

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL
OPERATIONS

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October 14, 2020
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HELD AT: Remote Hearing

B E F O R E: Fernando Cabrera
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Fernando Cabrera
Ben Kallos
Alan Maisel
Bill Perkins
Keith Powers
Ydanis Rodriguez
Kalman Yeger

A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Julie Menin
Director
NYC Census 2020

Alyson Tarek
Grants Program Director
NYC Census 2020

Amit Bagga
Deputy Director
NYC Census 2020

Kathleen Daniel
Field Director
NYC Census 2020

Joseph Salvo
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Gail Brewer
Madam Borough President

Susie Tanenbaum
Director of Immigrant and Intercultural
Affairs for the Queens Borough President

Jeff Baylor
New York Regional Director

United States Census Bureau

Jin Hu Bae
Public Library Systems

Jay Brandon
Public Library Systems

Iman Powe-Maynard
Public Library Systems

Mita Anand

Winnie Chin

Howard Chi

Katie Lowenberger

Lana Cohen

Elizabeth Angeles

Julio Rivera

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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS MARTINEZ: Good morning,
3 I mean good afternoon, and welcome to today's remote
4 New York City Council hearing of the Committee on
5 Governmental Operations. At this time would all
6 panelists please turn on their video. To minimize
7 disruption, please place electronic devices on
8 vibrate or silent mode. If you wish to submit
9 testimony you may do so via email at
10 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again,
11 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your
12 cooperation. We're ready to begin.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Today's meeting
14 comes to order. Let me gavel it in [gavel]. Good
15 afternoon. I am Council Member Fernando Cabrera,
16 chair of the Committee on Governmental Operations. I
17 want to start off by thanking the cochairs of the
18 Council Census Task Force, Council Members Carlos
19 Menchaca and Carlina Rivera, for their leadership of
20 making sure that every New Yorker gets counted.
21 Thank you so much. You did a marvelous, marvelous
22 job. And a special thank you to the dedicated
23 advocates with us today who have worked so hard for
24 over a year now to make sure New York gets a complete
25 count, especially under the circumstances we are

1
2 working with. I want to acknowledge that we had been
3 joined by Council Members Menchaca, Rivera, Kallos,
4 myself, and Perkins. Yesterday's Supreme Court
5 decision was extremely disappointing, disappointing.
6 Until yesterday we had until October 31 to get a
7 complete count for New York City. Now thanks to the
8 Trump administration that is determined to rush the
9 census count at all costs, the count will end on
10 Friday at 6:00 a.m. That means New Yorkers still
11 have over 24 hours to respond. This is a setback.
12 Let me say that again. This is a setback, but the
13 fight isn't over yet. We have made remarkable
14 progress in raising our count this summer and fall,
15 despite having an in-person outreach plans turn out
16 upside down by the global pandemic. As of now our
17 response rate is a little over 61%, which is only a
18 little over 5 points behind the national rate. In
19 2010 there was a 14-point gap between the city and
20 the national rate, so we should acknowledge that
21 remarkable success in closing the gap. But a 60, let
22 me be clear, but a 61% response rate is still too
23 low. We can do better and we have some time. I'm
24 calling everyone who is watching right now. Go on
25 social media right now. I want you to alert people.

1
2 Most people do not know we only have until Friday,
3 Friday at 6:00 a.m., ah, so let's do this last, let's
4 make a, a wave, ah, a buzz, let's create some buzz
5 to, to get more people, ah, to, ah, fill, ah, their
6 census. It is true the circumstances today are
7 different and more challenging than a decade ago
8 [inaudible]. The online census form went live in
9 March. Our city became an epicenter of an ongoing
10 global pandemic and we remain in a state of crisis as
11 we are witnessing signs of a second wave. We saw
12 COVID-19 ravage parts of our community, community
13 that were largely vulnerable and lower resources.
14 This is the backdrop of today's call to action, and
15 we need a complete count of every single New Yorker
16 because we need to make sure that our city receives
17 the resources it needs to address the current crisis
18 and future wants over the next 10 years. The census
19 data are used to calculate federal and state funding
20 allocations, not only for health care but for also
21 schools, SNAP, housing, roads, and other critical
22 safety nets, net programs and infrastructure. The
23 first thing we must do in our fight for federal
24 resources is to complete census count, a, a complete
25 census count. I'd also like to call attention to the

1
2 upcoming presidential election, because the census is
3 critical here, too. First I want to make sure
4 everyone listening has a plan to vote. The census
5 count determines how many seats New York gets in
6 Congress and it impacts state and local redistricting
7 as well. New York City could lose up to two
8 congressional seats if we are undercounted in the
9 2020 census. I'm sure my colleagues have even more
10 to add. So before I hand it over to them, I want to
11 thank the staff that had made it possible, this
12 hearing possible. My committee staff, committee
13 counsel CJ Murray, senior policy analyst Emily
14 Forjone and Elizabeth Cronk, senior finance analyst
15 Sebastian Bocci, and committee liaison John Lasko.
16 My legislative and communications director Claire
17 Michael Vee, and the rest of the census staff, task
18 force staff, including finance analyst Lou Sargelli,
19 unit head Cheema Ovishary, and Anthony Perez, deputy
20 chief of staff to the speaker. Thank you to our, our
21 data team, senior data analyst Rose Martinez, and
22 data scientist Rachel Alexandroff. Big thanks to you
23 as well as to the team of staff across the
24 legislative division who are working behind the
25 scenes to make this hearing run smoothly. I will now

1
2 turn it over to the 2020 Census Task Force cochair,
3 Council Member Carlina Rivera, for a statement.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you so, so
5 much, ah, Chair Cabrera. Good afternoon, everyone.

6 I am Council Member Carlina Rivera, cochair of the
7 New York City Council's Census Task Force. I want to
8 thank Chair Cabrera for holding today's important
9 hearing. It's been said before, but it bears
10 repeating. Getting a complete count in the 2020
11 census is absolutely critical to our city's future,
12 especially with what we expect to be a long recovery
13 from the COVID-19 crisis. The Supreme Court just
14 allowed the Trump administration to shorten the count
15 yet again. This blatant effort to exclude immigrants
16 from the census count could lead to an accurate, an
17 inaccurate count that could negatively affect New
18 Yorkers for a decade. The count ends on Friday at
19 6:00 a.m. It is urgent that we count as many New
20 Yorkers as possible in the little time we have left.
21 As we all know, the city is in the midst of a severe
22 budget crisis. So I want to get some facts straight
23 about the importance of the census to our city. In
24 fiscal year 2017 an estimated 121 billion dollars in
25 federal funds flowed to New York State based on the

1 decennial census-derived data. Our finance division
2 estimated that pre-pandemic 9% of our city budget, or
3 8 billion dollars, came from federal funding. I know
4 many of my constituents rely on the programs that
5 these funds support, such as Medicare, Medicaid,
6 SNAP, Section 8 housing vouchers, education grants,
7 and more. Not to mention that we all benefit from
8 federal investments in infrastructure, like our
9 roads. Last year we secured 40 million dollars for
10 census work in the city's budget in collaboration
11 with the mayor's office and CUNY because we knew it
12 was necessary investment in the future of our city.
13 Today we're checking in on that investment. The last
14 six months have threatened to derail our momentum,
15 but we have not given up. We have many, many
16 partners and stakeholders who share our vision of a
17 complete count. We have a little over 24 hours to
18 count as many New Yorkers as possible. The stakes
19 couldn't be higher. We look forward to hearing on
20 the incredible ways in which grassroots efforts by
21 local leaders, community-based organizations, the
22 mayor's office, the borough presidents, libraries,
23 unions, faith leaders, the business community, and
24 others have stepped up to bolster the work of our
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2 partners at the US Census Bureau in the midst of a
3 truly unprecedented global health crisis. Thank you
4 to my chair, Council Member Menchaca, for his fierce
5 commitment to this initiative. I'm proud to have
6 worked with you on this once-in-a-decade opportunity
7 to ensure that our city gets the resources that it
8 deserves. Thank you also to Speaker Johnson for
9 putting the council's 2020 Census Task Force
10 together, to the Government Operations Committee
11 staff for planning this hearing, to the task force
12 staff for their consistent efforts to ensure a
13 complete count for New York City this past year, and,
14 of course, to my whole entire team for their support.
15 Not only did we make sure that we were accurate in
16 our messaging and reaching people and collaborating
17 with credible messengers and community-based
18 organizations that have done this work for a very,
19 very long time, but we were out in the streets very
20 responsibly, making sure that we were reaching people
21 to let them know how important this effort is. Thank
22 you so much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
24 and I will now turn it over to the 2020 Census Task
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1 Force 2020 Census Task Force cochair, Council Member
2 Carlos Menchaca, for a statement.

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4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you,
5 Chair Cabrera, and buenos tardes everyone. I'm
6 Carlos Menchaca. I'm the cochair of the New York
7 City Council's committee on, um, the task force for
8 the census. And I just want to say thank you to all
9 the incredible staff at the council, whether you work
10 for one of the chairs, cochairs, or at central staff,
11 I, I just felt like every, every left and right turn
12 we, we made we were supported by you in these moments
13 of [inaudible] and information out into our, into our
14 communities. Ah, none of this could have happened
15 without, without you. And there's so much that's
16 happening with the, ah, the administration, and so I
17 want to thank the, the team on the ground, and we saw
18 you, ah, whether you were hold, um, a pamphlet, ah,
19 or, or a microphone, or dancing on a truck. Ah, we
20 saw you, and, and I think there's a lot to celebrate
21 as we get here. But we're gonna be asking some
22 questions about how and what happened and what we can
23 do in the next few hours, ah, to ensure that we can
24 get the, the best count. Um, this work couldn't have
25 happened either if the City Council didn't commit the

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2 incredible funding. And so I want to thank Speaker
3 Johnson and Finance Chair Dromm and [inaudible], ah,
4 for never ever saying no to this from the very
5 beginning. And I know it was a big surprise to bring
6 that funding. Ah, so we want to look at what that
7 funding did. Ah, today we are witnessing the
8 devastation that chronic under-resourcing and
9 systemic racism can wreck on our communities. It's
10 no surprise that black and brown communities,
11 including immigrants, have been hardest hit by the
12 COVID pandemic. They have had to fight for
13 recognition of their inherent worth in society for
14 far too long. When a crisis like this happens we
15 face, ah, we face this disadvantage. Ah, worse
16 health outcomes happen. We, ah, we get to compare
17 what happens in immigrant communities, black and
18 brown communities, with white communities. Those are
19 all things that we're talking about. And this summer
20 we have seen yet again that the Trump administration
21 tried to deny immigrants and cities where they live
22 the basic resource and presentation they're entitled
23 to. But trying to exclude undocumented immigrants
24 from population counts used for apportionment, the
25 president is saying immigrants don't matter. By

1 trying to shorten this census response timeline and
2 rush the count, the president is trying to sabotage
3 an accurate count for political gain. This is how
4 this administration works, a white supremacy-driven
5 institution. We must fight back by making sure that
6 every last New Yorker is counted, even if we just
7 have hours. The census is a great equalizing force
8 and you are counted no matter your age, county of
9 origin, ah, country of origin, race, ethnicity, the
10 language you speak, your sexual orientation, or any
11 other identity. And when you complete the census
12 form you are saying I am here and I count. New York
13 City as a diverse, as diverse as it is, is made up of
14 many historically undercounted populations, such as
15 African Americans, renters, limited English-
16 proficient individuals, and immigrants, ah, to name a
17 few. Knowing this, the city did secure that 40
18 million dollars and we are making that a
19 comprehensive reach into our neighborhoods. Almost
20 half of that funding was set aside for trusted
21 organizations throughout our city to do targeted
22 outreach. This became the complete count fund. The
23 last time we all met the [inaudible] have not yet
24 been announced. In December 2009, ah, 2019, 157
25

1 community-based organizations were selected through a
2 rigorous grant-making process to conduct targeted
3 census outreach. Those organizations spent the first
4 months of 2020 planning for the beginning of the
5 self-response, which was gonna happen in March. As
6 Chair Cabrera said, ah, the coronavirus already was
7 making its way through the city at that time, and
8 with New York on PAUSE the city and our census
9 partners have had to make creative adjustments to
10 those plans that they first developed. The need for
11 a complete count has not disappeared, ah, and so
12 we're making it evident with today's discussion. Ah,
13 we are incredibly thankful for our staff. I want to
14 give them one last shout-out, ah, but the final thing
15 I want to say is this. What we need to do right now
16 is figure out how we use every resource and even call
17 upon the state for the resources that we have yet to
18 see on the ground in our city and in our state, and
19 so where is that accountability? On the state and on
20 us as government to pull those resources down.
21 People are gonna be hustling in the next few days,
22 ah, until the 16th at 6:00 a.m. What are we doing to
23 fuel them to get that count? I'll leave it that.

1
2 Thank you, ah, to my hermana, Carlina Rivera, ah,
3 cochair, and to my hermano, ah, Chair Cabrera.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much
5 to both of the cochairs. I can't say enough of your
6 efforts, your leadership, ah, and you were up front
7 and, ah, on the cutting edge dealing with this issue.
8 So I salute, ah, both of you. Let me recognize that
9 we've been joined, ah, by Council Members Powers and
10 Yeger. And now I will turn it over to our moderator,
11 committee counsel CJ Murray, to go over some of the
12 procedure items.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair. I
14 am CJ Murray, counsel to the Committee on
15 Governmental Operations. Before we begin testimony,
16 I want to remind everyone that you will be on mute
17 until you are called on to testify, at which point
18 you will be unmuted by the host. I will be calling
19 on panelists to testify. Please listen for your name
20 to be called. The first panelist to give testimony
21 today will be representatives from the
22 administration, the Manhattan Borough President's
23 office, the Queens Borough President's office, the
24 United States Census Bureau, and the city's public
25 library systems. For the administration, testimony

1 will be provided by NYC Census 2020 director and
2 executive assistant corporation counsel, Julie Menin.

3 In addition, the following NYC Census 2020

4 representatives will be available to answer

5 questions: Deputy Director Amit Bagga, Field

6 Director Kathleen Daniel, and Grants Program Director

7 Alyson Grant Tarek. Also available to answer

8 questions for the administration will be Department

9 of Citywide Planning, Chief Demographer Joseph Salvo.

10 In addition, testimony will be provided by Manhattan

11 Borough President Gail Brewer and Director of

12 Immigrant and Intercultural Affairs for the Queens

13 Borough President Susie Tanenbaum. For the US Census

14 Bureau New York Regional Director Jeff Baylor will be

15 providing testimony. And for the public library

16 systems testimony will be provided by Jin Hu Bae from

17 the Queens Public Library, Jay Brandon from the New

18 York Public Library, Minnie Monpo Maynard from the

19 Brooklyn Public Library. I will call on you when it

20 is your turn to speak. During the hearing if a

21 council member would like to ask a question of the

22 administration or a specific panelist please use the

23 Zoom raise hand function and I will call on you in

24 order. We will be limiting council member questions

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2 to five minutes, which includes the time it takes the
3 panelist to answer your question. Please note that
4 for ease of this virtual hearing there will not be a
5 second round of questioning outside of questions from
6 the committee chairs. All hearing participants
7 should submit written testimony to
8 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Before we begin testimony
9 I will administer the oath. Director Menin, Deputy
10 Director Bagga, Field Director Daniel, Grants Program
11 Director Tarek, and Chief Demographer Salvo, please
12 raise your right hand. I will call on each of you
13 individually for a response. Do you affirm to tell
14 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
15 before this committee and to respond honestly to
16 council member questions? Director Menin?

17 DIRECTOR MENIN: I do.

18 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Deputy Director
19 Bagga?

20 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BAGGA: I do.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Field Director
22 Daniel?

23 FIELD DIRECTOR DANIEL: I do.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Grants Program
25 Director Tarek?

2 GRANTS PROGRAM DIRECTOR TAREK: I do.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Chief Demographer

4 Salvo?

5 CHIEF DEMOGRAPHER SALVO: I do.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I would
7 now like to invite NYC Census 2020 director, Julie
8 Menin, to testify. Director Menin, we ask that you
9 please summarize your written testimony which has
10 been added to the public record in full so as to
11 prioritize time for questions. You may begin with
12 ready.

