



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## Census Forms Available at Senator Lanza's Office

ANDREW J LANZA March 19, 2010

Asking just 10 questions and taking about 10 minutes to complete, 2010 Census forms began arriving in 120 million mailboxes across the nation today — just the 23rd time the country has undertaken the constitutionally mandated population count that dates back to 1790.

**If you did not receive a census form, or misplaced it, please contact Senator Lanza's office:**

**38 Richmond Ave. Suite 2A  
Staten Island, NY 10312  
718-984-4073**

The only civic event that includes every person in the country, the Census is the basis for America's representative democracy, ensuring that Congress is fairly reapportioned every 10 years between the states. Census counts are also used to redraw state and local legislative boundaries so that political representation is fairly distributed across their changing populations.

“When you receive your 2010 Census, please fill it out and mail it back,” Census Bureau Director Robert M. Groves said. “It's one of the shortest forms in our lifetime with just 10 questions very much like the questions James Madison and Thomas Jefferson helped craft on the very first Census.”

As America has grown and become more complex and more diverse, it has become more challenging over the decades to get a complete count of the population. The 2010 Census faces special challenges during the current economic downturn, including the housing crisis which has resulted in higher rates of vacant housing that must be visited to ensure a complete count.

The Census Bureau today estimated that if every household completed and mailed back their census form, taxpayers could reduce the cost of taking the census by \$1.5 billion. The Census Bureau saves about \$85 million in operational costs for every percentage point increase in the nation's participation rate by mail.

“Here is something every family can do to help their government save money, and get an accurate Census at the same time. Mailing back your census form when it arrives will contribute to saving hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars,” Groves added. “It's a lot less expensive to get responses back by mail than it is to send census takers to knock on doors of households that failed to respond.”

“It costs the government just 42 cents for a postage paid envelope when a household mails back the form,” said Groves. “It costs \$57 to send a census taker door-to-door to follow up with each household

that fails to respond.”

Advance letters alerting households to the arrival of the 2010 Census form last week, as well as reminder postcards sent later this month, are all part of a mailing strategy that has been proven to increase participation in the census by mail — a cost savings that could exceed more than \$500 million.

Even with these changes to make the census the shortest and easiest in a lifetime, the Census Bureau still projects that it will have to send census takers to an estimated 48 million households that do not respond by mail. Following up door-to-door to count households from May to July will require hiring about 650,000 census workers.

Participating in the census is required by law for everyone living in the United States, and the public is encouraged to promptly mail back their 2010 Census forms once they are delivered this week between March 15-17. About 12 million addresses, mostly in rural areas as well as Gulf Coast areas affected by Hurricane Katrina, began receiving hand-delivered forms March 1.

Census data also help determine how more than \$400 billion in federal funds are distributed to tribal, state and local governments every year — including funding for schools, roads, health care and other critical programs.

As a way of encouraging response, the Census Bureau will be publishing mail participation rates showing the percent of the population that have mailed back their 2010 Census forms on a daily basis on <[2010census.gov](http://2010census.gov)>. This map-based feature and widget application allows communities to track how well they are responding by mail and if they're doing better than neighboring cities, counties or states. The first participation rates for the 2010 Census will appear March 22. Rates from the 2000 Census are already on the new site and serve as a benchmark. We hope communities will challenge themselves to exceed their 2000 performance for this census.

### **It's Easy: A Look at the 2010 Census Questionnaire**

The census mailing package includes a cover letter, the 2010 Census form and a postage-paid return envelope. The 10 questions are basic and should take about 10 minutes to complete. The 2010 Census asks the following questions:

1. The number of people living in the residence
2. Any additional people that might be living there as of April 1, 2010
3. Whether the residence is owned or rented
4. Telephone number (in case the Census Bureau has follow-up questions)
5. Name
6. Sex
7. Age and date of birth
8. Whether of Hispanic origin
9. Race
10. Whether that person sometimes lives somewhere else

Census forms are available upon request in six languages: English, Spanish, Chinese (Simplified), Korean, Vietnamese and Russian. For the first time, bilingual English/Spanish forms will be mailed out to 13 million households where Spanish is the predominant language spoken at home. Braille and large print forms are also available on request. For the hearing impaired, a TDD program is available at 1-866-738-2010.

Language assistance guides are available in 59 languages on <[2010census.gov](http://2010census.gov)> to assist non-English speaking residents fill out their forms. There are also short, in-language videos on the Web site to help with form filling. Telephone Questionnaire Assistance is also provided in Spanish (1-866-928-2010), Chinese (1-866-935-2010), Vietnamese (1-866-945-2010), Korean (1-866-955-2010) and Russian (1-866-965-2010) in addition to English (1-866-872-6868).

The Census Bureau will also be staffing more than 30,000 Questionnaire Assistance Centers around the country where people can get help with their forms in multiple languages. Locations of the centers are being publicized locally and can also be found on <[2010census.gov](http://2010census.gov)>. These locations are temporary and may change based on levels of local assistance needed by residents.

### **It's Safe: Your Personal Information is Confidential by Law**

All census responses are confidential; they are protected by law and not shared with anyone. The Census Bureau takes extreme measures to protect the identity of individuals and businesses. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' individually identifiable answers with anyone, including tribal housing authorities, other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. All Census Bureau employees take the oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000, imprisonment of up to five years or both.

### **ABOUT THE 2010 CENSUS**

The 2010 Census is a count of everyone living in the United States and is mandated by the U.S. Constitution. Census data are used to apportion congressional seats to states, to distribute more than \$400 billion in federal funds to tribal, state and local governments each year and to make decisions about what community services to provide. The 2010 Census form will be one of the shortest in U.S. history, consisting of 10 questions, taking about 10 minutes to complete. Strict confidentiality laws protect the respondents and the information they provide.

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Information taken from the US Census website:

<http://2010.census.gov/news/releases/operations/census-forms-arrive-in-mailboxes-across-nation.html>