

Testimony of Norma Drummond
Westchester County Commissioner of Planning
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Thank you holding this evening's session. Every opportunity to raise awareness of the 2020 Census in Westchester County can only help.

I am Norma Drummond, Commissioner of Planning for Westchester County. The County Planning Department is the local Census Data Affiliate. We use Census data as the backbone to make informed decisions every single day. The County, our municipalities, school districts, hospitals, non-profit organizations and citizens use Census data to apply for grants and to direct resources where they are most needed. The data is also used to help resolve local issues and to help plan for future development.

From housing, to transportation, health care and education, Census data is critical to the amount of federal funding spent in Westchester.

While we applaud the Census Bureau's initiative to have almost everyone respond to post cards and answer the Census on-line, there is a very real concern in Westchester - where over 16% of the population is over age 65, and where almost 10% of the non-institutionalized population has a disability; and where 8.3% of our population lives in poverty – there is a very real concern that there is a significant portion of these special needs populations that may not be able to respond electronically. Though there may be some duplication, collectively these special needs populations represent over 250,000 people – or more than 25% of the County's population. Many of them may not have access to, or comfort with using, computers.

Yes, the County has established a Complete Count Committee with one of its 5 subcommittees focusing on our Senior, Veterans and People with a Disability. So we will do our part to ensure these populations know it is safe, easy and important to respond. But NYS also needs to focus a good portion of its resources to reaching these populations.

Westchester is made up of 45 municipalities – including cities, towns and villages. Boundaries cross over each other depending on whether you're talking about