

If You're Not Counted in the 2010 Census – You're Invisible

We all need to participate in the Census

The Constitution of the United States mandates that a count of the population of the be conducted every ten years. This count, or census, is conducted at the beginning of every decade, usually on April 1st. Our next Decennial Census is scheduled for April 1st, 2010.

How does the Census Bureau accomplish this?

Census operations are the largest non-war effort put forth by the Federal Government. It will take approximately 1.5 million temporary workers to complete this enormous task. All of the workers have to be hired, trained, given tools with which to complete their work (ie. computers, telephones, offices and supplies), and then after the Census process is complete, Decennial Census operations come to a close and the whole structure has to be dismantled.

It begs the question, why do these workers want to be a part of the process? "Census workers are passionate about our work because we believe what we're doing is important," says Sandra Alvarado, Media Specialist with the Census Bureau. "Not to mention that 1.5 million people get to work and receive a paycheck which helps individual families who are struggling to get through these difficult times, and helps the economy at large."

Participation in the Census is everyone's civic duty and responsibility. Furthermore, it is of vital importance to each individual, their families and their communities. It is an opportunity, once every decade, to do something that will positively impact our lives for the next ten years.

Census Firsts:

For the first time in decennial census history GPS computers were used to help the Census Bureau more accurately and efficiently update their lists of addresses. This is important because in order to mail out the questionnaires, there needs to be a complete list of addresses where people live or could live. This information changes drastically over ten years as structures come down and new ones are built. Additionally, many families have been forced to find alternative housing, as financial difficulties have forced numerous foreclosures.

For the first time everyone will receive the simple short form. The 2010 Census questionnaire will feature only 10 easy questions, such as: name, gender, age, race and ethnicity, etc. Questions **NOT** on the questionnaire: social security number, personal financial information, legal status, etc. This makes it easy for everyone to be counted. Fill it out and send it back. It will take only a few minutes, and you won't even need a stamp!

For the first time in 2010 tens of thousands of homes nationwide will receive a bilingual English/Spanish form in neighborhoods where it is determined there is a large Spanish-speaking population. This will speed up and simplify the process even further. Additionally, there will be forms available in Korean, Chinese, Russian, and Vietnamese, and in-language assistance in 59 other languages.

Why the Census is Important

The Census count provides the data that serves as the basis for the apportionment of the 435 members of the United States House of Representatives among the states. If we want our presence to count, and our voices to be heard it is important that we all be counted. That is how we and our interests can be properly represented in government.

Every year more than \$400 billion in government funds are distributed based on Census data. If one person fails to be counted they are costing their community a lot of necessary funds. Multiply that by the number of people in a family that doesn't participate. Multiply that by ten years. That equals a huge and significant loss of available money that would be designated for education, transportation, emergency services, and everything else that families and communities will need for the next ten years.

All personal information collected by the Census Bureau is protected by law and completely confidential. The Census Bureau does not share information with any other individual or agency. Violation of this law is punishable by up to \$250,000.00 and 5 years in prison.

The 2010 Census: It's safe, it's easy, it's important. Our future is in our hands.
<http://www.census.gov/>

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