13 DIRECTOR MENIN: OK, great. Thank you so
14 much. So first of all, I want to thank Chair Cabrera
15 and I want to thank the Census Task Force Cochairs
16 Rivera and Menchaca, and all the members of the
17 council here today. I'm Julie Menin, director of the
18 census and executive assistant corporation counsel of
19 the city law department. So in the interest of time
20 I will summarize. I want to say that obviously we
21 speak to you today under the very shameful and
22 maddening situation where the Supreme Court has cut
23 short the census by a full two weeks. Um, the
24 deadline, just to be clear, is at 6:00 a.m. eastern
25 standard time on October 16. So we literally have

1 two days to reach every New Yorker to let them know
2 that this deadline, ah, is indeed the, the true
3 deadline and we want to make sure to get every New
4 Yorker to respond. But I will say despite this
5 troubling decision and despite literally every single
6 obstacle being thrown at us, including be the
7 epicenter of the global pandemic, I'm incredibly
8 proud to share that our first, um, citywide effort of
9 its kind has, ah, achieved a response rate, and I'm
10 using yesterday's numbers 'cause we'll get new
11 numbers today, of 61.4%. So to put that into
12 context, that basically means we have met where we
13 were in 2010 when there was no global pandemic. We
14 beat the US Census Bureau's pre-COVID estimate. They
15 estimated before COVID that New York City would be at
16 58%. We beat that by 3.4 percentage points. And in
17 addition we've aggressively narrowed the gap to 5
18 points. We were 5 points behind the country. In
19 2010 we were 14 points behind the country. So that
20 is, um, significant progress and a true testament to
21 the citywide partners, all of the different
22 organizations, elected officials, the true
23 partnership that we had, um, and to New Yorkers as
24 well who responded. I do want to say to also put
25

1 this into context we are ahead of Los Angeles,
2 Chicago, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Atlanta, Orlando,
3 Miami, Detroit, Houston, Dallas, and so many other
4 cities. So it's really important to note that, um,
5 as well. So in terms of where we are, and, again,
6 I'm, I've submitted my full testimony, but in the
7 interest of time I want to be brief on this. Staten
8 Island currently holds the highest self-response rate
9 at 66.1%, ahead of its 2010 rate of 62. At 62.5%
10 Manhattan currently holds the second-highest rate.
11 It is lower than 2010 and it is lower than 2010 in
12 large part because some Manhattanites left, um, the
13 borough during COVID and did not fill out the census.
14 We work very closely with the Manhattan Borough
15 President's office, with the Board of Elections, and
16 we got absentee ballot information and we mailed
17 those individuals. We phone banked them. And we
18 sent text messages as well to reach out to them. Um,
19 before, ah, Queens is currently in third place with a
20 self-response rate of 62.3, ahead of its 2010 number.
21 Um, the Bronx is at 62% and Brooklyn is in fifth at
22 58.6. But I do want to note that Brooklyn now is
23 three full percentage points ahead of where it was in
24 2010. I'm really proud to, ah, report that a large
25

1 majority of black communities throughout New York
2 City are exceeding their 2010 performance. So that
3 is really important. I'm, I won't spend time going
4 through every single community. But certainly if we
5 look at Co-Op City in the Bronx, currently has a
6 self-response rate of 76%, nine points ahead of the
7 national average. So that's really something, um,
8 very significant as well. I want to talk for a
9 minute about some of the strategies that our team
10 employed, ah, post COVID. So one of the things that
11 we quickly had to do is when COVID hit we clawed back
12 1.3 million dollars from the signed contract we had
13 on subway ads. So we had a signed contract, but we
14 were able to get that money back and pour it into
15 digital and TV. We also, um, had procured before
16 COVID a text messaging system called Hustle. Our
17 team has sent 7.1 million text messages through
18 Hustle. We have a predictive dialer and we have
19 phone banked 3.1 million New Yorkers, and I think
20 that has made an enormous difference. We also moved
21 to building a new campaign to reach New York's many
22 immigrant communities. We created chat, um, chat
23 rooms both in What's App and Cako Talk and in We
24 Chat. We also worked with our Complete Count Fund,

1
2 um, where we had over 157 community groups that we
3 funded and we worked very closely with them and our
4 citywide partners to launch these chat groups in 15
5 different languages. Our whole advertising campaign,
6 so I'll talk for a minute about that. Um, we thought
7 it was so important to do our advertising campaign.
8 We had 34 different campaigns. We had everyone from
9 Cardi B to Alisha Keys in terms of celebrities. We
10 had Manuel Miranda. But then we also had local New
11 Yorkers really talking about what the census meant to
12 them. We advertised in 27 different languages. Um,
13 we also ran ads on 150 different websites. So we
14 think this was very important as well. Um, and I
15 think that the ads, ah, really resonated because one
16 of the things that we did with our digital ads is we
17 monitored them in real time and changed them out
18 quickly. So the ones that were resonating we kept on
19 longer. The ones that were not we quickly changed
20 them out. Our team has also been doing robocalls.
21 We've done robocalls with a number of different key
22 influencers. I'll mention one of them. We saw great
23 success with our [inaudible] with Congresswoman
24 Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. For a literally \$1000
25 investment we were able to reach almost 40,000

1 residents in, in the New York 14 district, um,
2 hundreds of which opted to be directly patched in. So
3 we did a direct patch through directly to the Census
4 Bureau so people could respond directly on the spot.
5 I do want to mention, um, that I believe it to be
6 true that we are probably the first and only
7 jurisdiction in the nation to ensure a nearly
8 complete count of residents experiencing homelessness
9 and we also believe that we are among the very few
10 cities to ensure complete count of all residents
11 living in public housing. The way we were able to do
12 that is we entered into an unprecedented legal
13 agreement with the Department of Social Services and
14 the Census Bureau so that, um, on the homelessness
15 issue we could make sure that the Department of
16 Social Services provided a complete accounting of all
17 of those in the shelter population to the bureau. I
18 can tell you that did not happen in 2010 and as a
19 result many in the homeless community were left
20 behind. We brokered a similar data transfer between
21 NYCHA and the Census Bureau. This is first of its
22 kind. We think this should honestly be a national
23 model that other cities should utilize. And we think
24 that this is incredibly important to make sure that
25

1
2 all of our residents in public housing were, um,
3 indeed counted and not left behind. Um, so then
4 again in the interest of time I will skip forward and
5 just talk a little bit about the work that we have
6 done with our partners. We had the most unbelievable
7 partners in this effort. I'm so proud of our
8 Complete Count Fund. As I mentioned, we quickly were
9 able to put in place a process to grant to 157
10 community organizations, as well as our citywide
11 partners, and these were trusted community voices on
12 the ground that we were able to work with. In
13 addition, we worked with one thousand houses of
14 worship. We worked with labor unions. We worked
15 with elected officials. We worked with community
16 leaders all across the City of New York about the
17 importance of the census. And I think you really
18 see, um, it's a testament to where we are as a city
19 in terms of census response, ah, numbers. So, um, I
20 will end on the note by saying that, look, we have
21 basically 48 hours to go. Every single minute in the
22 next two days counts. We don't want any New Yorker
23 to be left behind. While the [inaudible] numbers,
24 um, indicate that New York State as a whole is
25 approximately around 98%, um, again, we know that

1
2 the door knocking data is simply not as reliable as
3 self-response. So that is why our team has worked so
4 hard to get to the self-response number that we're
5 at, and that is why we're proud that we've been able
6 to close the differential in the nationwide
7 competition largely between the nation and New York
8 City versus 2010 and why we're very proud of the work
9 that we have done to, compared to other cities. So I
10 will end on that note, and of course we and my team
11 are happy to take any questions. Thank you.

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Director
13 Menin. Next we'll hear questions from Chair Cabrera,
14 followed by Council Member Rivera and then Council
15 Member Menchaca. Panelists, please stay unmuted if
16 possible during this question and answer period.
17 Chair Cabrera, please begin.

18 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
19 Um, I'm gonna be a bit unorthodox and I'm gonna, ah,
20 have, ah, the cochairs of the census, Council Member
21 Rivera and Menchaca, to go first. So with that, ah,
22 let me turn it over, ah, to Council Member Rivera,
23 one of the cochairs. Then I'll come back at the end.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you so
25 much, Chair Cabrera. Thank you, Julie. Thank you,

1 um, everyone who is here. I am, I'm really proud of,
2 of the work that we've done and I realize that this
3 was an unprecedented pivot. So I just want to ask a
4 few questions in terms of, ah, engagements and
5 pledges and, and some of the marketing material. So
6 I'll start there. So to date how many total
7 engagements, pledges, and completes have CCF awardees
8 reported to the administration?
9

10 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure. So I'm gonna have
11 Alyson Tarek, who ran my grants program, talk a
12 little about that.

13 GRANTS PROGRAM DIRECTOR TAREK: Thanks so
14 much, Julie, and thank you, um, Council Member. Um,
15 you know, it's been wonderful to be a part of this
16 entire, um, program and we are so thankful to the
17 City Council for your, um, significant contribution
18 to the Complete Count Fund. It would not have been
19 possible without you and we, um, are so happy to be
20 here today to speak about it. So thank you. Um, you
21 know, the, the Complete Count Fund program officially
22 ended just two weeks ago. So we are continuing, um,
23 to compile our, our final metrics and work with the
24 awardees as [inaudible] close out reports. Ah,
25 clearly, um, until yesterday we thought we'd be

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2 working with them, um, and getting those metrics
3 throughout the month. Um, now as we wind down these
4 next two days, um, we're continuing to support them,
5 um, as they do their civic engagement work. Um, but
6 I will say that preliminary indicators show, um, that
7 we are very confident of the success of the Complete
8 Count Fund. Um, many of them, um, use our van, um,
9 database, um, to report completes, um, and they also
10 reported what are, um, called soft completes, meaning
11 that they perhaps didn't get the name of the person
12 but they were able to say we spoke with 20 people who
13 said they completed the census today. So as we, um,
14 compile the data we will ensure the City Council
15 receives it, ah, by the end of the month. Um, but we
16 will say that, ah, we are really, um, pleased with
17 the work, um, as Director Menin said, it was 157
18 groups, um, it's in the hundreds of thousands, um,
19 and we're refining that data now and we'll be sure to
20 get it to you as soon as possible.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I understand, and
22 I'm just asking because I wonder, you know, sometimes
23 when I was out there trying to engage with people,
24 with the US Census Bureau, or with members of your
25 team, um, sometimes like getting a pledge card like

1
2 wasn't the easiest thing. So, you know, people still
3 wanted to participate for sure. So I just ask in
4 terms, I guess what I really want to know is what
5 were some of the most effective ways, um, that you
6 found, ah, outreach to be, to be successful. And
7 I'll give you one example. I'm very curious as to
8 maybe how we, ah, collaborated creatively. For
9 example, the Board of Elections and people requesting
10 absentee ballots.

11 GRANTS PROGRAM DIRECTOR TAREK: Yeah.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Were we able to
13 work with them in order to...

14 DIRECTOR MENIN: So I'm gonna, thank you
15 so much for that question. I'm gonna talk about the
16 Board of Elections. Because one of things that we
17 were really struck by, if you look at the Manhattan
18 numbers, if you look at the numbers on the Upper East
19 Side and midtown and SoHo and other parts of
20 Manhattan, they are lower than they were in 2010.
21 And so clearly we knew that there was a situation
22 where some, um, Manhattanites had left, um, Manhattan
23 and had either done one of two things. Either they
24 didn't fill the census out at all or they filled it
25 out from the location they were at, because the

1
2 census form talks about an April 1 deadline and where
3 you are, and we had heard anecdotally that many New
4 Yorkers, ah, did not fill it out correctly and filled
5 out from the second location that they were at. So
6 we worked with the Manhattan Borough President's
7 office. We went to the Board of Elections. We
8 requested the absentee ballot data and we did three
9 things with it. Ah, mailing to those individuals
10 about the urgency of the situation, telling them they
11 needed to fill it out as, ah, Manhattanites and if
12 they had erroneously filled it out they needed to go
13 online and correct it and fill it out as a
14 Manhattanites. Two, we phone banked them. And
15 three, we texted them. So we really did a tremendous
16 amount of outreach. And we did see the Manhattan
17 numbers start to move as a result of it. But it's
18 still a very stubborn problem. The other part of
19 your question is I think you were talking about what
20 outreach, um, methods we did find most efficacious.
21 And I will say um, we also ran a paid canvass
22 operation. And one of the reasons we did that is we
23 did not want to wait for the federal government to
24 start door knocking. Obviously during the height of
25 COVID we could not be out there having that kind of

1
2 in-person contact that normally we would. But as
3 soon as some of the restrictions started to lift mid,
4 um, summer we decided to bring our own paid canvass
5 operation, and that was highly effective, and I think
6 really moved the needle. And if you look at our
7 numbers and how New York City was actually ranked
8 number one in terms of movement of any major city
9 over the summer and I really attribute that to a lot
10 of the different outreach, ah, tactics, whether it's
11 the phone banking, the texting, or the paid
12 canvassing, we really started to see those numbers
13 move.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: So would you say
15 that's one of the most effective ways, and I
16 understand that the in-person canvassing to me is
17 super effective, right, and someone who has
18 campaigned on a, on a different issue, um, but
19 slightly related, um, I'm just trying to figure out
20 in terms of our investment and how we pivot, right.
21 You had a very, very large marketing budget. You
22 certainly were gonna utilize some of those tools.
23 For example, you used Hustle to send text messages.
24 Um, but how did you, I guess, also support those

1
2 community-based organizations who were going to be
3 very, very reliant on in-person outreach...

4 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: ...and who
6 suddenly kind of [inaudible] what they were doing.
7 And I ask because, just one second, I ask because,
8 um, a lot of them don't have a, a digital content
9 manager. You know, they don't have a robust social
10 media presence. And so you can do, ah, a thousand
11 robo, ah, you know, a robocall for a thousand dollars
12 and get 40,000 people reached. How many, you say
13 people were asked to be...

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: ...[inaudible]
16 patched in, um, to, to directly get their census
17 completed. So I ask, ah, I'm just asking, what was
18 the more, the most effective and how did you support
19 those community-based organizations, many of whom I
20 think are still awaiting the rest of their award?

21 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure, so, um...

22 UNIDENTIFIED: If I may.

23 DIRECTOR MENIN: Yeah, Alyson and Amit,
24 do you want to take that?

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: And, and, just,
3 the last thing I'll just say since I'm, I'm out of
4 time, is I wanted to know how, how you all determined
5 which absentee ballot requesters you sent census
6 flyers to, to remind them. I'm just wondering how
7 you [inaudible]. Thank you.

8 GRANTS PROGRAM DIRECTOR TAREK: Well,
9 I'll speak to the first part and then Director Menin
10 is the best one to speak to the, to the last
11 question, um, Council Member. Um, you know, ah, as
12 you said, um, the Complete Count Fund and the
13 community-based organizations, these are true
14 grassroots organizations. These are groups that had
15 budgets as an entity from anywhere from 50K, then
16 much larger ones, like in the millions, for instance,
17 helping, um, organizations like [inaudible]. Um, so
18 these organizations look to us. They, not all of
19 them had digital directors. Um, many, um, had to
20 [inaudible], um, with the pandemic. Um, just as we
21 shifted, um, our work, um, for our field team, um,
22 which Field Director Daniel I'm sure will speak to,
23 um, we also worked to provide support to each of our,
24 um, CBOs that we work with close. Um, you know, they
25 were, they went online. Um, we worked with them. We

1 provided them with amazing graphics and social media
2 tool kits that our digital team put together. Um, we
3 provided them in a multitude of languages, um, along
4 with ensuring that our CCF awardees were proofing,
5 ah, the languages, translations were correct, and
6 spoke to their communities. Ah, further, um, we
7 supported them, um, with providing, um, use of our
8 Google Meets and our Zoom to ensure they could do
9 virtual events. Um, many of them spoke on them. And
10 then as, um, we saw the city starting to reopen in
11 June we provided them with guidance to go back in
12 person. Some of them just, um, weren't capable or,
13 um, able to have their staff go out in the field.
14 But we did provide guidance. Um, we provided PPE.
15 Um, we provided, um, our own staff and volunteers to
16 ensure we could help them with tablets at their in-
17 person census outreach. Ah, and like you said, these
18 groups were not necessarily, um, digitally, um, you
19 know, ready to go on day one. But we provided a lot
20 of trainings. We provided a lot of online support.
21 Our data team provided a lot of technology support,
22 as did our citywide partners, ah, specifically the
23 NYIC. Um, we were able to ensure that our, um, CCF
24 awardees were able to use those virtual tools, um, to
25

1
2 get to all members of the community. They were able
3 to upload their own lists, um, contact their own list
4 and communities, um, memberships, clientele. Um,
5 when they do they got very, very high, um, response
6 rates. Um, also as they did their calls around
7 casework, um, they were able to check in on
8 individuals. How are you doing? How's your health?
9 Do you need food? Do you need A, B, or C. And, oh,
10 by the way, can you do the census? So really the
11 reason why the selection committee chose these
12 organizations is 'cause they are part of the
13 communities that they serve. They speak the
14 language. Um, they look like one another. They know
15 each other and they are known entities. They trust
16 each other, um, and that's why we think that the CCF,
17 um, as the metrics are coming together, um, we're
18 really proud of the work the Complete Count Fund has
19 done and I want to say that all the council members
20 and Chair Cabrera, you've all spoken to that as well,
21 that this partnership has been unique and, um, we
22 really provided the tools, ah, weekly, um, check-ins
23 with every organization and, and more regularly if
24 needed. Ah, so we really think that they were able
25 to take advantage of the virtual tools even if they

1
2 didn't have the expertise prior. And then we were
3 able to help them get out in the field once it was
4 safe.

5 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BAGGA: Um, um, to
6 quickly, to answer your last question. Um, in terms
7 of how we selected, um, who was gonna be contacted,
8 um, we were able to get from the Board of Elections,
9 ah, information about everyone who had requested an
10 absentee ballot, um, who was registered in the city
11 who had asked for a ballot for the June primary, but
12 asked for, um, an absentee ballot to be sent to them
13 outside of the five boroughs. So obviously we know
14 there were a lot of people who requested it who were
15 still here because they didn't want to actually go to
16 the polls, um, so we simply contacted everyone who
17 got a ballot outside of the five boroughs, but also
18 while still in the United States.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: [inaudible] much.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council
21 Member Rivera. I'll now turn it back to Chair
22 Cabrera, followed by Council Member Menchaca. Chair
23 Cabrera, please begin.

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
25 Ah, let me acknowledge that, let me acknowledge that

1 we've been joined also by Council Member Rodriguez.
2 Um, let me, ah, first, ah, Director Menin, thank you.
3 Thank you. You had to before you, ah, a task that
4 literally required a herculean effort, ah,
5 unprecedented. I don't know at any time in history,
6 US history, when a census was taking place that you
7 had to face what you face, ah, alongside with all the
8 advocates that had to do nearly the impossible and to
9 be able to end up, ah, with the results that we have,
10 we see so far, and I'm hopeful that in the next 24
11 hours, ah, we'll be able to move the needle. And
12 this is why I'm glad that we're doing this hearing
13 today and for all the members of the media please
14 help us out. Get the word out. Most people don't
15 know we have 24 hours. Matter of fact, ah, is there
16 any way possible that we could put forth a commercial
17 in the next 24 hours, I know it's the last minute, to
18 let people know what are some of the ways that, ah,
19 we could reach out to people, ah, to let them know
20 that the clock is ticking?

22 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure, so I'm, I'm happy
23 to address that. Um, in terms of putting out a TV
24 commercial that's not something, um, budget-wise,
25 that we would be able to do. Um, digitally we are

1
2 doing that. You know, we are able to use all of our
3 digital assets and digital resources. We have a
4 whole social media toolkit that went out the second
5 we had the new deadline. That's been disseminated
6 far and wide. We have reached out to numerous
7 members of the media. There's been a lot of media
8 attention in the last, ah, since the SCOTUS decision,
9 ah, last night, as well as today. So we are getting
10 the word out. And then obviously we're working with
11 all of our different citywide partners, you know,
12 whether they be labor, houses of worship, or our
13 grantees, um, really across the board.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. Thank
15 you so much. Ah, let me get to a few questions here
16 today. How many phone calls, I don't you, you
17 touched lightly on it, but if you could give me more
18 detail. Ah, to date how many phone calls were made
19 through virtual phone banking...

20 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: ...and you had the,
22 the dialer, too.

23 DIRECTOR MENIN: So, sure, we did
24 three...

25

2 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Ah, let me just
3 [inaudible] real quickly, ah, a battery of them so...

