CENSUS BASICS

What?
The census is a count of everyone living in the United States of America.

Who?
All people living in the United States must be counted—people of all races and ethnic groups, both citizens and non-citizens. The census does not ask about immigration status.

Why?
The U.S. Constitution requires a national census once every 10 years. The census produces the state population counts that are used to distribute seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. Census numbers also impact planning for schools and businesses, and determine the distribution of more than $300 billion annually of government funding for critical community services.

When?
Census Day is April 1, 2010.

How?
Census questionnaires will be delivered to households via U.S. mail in March 2010. A Census worker will visit each household that does not return a questionnaire, so mailing back your completed questionnaire is the least intrusive way to comply with the law. If you have questions about how to fill out your form, help will be available at community organization offices near you.

The American Community Survey (ACS) allows you to describe your heritage.

PRIVACY & CONFIDENTIALITY

By law (Title 13, U.S. Code), the U.S. Census Bureau respects your privacy and keeps your personal information confidential. Information collected by the Census Bureau is used only for statistical purposes. Individual responses and personally identifiable information cannot be shared with anyone, including other federal agencies or law enforcement entities. This airtight law means an individual’s information will not be shared—not even with the White House or U.S. Supreme Court, not with the Internal Revenue Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, police, military nor welfare agencies. The Census Bureau also withholds statistical totals if they represent a geographic area so small that the numbers might identify someone.

HIRING WITHIN EACH COMMUNITY

The U.S. Census Bureau is committed to achieving a complete and accurate count of every person living in the United States. In order to help reach every person, the Census Bureau hires staff to work where they live – in every neighborhood in the country. The Census Bureau also pays close attention to hiring staff who speak each language used in a local area, and who have the cultural sensitivity needed to be respectful to everyone who lives there. We encourage you to apply, or refer others to do so.

The Ancestry Question

The U.S. Census Bureau wants to paint a picture of the United States that includes information on the diverse origins of its population. Questions on race and Hispanic origin are included on the short Census 2010 questionnaire. Questions about ancestry or ethnic origin, place of birth, and language spoken at home are now asked on the American Community Survey (ACS). There is no question about immigration status or religion.
Census 2010 & The ACS

Responses on the short Census 2010 questionnaire should represent the household as it exists on April 1, 2010. More detailed socio-economic information is now collected on the American Community Survey (ACS), which goes to a randomly selected sample of 250,000 households every month of every year, allowing for up-to-date statistics throughout the decade.

If your household receives both questionnaires early in 2010, it is important that you complete and return both. Census 2010 counts your household for political representation and distribution of federal funds—the ACS allows you to describe your heritage as it documents the diversity of the people in the United States.

Arabic & Aramaic in 2010

Arabic is one of 14 languages in which Census advertising and promotional materials will be available, and one of 59 languages for which “Language Guides” will be available on the internet.

Some local community organizations will partner with the Census to provide Arabic and Aramaic language assistance to individuals who ask for help in completing their questionnaire.

In cities with significant numbers of Arabic and/or Aramaic speaking households, the U.S. Census Bureau will also be sure to hire Arabic and/or Aramaic speakers as some of the Census workers who will visit households that do not return their questionnaires by mail.

For more information about the 2010 Census, please contact:

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