



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

BEN WALSH, MAYOR

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PRESS RELEASE

SYRACUSE MAYOR BEN WALSH NAMES CENSUS COORDINATOR TO ENGAGE WITH COMMUNITY FOR 2020 COUNT

City partners with Community Foundation to create new position aimed at increasing community cooperation and individual participation in 2020 Census

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – The City of Syracuse has appointed Tory Russo to the position of Census Coordinator for the United States Census Bureau 2020 Census count. Russo will be the city's point person in coordinating with the Census Bureau, state and local government, as well as with private and non-profit organizations, volunteer groups, and other community organizations which represent people impacted by the census.

"The census occurs just once a decade, but it has a daily impact on the City of Syracuse and every single person who lives here," said Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh. "The census results play a large and lasting role in the allocation of federal dollars, ensuring our fair share of federal funding for schools, hospitals, and housing. Much depends on getting a complete and accurate count."

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the federal government agency is charged with providing accurate data about America's population, communities, and economy. Its findings are used to determine how many representatives each state gets in Congress and are used to draw local district boundaries. Each year, the federal government also distributes hundreds of billions of dollars to states and communities based on Census Bureau data.

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The Bureau has announced changes to the count procedures in 2020, including the ability to respond online, by phone, and by mail. According to the bureau, it will also “use data the public has already provided to reduce follow up visits,” which indicates less door-to-door counting by Census representatives. More information on the 2020 Census is at <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2018/comm/2020-at-a-glance.html>.

“The changes in the 2020 Census mean we need to do everything we can to educate people about the process and the importance of being counted. Tory has worked directly with many of the organizations already engaged in the Census and during the past year she’s become very familiar with neighborhoods all across the city,” Mayor Walsh said. “This is a critically important position for our community, and Tory has the right skills and experience for the work.”

Russo has served as Mayor Walsh’s public information officer since January 2018. Before entering public service, she worked with PEACE, Inc. and with Hopeprint in communications and youth programming positions, respectively. She is a 2016 graduate of Syracuse University with a dual major in Magazine Journalism from the S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications and International Relations from the Maxwell School of Citizenship.

Russo will transition to the full-time Census focus in April. Initial funding for the new position is being provided by a grant from the Central New York Community Foundation.

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