4 DIRECTOR MENIN: Oh, OK.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: ...we'll move
6 faster, ah, 'cause I'm looking for a lot of data.
7 How many unique individuals were reached via
8 telephone? Um, if you could provide a breakdown of
9 how many phone calls were made and individuals
10 reached by each entity? Ah, and in what language,
11 ah, was phone banking conducted in?

12 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure, OK. I mean, in,
13 in total we have used a predictive dialer to make
14 over 3.1 million calls. Um, I will and, and just on
15 the texting side, 7.1 million text messages using
16 Hustle. Um, and then third, and then we can get into
17 the details of it, the third, ah, big bucket is
18 using, ah, What's App, Cako Talk, and We Chat, where
19 we had 15 different languages, um, conversations on
20 those apps in large part to reach immigrant
21 communities. So I will ask, um, Amit Bagga to also
22 add in some detail on this as well.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

24 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BAGGA: Thank you, Julie.
25 Ah, thank you, Chair Cabrera, thank you for having

1
2 today's hearing. Um, so in terms of the exact number
3 of unique New Yorkers, ah, or unique individuals that
4 we've reached we can certainly get that to you right
5 after the hearing. Um, phone banking has occurred in
6 multiple languages. Um, I'll share a list of a few
7 that I know for a fact that we've conducted phone
8 banking in and then Kathleen Daniel, our field
9 director can add. Um, I know we've done English,
10 Spanish, ah, Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Bangla,
11 um, I believe Russian, ah, and I know there are some
12 additional as well. Kathleen, if you wouldn't mind
13 adding.

14 FIELD DIRECTOR DANIEL: Sure. Ah,
15 you've, you've pretty hit most of them, um, and it's,
16 we've also been doing some text linking, um, which
17 we'd love to share some numbers with you on. Ah, we
18 were able to as well, you can raise an army of over
19 10,000 New Yorkers that assisted us, um, with this
20 program.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Fantastic. Ah, in
22 late March you issued guidance asking Complete Count
23 Fund, CCF, awardees, ah, to suspend their in-person
24 outreach efforts and adjust their outreach plans to
25 ensure consistency with public health service

1 directives. Have, how have the awardees adjusted to
2 their outreach efforts in response to this guidance?
3 Could you give us some example? And what in-person
4 activity have, ah, have been able to proceed as the
5 city has reopened?
6

7 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure. So Alyson, our
8 grants director, will answer that.

9 GRANTS PROGRAM DIRECTOR TAREK: Thank
10 you, Director Menin, and thank you, Chairman Cabrera.
11 Um, yeah, our program, um, we were able to
12 [inaudible] very quickly. Um, the entire Team
13 Census, as we like to call NYC Census 2020, was able
14 to put together a plan and we were able to effectuate
15 it to ensure that the complete count plan was part of
16 that plan. Um, immediately upon understanding that
17 this pandemic was a reality in mid March, ah, we were
18 able to issue guidance stating, um, please hold on
19 all in-person, just like you said, Chairman. Um, we
20 issued that very quickly. We had several conference
21 calls. Um, we wanted to ensure that, um, they knew
22 that our guidance was like we don't expect you to be
23 in the streets, there's a pandemic. Um, and we, um,
24 really had a lot of positive feedback from the
25 awardees that we were understanding as a grant maker

1 that we wanted to shift with them. So we were able
2 to use the tools that some of my colleagues have been
3 speaking to. We were able to ensure all were
4 comfortable with using Hustle to text, that they were
5 able to upload their own lists of their, of their
6 membership. Um, they started using the phone banks,
7 um, even more than we had planned. We got the
8 predictive dialer. They had their own predictive
9 dialer events as well as joined the ones that our
10 field team organized, specifically focused on
11 different communities. So over the first, ah, three
12 months of census collection our, ah, Complete Count
13 Fund remains, um, virtual, as did the rest of work,
14 um, across Team Census and, ah, they were able to do
15 virtual events, um, town halls, um, and really the,
16 it's in the hundreds, the number of events that took
17 place over those three months online, which was
18 really quite remarkable. Um, and then really in
19 terms of outreach in person, as soon as we issued the
20 guidance, ah, we found that many of our CCF awardees
21 either they had already been, um, food distribution
22 centers or they opened new food distribution centers
23 at their locations in order to serve the communities
24 that they are in. Um, and they, and they were able
25

1
2 to, um, pivot and have either our team members or
3 themselves collect census and assist, um,
4 individuals, um, with census intake at those food
5 distribution points. Um, we found that we were able
6 to, um, ensure that people received the services they
7 need and that they understood the importance of the
8 census and getting the money and the power and the
9 respect that each of them deserve, um, as they were
10 waiting for their very much needed resources. Um,
11 and then we were able to just do, um, some other like
12 really great things, like virtual DJ parties and in-
13 person, um, ah, drive-throughs to do your census and,
14 and receive a, a raffle bag for your children full of
15 toys donated by local, um, institutions. Um, there's
16 a lot of creativity, a lot of [inaudible] events and
17 the Complete Count Fund was able to pivot, um, and
18 we're really, um, just really have been taken away by
19 the work that they've done just by the circumstances.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So you had a DJ
21 party and we were not invited? [laughter] I'm gonna
22 protest here. This is an injustice.

23 GRANTS PROGRAM DIRECTOR TAREK: I believe
24 they were all [inaudible]. I will say it was a CCF
25 individual organization to host it. Um, if it were

1 ourselves we would have made sure you had an invite,
2 Chairman.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: [inaudible]

5 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BAGGA: [inaudible]

6 distribution fund if I could just add very briefly, I
7 think that this is a very important point. Um, our
8 team started to actually go out to food distribution
9 sites starting in late May because we knew that's
10 exactly where New Yorkers were. The unfortunate
11 reality of the situation of COVID-19 is that it's
12 created an economic crisis that has obviously caused
13 food insecurity to rise tremendously here in New York
14 City. Um, but we knew that that [inaudible] reach
15 people, ah, and so as a result we've participated in
16 more than 150 food distribution or mask distribution
17 events, um, over the summer and these were almost
18 exclusively with immigrant communities and we did
19 provide the correct language support. Ah, I do also
20 think it's worth nothing that, um, these were
21 important not just because this is where people were,
22 but also because specifically we know that these are
23 communities for self-responses where they were really
24 low. Corona, Queens is a good example of this, um,
25 where, you know, it's been sort of at the bottom of

1
2 the list in terms of all of the neighborhoods across
3 the city for, for good reasons and I'm sure you can
4 imagine. Um, but, you know, we were helping to fill
5 out the census for households there that had, you
6 know, anywhere from six to 12 members on average,
7 which is, you know, [inaudible] number per household.
8 And so, um, I think [inaudible] some of these types
9 of events that were really done in partnership with
10 [inaudible] otherwise hard [inaudible].

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Ah, thank you. Ah,
12 at this moment I'm gonna turn it over to the task
13 force cochair, ah, Council Member Menchaca, and I'll
14 come back with some more questions.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you. Ah,
16 thank you, Chair Cabrera and Cochair Rivera. Ah, I
17 want to say thank you to the census team. You've all
18 been doing incredible work and I hope you feel that,
19 that love and appreciation. This, this was not easy.
20 We went in with so much, ah, wind behind us and
21 resources and you were dealt the most crazy hand
22 possible. And so I want to just let you know I'm,
23 I'm appreciating that in a very real way. What, what
24 I'm so curious about and I had to step back into my
25 other immigration hearing on adult literacy is the

1 connection with the state and the governor. Have you
2 all answered that question and really kind of thought
3 about how we can hold that administration accountable
4 in this moment for the funding that could have
5 actually helped so much in our, and could help in the
6 next few days, if that kind of funding was available
7 to the operation, the beautiful operation that you
8 built in every borough?
9

10 DIRECTOR MENIN: Well, first of all,
11 thank you so much, Council Member, for the kind
12 comments. We really appreciate it. Our team has,
13 um, it's not an over-statement and it's not trite to
14 say we've literally worked around the clock, ah, for
15 months and months and months on end, so we deeply
16 appreciate the comments and we deeply appreciate the
17 partnership with the City Council, which has really
18 meant a lot to us. Um, in terms of the state, the
19 state was, ah, set to allocate funding before COVID
20 and then COVID hit and, you know, I don't need to
21 restate, obviously what happened. We all know what
22 happened. Um, the state has allocated through the
23 borough presidents' office. So I know you're going
24 to be hearing from the borough presidents. So I, you
25 know, defer to them in terms of their comments on

1 that funding. Um, so that's basically where, where
2 things are.
3

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: So no
5 communication from the state at all about that
6 funding?

7 DIRECTOR MENIN: No, I don't want to say
8 there's no communication. I mean, you know, we do
9 talk to the state, um, about census, obviously, and
10 it's a, it's a top priority for us. But we don't
11 control those funding decisions, so it wouldn't be my
12 place to comment on them.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: OK. Um, you
14 know, my colleagues have asked a lot of the, a lot of
15 the, the kind of good questions about how the on-the-
16 ground operations were. Maybe my, my question is
17 really about the places that you saw, ah, that were
18 not working, that, that you can kind of give an
19 example of what, what, ah, initiative was launched
20 and you saw just no, no reaction to. Ah, I had my,
21 my experiences in, in the district, in Sunset Park,
22 ah, to [inaudible] Point. There are places like
23 Corona, Queens that are, were impacted greatly by, by
24 COVID, ah, and the deaths there are, are real. Um,
25 the fear is real. ICE, ICE raids have, have been

1
2 real in communities like Sunset Park, and, and so we
3 were trying to in real time figure out ways of
4 communicating these messages. Are there things that
5 did not work at all, in your experience?

6 DIRECTOR MENIN: I don't have an example
7 of something that didn't work at all. I would say
8 perhaps if I were to identify the number one biggest
9 challenge we had it was combating, um, obviously the
10 challenges we had with COVID and not having the in-
11 person contact that we needed in March and April and
12 May to combat the Trump administration's
13 misinformation, that we needed that in-person contact
14 for someone who is reluctant to fill the census out.
15 But we phone banked them. We text them. We can have
16 that virtual. But there's nothing like that in-
17 person human contact with a trusted advisor that we
18 were not able to do in March, in April, and in May.
19 As Amit mentioned, um, in late May we did go out to
20 food distribution sites and we were able to begin
21 that work. But that work we couldn't do in March and
22 April, and so in the beginning of the census where
23 other states weren't battling COVID and weren't
24 battling what New York City was battling, we were not
25

1
2 able to have that precious in-person contact that we
3 sorely needed.

4 FIELD DIRECTOR DANIEL: If I may, um, I
5 think Director Menin touches on a point that's,
6 that's really critical here. What we experienced was
7 a lack of, of feeling safe from all New Yorkers be it
8 from the threat of COVID or the threat of the
9 misinformation and the campaign to scare them from
10 doing the census. And what we found, um, while we
11 didn't experience a tactic that did not work at all,
12 um, which, which is astounding and, and we're very
13 proud of that difficult work, what we did experience
14 when our team went out to canvass and knock on doors
15 was that people were less comfortable because they
16 were coming to the door without masks, um, and, and
17 not being dressed in the same way that they would be,
18 of course, if they were in the street. We found
19 community canvassing to be far more effective, which
20 is different from the type of campaign and, and
21 direct constituent contact or resident contact that
22 we're used to. Um, so when people were already out
23 and already wearing PPE and already dressed a certain
24 way they were prepared to stop and have a
25 conversation and happy to do so. So we found that

1
2 direct communication was still the key and one of
3 the, the most successful factors, but not door to
4 door, but mano a mano in the street. And have, have
5 you and other council members join us for much of
6 that.

7 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BAGGA: If I could just
8 add very briefly, and thank you again, um, Chair
9 Menchaca, for, you know, having this hearing today
10 and for all of your, your work on the census. Um, to
11 Kathleen's point, as Director Menin has alluded as
12 well, there really was no tactic that we think didn't
13 work, and I do want to draw the committee's attention
14 just briefly to some of the advertising
15 communications and marketing that this campaign, um,
16 did, which was very different than anything that's
17 been done in the past by any other city entity. Um,
18 very specifically, we ran a campaign into which we
19 pumped real dollars, um, that was also very message
20 tested with multiple different communities around the
21 issue of the thousands and thousands and thousands of
22 New Yorkers that live in illegal, largely basement
23 units. Um, by and large, as you know, and as
24 everyone on the committee knows, um, issues that
25 these New Yorkers face are extremely overlapping

1 between poverty and immigration, obviously language
2 access. Ah, and as a result, um, you know, people
3 have a lot of fear about participating in the census.
4 It's a federal government activity, um, where someone
5 is asking you about how many live in your home and,
6 you know, what your address is and all of this. Um,
7 in addition to that, landlords themselves, the owners
8 of these multifamily units that are not actually
9 supposed to be renting out these basement units often
10 have discouraged or dissuaded their tenants from
11 participating in this for fear that somehow they're
12 gonna get in trouble with DOB. So for the first time
13 ever we launched a campaign which we called Doubled
14 Up that we did in multiple languages. Um, we did it
15 in Spanish, we did it in Chinese, we did it in
16 Punjabi, Urdu, Bangla, Russian, um, that really spoke
17 directly both to landlords and to tenants living in
18 these situations to say the census is completely
19 safe. There are no questions about immigration.
20 Your information cannot be shared with anyone, and no
21 harm will come to you. And just to, you know, sort
22 of put a finer point on how we know this campaign was
23 successful, um, the average click-through rate, which
24 is, you know, the percentage of clicks that an image
25

1
2 is getting when it is being, ah, shown online, um, to
3 [inaudible] targeting, the average click-through
4 rate, you know, for a city campaign is 2/10 to 3/10
5 of a percentage point. Average click-through rate
6 for this particular campaign in the non-English
7 languages was anywhere from 3% to 5%, which is just
8 enormous. I mean, it's several, several, several,
9 um, you know, times what the average click-through
10 rate is [inaudible]. So, um, you know, we're very
11 proud of this type of very, very tailored and
12 responsive work. Um, and, you know, the, the click-
13 through rates [inaudible] out, but so do some of the
14 anecdotes and the qualitative response that we go
15 from community [inaudible].

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you,
17 thank you for that. Ah, that's, that's really
18 helpful to understand how, how the technology works
19 and I think we're gonna do a post conversation when
20 this is all done, which is gonna be sooner than I
21 think we all anticipated. But I think these are
22 gonna be really important things to start integrating
23 into other campaigns. So thank you for, for this
24 work and this analysis that you're giving us today.
25 Um, and, and really speaking to this, ah, culturally

1 sensitive but also linguistic sensitive messaging,
2 ah, what steps did you take to reach non-English-
3 proficient New Yorkers. Um, in particular I'm
4 thinking a lot about our South Asian and Jewish
5 communities. I think that these were communities
6 that, ah, all of you are really focused on, um, at
7 the, at the prep site when we are doing conversations
8 with leaders. Is there, is there things, are there
9 things that you did in those two communities that,
10 that worked really well, um, that we can, we can kind
11 of look to now for the rates that, that are coming
12 in?
13

14 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure. I'll begin and
15 then I'll turn it over to Amit. I mean, I'll first
16 start with the Orthodox Jewish community, because
17 this was something that we from the get-go before
18 COVID had a concern about because of the historically
19 low response numbers. We work very closely with
20 religious and community leaders and elected officials
21 in those communities and we made a real concerted
22 effort in terms of granting to organizations that had
23 a lot of deep roots in those communities. Um, and so
24 I think that really has made a difference, because it
25 was a lot of cultural resistance to completing the

1 census, um, that we had to overcome. And that was,
2 you know, very, very difficult to overcome and it was
3 really with those trusted leaders that, that made a
4 difference. We also did a tremendous amount of
5 advertising, ah, in terms of Jewish publications,
6 Jewish radio. We did a lot. And, and, again, I
7 think that helped to move the needle as well. And I
8 think in the South Asian community it's really, you
9 know, again it was so important to have multilingual
10 advertising in a multitude of different community,
11 ah, newspapers. Remember, we, of the 8 million
12 dollars in advertising we took 3 million and put it
13 into community media. That is the largest amount the
14 city's ever spent on community media. And, again, I
15 think that that really made a difference. So, Amit,
16 I'll turn it to you to add additional information.

18 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BAGGA: Thank you so
19 much, Director Menin. Um, it's a great question. I
20 will say I will emphasize, totally agree with
21 Director Menin that language access was the very,
22 very top priority for this campaign, ah, for all the
23 reasons that we know that it had to be. And so we
24 really went above and beyond. Um, we have 34
25 campaigns in a total of 27 different languages. That

1
2 is more languages than any city entity has ever done
3 advertising in before to date. Um, and we really
4 wanted to make sure that our language was not
5 [inaudible] the language we were presenting was not
6 simply a translation, right. We all know that there
7 are these large translation companies, they spit
8 translations back out and they are sometimes very
9 formal and very inaccessible. So we actually had a
10 very rigorous process by which we put each and every
11 single translation through a native speaker review
12 and proofing process, which frankly did add a lot of
13 time to our work. Um, it did, in some instances we
14 weren't necessarily able to get some things out as
15 quickly as we wanted. But what we knew is that once
16 that ad was out or that particular brochure was
17 circulating that that, that the language was
18 accessible, it was understandable, um, it was plain
19 language and it was something that people from the
20 community would really understand. Um, we branched
21 out, ah, and advertised in a lot of South Asian
22 languages, um, but just off the top of my head, and I
23 may miss one or two, and if I do I'll follow up,
24 Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, ah, Bangla, ah, Nepali. Um, I
25 think we did a little, and I know we had some, ah,

1 materials in Gujarati as well. Um, we had, ah, PSAs
2 that were in Gujarati, Hindi, and Punjabi. Um, and
3 we held multiple, multiple events with lots of
4 different community organizations, both that were
5 part of the CCF and also outside of the CCF that, um,
6 I personally spoke in Hindi and Urdu at some of them.
7 I've personally spoke in Punjabi. Um, and I should
8 just note that the CCF itself also, and, you know,
9 we're really proud of the selection process
10 [inaudible] they really took a very critical and
11 rigorous look at what the true makeup of the city
12 really is and ensured that we were funding
13 organizations, um, many of which were organizations
14 that were receiving city money for the very first
15 time, right, that really served these communities.
16 So when you talk about the South Asian community you
17 look at Desis Rising Up & Moving. You look at China
18 CDC. Um, you look at United Six. You look at
19 [inaudible]. I mean, [inaudible] in, in Elmhurst
20 could not have been a more successful partner. Um,
21 that is also true for China. I mean, these
22 organizations really, really poured their heart and
23 soul into organizing locally in their communities in
24 the languages people speak. Um, and it was, it was a
25

1
2 tremendous success. And I'll just end by saying, um,
3 in Elmhurst, ah, you know, the response where we have
4 a large South Asian population and Jackson Heights,
5 response rates higher than we expected in some ways,
6 and in other parts of the city where [inaudible]
7 large South Asian and Indo-Caribbean where the
8 response rates were lagging, China, DRUM, ah, ah,
9 also Jahajee Sisters, the Caribbean Equality Project,
10 all came in, you know, queer people leading the
11 charge, um, at the end of the census process to
12 really give the community [inaudible] and in the last
13 few weeks those numbers really did go up. So I
14 really want to give them some credit for that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: This is, this
16 is beautiful to, um, to listen to, to hear, to watch
17 over time. And, again, this is the, this is the
18 celebration and the applause, applause to your team
19 and, and the hard work around the clock. I know you
20 did not stop. And really this is maybe my last, my
21 last question is are you planning on really building
22 out a retrospective, ah, report on the city census
23 campaign after this is all completed and, and when
24 can we expect that? Ah, partly because what I'm
25 hearing really here is that you've all really built a

1 new level and a new threshold and a new, um, a new
2 bar. This is how this whole city should be
3 functioning under these kind of, of standards in
4 engaging on all our messaging, that if this was in
5 place 10 years ago and that we were going back to a
6 warm apparatus that you wouldn't have to build new
7 ground to connect to these communities, that that
8 trust, even if ICE came, even if all the things and
9 messages that came down, you would have been
10 funneling information and conversation with people
11 who have already been engaged over time. You can,
12 this team alone can build the next, ah, pipeline of
13 information and relationships to communities that
14 have never seen this kind of engagement before.

