

**New York State Complete Count Commission Hearing**

**Testimony of Julieta Larsen**

**Queens Community House**

Good evening. My name is Julieta Larsen, I am the Community Engagement Coordinator at Queens Community House, a community-based organization that provides a diverse array of services, resources and programs to more than 25,000 residents in Queens.

For more than 40 years, we have been committed to a holistic approach that deals with immediate needs as well as the barriers that may impede personal, family, and community stability. Throughout our 32 locations in Queens, our programs help thousands of our neighbors to thrive in school, employment, succeed in educating themselves, become engaged citizens, stabilize their housing situations, and make the most of their senior years.

Queens Community House has built a long-term relationship of trust with our participants and communities that goes beyond the multiple services that we provide. We engage and connect everyday with the hard-to-count communities and they trust us. Because of this, we know we are highly responsible for increasing community awareness around the Census 2020 and making sure everyone is counted.

Queens Community House strongly believes that trusted community members like us are the best candidates to properly inform and educate our neighbors about the benefits of filling out the census and the risks that come with an undercount: less resources and federal funds for greatly needed programs, health care, education, housing, transportation, as well as less political representation in Washington.

We know from previous Census data that communities in these areas have been undercounted, underrepresented and under-resourced. And now, with the addition of a citizenship question the danger of an undercount will be immense.

To avoid this from happening, we strongly oppose to the addition of a citizenship question and will continue to work to assure that everyone participates in the Census and is counted, but we know that we can achieve greater success with the proper funding to do so.

We are asking New York State to fund community-based outreach because our communities trust us and we want to continue to help sending the Census 2020 message to maximize participation across Queens and assure a full and accurate count of our communities, especially our immigrant residents.

Thank you.