

COUNCIL ACTION FORM

SUBJECT: 2020 CENSUS PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN AND BUDGET

BACKGROUND:

In anticipation of next year's federal census, staff has been developing a plan to educate Ames residents regarding the importance of completing and returning census forms when they are distributed next spring.

It is very important that all Ames residents understand the significance of participating in the 2020 Census. Several types of state and federal funding are based on census counts. Political representation is determined by census counts, and the census may impact the type and nature of businesses interested in exploring Ames in the future,

As in previous years, Iowa State University students will continue to be a primary target for this educational outreach. This group has potential for non-compliance due to the variety of factors. Students may be confused about their official residence, and may incorrectly believe their parents' home or their hometown is their residence for the census. Federal law for census residency clarifies "residence" as the place you live and sleep the majority of the year. The goal is to ensure all Iowa State University students living in Ames correctly "Claim Ames" in the 2020 Census. In addition to ISU students, staff will be reviewing census data from 2010 to identify low response neighborhoods and direct education efforts to best use resources.

A marketing plan is being developed to promote compliance with the 2020 Census. The plan will include traditional communication tools (television, print, radio), as well as social media platforms, bus boards, speaking engagements, events, and other types of outreach. A key component of the marketing plan is to leverage the support of the Complete Count Committee, a census steering committee made up of representatives from the university, schools, media, business community, religious and civic groups, and others. Recruitment for the Complete Count Committee continues, and a kick-off meeting is planned for late summer/early fall.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. Allocate \$35,000 from the City's 2019/20 Contingency Account for Census 2020 education, outreach, and promotional activities.
2. Allocate another amount from the City's 2019/20 Contingency Account for Census 2020 education, outreach, and promotional activities.
3. Do not approve the request

CITY MANAGER'S RECOMMENDED ACTION:

An accurate census count benefits the City of Ames in numerous ways. To accomplish this objective, our residents must be informed of these benefits and their responsibility under the federal law. This type of educational effort will require funding. Therefore, it is the recommendation of the City Manager that the City Council adopt Alternative No. 1, thereby approving \$35,000 from the City's 2019/20 Contingency Account for Census 2020 education, outreach, and promotional activities.