



MeckCounts Communications Toolkit Speaker's Resources: Speech

Here is a 10-15-minute speech for addressing general audiences about the 2020 Census in Mecklenburg County. This is part of the MeckCounts 2020 Communications Toolkit, Speaker's Resources. Other items you might use from the Communications Toolkit include:

- *PowerPoint Deck*
- *Talking Points*
- *Elevator Speech*
- *Fact Sheet/FAQ handouts*

Speech [approximately 15-20 minutes]

Note: If you are using the accompanying presentation, we have made note of when you should advance the slides.

[Start with title slide]

Thank you for inviting me to speak to you today.

I am here to talk about the 2020 Census in Mecklenburg County. [advance slide]

First, I'd like to explain how the census and MeckCounts are related. The U.S. Census Bureau is the national organization that conducts the census, while MeckCounts 2020 is the local campaign to ensure that every resident of Mecklenburg County is counted in 2020.

It is led by the Mecklenburg County Complete Count Committee, a diverse group of community members working with individuals and organizations across the community to get the word out about the importance of the census. There are complete Count Committees around the state and the country working to do the same in their communities.

[advance slide]

The main points I want to get across today are that the census is required, important, convenient and SAFE.

[advance slide]

The census is a count of every resident of the United States, and it is only conducted once every 10 years.

It is required by the U.S. Constitution.

We only get once chance in a decade to get a complete count.

Many resources are dependent on the census, and I will give you some examples.

The more accurate the count, the more our community can benefit from these resources.

[advance slide]

The *first* way the census is important is tied to funding. [advance slide]

The U.S. Government distributes hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funds each year based on census data.

- In one year¹, North Carolina received nearly \$24 billion dollars through federal spending programs guided by census data.
- On a per-capita basis, this is more than \$2,000 dollars per North Carolina resident per year, or \$20,000 dollars per resident over a decade.

That's a BIG IMPACT!

Here's another way the census impacts funding our community.

[advance slide]

¹ This was in Fiscal year 2016. This footnote is just in case you get questions about this statistic.

Educational funding is tied to the census. The resources children need, including teachers, textbooks and other educational expenses, are supported by federal dollars distributed using census data.

For example, North Carolina received more than \$2.3 billion dollars² in one year for programs for students in pre-k through college.

[advance slide]

And smaller, but impactful, programs like the college access program Trio offered by Communities in Schools, are federally funded. Communities in Schools uses census data to determine target schools for the grant applications.

For example, student La'Mya Moffett participated in TriO as part of the class of 2019. She was also a Communities in Schools participant. As a result, La'Mya is a member of the first generation of her family to attend college. La'Mya was recognized by CMS as an Outstanding Senior in 2019, and received a renewable \$3,000 scholarship through Urban Promise. She is attending Fayetteville State University and is planning to study Computer Science or Aerospace Engineering.

[advance slide]

The second way the census is important is for planning.

Local organizations and businesses use census data to plan for the future. This impacts the quality of life in our community.

[advance slide]

For example, the Charlotte Area Transit System used census data to help redesign the entire bus network.

The result has been improved connections to employment, and better service to low-income populations.

[advance slide]

² This was in Fiscal year 2016. This footnote is just in case you get questions about this statistic.

Business owners large and small use census data to research their customers, to write and revise business plans, and to secure funding.

Here's an example: Atrium Health has opened 17 Urgent Care locations since the last census.

They used population estimates and demographic data derived from the census in their planning to determine where the new Urgent Care facilities should be located.

[advance slide]

Similarly, retail companies like grocery stores use census data to determine where their stores will be located, so they can reach the most customers.

German supermarket chain Lidl opened its first store in Charlotte in December, following in the footsteps of another discount supermarket chain, Aldi.

Nine of the 22 total stores that Lidl and Aldi have in the region are located in "food deserts," areas with low access to full-service grocery stores.

These food deserts are identified using USDA data linked to census information. Locating stores in these areas improves the quality of life for residents who now have access to healthier, more affordable food options.

[advance slide]

And it's not just large companies, it's small businesses too. Small businesses use census data to create business plans and secure funding.

[advance slide]

The third way the census is important is political representation.

Census data are used for drawing electoral districts at all levels of government.

[advance slide]

For example, our number of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives is based on census data.

North Carolina currently has 13 seats; we may gain an additional seat if the 2020 count is complete.

In 2010, the last census, North Carolina likely missed gaining a congressional seat by only 15,800 people.

With all of this at stake – federal funding; local planning for things like transportation, business and healthcare; education; and political representation – you can see why the census is so important for our community.

[advance slide]

The next point I want to make is that the census will be convenient. This is the first year that people can complete it online.

There will also be phone and paper options. Online and phone options will be in English and 12 other languages.

Print and video language guides will be in 59 languages including American Sign Language, braille, and large print guides.

[advance slide]

Finally, the census will be safe.

The U.S. Census Bureau will keep respondent information confidential and secure.

Responses will be protected by federal law. They will not be shared with other agencies.

Answers will only be used to produce statistics like the examples I gave you earlier.

For privacy reasons, individual responses will not be released for 72 years. That means your responses won't be available until 2092.

[advance slide]

So, how can people participate?

In March, people will begin receiving letters in the mail inviting them to complete the census online.

For a family of four it should take less than ten minutes.

[advance slide]

Here is page one of the sample census questionnaire. As you can see, the questions are easy to understand.