16 DIRECTOR MENIN: Thank you so much,
17 Council Member, we couldn't agree with you more. We
18 first of all think this should serve as a paradigm
19 for other citywide outreach efforts, um, but also a
20 national paradigm, um, on how you can conduct census
21 outreach and we've had many other cities reach out to
22 us, um, during this whole process. So obviously we
23 want to be able to put this in some kind of report,
24 because we think it's incredibly important to codify
25 this and have this...

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yes.

3 DIRECTOR MENIN: ...the model, um, for
4 future endeavors. So, yes, we will work on that in
5 the remaining time that we have left. So thank you
6 so much.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Wonderful.

8 Thank you. Back to you, Chair.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.

10 I'm going to turn it back, ah, to the Task Force, ah,
11 Cochair Rivera. Ah, but for the sake of time, ah,
12 Director, if you could help us, ah, and the staff to
13 give us the, we're gonna do a rapid fire of
14 questions, ah, 'cause we know we have borough
15 presidents and, ah, advocates waiting. If you could
16 give us like a 30-second answer to each of the
17 questions coming forward, that way we could build
18 momentum and go through these questions, ah, rather
19 quickly, which I'm sure you would, ah, ah, be happy.

20 DIRECTOR MENIN: Yes, sure.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.

22 Ah, Council Member Rivera.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you so
24 much. I just wanted to ask, ah, ah, Mr. Salvo, I
25 guess, a couple questions, if that's OK, or whoever

1 wants to chime in. Um, what do DCP's post census
2 operations look like? Does DCP have a process in
3 place for evaluating the census count in the city
4 after the census is completed? How do DCP support
5 the city's census count during the self-response
6 period? And were there any changes in the way that
7 DCP supported the city's census count during 2020
8 compared to 2010?

10 CHIEF DEMOGRAPHER SALVO: Um, OK. I'll
11 start with the last question. Um, we published over
12 the course of the census, um, materials in support of
13 the effort that you've, you've heard about. Um,
14 there are 19 reports. They're all up on our website.
15 Um, we looked, evaluated, um, self-response rates and
16 then what are called final enumeration rates by
17 neighborhood, providing guidance to many of the
18 people that you've heard from on this call.
19 Regarding, um, the post census evaluation, we're part
20 of an effort that is taking place to try to see how
21 the Census Bureau went from a neighborhood that had a
22 40% or 50% self-response rate to 99%, because there
23 are many ways that the Census Bureau can so-called
24 close out a case that does not involve necessarily an
25 accurate count of people in housing units. One

1
2 example, proxy responses, as we call them. A
3 neighbor who provides a count. In general, those
4 counts will be low. In general, those counts may not
5 be accurate. So the result is that the city, um,
6 could lose population by virtue of an excessive use
7 of that method. There is a movement nationwide now,
8 there is a group of people and we're involved with
9 that group, that are trying to get the Census Bureau
10 to provide us with information on how they completed
11 the enumeration.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: So right now you
13 have, you have the published materials, you're
14 looking at the proxy responses, um, I'm trying to
15 make sure I didn't lose anything there in terms of
16 post census operations, like in terms of working
17 collaboratively.

18 CHIEF DEMOGRAPHER SALVO: Um, there are a
19 number of ways that the Census Bureau can complete a
20 case for a housing unit. They can declare a housing
21 unit to be, um, vacant, can prove the use of
22 administrative resources or observation. They can,
23 ah, the [inaudible] housing unit that they find does
24 not exist. They can delete a housing unit by virtue
25 of it being a duplicate. There is going to be a lot

1
2 of concern about the post processing of the data
3 collection, which starts in a couple of days, and
4 they're going to have to de-duplicate cases. You've
5 heard earlier that we reached out to people beyond
6 the city who live in the city. Many of those people
7 may have actually answered the census in two places.
8 So we want them to be recorded as residents of the
9 city. The Census Bureau will need to do that, and we
10 will need to have feedback on what they did. And
11 then finally, as you said, the use of proxy, and I
12 mentioned, the use of proxy responses. Um, the use
13 of administrative resources, for example from, ah,
14 Social Security, from the IRS tax returns, from HUD
15 records, ah, records from Medicare. All of that,
16 those resources can be used to actually complete an
17 enumeration. How much of that took place in order to
18 complete the enumeration in the city? All of these
19 things have error associated with them. And we need
20 to learn more about them.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you very
22 much. I know, I know we have, um, less than 48
23 hours. So whatever push there is, um, in, in the
24 next few hours, next couple days, please, please let
25 us know, of course, how we can be supportive and how

1
2 we can make sure that we're reaching our
3 constituency. We've tried a lot of different ways
4 and I know, um, Mr. Salvo, you've been doing this a
5 long time. So in terms of, of lessons learned and I
6 know we're gonna hear from some others, um, on the
7 next couple panels, ah, we're happy to, to
8 collaborate and, and let you know as to some of our
9 experiences and, of course, you'll hear about that
10 through some of the questions we ask, ah, ah, future
11 panelists and advocates. So thank you so much for
12 your work.

13 CHIEF DEMOGRAPHER SALVO: You're welcome.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you, Mr.
15 Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.

17 Ah, here comes the rapid-fire questions, ah,
18 Director. And so, ah, let's start, ah, with CUNY.
19 How are the administration and CUNY, how did the, the
20 plan, ah, how was the use, actually, rather, ah, on
21 CUNY census core of students, ah, how were you able
22 to utilize them? What's the latest update with them?

23 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure. Well, two things
24 on CUNY. We, CUNY was a, a huge partner, ah, from
25 the beginning, both with the Complete Count Fund, um,

1
2 and helping to administer that. And then through the
3 students. Obviously with COVID it, it changed the
4 way that the students could interact, um, with New
5 Yorkers, and that was an unfortunate reality of
6 COVID. But CUNY had been a fantastic partner and
7 we're really thrilled with the work, um, that they
8 and the students have done.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I know, back in May
10 you had, ah, ah, you had stated 178 students had
11 signed up to work. Were you able, was that a
12 sustainable number that we were able to retain? Did
13 we get more?

14 DIRECTOR MENIN: Yeah, Amit and Kathleen,
15 if you want to add in there.

16 FIELD DIRECTOR DANIEL: We had a
17 fantastic experience with our students. We were able
18 to swell to 220 CUNY students, um, and when, some of
19 them were assigned to our CCF awardees and many of
20 them were assigned to the field team. Um, and then
21 when, of course COVID, um, became our reality many of
22 them, ah, were able to move between teams, um, so
23 that if they were willing to go outdoors when the,
24 some of the restrictions were lifted they went
25 outdoors with awardees or field team and many of them

1 not only participated in our phone banks and our
2 virtual events, but they hosted them themselves. So
3 they hosted some great events, participated in our
4 [inaudible], ah, participated in our other cultural,
5 um, initiatives like My Umma Counts, um, [inaudible],
6 um, like [inaudible], um, in the Haitian community.
7 So they really were super troupers and became leaders
8 themselves, leading NOCC meetings, um, which are our
9 neighbor, neighborhood organizing census committees,
10 um, and being the NOCC in some places, um, because we
11 had clusters of students, of course, from specific
12 historically undercounted communities. Um, so very
13 proud of the work that our CUNY students did, and
14 they became civic engagement leaders throughout our
15 process, many of them still volunteering today, well
16 after their program sunsetted in late August. So we
17 retained the overwhelming majority of them, about
18 70%, through the summer, and then some still, um, are
19 with us today in Sunset Park and Dyker Heights and
20 are joining our census last call phone banks today
21 and tomorrow.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Great. Thank you.
24 And, ah, and the shorter you can give me the answer
25 the better 'cause I have a lot of questions.

2 FIELD DIRECTOR DANIEL: Sure.

3 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: In July you
4 provided data to the committee and the task force
5 chairs on the neighborhood organizing census
6 committee, ah, recruitment, ah, stating that the
7 administration have recruited over 5120 NOCC
8 volunteers. Has the administration needed to recruit
9 more volunteers since then?

10 DIRECTOR MENIN: Yes, so, um, and I think
11 as Kathleen mentioned before, we had a total of
12 10,000 volunteers in our overall operation. Ah, this
13 was really exciting. Neighborhood organizing census
14 committees was a new structure that our office
15 created to involve 245 different neighborhoods in New
16 York City, ah, in the census, and really to make sure
17 that neighborhoods are invested in the future of
18 their community.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So from what I
20 gather there are plans for engaging these volunteers
21 in other civic engagement opportunities in the
22 future?

23 DIRECTOR MENIN: Yeah, these are
24 obviously very engaged New Yorkers.

25 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Beautiful.

1 DIRECTOR MENIN: So we'd love to keep
2
3 them engaged in the future of the City of New York.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So let me move on
5 to questions regarding the agency and partnership
6 engagement. Did NYC Census use the availability of
7 real time self-response data to adjust to, to adjust
8 its outreach as needed? How did it pivot in outreach
9 between collaboration with city agencies and partners
10 in response to real time self-response data in
11 shifting public health directives?

12 DIRECTOR MENIN: Um, sure, I'll try to
13 answer in 30 seconds. That's a long question.

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I know, sorry.

15 DIRECTOR MENIN: Ah, no, no, no, I'll try
16 my best. We worked with every single city agency.
17 There is no city agency that was not involved and
18 engaged with us on census.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Good.

20 DIRECTOR MENIN: And that is really,
21 really important. Ah, whether it be the Department
22 of Education, the Department of Health, Department of
23 Social Services, I mean, the list goes on and on.
24 And they were all engaged. And yes, of course, we
25 used real time data. I mean, one of the advantages

1 of having real time online data every day is it made
2 us more nimble in terms of how we could quickly, um,
3 send in teams to neighborhoods that had low self-
4 response rates.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Ah, thank you. How
7 was NYC Census collaborated, ah, with the Census
8 Bureau to count people living in nursing homes?

9 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure. So, yeah, Amit,
10 do you want to talk about that?

11 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BAGGA: Sure, yes. So,
12 um, as the director mentioned in her testimony, we
13 have essentially achieved a complete count
14 [inaudible] shelter. As far as nursing homes is
15 concerned, um, if the bureau had trouble reaching out
16 to any of the nursing homes we would step in make a
17 call if we needed to. But by and large the bureau
18 was able, um, to take care of that themselves.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Beautiful. Ah,
20 public libraries. What's the, has the administration
21 taken to help public libraries conduct census
22 education and all this census-related amidst, ah,
23 COVID-19 crisis?

24 DIRECTOR MENIN: The libraries were a key
25 partner with us. We gave them a grant well before

1
2 COVID because we knew that the libraries are key
3 disseminators and trusted voices in their
4 communities. When COVID hit we then worked on a
5 virtual strategy with the libraries, virtual events,
6 the use of social media, the use of email blasts. So
7 they were very helpful to us in terms of that.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: That's good.

9 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BAGGA: Um, one thing
10 that was very effective that I think the libraries
11 did was, um, they were able to repurpose some of
12 their funds to send out multilingual postcards to
13 targeted census tracks in various boroughs that were
14 really looked at. What are the languages that are
15 spoken, what are the response rates, um, and we
16 ensured that the libraries were able to leverage
17 parts of their grant to actually, um, print and mail
18 those postcards.

19 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Very good. In late
20 May you announced a partnership with Grub Hub, ah,
21 Seamless, toward 10 gift cards worth \$1000 apiece to
22 New Yorkers who recently completed the census. In
23 July you reported that 3029 New Yorkers had entered
24 the contest, ah, and 1083 New Yorkers had submitted
25 confirmation that they had completed the census.

1
2 Have additional [inaudible], ah, confirmed completion
3 of the census since then?

4 DIRECTOR MENIN: Yes, because we extended
5 the contest, um, after the initial announcement, and
6 then we also extended the contest to include gift
7 certificates from Lyft, from City Bike, from the
8 Museum of Modern Art. So we had other contests
9 running as well. We'd be happy to send over to the
10 committee all of the completions from all the
11 different contests combined, if that's helpful.

12 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Fantastic, that
13 will be helpful, really. Thank you. Ah, charitable
14 foundations, ah, if you could just briefly describe
15 the administration's partnership with charitable, ah,
16 foundations since July.

17 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure. Um, so I'm gonna
18 ask Amit to talk a little about that because we had
19 numerous [inaudible] discussions with a number of
20 different foundations. So, Amit, do you want to take
21 that one?

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you.

23 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BAGGA: Absolutely. Um,
24 so, you know, we've worked pretty closely with
25 philanthropy throughout this process. They've been

1 really great partners. As I'm sure you know, they've
2 provided funds to many different organizations across
3 the city. We did provide them with a lot of
4 information about our CCF process and obviously
5 nothing that was, um, you know, confidential. Ah,
6 but really they, you know, they've been great
7 partners. Ah, in terms of since July, um, ah,
8 chiefly it's the Robin Hood Foundation that's been
9 sort of most involved in providing additional funds
10 for activities on the ground, and they have supported
11 both our paid canvassing efforts as well as our
12 robocall efforts.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: So let me, ah,
15 thank you, ah, let me jump into, ah, questions
16 regarding messaging and marketing. Ah, you answered
17 a few of them and I thank you for that. Ah, since
18 July, so let me jump into the ones that we still have
19 outstanding here. Ah, has the, ah, NYC Census
20 introduced new messaging to ensure a complete count?

21 DIRECTOR MENIN: I just want to make sure
22 I understand the, the question. New messaging in
23 terms of?

24 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Ah, to ensure a
25 complete count.

1 DIRECTOR MENIN: Oh, from, ah, you're
2 saying in, in the last, in this most recent
3 timeframe?
4

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Yes, since July.

6 DIRECTOR MENIN: Yeah, OK. Ah,
7 absolutely. So we constantly change our messaging.
8 I mean, as I mentioned earlier, we ran 34 different
9 campaigns, ah, and that was really important because
10 if you keep sending the same message again and again
11 and again people tune out. So we constantly rotated
12 our digital messaging, our TV messaging, our
13 community newspaper messaging, radio, um, and I think
14 that that really did work. And on the digital we can
15 tell what worked. We could tell how long people
16 spent on each of our ads, whether or not they clicked
17 through, ah, because all of our digital ads had
18 immediate call to action with a click through
19 directly to the Census Bureau to complete the census.

20 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Beautiful, thank
21 you. Ah, in response to COVID-19 crisis [inaudible]
22 CCF awardee, ah, awardees, to make their own and buy,
23 ah, let me take that back. To make their own ad buys
24 using 25% of their budget, ah, funds. In July you
25 said that 21 of them had taken advantage of this, ah,

1
2 opportunity. Since July were there any additional
3 awardees that utilized their funds for ad buys. If
4 so, how many and what languages, and groups you were
5 targeting?

6 DIRECTOR MENIN: Sure. So, um, so yes.
7 We allowed them to go to a cap of 25%. Um, many did
8 not go that high and so wanted to keep their funding
9 for other things, but they found that it was a good
10 way to pivot their dollars to reach, um, the
11 populations that they work with. Um, it was three
12 additional organizations, um, including those that
13 published in Spanish, English, and Yiddish, so they
14 were able to reach different communities, um, in
15 their own outlets and in their own languages.

16 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Fantastic. Ah, let
17 me turn it over to Council Member Rivera. I believe
18 she has a question [inaudible] later. Council Member
19 Rivera.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: It's for Jeff. I
21 think he's gonna testify in the next panel.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: OK, great, thank
23 you. Ah, have all the changes to the response
24 deadline affected your operations? I would imagine,
25 yeah.

1
2 DIRECTOR MENIN: Yeah, absolutely. I
3 mean, this is a, a, can only best be described as an
4 unpredictable rollercoaster, and when you constantly
5 tell people that the finish line is moving and
6 rotating and changing, it, it accomplishes really
7 what they intended from the start, which is confusion
8 and causes people to be fearful. Well, should I
9 respond to this? Why does the date keep changing?
10 Is this legitimate? So it's, it's really upsetting
11 that this happened and it's unconscionable and quite
12 frankly it's shameful.

13 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: I can only imagine
14 if we didn't have COVID-19 what our numbers would
15 have end up with, you know.

16 DIRECTOR MENIN: Um-hmm, um-hmm.

17 DEPUTY DIRECTOR BAGGA: Can I just add to
18 that, 'cause I think it's important to state on the
19 record. Um, we have an incredible, incredible team
20 of more than 60 very dedicated New Yorkers who have
21 lived through sort of an unspeakable psychological,
22 ah, battle with this shifting deadline and with
23 COVID, and I think it is just really important for us
24 to thank, um, the member of, all of the members of
25 our team, as well as every employee of every CCF

1 awardee and partner for, ah, their tenacity
2
3 [inaudible].

