

2020 Census

The Stark County Regional Planning Commission (RPC) was a part of a county-wide Complete Count Committee (CCC), established by the Census Bureau to help create localized messaging to encourage people to respond to the 2020 Census. The CCC, chaired by Stark County Commissioner Richard Regula, was comprised of local government and community leaders representing education, business, healthcare, housing and other community organizations. Multiple committee meetings were held between November 2019 and September 2020 to develop strategies and share a collection of resources for committee members to utilize in promoting the importance and safety of the census to their respective audiences.

As a member of the Stark County CCC, the RPC distributed press releases and public service announcements to local newspapers, radio stations, and other publications throughout the county, made presentations at public events, facilitated in the production and distribution of flyers (in English and Spanish), posters and yard signs and shared weekly posts on the RPC Facebook and Instagram pages. Additionally, letters were mailed on behalf of Commissioner Regula to all cities, townships and villages asking for them to reach out to their communities and stress the importance of responding to the 2020 Census. These letters included newly created ward maps highlighting specific low response areas within the cities of Canton, Massillon, and Alliance, in an effort to help those communities better target outreach efforts.

The main objective of the CCC was to increase census awareness and participation throughout the Stark County community, since more than \$675 billion in federal funding is dispersed across the country based on census data. This federal money goes towards schools, hospitals, roads, public works, and other vital programs. The state of Ohio receives roughly \$33.5 billion, with over \$1 billion of that going to Stark County. This means that with every uncounted person, Stark County loses \$2,900 in funding. The CCC wanted to ensure that Stark County received an accurate amount of federal support.

Along with the importance of a proper count, the CCC also wanted to inform Stark County residents that the 2020 Census was the first time individuals could respond online, in addition to responding by mail or phone, which proved to be an especially valuable benefit during this uncertain time. The CCC assumed an added role due to the recent public health crisis, as it continuously updated the community about any revisions to the census timeline.

The RPC, on behalf of the Stark County CCC, is confident that the efforts made will benefit the community when it comes to the allocation of federal dollars. This committee, with members representing almost every type of government and civic facet, strived to advise and educate in an endeavor to achieve a truly complete count for Stark County.