



The Voice of the Library Community

New York Library Association

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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**NY LIBRARY ASSOCIATION: CUOMO'S COMPLETE COUNT
COMMISSION MISSES THE MARK, CALLS ON
GOVERNOR TO FUND COMPLETE COUNT EFFORT**

***AS NATION'S FIRST ONLINE CENSUS APPROACHES, LIBRARIES PREPARE TO SERVE NEW YORKERS
LACKING INTERNET ACCESS, DIGITAL SKILLS NEEDED TO UNDERSTAND & COMPLETE CENSUS FORMS***

UNDERCOUNT THREATENS NEW YORK'S CONGRESSIONAL SEATS, BILLIONS IN FEDERAL FUNDING

ALBANY, NY – The New York Library Association (NYLA) is once again sounding the alarm on New York's lack of preparation for the 2020 Census, the nation's first to be conducted primarily online. The FY19-20 NYS Budget allocated \$20M for statewide complete count efforts and NYLA is calling on Governor Cuomo to designate a portion of that money to support NY's libraries. Unless New York State aggressively invests in statewide complete count efforts, a catastrophic undercount in 2020 is a near certainty.

Michelle Young, President, New York Library Association: "New York State is woefully underprepared for the 2020 online Census. Without immediate, significant investment in complete count efforts, we stand to lose power in Washington and billions in federal funding over the next decade. The Census is an opportunity to affirm our modern democratic values - that everyone counts. If the federal government will not protect this right, New York State must."

On October 8, Governor Cuomo's sixteen-member NYS 2020 Complete Count Commission released their much-anticipated report. <https://www.ny.gov/programs/2020-census>

The report issues a series of recommendations, including:

"Establish 'NYS Census Assistance Centers' in every hard-to-count community in the state. The Commission meticulously identified specific hard-to-count census tracts. These communities are spread across 29 of the state's 62 counties. New York State must maximize the use of existing infrastructure and resources to reach all communities. The Department of Labor's 96 Career Centers across the state should be leveraged as Census Assistance Centers with secure workstations where visitors can complete their online census questionnaires with staff capable of answering questions about the census. There is a SUNY campus within 30 miles of every New Yorker, and a **public library within 5 miles of 99 percent of the hard-to-count communities.**"

Libraries will be primary points of service for New Yorkers who require assistance to complete their online Census forms. Recent data show that 25% of state households earning less than \$50,000 annually – households which have historically been undercounted -- rely on their library for internet access. Hard-to-count New Yorkers visit public libraries every day, yet libraries are little more than a footnote in the Commission's recommendations.

Jeremy Johannesen, Executive Director of the New York Library Association: “The New York Library Association calls on Governor Cuomo to allocate \$10M, half of what was included in the State Budget in special funding, to provide libraries the resources necessary to help New Yorkers participate in the first-ever digital Census. Libraries must provide access to high-speed internet; access to devices that people of all abilities can use; access to digital literacy instruction; access to trained personnel to provide information and troubleshoot; and address IT security concerns to ensure data privacy – all while maintaining day-to-day library services. This is an unprecedented effort in both scale and scope.”

NYLA encourages individuals to visit nyla.org/advocacy to learn more about how they can support NYLA's efforts to ensure a complete count in NYS.

About NYLA:

The New York Library Association (NYLA) leads, educates, and advocates for the advancement of New York's library community. Founded in 1890, NYLA is the oldest statewide library association in the nation and represents public, school, college, and special libraries, library systems, library staff, trustees, students, and patrons.

NYLA is the only statewide organization dedicated to advocating on behalf of all libraries and library staff in Albany and serves as the spokesperson on library matters to the media and public policymakers.

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