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Indeed, they need
5 to be, ah, affirmed, acknowledged, celebrated, ah,
6 [inaudible] Chris, ah, I know I had an event, ah, in
7 my district and, ah, workers came out. You know,
8 we're out there in the public and there's a level of
9 exposure and risk, ah, that we're taking. So I
10 salute every single one of them and, ah, tremendous
11 effort that they put forth, and that's why we see the
12 results that we're seeing right now, even under the
13 circumstances that we're working, ah, with in the
14 city that literally got hit the hardest when it came
15 to COVID-19. Only got a couple more questions,
16 you'll be happy to hear that. Um, is, ah, New York
17 City, ah, Census planning to issue a comprehensive
18 retrospective report on the city census campaign
19 after the count is complete, and if so when do you
20 expect it to be completed by?

21 DIRECTOR MENIN: Yes, we will issue a
22 report and, um, I can't give you the exact date
23 because honestly the next 48 hours we're just focused
24 on getting the count out. But we have always
25

1
2 intended to do the report and we will issue it as
3 soon as humanly possible.

4 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: As a matter of
5 fact, I believe that's my last question. The rest
6 we'll send it, um, we'll send it, I know you're busy,
7 as you can imagine. I don't want to hold you any
8 longer. I know you're dying to get back, ah, to
9 control center...

10 DIRECTOR MENIN: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: ...[inaudible]. Ah,
12 I thank you. I, really, from the bottom of our
13 hearts, I know from our community to all your staff,
14 ah, fantastic, fantastic work. I can only image the
15 pressure that you were working on and, and really you
16 should be applauded, ah, for the work, ah, that it
17 was done and I'm sure we'll hear that from the
18 advocate, ah, from the other groups that were
19 directly involved in the front line and, ah, so with
20 that I, I turn it back to the moderator. But thank
21 you again. I can't say thank you enough. Ah,
22 literally this is gonna bring resources to our
23 districts and as elected officials we, we fully know,
24 ah, the impact that this funding, federal funding,
25

1
2 we'll have it in our district and we need it more
3 than ever.

4 DIRECTOR MENIN: Thank you so much, Chair
5 Cabrera. Thank you for having us today.

6 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. Let me
7 turn it over to the moderator at this point.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.

9 Ah, I will now call on council members in the order
10 they used the Zoom raise hand function. Council
11 members, if you'd like to ask a question and you have
12 not yet raised your hand please do so now. You'll
13 have a total of five minutes to ask your question,
14 receive an answer from the panelists. The Sergeant
15 at Arms will keep a timer and will let you know when
16 your time is up. Once I've called on you please wait
17 until the sergeant has announced that you may begin
18 before asking your questions. Seeing no hands
19 raised, we will now turn to testimony from the
20 borough presidents' offices. Each panelist will be
21 given three minutes to speak. Panelists, once your
22 name is called a member of our staff will unmute you
23 and the Sergeant at Arms will set the timer and give
24 you the go-ahead to begin. The first panelist to
25 testify will be Manhattan Borough President Gail

1
2 Brewer, followed by Director Susie Tanenbaum from the
3 Queens Borough President's office. Borough President
4 Brewer you may begin upon the sergeant's
5 announcement.

6 BOROUGH PRESIDENT BREWER: So thank you
7 very much [inaudible]...

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

9 BOROUGH PRESIDENT BREWER: Thank you very
10 much to Council Member Cabrera, and I certainly want
11 to thank Julie Menin and her staff of Jeff Baylor,
12 Billy Golden, and Joe Salvo. Um, I'm just gonna
13 summarize because I know you're gonna get a copy of
14 our presentation. We know that there's millions of
15 dollars. We know that representation is all stake.
16 Ah, I think you know that Manhattan in 2010 we had
17 about 66.2% self-response and right now, to date,
18 62.5%, so we're really, you know, lacking
19 tremendously. So what we have tried to do, we
20 obviously heard earlier from Julie Menin about the
21 New Yorkers who relocated out. It really was us that
22 called the department, the Board of Elections, ah, we
23 got the 35,000 names of those who had left from the
24 June primary, as you've heard. Ah, we helped pay the
25 cost of the mailing. Ah, we did it with the League

1 of Women Voters. It's a very impartial movement.
2 They did get a pretty good, ah, response. You have
3 to know, though, that that is, the census track,
4 those were the census tracks that in the past
5 responded 75%. And now it's around 50%. But you can
6 see that's why, particularly in Manhattan, our
7 numbers are lower. I think we were the only borough
8 to do that and I certainly want to thank everybody
9 who participated. We also mail postcards at our own
10 expense, the Borough President's office, to 240,000
11 Manhattanites who live in the lowest-performing, ah,
12 census tracks and they were sent first class so that
13 they would not, ah, get lost, and the other reason
14 [inaudible]. Um, we also bought ads in the *East*
15 *Hampton Star* and other papers in Connecticut, upstate
16 New York, trying to say fill out your census with
17 your Manhattan address. We also worked hard, as you
18 can imagine, with the Manhattan Complete Count
19 Committee in the very beginning and, as Carlina
20 Rivera knows, we went to, ah, Providence, Rhode
21 Island, even a couple years ago, just going up to say
22 how are doing in Providence because you are the pilot
23 for the online action. Ah, with our, ah, Manhattan
24 Action Fund, which is our nonprofit, we did our own,
25

1
2 ah, allocation of funding. On September 29 we
3 awarded, ah, money to 12 organizations and then you
4 heard recently about the governor's funding. It was
5 a lot less than what we expected, ah, and in came in
6 late, but we were the first borough president to get
7 the money out. We got out in August. Ah, that was
8 month from the Empire State Development Corp. And we
9 gave \$215,000 to 16, ah, additional organizations,
10 and as you can imagine we were out on the streets
11 with them. I think you heard earlier how important
12 the in-person is. There is nothing, ah, to, ah, do
13 anything but make sure that's how it works. So, um,
14 we also had [inaudible] action. We went to almost
15 every single school in the Borough of Manhattan...

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

17 BOROUGH PRESIDENT BREWER: ...on September
18 29. So those are some of the ways in addition to
19 census [inaudible]. So we're very depressed about
20 the, ah, short timeframe, but to give you some ideas
21 of what we have accomplished. Finally, I just want
22 [inaudible] we went to all the building management
23 companies in Manhattan, where it was hard to get in
24 and between 32BJ and [inaudible] we really were able.
25 That's not self-reported. But it got enumerators in

1 and it also gave an idea about who's in that
2 apartment, at least by name, by, ah, enumeration.
3 Thank you very much.

4
5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next we
6 will hear testimony from Director Tanenbaum.
7 Director Tanenbaum, you may begin upon the sergeant's
8 announcement.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 DIRECTOR TANENBAUM: OK. Thank you. Um,
11 it is my privilege to present this testimony on
12 behalf of Borough President Lee. Good afternoon and
13 thank you, Chair Cabrera and members of the
14 committee, for convening this public hearing on the
15 importance of the 2020 census to the five boroughs of
16 New York City. This census has been quite a journey,
17 particularly for the Borough of Queens. In March
18 when the coronavirus hit we found ourselves at the
19 epicenter of the epicenter of the pandemic. Not
20 surprisingly, neighborhoods like Corona and Elmhurst
21 with high levels of COVID-19 had low self-response
22 rates in the census. Queens is tremendously proud to
23 be the most ethnoracially diverse county in the
24 continental US. But when it comes to the census our
25 exceptional diversity presents unique challenges. In

1 this political climate, even after the federal
2 government's failed attempt to add a citizenship
3 question to the census. Our undocumented immigrants
4 and our mixed status families were reluctant to be
5 counted. Also our African American communities in
6 southeast Queens and the Rockaways have historically
7 been undercounted, and initially response rates were
8 persistently low. Yet Queens was determined to
9 secure its fair share of federal funding with the
10 2020 census. Already in November of 2018 my
11 predecessor, the honorable Melinda Katz, announced
12 the formation of the Queens Complete Count Committee,
13 a diverse and vibrant network of trusted community
14 partners committed to ensuring that their
15 neighborhoods get counted, and my office has fully
16 sustained this commitment. Since February of 2019
17 the Queens CCC has met on a regular basis,
18 strategizing across neighborhood and cultural lines.
19 We have benefitted from the expertise of many great
20 colleagues at NYC Census 2020, the US Census Bureau,
21 the population division at City Planning,
22 [inaudible], and Queens Public Library. Our trusted
23 community partners have been incredibly resilient.
24 When the pandemic hit they moved their census
25

1
2 outreach to virtual platforms. Our office partnered
3 with NYC Census 2020 on a weekly phone bank that
4 contacted over 40,000 Queens households. When
5 socially distant in-person activity became
6 permissible again my team joined with our census
7 colleagues and distributed thousands of branded masks
8 and hand sanitizers while providing questionnaire
9 assistance at food distribution sites and transit
10 hubs. Funding from the City Council, the mayor's
11 office, the governor's office, and the borough
12 president's office has been essential in helping our
13 community partners to launch their own rigorous and
14 creative get out the count campaigns. All of these
15 efforts have paid off. Whereas Queens ranked number
16 four among the five boroughs for approximately one
17 year, we are now virtually tied for second place with
18 Manhattan. As of this week our census self-response
19 rate is 62.3%, which is above...

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

21 DIRECTOR TANENBAUM: Which is above the
22 city average of 61.4%. Can I say two last sentences?
23 The federal government's decision to bring this
24 critically important process to a screeching halt is
25 devastating to our borough and city. Thousands of

1
2 Queens residents will lose their chance to self-
3 respond, but rest assured that our borough-level
4 operation will continue until the very last moment
5 when the census portal closes. And we thank you for
6 your support.

7 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you, ah, so
8 much. Ah, just a quick question. Ah, I don't know
9 if you mentioned it. I don't recall. Do you happen
10 to know and clarify how much of a census grant that
11 you received from New York State to either one of,
12 ah, your borough office?

13 BOROUGH PRESIDENT BREWER: No, we got
14 \$215,000 in Manhattan.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: OK, and for Queens?

16 DIRECTOR TANENBAUM: And we were
17 allocated almost \$500,000, ah, given the, the
18 diversity and the, ah, populations that were at risk
19 of being undercounted. We received almost half a
20 million.

21 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Worker. Ah, that's
22 impressive. Ah, I want to thank you, ah, both. Ah,
23 I happen to know, ah, both President Brewer since she
24 was a council member, and I could tell you I don't
25 know any harder working elected official than, ah,

1
2 Borough President Brewer. So I know you gave it all
3 you had and there, and under very unusual
4 circumstances. So thank you, ah, for both of your
5 offices and everything that you have done, um, to
6 really, to get the numbers to where we're at. I
7 don't have any, ah, other questions, so unless the
8 task force chairs have questions, I see a no, and so
9 with that we'll move on. Thank you all. I salute
10 you for your dedication and hard work and, and for
11 the results, ah, that you got. But we still got less
12 than 48 hours, ah, so let's keep moving that needle.

13 BOROUGH PRESIDENT BREWER: Thank you.

14 DIRECTOR TANENBAUM: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Let me turn it back
16 to the moderator.

17 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.

18 Ah, I will now call on council members in the order
19 they have used the Zoom raise hand function. Council
20 members, if you'd like to ask a question and you have
21 not yet raised your hand please do so now. First we
22 will hear from Council Member Kallos. Council Member
23 Kallos, you may begin when ready.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you. I, I
25 never pass up an opportunity to interrogate our

1
2 borough president when she comes before the council
3 to testify. Ah, my, my first question is which is
4 the best borough in the City of New York, and I was
5 kind of disturbed to hear that we had fallen behind,
6 ah, and just really appreciate all the hard work.
7 What should we be doing in the next day or so to, ah,
8 make sure that Manhattan beats the other boroughs in
9 terms of census response rates?

10 BOROUGH PRESIDENT BREWER: Well, as you
11 know, Council Member Kallos, the problem is Staten
12 Island is hard to beat. It has to do with the fact
13 that so many Manhattanites left, and I assume Staten
14 Islanders didn't. So I think the answer to your
15 question is, you know, the only thing we can do is
16 keep the pressure on those who have left to fill it
17 out in Manhattan. So whether that's the private
18 school list that we've tried, the synagogues, the
19 churches, many of which are [inaudible] distant. So
20 that's what I would do. If the, the count problem is
21 those who left, to be honest with you.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: And the best
23 borough?
24
25

2 BOROUGH PRESIDENT BREWER: Of course
3 we're the best borough. But that's, ah, says it
4 without saying.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council
7 Member. Next we will hear testimony from Jeff
8 Baylor, New York regional director for the United
9 States Census Bureau. Regional Director Baylor, you
10 will be given three minutes to deliver your
11 testimony. Please begin once the sergeant announces
12 that the timer has started.

13 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

14 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Thank you very
15 much, Cochairs, ah, task force members, and members
16 of the council. We have over 11,000 partners in New
17 York City on the 2020 census who held over 10,000
18 events, posted over 2600 mobile questionnaire
19 assistance sites, and made over 17,000 commitments.
20 And that's just when they partnered with us. It is
21 because of the amazing work of our partners across
22 every borough and every level of government, across
23 every race and ethnicity and houses of worship, and
24 across community-based organizations that we should
25 all celebrate the achievements of this census, the

1 most difficult census in our nation's history. The
2 Census Bureau, specifically the team at the New York
3 region, thank all of you for your tremendous efforts,
4 your outreach, serving as the true trusted voice in
5 your communities. Your efforts have clearly made a
6 difference. And there's another group I want to
7 recognize. The group of 17,564 New York City
8 residents who took an oath of confidentiality,
9 completed training virtually, and knocked on doors in
10 their community and their neighboring community,
11 which made nonresponse follow-up a true success. I
12 was asked to give the latest schedule and of course
13 as a result of last night's announcement has changed
14 dramatically. We will continue to support any plan,
15 mobile questionnaire assistance events through
16 tomorrow, ah, tomorrow evening, October 15. Any
17 mobile questionnaire assistance support plan for
18 events that were being held October 16 through the
19 end of the month, October 31, will be canceled. For
20 nonresponse follow-up, our door knocking activities,
21 we have until 11:00 p.m. tomorrow evening, October
22 15, to knock on doors and collect data via our
23 [inaudible] operation. We will not have staff
24 enumerating that late, but we will have every
25

1 remaining case to be resolved in the hands of someone
2 who has work availability both today and tomorrow.
3 As of this morning we had 2367 cases to work across
4 New York City, the majority of which are quality
5 control or field verification cases, of which 263
6 were added to our workload this morning. Currently
7 we're at 99.88% complete on nonresponse follow-up as
8 of this morning, and I want to note and stress again
9 our workload on nonresponse follow-up is not just
10 cases that have yet to respond, but cases in which
11 there may be a quality issue or we need to verify an
12 address. Internet self-response will be available
13 across the nation through October 15 until 11:59 p.m.
14 Hawaii standard time, or 5:59 a.m. eastern on October
15 16. Phone response will be available, ah, for its
16 regularly scheduled time on October 15, so for
17 English and Spanish language lines they are available
18 until 2:00 a.m. eastern time on Friday, October 16.
19 And the non-English, non-Spanish language lines are
20 available Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 10:00
21 p.m. eastern time. Paper responses, for those who
22 still have a paper form, must be postmarked by
23 Thursday, October 15, and received by Thursday,
24

2 October 22. I want to thank you for the
3 opportunity...

4 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

5 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: ...to provide
6 the updates and I look forward to our discussion
7 today.

8 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Let me, ah, turn it
9 over, ah, to, ah, the cochair of the task force,
10 Council Member Rivera. She had a few questions.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Hi, Jeff. Thank
12 you so much for being here.

13 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: It's great to
14 see you.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Great to see you
16 too. Um, we've been very busy and I know you'd
17 extend the deadline if you could, so we'll just leave
18 that there. Please can you share the successes and
19 some of the lessons learned about conducting a safe
20 yet effective in-person nonresponse follow-up? I
21 know, um, we heard from the borough president, for
22 example, that, ah, this was something that definitely
23 happened in my district, that some people were being
24 denied access to some of the apartment buildings, so
25 we thought creatively. We involved 32BJ. We spoke

1 to [inaudible] because of the building managers to
2 make sure that he got that access. That's one
3 example of, of like a lesson learned and things we
4 can do differently. I thought about, you know, ah,
5 introducing legislation, making sure that they had to
6 be granted access, but we just didn't have enough
7 time. Um, with something like that any lessons
8 learned, um, given the last few months?

10 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Yeah, there
11 were a couple of things that, that stand out. First
12 off, partners who've donated space to allow us to
13 conduct, ah, trainings virtually. Now, two pieces to
14 that. First off, the training itself, the in-person
15 piece, was only about two hours. We had to bring
16 people in, swear them in as a census employee. They
17 take an oath of confidentiality. We give them the
18 device and then we send them home to do their
19 training online. So getting space to do that was
20 extremely helpful, and we've had so many partners
21 throughout the city donate space for those purposes.
22 But also the ability to, to use a space and
23 computers. Many of our, our employees didn't have
24 their own laptops or computers for use at home. So
25 they needed a place to go to, and partners, ah, did a

1
2 wonderful, amazing job at providing that space. And,
3 and probably the most important, one of the most
4 important things during nonresponse follow-up and how
5 our partners support is exactly what you said,
6 getting us, ah, access into buildings, ah, you know,
7 providing, ah, ah, Director Menin talked about the
8 ability to provide, ah, proxy data from, ah, the
9 public housing, ah, which we'll use it, ah, in the
10 event we need it, ah, you know, at the end of the
11 census. But, but just getting us access has been a
12 tremendous help, ah, in ensuring we can knock on
13 doors, because outside of self-response the very next
14 best thing is having that conversation at the door
15 and collecting that information from someone who
16 lives in that household.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: How did the, some
18 of the, you had some issues in terms of the
19 [inaudible], but we also know that the bureau
20 intended to hire roughly 13,000 enumerators in New
21 York City. How many did you end up, ah, hiring for
22 [inaudible] and, for example, how if at all did the
23 bureau attempt to recruit individuals who lost their
24 jobs as a result of COVID?

