

080519-Census-info

Ray Martinez, Co. Commissioner

I wanted to inform you that DFA has decided to allocate up to \$2.4 million to counties for census outreach efforts. As many of you know, the Legislature appropriated \$3.5 million in the 2019 session for statewide outreach efforts, especially in hard to count and remote rural areas. The plan to distribute the funds was announced yesterday by DFA at a meeting of the Governor's Statewide Complete Count Commission (I am a member of the commission).

The funding allocation formula developed by DFA takes into account a county's population and proportion of anticipated non-self-responders based on data from the 2010 census and using 2018 population numbers, and how hard a county's population is to count relative to other New Mexico counties. A minimum floor was established, so all counties that opt-in and meet DFA's requirements will receive no less than \$10,000, regardless of the county's population and the funding allocation formula.

DFA will be sending out a letter next week with specific instructions to counties on how the funds can be accessed. The money will be available to county governments on an opt-in basis. Counties will have to establish a complete count commission (I know that many of you already have established them), develop a plan to utilize the funds for outreach and training, and sign a grant agreement with DFA. It is anticipated that counties which have Native American tribes, pueblos, or nations within their boundaries will be asked to coordinate their efforts with tribal governments. There will be a \$400,000 distribution to tribal governments for outreach.

This is exciting news for counties and will go a long way towards increasing the effectiveness of the complete count commissions. It should be kept in mind how important it is to maximize census responses, and how much is at stake for New Mexico in the 2020 census. This is very challenging in New Mexico because so much of our population live in hard to count areas. **New Mexico will lose approximately \$3,700 in federal benefits each year for every one of our State's residents who goes uncounated; a one percent undercount in the 2020 census will result in the loss of approximately \$780 million over ten years. In addition, an inaccurate undercount may result in unequal political representation and a decline in access to resources.**

Please give me a call if you'd like to discuss or if you have any questions on this information.

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