



July 31, 2019

Pulling Together For Funding West Side Organizations For An Accurate Census Count

On April 1, 2020, a census will be conducted in order to count all people living in the United States. This head count is crucial in determining local and state needs, in addition to shaping political districts. Unfortunately, barriers to Census participation make some populations hard-to-count, which denies access to important resources needed in our communities. Chicago's West Side communities are among these communities that are difficult to count.

As the 2020 Census approaches, many organizations have regional efforts to ensure that hard-to-count populations are reached in order to get the most accurate population count. I set up a 2020 Census Task Force in my office in May 2018. The goal of the Task Force is to get people from our community to help devise a strategic plan to make sure everyone is counted and no federal dollars are diverted from the West Side. We need major developments on the West Side of Chicago, and a misrepresentation of the count will hurt the West Side for the next 10 years. The groups involved in our Task Force are forming coalitions in order to collaborate and increase efforts to ensure accurate counts for Chicago's West Side neighborhoods, specifically marginalized populations. We ask any organization who would like to be a part of these efforts to participate by contacting me.

The Illinois General Assembly appropriated \$29 million of General Revenue Funds for census outreach, education and mobilization. That work is being launched now to prepare for a fair and accurate count. The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) will be administering a statewide Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to issue grants to community providers and local governments to encourage full participation in the 2020 Census. Many West Side organizations have been doing census work in preparation for the 2020 Census. I commend these organizations for their work and preparation for the 2020 Census. I will be attending a regional census convening in Chicago sponsored by the Conference Education Fund, State Voices, and the State Counts Action Network to learn more about efforts and resources that will be available to us. I fully support funding of West Side organizations for an accurate count in the 2020 Census. Please email me at repford@lshawnford.com if you are interested in making our 2020 Census count the very best it can be.

Sincerely,

La Shawn K. Ford
State Representative-Eighth District