1
2 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Yeah, great
3 question. So we kept our online recruiting systems
4 up, um, throughout the COVID crisis. Originally we
5 were scheduled to take, stop recruiting at the end of
6 February. Ah, the decision was made to continue to
7 recruit people, you know, through the COVID crisis,
8 'cause what we were finding is as we were offering
9 jobs to, to New York City residents they were no
10 longer interested or maybe they were in a, a high-
11 risk category that wouldn't allow them to go out
12 there and knock on doors in their communities and we
13 certainly understood that. So what we had the
14 ability to do is to pull certificates to hire some of
15 the most recent, ah, individuals in areas, um, which
16 we were struggling in, in finding someone to work for
17 us. So we were able to pull certificates that had
18 the people who most recently applied, ah, because we
19 know they were interested. We know they wanted to be
20 considered for these positions. Ah, so we were able
21 to do that and, and hire over 17,000 people, ah,
22 enumerators, to work nonresponse follow-up and, and
23 that's one of the, the strategies, um, it, you know,
24 again, I know, don't get me wrong, an extra two
25 weeks, absolutely we would have got more self-

1
2 response, but we also front loaded some things that
3 really were, were, a, a true, advantageous, ah, to
4 get it where we're at right now today in terms of
5 nonresponse follow-up. And the first is we started
6 eight days earlier. We were supposed to start
7 knocking on doors August 11 in New York City. We
8 were ready to go. Our offices were up and running.
9 We had staff trained. They were eager to get out
10 there. So we started on August 3. We provided
11 incentives. This was not part of our original plan
12 when we were gonna start knocking on doors August 11.
13 So we tried to get those people who were working,
14 rather than working 20 hours a week would you
15 consider working 25 hours a week? Those that were
16 working 15, could you work 20 hours a week? And, and
17 that increased the, the productivity of our
18 enumerators. And then, um, finally replacement
19 training. So we did not stop hiring in New York City
20 until September. We were scheduled to stop hiring in
21 July, train at the end of July for enumeration to be
22 August 11. We continued to hire and train. As we
23 lost someone we hired someone new to come in and take
24 their spot, to take that device, to ensure we had the

1
2 maximum amount of people we could have out there
3 knocking on doors.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: I know we've come
5 a long way from our Rhode Island visit. Um, I guess
6 my last question is, is what were the accountability
7 measures in place, um, and what did the bureau
8 implement to ensure that there was training that
9 really covered the health and safety guidelines that
10 the enumerators had to follow? From what I saw, you
11 know, people were very, very careful. Um, in terms
12 of those who were going door knocking, for example,
13 what was that training like?

14 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Yeah, so it,
15 it was something that was created kind of on the fly
16 because we never had planned on doing virtually
17 training. So there was a module that was
18 specifically COVID-19 related, which talked about,
19 you know, washing their hands. It talked about if
20 they're feeling ill not going out to work. It talked
21 about how to wear your mask properly. And we
22 provided masks to all of our employees. We even
23 provided masks to our employees to give to
24 respondents in packages of five as they were knocking
25 on doors to try to make it safe. Um, you know, we,

1 we incorporated social distancing. There's no need
2 for a, an enumerator to go into someone's home. They
3 can knock on the door and back up six feet. And, you
4 know, even the Center for Disease Control had issued
5 a joint statement with our director, that opening your
6 door to a census taker was low risk as a result of
7 some of these policies and procedures we put in
8 place. Now, it wasn't perfect but because we had
9 some people who didn't want to wear a mask and as we
10 learned about those individuals, as we were told, ah,
11 from community members we, we took, you know, the
12 appropriate action regarding, ah, lack of following
13 the guidance that, that we provided.

14
15 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you. I, I
16 appreciate that. I, I think, um, it was, it was
17 really, really effective to go and meet people where
18 they were at. So thank you for all of your work and,
19 and all the time and, and the commitment that you
20 gave. Um, I'm gonna turn it over back to the chair,
21 who I think also has a couple questions. Thank you.

22 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much,
24 ah, Council Member Rivera. Just two quick questions.
25 Ah, number one, how many mobile questionnaire systems

1 of the MQA event events were conducted in New York
2 City since March 12? I think you're in mute mode.

3 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: OK. All
4 right, yes, so, ah, we conducted over 2600 and still
5 counting. We, we just had one signed up for, ah, for
6 Brooklyn tomorrow. Um, but over 2600 mobile
7 questionnaire, ah, assistance events. And I, I have
8 to stress that is probably the, the one, ah, lesson
9 learned. This was not a planned activity of part of
10 the 2020 census. This was something that was
11 developed late in 2019, and I think this was a huge
12 success, because our partners, and I see Susie there
13 who, again, I don't how many Queens hosted and, and,
14 ah, I know Borough President Brewer as well, um, that
15 was awesome because and, and I know Council Member
16 Rivera did some as well. Having that trusted person
17 there talking about why the census was so important
18 and then just giving them that ability right then and
19 there. I know New York City Census did their own,
20 ah, which, which were a huge success in communities
21 throughout. So that's something that we definitely
22 need to build off of for, for 2030.

23 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: How, how does that
24 compare to other major cities?
25

1
2 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Great
3 question. I don't have that data. I can tell you
4 certainly within the New York region, which covers
5 from New Jersey, New York, all the way up, ah, into
6 Maine, and Puerto Rico, ah, clearly New York City
7 had, had the most amount of, of mobile questionnaire
8 assistance sites.

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: OK, and my last
10 question. Does the bureau believe the request
11 extension into April 30, 2021, for delivering
12 apportionment counts to the president and into July
13 31, 2021, for delivering redistricting data to the
14 state are still adequate? Does it still [inaudible]?
15 Does it still stand by those requests? Does the
16 bureau anticipate needing even more time to deliver
17 the data?

18 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Yeah, that's a
19 great question. Ah, and I just wish it was one I
20 could answer. But I don't, I don't have all the data
21 or the facts. All, all I can tell you is that, you
22 know, back earlier this year when COVID-19, ah, hit
23 we provided a plan, a replan, and that replan was
24 based upon statutory relief from that December 31
25 date, which is why we extended, ah, data collection

1 through October 31. I don't know if that, that
2 statutory relief will get approved or not. You know,
3 as of right now, as I understand it, December 31 is
4 the date in which we had to provide the apportionment
5 files to the president. And I guess we'll see over
6 the next two-and-a-half months if anything
7 [inaudible].
8

9 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Well, does the
10 bureau have enough staff to be to accomplish that in
11 this short amount of time?

12 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Yeah, it's a,
13 again, it's a great question. Unfortunately, that's
14 not something we do in the regions. That's really a
15 headquarters task and, and certainly, um, I would not
16 be the best one try to even address that.

17 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you. Let me
18 turn it over to the moderator, who will be calling up
19 on council members for questions.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Chair.
21 Ah, I will now call on council members in the order
22 they have used the Zoom raise hand function. Council
23 members, if you'd like to ask question and you have
24 not yet raised your hand please do so now. First we
25

1
2 will hear from Council Member Kallos. Council Member
3 Kallos, you may begin when ready.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you to the
5 chairs. I guess I just have some very specific and
6 technical questions. Any of the elected officials
7 sitting here have had to deal with a, a much smaller
8 problem and task than you've had to deal with in
9 terms of just identifying people who will go out and
10 vote, and, and in New York State we have some of the
11 worst voting laws in the country, so it's actually
12 quite difficult to vote. Um, at least before the
13 pandemic and even now just trying to get an absentee
14 ballot. Now it's gotten easier, but in the primary
15 it was incredibly difficult, too. So I, I, I guess
16 for the census [inaudible] it's just literally a
17 matter of getting somebody to go online and, and fill
18 out a form, which is incredibly easy, or, or just
19 call a number. So I guess, my question is just what
20 technology did you, are we using, do we use, do we
21 have it at our disposal to match up every single
22 address in New York City and New York State with the
23 people who we expect to be living there so that we
24 can do a directed canvass?

1
2 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: So, direct a
3 canvass in terms of census-related work, or are you
4 talking in terms of polling?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Per, per census.
6 So, so knowing that, ah, as of whatever credit report
7 or voter registration record that, that Ben Kallos
8 lived at this address. We can't get a response from
9 him, from whoever lives at this address now. Let's
10 do whatever we can, ah, to track down the person who
11 think might live there.

12 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Yeah. So I, I
13 think that's some of the analysis that, that, ah, Dr.
14 Salvo was talking about earlier that we'll, we'll
15 see, um, after the census data are, are tabulated.
16 Certainly, you know, getting someone to self-respond
17 is the best way for someone to fill out the census.
18 It's the best data, the highest quality data at the
19 lowest possible cost. The next best way is knocking
20 on that door and, and having that conversation with
21 that individual. Now we know we have administrative
22 resources that we can use in the event at the end of
23 the census, ah, in which, you know, we have a
24 household that has not responded. Um, but it's not a
25 one-size-fits-all, and in certain areas the

1 administrative records are very strong. In other
2 areas, primarily the areas where the self-response
3 rate is the lowest, this is where the, the
4 administrative records are probably the poorest.
5 And, and that's why, again, working with our
6 partners, and especially, I can't stress enough,
7 these mobile questionnaire assistance sites, ah, have
8 been fantastic. So we've been working with, with the
9 city, um, you know, early in the decade through the
10 local updated census addresses to ensure that the
11 city, that the US Census Bureau, have every possible
12 address where someone lives or could live, which is
13 the basis of ensuring we get a complete and accurate
14 count, and then working with partners as we're
15 knocking on those doors. And, and I know it was a
16 common concern. Many people got multiple knocks on
17 their door because we, you know, we believe there may
18 be multiple units within that single family
19 structure, ah, but, but weren't converted. So, um,
20 it, I don't know if that addressed your question, ah,
21 but it...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: I, I guess the,
24 the frustration, because of the secrecy oaths,
25 etcetera, for census you are the only ones who have

1
2 the information on who responded [inaudible]. Is
3 that correct?

4 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: That's
5 correct, yeah. Due to Title XIII we can't share that
6 information with anyone.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: So I guess my
8 frustration is as, as an elected official where, ah,
9 I think I'm in a high information district where
10 there's a lot of administrative information
11 available, but we have fallen behind, and so I guess
12 it's just frustration, I guess the question is like
13 how can we just target those who have been
14 unresponsive and in, in the campaign world if I want
15 a voter, if I, if I can't get them out the door I'm
16 gonna buy, I'm gonna get their email address, I'm
17 gonna call their mobile phone, hell, I'll even call
18 their family members until I get that person to
19 respond. Ah, and that's just talking about a vote,
20 not like whether or not we get billions of dollars in
21 federal funding. So I guess it's just how can we use
22 the same tools and technologies that many of the
23 elected officials here have used in, in the next, I
24 guess, 24 to 36 hours to really leave a, a no stone
25

1 unturned, ah, approach to getting everyone to
2 respond?
3

4 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Yeah, I mean,
5 the best thing that, that I can think of is, is using
6 the tools, you know, the self-response, that, where
7 areas, neighborhoods with low self-response. That,
8 that has been the, the areas in which we've had to
9 knock on doors the most. Those are the areas where
10 we have the, probably the greatest probability of
11 getting proxy data versus data directly from,
12 there's, there's just more chances to, to get proxy
13 data. So, so that I would say would be the focus.
14 I, I mean, we have data, either directly from a
15 household or, ah, via proxy for all but 2600, what
16 I'd say, 2367 addresses in New York City as of this
17 morning. Um, so it's, it's really, we're hopeful
18 that some of these people who, who maybe they would
19 never open up their door to us, maybe they're,
20 they're hearing a message, maybe they're gonna see
21 something tonight, maybe they're going to go by an
22 MQA event and self-respond, because that self-
23 response will supersede that proxy data that we could
24 from their neighbor on, you know, who lived in that
25 particular household.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KALLOS: Thank you.

3 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, Council
4 Member Kallos. We will now call on Council Member
5 Menchaca.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Thank you. Ah,
8 Jeff, I just also want to say thank you for all the
9 work you're doing and two quick questions. One, will
10 you commit to coming back to the council in front of
11 the committee's, ah, task force and work with us to
12 really build a 10-year plan. I feel like we engaged
13 you a year and some ago where we probably could have
14 benefitted from working with you and learning that
15 this pandemic has offered you. Could you, could you
16 come and join us for a conversation?

17 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: I, I think
18 that's a...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Afterwards?

20 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Yeah, I think
21 that's a fantastic idea. I will commit to doing
22 that. And the other thing I'll commit to is we have
23 a wonderful program, a data dissemination program
24 that teaches the public how to use this data that
25 we're collecting when we release it. You know,

1
2 whether it's for grant writing purposes or emergency
3 management planning, or just for, for basic community
4 planning. Ah, it's a free resource and I think it's
5 a great way to, to couple, um, the conversation
6 you're talking about with also helping your community
7 members and learning how they can use census data for
8 their benefits.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Beautiful.

10 Thank you for that. Ah, and the second question is
11 we, there were some questions about the work force
12 itself and how you adapted. Did you receive any
13 issues from staff that were already in motion and
14 before COVID, ah, entered into COVID world, and are
15 those things filed? Ah, I think, I'm anticipating
16 some issues that may have come up that might not have
17 been presented that we can also solve and, and I'm
18 talking about your staff, ah, the federal staff, and
19 do those get collected and can we, can we learn from
20 that as well?

21 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Yeah, and I'm,
22 I'm not sure I understand motions as far, ah, issues
23 employees had in, in the work they were conducting
24 or?

1 COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS 107
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yeah, the work.
3 Ah, I, I really want to hear from workers in terms of
4 what happened on the ground. Ah, PPE issues, any,
5 any of those kinds of things that are gonna be, I
6 think, important for us as we compare both the city
7 effort and the federal effort.

8 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Absolutely.
9 I, I think if it's, as long as it's not anything, you
10 know, ah, tied to Title XIII data or talking about
11 specific experiences, on knocking on particular doors
12 in a community, ah, I, I think that information can
13 be shared. And we are, and we can...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Awesome.

15 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: ...[inaudible]
16 every concern we receive.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Beautiful,
18 beautiful. That'll be kind of after, after all this.
19 And then the final question is, ah, I was, I was on a
20 phone call with some folks in Texas and they are
21 doing really well. They're gonna, they're, they're
22 already counting the number of new Congress people
23 that they're gonna have and the new dollars that are
24 coming in. Ah, are you already seeing, and will you
25 be able to see this kind of, ah, analysis and data

1 about how the execution happened state by state, city
2 urban center by city urban center? Is that something
3 we can expect in terms of, of information and do you
4 have some learning to share right now about other
5 cities that had did it just differently? Um, I, I
6 feel proud of what we've done here in the City of New
7 York. But it'd be great to kind of work with you to
8 get colleague information about other cities.
9

10 REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Yeah, I think
11 that's definitely something we could pull together.
12 You know, I talked earlier about all the partners
13 that, that signed up to, to partner with the Census
14 Bureau for 2020, as well as the commitments and, and
15 all the events they hosted. We certainly have that
16 available nationwide and we can pull that from the
17 largest cities. And I'll just tell you from my
18 experience, this is my third census, um, and you
19 know, I worked in the Dallas region in 2010 and in
20 the Detroit region in the Census 2000. I have never
21 seen a partnership effort, um, as I've seen in New
22 York City. I have never seen, you know, and it
23 started back when that, that whole citizenship
24 question debate. And there were some very loud
25 voices...

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COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yeah.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: And they kept, kept that momentum going all the way through the census. And it's, it's been an honor to work with all of you and all the partners, um, you know, throughout New York City. It's, I have never seen the, the effort, the perseverance, and, and the re-engineering as a result of COVID-19 that I've seen, um, from New York City partners.

COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Awesome. Thank you. Thank you for your time today.

REGIONAL DIRECTOR BAYLOR: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will now hear testimony from representatives of the public library systems. Each panelist will be given three minutes to speak. Panelists, once your name is called a member of our staff will unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will set the timer and give you the go-ahead to begin. I would now like to invite Jin Hu Bae to testify, followed by Jay Brandon, and then Iman Powe-Maynard. Jin Hu Bae, you may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

JIN HU BAE: Ah, if I may, ah, we already have an order set. Thank you very much. Um, the,

1 um, there will be Jay, um, who will be testifying
2 first. Um, and then myself, and then, um, Iman.
3 Will that be all right with the, with you and, ah,
4 everyone else?
5

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Sure, that's fine.
7 Please go ahead.

8 JIN HU BAE: Thank you. Jay.

9 JAY BRANDON: Great. Good, good
10 afternoon.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Mr. Brandon, I
12 believe you're on mute.

13 JAY BRANDON: Yeah, I was. All right,
14 thank you. Ah, good afternoon. I am Jay Brandon,
15 the civic engagement and community partnerships
16 manager of the New York Public Library. I'm joined
17 by my colleagues, Iman Powe-Maynard, civic engagement
18 manager of the Brooklyn Public Library, and Jin Hung
19 Bae, civic engagement manager at the Queens Public
20 Library. I'd like to first start out by thanking the
21 City Council Speaker, Corey Johnson, Chair Fernando
22 Cabrera, ah, other members of this committee, and the
23 Census Task Force cochairs, ah, Council Member
24 Carlina Rivera and Carlos Menchaca. Ah, as well as
25 the City Council for holding its meeting and your

1
2 tireless support of libraries and the services that
3 we provide to New York City. Additionally, I would
4 like to thank the NYC Census 2020 director, Julie
5 Menin, and the entire, ah, Census 2020 team, the
6 Complete Count Fund awardees, and specifically the US
7 Census Bureau's New York regional office for their
8 ongoing collaboration. We are grateful to the
9 council for this opportunity to testify, ah, to you
10 about our work and ensure that all New Yorkers were
11 counted in this 2020 census. For over a century the
12 libraries have been a committed community partner and
13 vital hub. We have over 217 libraries across our
14 diverse city and we are a trusted partner, ah, in
15 conducting this democratic effort here in the United
16 States. As essential providers of information and
17 opportunity for all, essential providers of essential
18 information and opportunity, libraries are aptly
19 suited to ensure New Yorkers are counted and, and
20 disseminate accurate information. As a key citywide
21 partner the free library system developed a proposal
22 that reinforced our strength as community conveners,
23 provided crucial technology, and internet access, as
24 well as offered a trusted and safe place for patrons
25 to be counted. In preparation for our work to

1 support the census, the New York Public Library,
2 Brooklyn and Queens Public Library, created an
3 extensive plan to connect hard-to-count communities
4 to vital information and technology resources. 110
5 of our branches were identified to receive additional
6 census support, technology, collateral, and
7 programming. This included staff. We teamed up with
8 the US Census Bureau to host hundreds of census job
9 recruitment sessions in our branches to build early
10 awareness and later drive self, ah, self-response
11 rates. We prepared hundreds of dedicated devices to
12 allow for quick and easy access to the census
13 websites, averting possible scams and long lines for
14 public computers. To ensure patrons fully
15 participated in the census at our neighborhood
16 branches, the three library systems collaborated on a
17 culturally competent marketing campaign designed to
18 engage New York City's diverse communities and drive
19 self-response rates. Each library system hired a
20 team of multilingual census navigators, who began
21 visiting branches, training staff, and reaching out
22 to other CCF awardees and partners...