On page one you will be asked:

- **Your Name.** They ask for names to ensure everyone in the household is counted. This also helps them to keep ancestry records.
- **How many people are living or staying at your home.** The census asks this question to collect an accurate count of the number of people at each address on Census Day, April 1, 2020. Their goal is to count people once, only once, and in the right place according to where they live on Census Day.
- **Whether the home is owned or rented.** They ask about whether a home is owned or rented to create statistics about homeownership and renters. Homeownership rates serve as an indicator of the nation's economy and help in administering housing programs and informing planning decisions.
- **Phone number.** They ask for a phone number in case they need to contact you. They will never share your number and will only contact you if needed for official Census Bureau business.

[If you get specific questions about how to respond to certain questions, refer to the Speaker's Bootcamp FAQs.]

[advance slide]

On page two you will be asked:

- **Your sex.** They ask about the sex of each person to create statistics about males and females. Census data about sex is used in planning and funding government programs, and in evaluating other government programs and

policies to ensure they fairly and equitably serve the needs of males and females.

- **Your age and date of birth.** They ask about age and date of birth to understand the size and characteristics of different age groups and to present other data by age. Local, state, and federal agencies use age data to plan and fund government programs that provide assistance or services for specific age groups, such as children, working-age adults, women of childbearing age, or the older population.
- **Whether you are of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.** They ask about whether a person is of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin to create statistics about this ethnic group.
- **Your race.** They ask about a person's race to create statistics about race and to present other statistics by race groups.
- The data collected in both the previous questions is needed by federal agencies to monitor compliance with antidiscrimination provisions, such as the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act.
- **You will not be asked about your citizenship status.**

[advance slide]

On page three you will be asked the same questions about additional members of your household.

- The sex, age, date of birth and race of each person.
- Whether a person is of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin.
- The relationship of each person in your home.

After this, you will repeat the same information for each member of your household.

As a reminder, the census counts everyone – from newborns to the elderly. If they are in a household, they should be counted!

[advance slide]

You may have heard that Census Day is April 1. This is a key reference date for the 2020 Census.

When completing the census, you will include everyone living in your home on April 1.

[advance slide]

You may be wondering, what's next? Here's a simplified timeline of the census process over the next few months.

[advance slide]

As we work to ensure a complete count in 2020, we have worked to identify historically underrepresented populations. These are communities who were less likely to respond in the 2010 census. These are the communities where we need to focus our communication efforts so that we can have a complete count in 2020.

[You can read them or simply refer to the list on the slide.] They include young children, highly mobile persons, LGBTQ, racial and ethnic minorities, non-English speakers, lower income people, persons experiencing homelessness, undocumented immigrants and persons who distrust the government.

[advance slide]

Another way to identify communities that are less likely to respond is by neighborhood. Here is a map of response rates from 2010. The darker the color, the lower the response rate in 2010. Those are the areas that likely need the most outreach if we want to help increase the response rate in 2020.

On the next slide we will give you a list of the neighborhoods. If you would like a larger copy of this map, you can download it on our website, meckcounts2020.com.

[advance slide]

Here is the list of neighborhoods from the map, color coded in the same way, so you can see that the darker the color, the lower the response rate in 2010.

This data helps us to focus on areas that might need more focus and outreach. If you live, work, worship or have a social network in any of these neighborhoods, you can help increase the response by spreading the word there.

That doesn't mean that we will ignore the other neighborhoods. In the 2020 Census, everyone counts!

[advance slide]

We talked about spreading the word; here are some ways you can do that to help ensure a complete count in the 2020 census.

First, you can get creative!

Second, you can have a Conversation That Counts.

Third, you can help spread the word on social media.

Fourth, you can use our Communications Toolkit, available on the website.

[advance slide]

So as you think of ways to get creative and spread the word in these neighborhoods and throughout the rest of Mecklenburg County, here are some ideas of things that you can do.

Here are some examples from partners who have already stepped up. Johnson C. Smith has used our graphics on their digital board during football games, public service announcements during basketball games, video public service announcements during live streaming of games, and much more. They got all of those resources from our Communications toolkit.

Mecklenburg County has put giant banners on their parking decks and signs at the government center. They have put Census Screen savers on all of their computers and added the census logo and messaging to their employee email signatures.

The public library is distributing bookmarks in books at all of their locations.

This church has put a census message on their monument sign.

We hope this gives you ideas about what you can do to get the word out!

[advance slide]

Another way you can help is by having what we call a “Conversation That Counts.”

This is where you use our tools, and your influence, to help get the word out in as many ways as possible.

A Conversation That Counts could be a social media post, meeting or event. It could be written, verbal and/or visual. Here are some examples [refer to slide].

[advance slide]

Here’s some more information on how you can spread the word is on social media.

Follow our local campaign on social media today – and share information with your followers, friends and family.

You can find us at meckcounts2020 on all major social media, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

You can also find sample posts on our social media primer on our website.

[advance slide]

Speaking of our website, you can access our Communications Toolkit at meckcounts2020.com. We have materials in English and Spanish in a variety of formats – to print, to share digitally or to display.

[advance slide]

Thank you for your time and your interest in the census.

If you would like to contact our local Complete Count Committee, you can do so on our website or by emailing info@meckcounts2020.com.

Just remember that the census is **required, important, convenient and SAFE**. A complete count will help to improve our community in so many ways, including funding, planning and representation.

I hope you will join me and your fellow community members as we “Make it Count!” in 2020.

Together, we can help shape the future of Mecklenburg County!