



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
U.S. Census Bureau
Office of the Director
Washington, DC 20233-0001

DEC 13 2019

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4611

Dear Representative Connolly:

Thank you for your letter about the Census Bureau's ongoing efforts to recruit the staff needed to conduct the 2020 Census. I am pleased to report that we have been working on these important issues for some time, and we are expanding our efforts.

The appropriations law permits the hiring of non-citizens if no citizens with the necessary non-English language skills are available. Consistent with law, the Census Bureau will hire non-citizens who are legally entitled to work in the United States as translators on an as-needed-basis during 2020 peak field operations. As a point of reference, during the 2010 Census, more than 700,000 people were hired to conduct the census during peak operations, including 4,000 non-citizen translators.

Nearly 20 percent of the applicants on file to date can speak a language other than English, representing more than 400 languages and dialects. We are constantly recruiting more applicants to fill needs for critical language skills.

Overall, we anticipate needing between 320,000 and 500,000 people for peak operations. We need fewer positions in 2020 than in 2010 because of the advancements and innovations we have made since then. We now have significant automation and streamlining of previously paper-based field operations. We have replaced tedious, paper-based daily payroll logs, case assignments, maps, and questionnaire returns with a single application for case assignment, employee management, routing, and enumeration work. As a result of these changes, temporary field staff had a higher degree of efficiency and productivity in the 2018 End-to-End Census Test and the other field tests conducted this decade.

On recruiting efforts overall, the Census Bureau is making an aggressive push. As you noted, this is clearly a tremendous challenge and is one of our top priorities. The jobs for the 2020 Census will provide flexible hours, competitive wages, and an opportunity to take part in important work mandated by the Constitution. We are taking a number of aggressive steps to share that message and to increase the number of applicants.

We are pursuing the traditional efforts to recruit workers, including working with local job banks, advertising in job forums, and leveraging our partnerships with local governments to use their employment services. We have more than 4,000 recruiting assistants who are working to generate grassroots interest in recruiting applicants. We are also engaging thousands of partners to promote positions on the 2020 Census. These efforts have varied greatly, from advertisements on buses to teams of people passing out flyers to people waiting in line for "Black Friday" sales. In recent meetings with congressional offices, we are focusing on recruiting and asking all members of Congress to promote the job opportunities to their constituents. Across the country, partners, community leaders, and elected officials are helping promote these jobs.

The temporary census jobs are great opportunities for students to earn extra money. To that end, I recently sent a letter to 6,100 colleges and universities across the country asking that these institutions share recruiting and hiring information with their students.

The current dedicated Census Bureau employees will assist as well. At a recent town hall with Census Bureau employees, I called on all Census Bureau employees to be recruiters.

As we completed Address Canvassing earlier this year, the first major field operation, we learned that a higher than expected number of applicants dropped out before completing the hiring process. Therefore, we increased our total national recruiting goal from approximately 2.1 million to approximately 2.7 million. This level provides us a healthy contingency of applicants if needed. The original goal is likely sufficient, but we are raising the goal as a risk mitigation strategy.

Another lesson learned in the Address Canvassing operation was the need to streamline our process for hiring people for temporary jobs. All census workers must successfully complete a background check. To process clearances more quickly, we are bringing on more staff to do that work. To provide more convenience for applicants, we are adding more locations for fingerprinting. We are also using technology to provide more feedback to the applicants during the onboarding process so that prospective hires know more about when and where they will work.

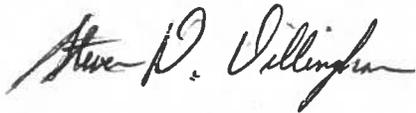
Our partnership effort is a critical part of our outreach campaign, as you noted. We are aggressively recruiting partners to be trusted voices in local communities and at the national level to motivate people to respond. We will have more than 1,500 partnership specialists at the local level, compared to 800 in 2010. These specialists are working to establish an estimated 300,000 volunteer partnerships at the local and regional levels, focusing on diverse racial, ethnic, religious, and other communities. We also got an earlier start on our National Partnership Program, securing 500 national partners and allies to date.

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly

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Thank you again for your support for a complete and accurate census. If you have any further questions, please contact Chris Stanley, Chief, Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Affairs, at 301-763-6100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Steve D. Dillingham".

Steven D. Dillingham
Director

P.S. - Much thanks to you and your staff for your strong support of a successful 2020 Census!