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

1 JAY BAYNARD: ...preparing to launch
2
3 citizen's programming. Brooklyn, ah, Public Library
4 navigators began visiting every, ah, Brooklyn Public
5 Library branch, 59 in total, to deliver comprehensive
6 census and community service trainings to each, ah,
7 team member. In addition to its own comprehensive
8 training, QPL navigators assisted in information
9 sessions for front-line staff, children's librarians,
10 and afterschool specialists, as well as establish new
11 and deeper connections with organizations working
12 with undercounted populations. QPL collaborated with
13 City Council Member Daniel Dromm and Barry Grodenchik
14 to host recruitment fairs in Elmhurst, Glen Oaks,
15 Bella Rose, and Queens Village libraries. NYPL
16 navigators scheduled census cafes, public programs
17 offering census information in English and Spanish
18 and established partnerships with organizations such
19 as the Apollo Theater, the National Black Leadership
20 Commission on Health to reinforce the importance of
21 census in familiar community spaces. Along with NYC
22 Census 2020 and other citywide partners, libraries
23 began preparing for citywide opening, open house
24 events on April 1, Census Day. We, we had We Count
25 Families story times, cultural events that attract

1 new patrons and interactive programs to welcome all
2 New Yorkers, specifically those most impacted by the
3 digital divide. Census messaging was incorporated
4 into existing channels such as ESOL classes, New
5 American workshops, early literacy story times, and
6 other adult programming sessions. By the week of
7 March 12 the official launch of the census, of the
8 census self-response period libraries were fully
9 prepared to execute a sophisticated, comprehensive,
10 full-scale, in-person campaign to get an accurate
11 count through engaging programming, easily accessible
12 kiosks with technology at branches, fully trained
13 staff, and partnerships with local CBOs, and then
14 everything changed. I'd like to pass it to Jin.

15
16 JIN HU BAE: Thank you very much, Jay.

17 So the COVID-19 pandemic affected our library
18 systems, as it did many other organizations, shutting
19 down locations and disrupting our in-person outreach
20 plans. As New Yorkers faced a new reality we shifted
21 our programming and engagement online. As trusted
22 community voices we know that when we speak about the
23 census our patrons take note. So we continued to
24 prioritize sharing news and information. We
25 coordinated with NYC Census 2020 on messaging to

1 maximize the impact of social media campaigns and
2 newsletters. Our newsletters reach a combined 2
3 million subscribers and NYPL's NYPL Connect and Book
4 of the Day newsletters in particular reach 1.2
5 million. Libraries continue to share PSAs via online
6 programming, including story times, ESOL classes, and
7 older adult programs. Our city, state, and federal
8 representatives also delivered PSAs and on QPL's
9 Facebook page their videos have garnered over 17-1/2
10 thousand views. Turning to census-dedicated
11 programming, our navigators were absolutely crucial.
12 BPL's navigators hosted Q&As on BPL's social media
13 accounts, a teen census panel, and a teletown hall,
14 teletown halls in Spanish and Bengali with CUNY
15 Census School and other local partners. QPL's
16 navigators brought together the US Census Bureau, NYC
17 Census 2020, CUNY Census School, and 11 local
18 partners for 10 Q&As held in 10 different languages.
19 Navigators also played a critical role in other
20 engagement opportunities. As census experts who
21 speak a variety of languages, they were very well
22 suited for executing direct calls to action. They
23 assisted in citywide phone banking and staffed
24 library census support lines. And last, but not
25

1 least, we continued to train our staff and
2 stakeholders to be effective census advocates. BPL
3 and QPL held census ambassador trainings, inviting
4 volunteers, donor groups, and board members. NYPL's
5 navigators led a census-focused conversation for a
6 virtual staff conference. And now I'd like to pass
7 on to Iman, ah, from Brooklyn Public Library. Thank
8 you.
9

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

11 IMAN POWE-MAYNARD: Census navigators
12 along with library partners and volunteers safely
13 expanded census outreach outdoors as our neighbors
14 returned to the new normal. Recognizing that one in
15 five New York City residents don't have reliable
16 broadband access and that some may not engage with
17 virtual offerings, the three systems brought census
18 messaging to people's doorsteps. In collaboration
19 with NYC Census we conducted a direct mail campaign
20 to target low-responding neighborhoods across the
21 city. We placed multilingual posters in high-
22 priority ZIP codes and conducted billboard campaigns
23 in high-traffic, hard to count neighborhoods.
24 Brooklyn Public Library put resources into
25 multilingual outreach across the borough. BPL's

1 collaboration with the YMCA of Greater New York and
2 NYC Census produced two call out the count virtual
3 phone banking sessions in August and September,
4 reaching over 4700 households. Census navigators
5 also collaborated with the Census Bureau and local
6 partners to begin tabling outside of BPL branches and
7 across Brooklyn, from community boards to churches to
8 affordable housing units in low-response
9 neighborhoods. In August BPL's Bookmobile joined the
10 NYC Census march for racial justice caravan, which
11 traveled through Sunset Park to Prospect Park. In
12 September the library held two census tailgate events
13 featuring the Bookmobile, back to school giveaways,
14 music, and food distribution from the campaign
15 against hunger. At the end of the month BPL hosted
16 skate for the census, which provided free roller
17 skate rentals to participants who completed the
18 census. In addition to collaborative direct
19 mailings, posters, and billboards, BPL promoted
20 census messaging on Link NYC screens, waiting rooms
21 across hospitals and doctors' offices, and on self-
22 check kiosks at our grab and go branches.
23 Additionally, BPL recently donated 58 cases of the We
24 Count 2020 census picture book to partners. Earlier
25

1
2 this summer New York Public Library collaborated with
3 local stakeholders to integrate census messaging and
4 the delivery of services and resources.

5 Collaborations with uptown Grand Central and East
6 Harlem helps connect census messaging to the Latinx
7 community and partnerships with Assembly Members, ah,
8 Yu Lai Mao and Charles Falls strategically targeted
9 diverse communities with disproportionately low self-
10 response rates. As NYPL began its first phase of
11 branch openings it partnered with the Census Bureau
12 to establish outdoor tabling events in a scaffolded
13 approach that utilizes street funds as enumeration
14 hub. The library partnered with elected officials to
15 publicize and provide PPE and school supplies at
16 mobile questionnaire assistance events, which helped
17 enumerate 200, over 200 households. NYPL also
18 cohosted the virtual program, Community Action
19 Benefits in the Census, featuring Q&A with Census
20 Bureau regional director, Jeff Baylor. The library
21 continued to host virtual programs that kept
22 participants informed on key census updates. We
23 prepared...

24 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

1
2 IMAN POWE-MAYNARD: ...weekly census
3 emails for [inaudible] branch, almost done. QPL
4 census team helped support the US Census Bureau and
5 community partners with MQA events across multiple
6 locations as well as outdoor food distribution sites,
7 health events, transit hubs, and more. The QPL
8 Bookmobile was also deployed at a Richmond Hill event
9 co-organized by the Queens borough president's office
10 and community partner. QPL hosted five census back
11 to school events with library friends and co-
12 organized Queens Discounted, Queens' marquee event
13 for New York City Census Week of Action. The library
14 also deployed street teams who counted 1100
15 households in Flushing, Corona, and Richmond Hill.
16 In October QPL supported the Mayor's Office of
17 Immigrant Affairs, um, China CDC, at a car in the
18 National Black Leadership Conference. The concerted
19 outreach of our three library systems aligned with
20 the steady increase we saw in several hard to count
21 communities over the last two months. Brooklyn,
22 Queens, and Staten Island, who have the most hard to
23 count populations in the state, saw their self-
24 response rate beat those of 2010. We knew that
25 achieve a 2020 census complete count in New York City

1 was going to be a challenge with the added
2 complication brought by the pandemic. But New York
3 City libraries took on that challenge. We had to
4 pivot quickly and our partnerships were invaluable as
5 we safely engaged with as many New Yorkers as
6 possible to increase the count. Thank you.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
9 now turn to public testimony. I'd like to remind
10 everyone that unlike our typical council hearings we
11 will be calling on individuals one by one to testify.
12 Each panelist will be given two minutes to speak.
13 Please begin once the sergeant has started the timer.
14 Council members who have questions for a particular
15 panelist should use the Zoom raise hand function, and
16 I will call on you after the panelist has completed
17 their testimony. For panelists, once your name is
18 called a member of our staff will unmute you and the
19 Sergeant at Arms will set the timer and give you the
20 go ahead to begin. Please wait for the sergeant to
21 announce that you may begin before delivering your
22 testimony. I would now like to welcome Mita Anand to
23 testify, followed by Winnie Chin and then Howard Chi.
24 Mita Anand, you may begin upon the sergeant's
25 announcement.

1 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

2 MITA ANAND: Thank you so very much,
3 Chair Cabrera, Cochairs Menchaca and Rivera, and
4 members of the Committee on Governmental Operations
5 and the 2020 census task force. I am Mita Anand,
6 Census 2020 Senior Fellow at the New York Immigration
7 Coalition. The New York Immigration Coalition serves
8 as the convener for New York Counts 2020 and through
9 that I have been acting as the facilitator for New
10 York Counts 2020 and I am delivering my remarks in
11 that capacity. Ah, for well over two years New York
12 Counts 2020 has been working through its partners,
13 many of whom are here with us today, ah, to achieve a
14 fair and accurate census. I want to thank the
15 council for their amazing partnership as well as our
16 partners and, of course, New York City Census, and I
17 would thank Jeff, but he disappeared. Ah, at this
18 point, ah, I am not going to emphasize all the work
19 that we have done. But I want to direct people's
20 attention to something that's already been discussed,
21 which is what we're talking about when we're talking
22 about response rates and what accurate and quality
23 response rates look like. The Census Bureau has
24 articulated the goal of having 99% of households
25

1 enumerated. Today we heard Jeff Baylor say that New
2 York City is at 99.8%. What we know is that we have
3 rushed to get to that number, that with [inaudible]
4 the nonresponse follow-up that the Census Bureau is
5 twice as likely to miss people in a household that
6 would otherwise be counted if we were using self-
7 response. We also know that using administrative
8 records to count people hurts our most vulnerable
9 communities. It hurts young children. It misses
10 black men and it misses our immigrant communities.
11 These are communities that don't really have those
12 administrative records available. And we also know
13 that the Census Bureau has been relying on proxies
14 after trying to reach households after only three
15 times versus six times. So what we're saying is when
16 we hear 99 point...

17
18 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

19 MITA ANAND: Ah, I will just conclude with
20 this. Ah, when we're talking about that and we're
21 talking about this shortened, truncated processing
22 period that has to end by December 31, ah, we are
23 looking at the possible undoing of all of our hard
24 work. And it's incumbent upon all of us to do
25 everything we can to pressure the Commerce

1
2 Department, the Census Bureau, the Congress, to make
3 sure that we get our statutory reporting deadlines
4 extended so that all of our hard work does not get
5 put to waste. Thank you very much.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Next, I
7 would like to invite Winnie Chin to testify and then
8 Howard Chi, followed by Katie Lowenberger. Winnie
9 Chin, you may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

10 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

11 WINNIE CHIN: Thank you, Chair Cabrera,
12 cochairs, and members of the committee. I'm Winnie
13 Chin, with the New York Immigration Coalition,
14 convener for New York Counts 2020. For the past two
15 years NYC and our partners have been working on the
16 Census 2020. And there have been many hurdles, both
17 anticipated and not. And I want to thank the council
18 for their partnership through this long process.
19 While the NYC, our partners, and NYC Census 2020 have
20 shown amazing efforts to increase self-response, the
21 census has been subject to many headwinds, with which
22 we are all familiar, the continued assault by the
23 Trump administration, targeting undocumented
24 immigrants, confusion over the end date, diminishing
25 number of groups on the ground, and the shortage of

1 MQAs. Sorry, Jeff. As we chase towards the finish
2 line we must continue to do everything we can to
3 further encourage self-response. I know there's only
4 36 hours, but in the past few hours NYC Edge has
5 launched a text bank in Brooklyn and a series of
6 robocalls with Whoopie Goldberg in the Bronx, because
7 communities at risk of being undercounted are not
8 coincidentally the same ones most affected by COVID-
9 19 and chronic underfunding. This gets that 0.1%.
10 So now I ask what is left to be done? Three things.
11 One, disseminate. For the next few hours, 36 hours,
12 mention the census at every single event. Leverage
13 every partnership. Two, advocate. We are concerned
14 that the urgent data processing will lead to more
15 distortions that will hurt our communities of color.
16 We need to make sure Congress extends the statutory
17 reporting deadlines for the census. And three,
18 empower. Despite the census enumeration coming to an
19 end, City Council still has an opportunity to make
20 sure New Yorkers' voices are heard. This city, home
21 to over three million New Yorkers, immigrant New
22 Yorkers, many of whom had held the front lines for us
23 during the peak of the pandemic response, are left
24 out of the electoral process. We urge your support
25

1
2 for Intro 1867 to empower 900,000 New Yorkers with a
3 vote in local elections, a step towards acknowledging
4 the diverse voices, and expanding the representation
5 in our city. We are proud of what NYC has done in
6 the face...

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

8 WINNIE CHIN: ...[inaudible] pandemic and
9 an administration hostile to successful census. But
10 we what we have learned from the past two years is
11 that when we work together collectively we can
12 achieve great results, even despite the pandemic and
13 an antagonizing administration. So thank all of you
14 for your attention to this issue and your
15 partnerships.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I would
17 now like to welcome Howard Chi to testify, followed
18 by Katie Lowenberger and then Lana Cohen. Howard
19 Chi, you may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

20 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

21 HOWARD CHI: Um, thank you, Chair
22 Cabrera, and thank you to Council Members Menchaca
23 and Rivera and the City Council at large for your
24 unprecedented support for civic engagement on this
25 particular issue. Um, I'll cut to the chase. Uh,

1
2 the decennial census is the primary source of high-
3 quality data on Asian communities and Asian ethnic
4 groups and it's vital for representation and advocacy
5 for our communities. Um, I want to highlight three,
6 well, actually, first, um, I'm hoping that this is
7 just the start of a conversation about what, um,
8 worked really well for the census and, um, and what,
9 ah, needs to be, what challenges we had and what
10 needs to be improved so that, ah, we can document
11 this so that 10 years from now we don't, we're not
12 starting from scratch. Um, so I do want to highlight
13 three things that kind of came up, ah, during this
14 process. I think that the city's unprecedented
15 investment in, ah, census outreach has, ah, enabled a
16 great deal of planning and the creation of an
17 infrastructure that's been put in place to, ah, well
18 before the start of the 2020 Census in March. Ah,
19 unfortunately a lot of the planning had to go out of
20 the door because of COVID, but I think the city's
21 census office, I want to, um, give kudos to them to
22 pivoting to, um, providing a lot of resources for
23 text and phone banking and a lot of virtual
24 engagement, ah, and enabled community partners to
25 make use of that, sort of that lost time, ah, in

1
2 March and April and May. Ah, nevertheless, we knew
3 that virtual outreach was never gonna take the place
4 of in-person outreach, um, especially, ah, among our
5 Asian, ah, immigrant communities and so, um, in our
6 testimony we showed the improvements that happened
7 within the Asian community and the response rates
8 where Asian communities lagged behind the city
9 overall self-response rates, ah, in May, at the
10 beginning of May. Ah, but once we started doing in-
11 person, um, the Asian outreach rates, ah, surpassed
12 that of the citywide rates. Um, that just shows the
13 value of in-language, in-person outreach, um...

14 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

15 HOWARD CHI: ...[inaudible] just the
16 voices in the community. And then finally I think, I
17 hope that we in the City Council continues to invest
18 in this so civic engagement infrastructure, ah, it
19 would be a pity to have to rebuild it, um, 10 years
20 from now. Thank you.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I would
22 now like to invite Katie Lowenberger to testify,
23 followed by Lana Cohen, and then Elizabeth Angeles.
24 Katie Lowenberger, you may begin upon the sergeant's
25 announcement.

1 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

2 KATIE LOWENBERGER: Thank you. Good
3
4 afternoon. My name is Carline Buccino and I'm
5 testify on behalf of Katie Lowenberger, president and
6 CEO at Community Resource Exchange, or CRE, and on
7 behalf of CRE we want to thank the New York City
8 Council Governmental Operations Committee and the
9 2020 Census Task Force for holding this important
10 hearing on the 2020 census in New York City. CRE is
11 a nonprofit that provides consulting services to
12 social sector organization. We serve more than 500
13 organizations a year, both here in New York City and
14 across the country. And last year we worked with,
15 strengthened, and advised hundreds of groups leading
16 the charge on today's critical issues, immigrant
17 rights, racial equity, health, education, housing,
18 hunger, and policy advocacy. These groups provide
19 vital community-based services that are lifelines to
20 New Yorkers. And last year CRE was extremely
21 grateful for the council's support as we partnered to
22 train and support nonprofits and CBOs to pursue
23 census outreach and education. Thanks to your
24 funding, CRE supported 250 organizations that have in
25 turn reached tens of thousands New Yorkers with their

1 census outreach. Our sessions enable people to
2 conduct teach-ins within their neighborhood, equip
3 front-line healthcare workers to answer census-
4 related questions, and have trained and helped
5 complete count fund awardees to conduct census
6 education in our new virtual world. Throughout the
7 pandemic we've supported the nonprofit sector as a
8 whole by convening with organization leaders,
9 providing customized consulting support, and offering
10 crisis-focused webinars for organizations facing
11 difficult decisions. Nonprofits have continued their
12 unwavering dedication to ensuring that New York City
13 gets a fair and accurate count. After yesterday's
14 announcement we know we can't wait another minute.
15 All of us involved who care about this city need to
16 do everything we can to ensure that as many New
17 Yorkers as possible are counted in the next day and a
18 half. From organizations doing critical outreach
19 work, local government agencies supporting this
20 effort, New York City residents who can help, help
21 get the word out in their neighborhoods and
22 communities, as well as go online and complete their
23 own census [inaudible].
24

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: You can wrap up if
3 you'd like.

