



THE CITY OF POUGHKEEPSIE

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The Importance of the 2020 census to the City

People in our community have been getting invitations by mail to fill out the 2020 census. It's vitally important they do so. This year, for the first time, people can fill out the form online at www.my2020census.gov, but they also can respond by phone or regular mail if they like. Census field workers will go door to door to those who don't respond. That has never been the most efficient way of conducting the census, and it likely will prove to be an even harder one in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Field workers aren't expected to start that process until later this summer.

The answers to census questions provide valuable information. The federal government undertakes this initiative every 10 years as required by the Constitution. Please keep in mind that communities that are undercounted will be hurt financially. That's because the distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funds, grants and support to states, counties, cities and other communities are based on census data. This involves more than 130 programs, from housing and highway funds, to nutrition to education needs.

Sections of the City of Poughkeepsie are considered "hard to count" – that is, people in those areas are less likely to fill out the form and be counted. This is one reason why it is imperative to spread the word and make sure everyone is counted.

It's important to note – and to stress to the public – that the information collected by the Census Bureau is confidential and protected under law. All Census Bureau employees take an oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both.

In the weeks ahead, please help us spread the word about the importance of filling out the census. Our community cannot afford to be shortchanged. The City has created a webpage, www.cityofpoughkeepsie.com/census2020 where you can learn more about the 2020 census.