

P.O.M.O.C., Inc.

Polonians Organized to Minister to Our Community, Inc.
Not-for-profit human services agency

NY State Complete Count Commission's Queens County Public Hearing Queens Borough Hall, May 1, 2019

Polonians Organized to Minister to Our Community, Inc. (POMOC) is a not-for-profit human services agency located in Ridgewood, Queens. The mission of POMOC is to improve the quality of life for those in need, particularly immigrant families and seniors.

The vast majority of our clients are immigrants, predominantly from Poland and other Eastern European countries. Many of them have very limited English language skills, making them severely disadvantaged due to lack of information and communication barriers. In many cases we are their only resource for help and assistance in their own language and familiar environment.

As service providers we are all aware that a serious undercount in the 2020 Census will dramatically reduce the amount of Federal funding New York City receives for a variety of crucial programs delivered by non-profit community-based organizations.

Our task is to get this message across to the communities we serve. Many immigrants may not understand how devastating it is to lose two Congressional seats. When we explain these cold facts and visualize the impact they will endure in their own environment, people begin to understand the consequences of losing school seats for their children and hospital beds for themselves and their families. Additionally, the citizenship question may prevent many people from participation in the Census and therefore the loss of political power for immigrant communities in years to come.

POMOC is already preparing to incorporate Census education and outreach in our ongoing community presentations and workshops. We anticipate there will be a need for additional staff performing such services and assisting clients with filling out the online questionnaires. All this requires Federal funding allocated to support education and outreach provided by trusted community-based organizations.

Our organization participated in the 2000 and 2010 Census outreach campaigns where a lot of money was spent on promotional materials and hand-outs, which of course are important. This time we would like to see more funding allocated to the service providers doing the actual groundwork.