these areas within their borders. These communities should strongly consider efforts to raise awareness of Census 2020 and encourage residents to participate in the Census.

Questions about New Jersey's complete count initiatives can be addressed to 609-777-2581.