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Census Takers Begin Hand Delivering 2010 Census Questionnaires to 12 Million U.S. Addresses
Most of the Nation will Receive Forms by Mail in 2 Weeks

About 56,000 census workers today began hand delivering 2010 Census questionnaires to roughly 12 million addresses across the nation, mostly in rural areas where people do not receive mail at the same location as their residence. Most of nation's 120 million households, about 90 percent of the U.S. population, should look for their 10-question forms to arrive by mail mid-March.

While the majority of areas covered by this operation are rural, the Census Bureau also is delivering forms to Gulf Coast areas affected by Hurricane Katrina to ensure everyone is included in the once-a-decade count. Census takers will deliver 2010 Census questionnaires directly to each residence in these areas, leaving a form packaged in a plastic bag at the home's main door. Residents are encouraged to fill out and mail back their census forms — using the enclosed pre-paid envelope — as soon as possible.

“Regardless of whether your census form gets dropped off at your front door or you receive it within a few weeks in your mailbox, it’s important that you fill it out and mail it back as soon as possible,” said Census Bureau Director Robert M. Groves. “With only 10 questions, the 2010 Census should only take about 10 minutes to complete.”

In 2000, about 72 percent of the population mailed back their census forms — halting a three-decade decline in the national mail participation rate. Mailing back the forms save taxpayers money, as it reduces the number of census takers that must go door-to-door to follow up with households that failed to do so. The Census Bureau saves about \$85 million in operational costs for every percentage point increase in the national mail response rate.

In 2000, 72 percent of households that received a form mailed it back. The mail participation rate is a new measure designed to give a better picture of actual participation by factoring out census forms that the U.S. Postal Service was unable to deliver as addressed. It should be particularly useful in areas with seasonal populations or a large number of vacancies or foreclosures.

“It costs us just 42 cents in a postage paid envelope when households mail back their 2010 Census forms,” Groves said. “The Census Bureau will spend about \$25 per person if we have to go out and knock on the doors of households that don’t mail them back.”

“The Census Bureau is urging everyone to take 10 minutes to fill out their census forms and mail them back. Starting March 22, visitors to the [2010 Census Web site](#) will be able to track how well their communities are participating in the census on a daily basis. Communities will even be able to embed a Web-based tool on their own Web sites that automatically updates the daily rates. An interactive [Google-based map](#) is now online that allows visitors to find out how well their communities did in the 2000 Census. The Census Bureau is challenging all communities to improve their 2000 mail participation rates in 2010.

All census responses are confidential. Answers are protected by law and cannot be 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.

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.