

To: New York State Complete Count Commission
Re: Public Forum
Date: July 25, 2019

My name is Terry Kirchner and I am the Executive Director of the Westchester Library System (WLS), one of the 23 cooperative public library systems in New York State, comprised of 38 member public libraries located within the geographic boundaries of Westchester County. I lead the WLS Complete Count Committee, serve on Westchester County's Complete Count Committee and proudly represent Nonprofit Westchester (NPW) and the Westchester County Board of Legislators' Families Task Force.

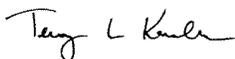
Libraries, nonprofits and local governments in Westchester County are working to ensure that everyone is counted as part of the 2020 Census. Working together we are connected to every community in the County. Through our shared connections we have built community trust and with additional financial investment could provide hard-to-count (HTC) communities with easier access to the internet so that they can complete the survey on a secured network that would help protect their privacy.

To achieve this goal, I am requesting that New York State provide a simple, straightforward approach that allows organizations statewide to gain access to the \$20 million allocated to support the 2020 Census. Investing in libraries, nonprofits and government agencies will increase community awareness and understanding of the census process. The local approach tells the census story and explains why full participation matters to each and every individual, their family and their communities. The relatively small statewide investment of \$20 million has the potential to protect over \$73 billion in federal funding and can protect the voting power of historically under-counted populations.

The 2020 Census survey was designed for individuals who have easy and quick Internet access. Statewide, at least 18% of households lack internet access or rely on dial-up services. Access to the \$20 million statewide funding will allow libraries, nonprofits and local governments to upgrade technology infrastructure to meet the hardware and software demands of the online Census survey. These upgrades include providing enhanced cybersecurity to protect personal information, increasing bandwidth to provide Internet access and hiring additional staff to address the anticipated influx of individuals needing assistance in connecting to and completing the online census.

The investment in a successful 2020 Census today will result in a more financially secure New York State that can better support the quality of life needs and democratic rights of all its residents over the next ten years.

Respectfully submitted,



Terry L. Kirchner
Executive Director