4 KATIE LOWENBERGER: Sorry, OK, thank you.
5 CRE remains committed to continuing our partnership
6 with the city and its nonprofit partners to reach as
7 many New Yorkers as possible and secure its fair
8 share of resources and representation. Thank you for
9 listening.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I would
11 now like to invite Lana Cohen to testify, followed by
12 Elizabeth Angeles and then Julio Rivera. Lana
13 Cohen, you may begin upon the sergeant's
14 announcement.

15 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

16 LANA COHEN: Thank you. Hi there. I'm
17 Lana Cohen. I'm testifying on behalf of the United
18 Neighborhood Houses. Thank you so much, Chair
19 Cabrera, and to the City Council for this opportunity
20 to testify on the census. Just for background, UNH
21 is a policy and social change organization
22 representing 44 settlement houses across New York
23 City, and our network reaches over 765,000 New
24 Yorkers each year, all through the lens of delivering
25 holistic services to families and local communities.

1 With, ah, big thanks to the City Council, um, and of
2 course the leadership of Council Member Rivera and
3 Council Member Menchaca, UNH was identified as a
4 citywide census partner, ah, which was incredibly
5 helpful because, ah, therefore we were able to
6 support our 19, ah, member settlement houses that
7 were also Complete Count Fund awardees. Um, so we
8 participated in the citywide coordinated effort, ah,
9 to make phone calls, to collect pledge cards, and to
10 do so much more to really connect everyone, ah,
11 living in New York City with the type of support they
12 need to understand their role in the census, as well
13 as the, ah, within the broader context of democracy
14 in New York City. UNH is committed to a complete
15 counsel because the census is about money, power, and
16 respect, and we want to do everything to ensure that
17 people have voices in our city. Which brings me to
18 my last point, ah, which is really, again, looking
19 back to democracy. Immigrant New Yorkers have not
20 only been historically undercounted in the census,
21 but also disenfranchised from elections, ah, despite
22 having lived here, worked here, ah, paid taxes to New
23 York for years. And so that's why I also wanted to
24 say, ah, that UNH urges the City Council to pass
25

1
2 Intro 1867, legislation introduced by a member of
3 this committee, Council Member Ydanis Rodriguez. Ah,
4 this legislation would amend the City Charter to
5 permit lawfully present residents, ah, to vote in
6 municipal elections...

7 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

8 LANA COHEN: Um, and I'll close by saying
9 that the current pandemic highlights the critical
10 need for expanded enfranchisement as well as long-
11 term, ah, engagement among all of our residents in
12 New York to ensure that, ah, people really do have a
13 say in the direction of our city. Thank you for the
14 opportunity to testify.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I will
16 now welcome Elizabeth Angeles to testify, followed by
17 Julio Rivera. Elizabeth Angeles, you may begin upon
18 the sergeant's announcement.

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

20 ELIZABETH ANGELES: Good afternoon,
21 council members. My name is Elizabeth Angeles. I am
22 the senior director of advocacy at the United Way of
23 New York City, and we are so thankful for the
24 council's investment and partnership in the Census
25 2020 efforts. We really believe that investing in

1 organizations that have had the trust of those who
2 have been historically undercounted has been the
3 right focus, and for 80 years the United Way of New
4 York City has partnered across community, business,
5 and government to support low-income New Yorkers. A
6 complete and accurate count has been core to our
7 mission, particularly as we think about supporting
8 programs that many low-income New Yorkers access.
9 And since the start of the Complete Count Fund we
10 have served as a network convener. We helped guide
11 the development of the New York City Census 2020
12 campaign plan, the development of the Complete Count
13 Fund goals, and we facilitated collaboration among
14 community-based partners. We also had five staff
15 members as grant managers, providing support for 66
16 of the 157 awardees, where we reviewed weekly
17 reports, helped awardees adjust to the virtual
18 environment, and challenges of the pandemic, among
19 other responsibilities. Our managed awardees account
20 for over 94,000 completes and more broadly we reached
21 over 275,000 New Yorkers through our outreach. As
22 both a citywide partner and CCF awardee, we partnered
23 with Hester Street and Robin Hood to host convenings
24 for organizations to share best practices and
25

1 recommendations on how to reach communities. We
2 recently launched a micro grants initiative with
3 Robin Hood and Hester Street to call the census last
4 mile grant, where we host weekly calls with updates.
5 And so in conclusion, we've all worked together to
6 reduce the gap between the national self-response
7 rate and our city's, and we come to the City Council
8 to share these experiences and highlight a few key
9 asks. First, one of our goals as part of this effort
10 was to build greater civic engagement through out
11 outreach. We ask the New York City Council to
12 allocate resources to continue the work of supporting
13 community-based organizations in building civic
14 engagement, particularly in communities...

16 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

17 ELIZABETH ANGELES: May I finish? Thank
18 you. That have been historically disconnected across
19 the city. And second we ask that the council capture
20 all that we have learned to draw from this for the
21 next census. And the New York City Council has the
22 power and resources to invest in research and
23 analysis that can help us effectively document what
24 has worked and what we have learned. And finally we
25 ask that the council invest in census outreach every

1
2 decade and begin to plan for the census much earlier
3 than we did this year to ensure that we have a
4 complete and accurate count for New York in the
5 future. Thank you so much.

6 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I will
7 now call on Julio Rivera to testify. Mr. Rivera, you
8 may begin upon the sergeant's announcement.

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

10 JULIO RODRIGUEZ: Thank you. Chairperson
11 Cabrera, Chairperson Rivera, Chairperson Menchaca,
12 and members of the Committee on Governmental
13 Operations and the 2020 Census Task Force. Thank you
14 for extending the opportunity to deliver this
15 testimony today. My name is Julio Rivera. I'm
16 northeast civic engagement campaign manager for the
17 National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed
18 Officials, NALEO Educational Fund. NALEO Educational
19 Fund is the leading nonprofit, nonpartisan
20 organization that facilitates for Latino participation
21 in the American political process, from citizenship
22 to public service. In view of the dynamic nature of
23 New York City's population, securing a complete and
24 accurate count of all residents in 2020 is of
25 paramount importance to the city's future. This task

1 was daunting even before the coronavirus pandemic
2 disrupted daily life and activities. NALEO
3 Educational Fund has consistently found that self-
4 response rates trend lower as the concentration of
5 Latino residents of a [inaudible] city or county
6 increase. In addition, the share of the city's
7 residents who are young children, one of the most
8 likely subgroups to be undercounted in past censuses,
9 is larger than the national average. Due to the
10 pandemic, get out the count mobilization was
11 challenging because it had to shift from an in-person
12 to a digital operation. These methods were not
13 always the most effective in reaching the city's
14 hardest to count population who may not tuned into a
15 census town hall or find themselves on a phone bank
16 call list. The extended census timeline also forced
17 stakeholders to conserve resources and continually
18 adjust messaging. The bureau's frequent changes to
19 its plans frustrated its community partners. Most
20 recently the bureau's move to shorten the deadline
21 from the announced date of October 31 and related
22 legal battles created in the environment of
23 uncertainty and confusion as to the final deadline
24 for residents to be counted. Moreover, NALEO
25

1
2 Educational Fund is concerned that data collected
3 from large numbers of New York City households during
4 the nonresponse follow-up operations is likely
5 incomplete and omits some households that should and
6 would have been counted if counting had taken
7 place...

8 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time's expired.

9 JULIO RODRIGUEZ: ...under better
10 circumstances. I thank the city for its efforts and
11 foresight in fund an unprecedented outreach effort.
12 The diversity and collaboration between partners was
13 invaluable. But we also urge the city to continue
14 being engaged and vigilant on census policy and the
15 delivery of accurate census data moving forward.

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you, thank you.
17 At this time if your name has not been called and you
18 wish to testify please raise your hand using the Zoom
19 raise hand function. OK, seeing no hands raised I
20 will now turn it over to Chair Cabrera for closing
21 remarks.

22 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
23 Ah, before I give my closing remarks I wanna give an
24 opportunity to Council Member Rivera and Council
25

1 Member Menchaca, ah, for some final words and then
2 I'll, I'll come back to, ah, to close it up.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: If, if it's OK, I
5 just wanted to ask the, the panelists that are left,
6 um, a quick question. I, I wanted to thank you. I
7 know that some of you continue to provide essential
8 in-person services and maybe it was food
9 distribution, you know, maybe it was just helping
10 those who aren't necessarily digitally savvy, you
11 know, just go on with day-to-day responsibilities,
12 and, and I thank you for that. I especially know my
13 community-based organizations here, ah, took census
14 outreach very, very seriously and I, and I give them
15 so much credit, whether it's [inaudible] or Cooper
16 Square Vision or Bonna and the work that we did
17 specifically in public housing was really important
18 to me. Um, I wanted to ask, as your organization did
19 outreach what was maybe the most common response
20 regarding this census that you received from
21 individuals? Anyone can chime in, sorry.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Maybe since we have a
23 few different, um, ah, panelists, if, if you have a
24 answer feel free.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Maybe Howard or
3 Winnie or, well, I know 'cause we were doing texts,
4 we were doing text-a-thons, or [inaudible].

5 HOWARD CHI: I guess I got unmuted.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Please, yeah. I
7 know when I was out there I received a lot of
8 different kinds of responses. Some of them were I
9 don't receive benefits, or I'm not a citizen. I am
10 just trying to figure out how I can always get better
11 at outreach and how we can do this, you know, much
12 better in terms of whatever we need to do in, in
13 reaching New Yorkers that are historically
14 marginalized and have really been targeted by this
15 federal administration.

16 HOWARD CHI: Um, ah, I will give an
17 example from my staff. Um, basically it comes down
18 to, um, there's one individual who was adamant about
19 not wanting to fill out the census, right, ah, saying
20 that it was, um, I think he thought it was a
21 conspiracy and distrusted government and that kind of
22 thing. But I think having a conversation with that
23 individual and just showing that the, the building,
24 um, just over a short period of time a bond and
25 saying that, um, you know, you do matter, and then

1 showing that you, and the giveaways also helped in,
2 in getting people to engage, and once you have that
3 conversation that person actually turned around and
4 started bringing his friends. Um, I think part of it
5 was there's, you know, certainly giveaways help, but
6 I think just having a conversation with that
7 individual and showing that there are people from the
8 community that really care about the census and that
9 there is, um, a reason why we're out there, ah,
10 pushing for it, um, those conversations go a long
11 way, and I think it just comes down to having an
12 individual conversation and finding the thing that
13 the person cares about and tying to the census,
14 because we can find censuses in all parts of our
15 lives and there's always a way to tie to it. So I
16 think that's the way we ended up connecting the
17 people.

19 JAY BRANDON: Ah, Jay Brandon from the
20 New York Public Library. I'll add, um, just looking
21 and to answer the question, but also thinking about
22 it holistically, um, as some of the folks have talked
23 about the ongoing sustaining effort, I believe it
24 Council Member Menchaca that talked about, ah,
25 looking to build for 10 years ahead. Ah, the

1
2 collaboration that the New York Public Library and
3 the library systems in general had with the US Census
4 Bureau I think was very fundamental to us being able
5 to offer, um, a number of mobile assistant, ah,
6 mobile questionnaire assistance, ah, events at our
7 branches, um, as we started to go throughout our
8 reopening. I think the collaboration that we took to
9 engaging with, ah, elected officials around the city,
10 we worked with a number of council members, a number
11 of Assembly members, um, to host events at our
12 branches that allowed for cross collaborations
13 between the two entities, the library or the elected
14 official, um, to tap into all of our networks to, um,
15 be able to disseminate information to community
16 members around these events that were happening to be
17 a draw. Um, and then from there the Census Bureau,
18 um, was able to provide staff members to take their
19 responses. Um, looking at, you know, as those are
20 efforts to get the count, um, recognizing to, to
21 answer specifically the questions that the council
22 member asked, um, folks largely, you know, the
23 interactions were of reservation and hesitation, um,
24 having fear of interacting with government officials.
25 While the census, um, doesn't have a law enforcement

1 aspect to it, it is still a US government, um,
2 exercise. It is still a government, it's still a
3 government exercise that involves passing along
4 information. Um, and so oftentimes when we were
5 engaging with community members, when we did our
6 first initial set of town halls to ask some of those
7 questions that was some feedback that we got, um, is
8 that folks, you know, just have a fear of, you know,
9 what it means to engage with the, you know, with the
10 government in that manner, um, and I believe having
11 opportunities for the collaboration with elected
12 officials and other community partners, um, allowed
13 for us to push past some of those challenges.

15 MITA ANAND: So at the New York
16 Immigration Coalition we actually put together a very
17 specific messaging package to deal with the issues we
18 knew, ah, regularly came up. So to be, you know,
19 directly responsive, ah, it, it was questions like if
20 I have a visa why do I have to respond to this? The
21 government already has my information. So I think
22 some of us were already ready for the questions of
23 misinformation, disinformation, fear of government.
24 Um, but it, it, at some points came down to really
25 logistical moments of saying like no, this is a

1
2 separate counting operation. So through the
3 education work we did leading up to the get out the
4 count moment we were able to figure out what those
5 questions were. So it was, ah, questions like you
6 referred to, like sometimes it's I'm not a citizen,
7 is it me, other times it's well, um, you know, would
8 a child count? Why would you count children? They
9 can't vote. And I think a lot of it is that
10 importing of norms from other parts of our lives and
11 assuming that they apply to the census and finding
12 the language in the ways that Jay and Howard
13 explained, and finding the partnerships that they
14 explained. But finding the language to make sure
15 people understand like no, this is applicable to you.
16 Um, I think what was unfortunate with COVID is that
17 moment to have that longer conversation was
18 diminished and, and it really is that longer
19 conversation and we knew that going into it, that it
20 would be the longer conversation that was important.
21 Um, so, so when people say well, it doesn't apply to
22 me, they might just keep walking down the street
23 because they don't to want to then stop and engage in
24 a COVID era about like why it actually would apply to
25 them.

1
2 UNIDENTIFIED: I just wanted to add
3 something from, um, community resource exchange
4 experience to build on what Howard, Jay, and Mita
5 shared. So building on the work that the New York
6 Immigration Coalition and other partners had done
7 around kind of messaging in key concerns, we built
8 out a couple of scenarios and used that in a lot of
9 our teaching trainings so we reaching kind of
10 nonprofit staff who would be working directly with
11 community members, talking with them about the
12 census, um, and ensuring that those kind of trusted
13 messengers had key messages kind of elevate our
14 pitches quick sort of responses in their pocket for
15 those different common concerns that we knew, um,
16 different community members might be concerned about,
17 living arrangements, language, religion, Social
18 Security number, citizenship, etcetera. So making
19 sure people had really concise, easily memorably
20 talking points that were readily accessible, whether
21 it was in-person or virtual. So thanks to all of the
22 partners who, who did the ground work on that.

23 UNIDENTIFIED: Yeah, to add a little bit
24 on, agreeing with everybody's statements thus far,
25 but I think that's where Title XIII and

1 confidentiality come into play and why it's so
2 important. I think one of the main barriers when
3 you're talking about the hardest to count communities
4 is that mistrust and that distrust that that
5 information is going to be used against them, right?
6 When I'm living doubled up, um, when I'm living in
7 untraditional households, um, I may not have all of
8 that information for the other people that live in
9 the same housing unit as I do. Or I may, ah, fear
10 giving out that information. Um, so it's, it's
11 reassuring folks that their information won't be used
12 against them, and making sure that that information,
13 that message is also coming from those trusted
14 messengers, right. It's the community groups that
15 the city, ah, so wisely funded, um, to do this
16 outreach work and it's, it's from elected officials
17 like yourselves, council members, um, you're, you're
18 all trusted messengers in your own communities, um,
19 so I think having, making sure that that message is
20 coming from that right messenger is also key.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER RIVERA: Thank you.
23 Thanks, everyone. And that's, that's all the
24 questions I had, Mr. Chair. That's exactly it. We,
25 we needed you and, and you all stepped up

1
2 tremendously. So, so thank you, thank you from the
3 very beginning, from the court case to, ah, wrapping
4 up our early morning efforts. Thank you.

5 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
6 Ah, Council Member Menchaca, final words.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENCHACA: Yes, um, thank
8 you [inaudible] incredible gratitude right now for
9 every, everyone that spoke and those who weren't able
10 to be here because they're on the ground right now,
11 ah, doing the good work. I do hope that we can learn
12 from the incredible investment, the human sweat
13 equity, the capital that you put in, not just the
14 forty-plus million dollars of funding that came in
15 from the council and the city, but your own wisdom,
16 that it does not dissipate, that it does not dissolve
17 and disappear, that it actually helps build the next
18 apparatus for the city. That is, that is what I'm
19 interested in doing right now. I think that's the
20 legacy that we can leave for, for everyone, ah, as we
21 get [inaudible] closer to the next, ah, in 10 years,
22 which will happen. It will come. The question is
23 will we, will we have built what we need to solve the
24 programs, um, that we're seeing and we're confronted
25 with and, ah, I'm looking forward to, to working with

1 all of you on this and, ah, and my, um, my
2 [inaudible], Carlina Rivera, our cochair, and then
3 our chair, Chair Cabrera, as well. Ah, I do see a,
4 a moment in the future where we can bring it back
5 into a setting like this. Hopefully it's in person,
6 but if not that we still commit to that time and I
7 hope you can make that commitment today to come back,
8 ah, and, and really work for, work with us to build
9 what we need. Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON CABRERA: Thank you so much.
12 I want to take a moment to thank the task force
13 Chairs, Menchaca, Rivera, ah, for the incredible work
14 that you did, the investment of time, um, your, your
15 passion, your presentation to other council members
16 how you were able to be so engaged with everyone that
17 was involved. I want to thank all the advocates that
18 are present and those who couldn't come to today's
19 hearing, but you were all in the trenches. I salute
20 you. I thank you. What you did made a difference.
21 As a matter of fact, it made a difference beyond what
22 we often, ah, realize, ah, in a very direct way. You
23 are champions and, ah, but our job is not done, as
24 you stated so eloquently. Ah, we have 36 hours to go
25 and then we're gonna have to push for extension

1
2 because as it was mentioned it could go all down the
3 drain, and we don't want all those efforts to be for
4 not, because that would be very discouraging, ah, for
5 the next round in 10 years. Ah, so thank you. I
6 want to thank, ah, the administration for the
7 investment, Speaker Johnson, ah, for all the
8 resources that were allocated. And I want to thank
9 the staff. You were incredible. I always call them
10 the dream team staff. Ah, thank you for all the
11 work. You guys are marvelous. And with that we
12 conclude today's hearing. [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date November 9, 2020