



Red Hook Initiative

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Red Hook Initiative Announced as Complete Count Fund Awardee Joining Citywide Effort to Ensure a Fair and Complete Count

Brooklyn, NY— Red Hook Initiative (RHI) is pleased to announce it has received a \$125,000 award from the NYC Complete Count Fund — a partnership between CUNY, Mayor Bill de Blasio and the New York City Council. The NYC Complete Count Fund is a first-of-its-kind Census-related community organizing program that will support and resource community-based organizations to help NYC reach a full and accurate count in the 2020 Census. These funds will support the 2020 Census outreach and education in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

The Complete Count Fund was built with the understanding that local community-based organizations — which serve New Yorkers in the communities where they live and in the languages that they speak — are the most trusted messengers of important and sensitive information.

RHI is proud to join this coordinated citywide effort to build awareness about the census, convey its importance, fight the spread of mis- and disinformation, and help bridge the digital divide that might prevent many New Yorkers from participating in this year's first online census.

Over the next six months, RHI will hire and engage a team of Red Hook residents to host events, canvass, use social media channels, and increase awareness about the importance of the Census for the community. We will build off of our 2010 successful Census campaign in Red Hook to focus on the responses for the 85th and 59th tracts in Red Hook by using a three phase approach: 1) education, 2) participation, and activation. Our efforts will require extensive education and outreach, and we will also need to prepare residents to use the new digital platform.

In 2020, our community building and youth development programs will engage 6,500 Red Hook residents in community building initiatives that cultivate a sense of community empowerment, create positive institutional change, facilitate authentic participation/leadership in community life, and build a healthy and sustainable neighborhood. With a staff that is made up of 90% residents of Red Hook, RHI has deep

roots in the neighborhood and especially strong connections to public housing residents. Red Hook WIFI, a free local internet network is a community-centered platform for communication and information. RHI's NYCHA Safe Homes Campaign is organizing public housing residents to pressure NYCHA to remedy the public health emergencies of heat, lead, and mold in the Red Hook Houses.

Jill Eisenhard, RHI's Executive Director, commented: "If everyone in Red Hook completes the 2020 Census and is counted, our community will receive increased funding for hospitals, clinics, community programs, schools, and senior centers, better transportation, and political representation in Washington and Albany."

A complete and accurate count is critical to the future of New York City. The census will determine how more than \$650 billion in federal funds for public education, public housing, roads and bridges, and more, gets distributed annually throughout the country. It will also determine the number of seats each state is allocated in the House of Representatives (and thus, the Electoral College). Based on current estimates, an undercount could cost the State of New York up to two congressional seats.

In such a complex city, enriched by such linguistic and cultural diversity, New York City's full participation in the first online census faces a unique set of challenges. As New Yorkers, we have embraced these challenges as an opportunity. Together, these citywide efforts will lay the groundwork for a civic engagement apparatus that will continue well beyond the 2020 census.

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About [Red Hook Initiative](#)

Red Hook Initiative (RHI) is a community-based nonprofit that is working to foster a healthy and sustainable Red Hook, Brooklyn through youth development and community building programs and an innovative community hiring practice that has paid over \$1M annually in salaries to Red Hook residents over the past 5 years. Established in 2002 as a program of a local hospital, RHI has grown to be an independent 501 (c) 3 nonprofit and a nationally recognized model for place-based social change and community hiring.

About NYC Census 2020

NYC Census 2020 was established as a first-of-its-kind organizing initiative by Mayor de Blasio to ensure a complete and accurate count of all New Yorkers in the 2020 Census. The program is built on four pillars: (1) a community-based awards program, The New York City Complete Count Fund; (2) an in-house "Get Out the Count" field campaign; (3) an innovative, multi-lingual, tailored messaging and marketing; as well as (4) an in-depth Agency and Partnerships engagement plan that seeks to leverage the power of the City's 350,000-strong workforce and the city's major institutions, including libraries, hospitals, faith-based, cultural institutions, and higher educational institutions, and more, to communicate with New Yorkers about the critical importance of census participation.