

Make Your Voice Count

The 2020 Census is ready to roll out

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In early September 2019, Sussex County Community College (SCCC) President Dr. Jon Connolly met with Census Bureau partnership specialist Marvin Joss to discuss ways the college could leverage its talents to help ensure a full and accurate count in the 2020 Census. With the help of Dr. Connolly's leadership team, a brainstorming session ensued to identify opportunities to engage students that could give them a better understanding of the importance of the census while empowering each to connect with their fellow students and the community at large.

A few of the ideas adopted by the college included inviting U.S. Census Bureau employees to host a table at an open house to promote jobs and participation; speaking to individual classes; and providing valuable Census information for its internal monitor system. In addition to promoting the Census, these activities have helped the Census Bureau work towards its goal of recruiting 63,000 qualified applicants in New Jersey.

Census art

One additional initiative created by the SCCC was a Census poster contest, which provided an opportunity for 60 graphic design students to create visually appealing artwork that would direct the community to additional 2020 Census information, both about the questionnaire and jobs.

Students were excited for the opportunity to showcase their talents and have their work on display throughout the campus and community. An internal review committee met on October 16 to evaluate the 20 excellent entries and choose an eventual winner. The committee was comprised of Dean of Applied Arts and Sciences Sherry Fitzgerald, SCCC Director of Marketing Kathleen Peterson, and Adjunct Instructor for Graphic Design Kristen Elias. Although selecting just one winner was a difficult decision, the ultimate prize was awarded to Emily Hewitt of Stanhope for her creation "Make Your Voice Count."

With a winning design chosen, the college moved to immediately print various sizes of the poster for display across campus and by Census partners throughout Sussex County. The design soon became a hit. On December 11, the Sussex County Freeholder Board issued a proclamation recognizing Emily for her design, and the college for its work to get the message out

to county residents.

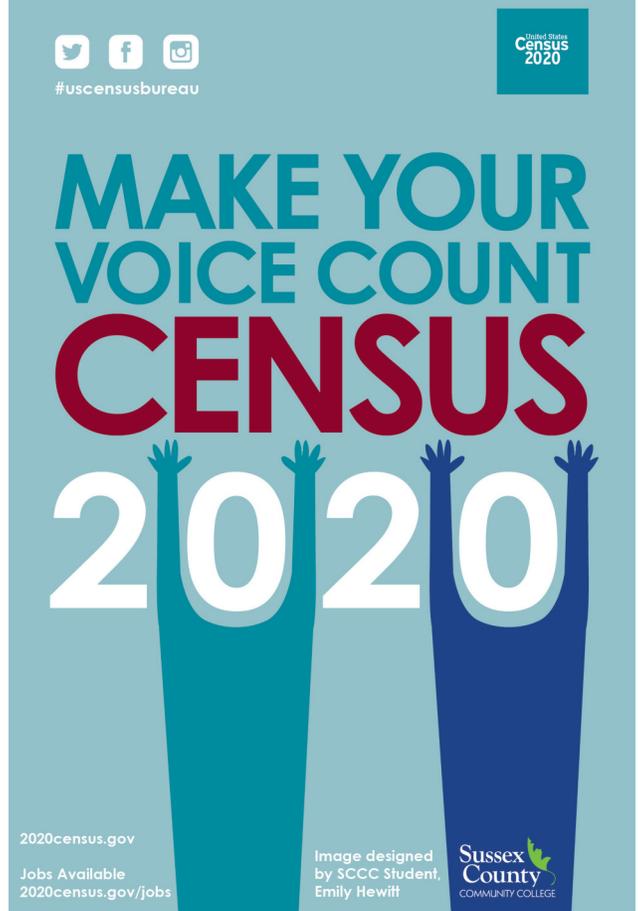
The design was subsequently featured in the 7th edition of the New York Regional Census Center's weekly Ideas That Count publication, which shares best practices with partners throughout the region. Requests to use the design soon came from various partners, including a municipality in Massachusetts.

Building awareness

Creating community awareness about the 2020 Census is successful when it comes from within each community. Thankfully, each college, town, and state is filled with talented individuals who are often looking for ways to apply their skills, talent, and passion to everyday situations.

The engagement and buzz created by Sussex County Community College can certainly be replicated in other educational institutions, community organizations, or anywhere the desire exists. Not only will Emily's winning design be great for her resume, but it will also help ensure federal resources reach the places they are needed most.

Census data is used to distribute approximately \$675 billion in annual federal funding, and to apportion U.S. House of Representative seats, so getting people involved to achieve a complete and accurate count will be vital to shaping the future of your community. 🇺🇸



HELP WANTED

Census jobs offer a great opportunity for students and community residents to earn extra income at a job that offers competitive pay, flexible hours, and paid training. In Sussex County, census takers earn \$21/hour. For more information on census jobs, please visit www.2020Census.gov/jobs.