

Talking Points on Census 2010

Not sure what to say to community members or the media? The key messages listed below are a great place to start, or check out the community-specific talking points for:

- [Immigrants](#)
- [Gulf Coast Communities](#)
- [The Recession & People Facing Economic Hardship](#)
- [People with Disabilities](#)

Our communities have a lot to gain or lose in the 2010 census. We need to make sure everyone is counted.

- The federal government uses census information to decide where and how to spend almost \$400 billion every year on health, education, transportation, and more.
- State governments use census information to decide which communities need money, and what kind of nonprofit services to support.
- Businesses use information to decide where to invest in new factories, distribution centers, and stores.
- Every person who goes uncounted could cost our community thousands of dollars a year. If a lot of people don't get counted, we could lose out on millions that our communities need and deserve. It could make the difference between getting or losing a school, health clinic, senior center, or job training site.
- Census information is also the basis for political representation. Census counts are used to decide how many representatives each state gets in Congress and how those districts are defined. States use the same information to draw legislative districts.
- Communities where people don't get counted will lose political representation and influence to communities where everyone does get counted.

It only takes a little bit to accomplish a lot – a little time now brings 10 years of benefits.

- The census questionnaire covers just six topics and shouldn't take most people very much time to fill out. But the benefits last for 10 years. That's a great investment.
- Every household is required by law to complete a census form. People who fill out and return their form by April 1 won't be contacted by a census worker; the Census Bureau will try multiple times to get in touch with people who don't complete the form.
- Anyone with questions about the form can get free help by calling a census hotline, which will be available in many languages, or getting information and assistance from local organizations working to get a complete count.

The census is an opportunity we only get once every 10 years. It's time. Make yourself count!

- Census information has a huge impact on our communities: how we're represented in local, state, and national government; how much money our communities get for schools, health care, and other services; where new money gets invested in transportation or roads; how effectively our educational and economic opportunities and civil rights are protected.
- Making sure everyone in our communities gets counted will benefit us for the next 10 years. If everyone doesn't get counted, we'll be hurting ourselves for 10 years.

<http://www.civilrights.org/census/messaging/>



- It's a big job to count every person. In the past, millions of people have been missed. We can't afford to let anyone go uncounted. So we're working to make sure it's done right.

Your privacy is protected. There's no need to fear the census.

- Census responses are completely confidential, protected by the strongest national privacy laws on the books. Any census worker or other government official who violates census confidentiality can be imprisoned for up to five years and fined \$250,000.
- No other government agency – not even law enforcement or the courts – can get any person's individual census information for the next 72 years.
- No private company – no landlord, employer, bank, or creditor – can get any person's individual census information, even with a court order.
- Every census worker has to swear an oath to keep information confidential for life, or they face big fines and jail time.
- Participating in the census is simple and safe. The only thing to fear is not being counted.

The census is a chance to build respect, influence, and power for our community.

- In 2008, we wanted to be sure every vote was counted. In 2010, we need to make sure every person is counted.
- We can't just count on the Census Bureau. It's up to us to take responsibility for making sure that everyone in our community is counted.
- Numbers matter. In the past, minorities and low-income people have been more likely to be passed over in the census. Getting everyone counted will demonstrate the strength of our communities and will give us a bigger voice in government, business, and decisions that affect our lives and families.
- Census information helps identify places where people are being denied opportunities and where action is needed to help protect civil rights.

The census is a chance to build leadership in our community.

- Helping make the census a success is a great next step for people who got involved in 2008 by registering voters.
- Activists can get training in organizing and communications skills that will help them be effective community leaders after the census is complete.
- How many chances does an individual activist have to help bring millions of dollars to their community?