

U.S. Census Bureau News

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120 Million Households to Begin Receiving 2010 Census Advance Letter *Early Notification Increases Awareness That Census Forms Will Arrive Soon*

The U.S. Census Bureau today began mailing advance letters to about 120 million addresses nationwide, notifying households that 2010 Census forms will be arriving March 15-17. The one-page letter urges households to complete the 10-question census form when it arrives and to return it in the accompanying prepaid envelope as soon as possible.

"The advance letter helps people know that their 2010 Census form will be arriving soon," said Census Bureau Director Robert M. Groves. "It's an important reminder about the impact the census has on our communities, that the census is important and that everyone needs to participate."

Census Bureau research shows that reaching out to respondents with an advance letter and reminder postcard if necessary can boost census mail-back rates and save money. For every 1 percent increase in households that respond by mail, taxpayers save about \$85 million in operational costs associated with census takers going door to door to follow up with households that did not mail back the form.

The more than 120 million households that receive both the advance letter and 2010 Census form by mail represent about 90 percent of all residential addresses in the country. Census workers last week started hand-delivering census forms to another 9 percent of addresses in areas where many households lack traditional city-style postal addresses. Hand-delivery of 2010 Census forms is also occurring along hurricane-affected areas of the Gulf Coast. Less than 1 percent of households are in areas where it's more efficient for census takers to conduct census interviews rather than drop-off and require mail-back of the form.

The advance letter includes messaging in five languages other than English (Spanish, Chinese [simplified], Korean, Vietnamese and Russian) directing people to visit the 2010 Web site for in-language assistance. For the first time in U.S. census history, the Census Bureau is sending a bilingual advance letter and form to more than 13 million households in areas where Spanish is predominantly spoken at home.

The text of the advance letter is as follows:

Dear Resident:

About one week from now, you will receive a 2010 Census form in the mail. When you receive your form, please fill it out and mail it in promptly. Your response is important. Results from the 2010 Census will be used to help each community get its fair share of government funds for highways, schools, health facilities, and many other programs you and your neighbors need. Without a complete, accurate census, your community may not receive its fair share. Thank you in advance for your help.

Sincerely, Robert M. Groves
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

Go to 2010census.gov for help completing your 2010 Census form when it arrives. [Note: this sentence is repeated in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese and Russian]

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.