United States Census 2010

It's In Our Hands

Raising Awareness:

Leveraging Town Hall Meetings and Television Appearances

As you know, town hall meetings and television appearances are effective channels for reaching your constituents with important messages. Following are suggestions and talking points for leveraging these opportunities to generate increased awareness of the 2010 Census and motivate constituents to complete and mail back their census forms by April 1, 2010 – Census Day.

To Get Started, Develop an Action Plan and Timeline

When developing your action plan, the Operational Milestone Timeline and 18-month calendar may be helpful resources (both are available as separate electronic files in this toolkit). By anchoring your town hall meeting or program to a milestone, you can easily identify a theme and focus your messages.

Town Hall and Television Appearance Format Ideas

- Panel discussion. Coordinate a panel with U.S. Census Bureau representatives and community members to:
  - discuss the importance of the 2010 Census.
  - inform participants/viewers about how census data are used to make communities better places to live, work and worship.
  - dispel any concerns or misconceptions about the census.
  - provide tangible examples of how to get involved and support the upcoming census (i.e. Complete Count Committees).

  A panel format is applicable for either town hall meetings or television programs.

  Panel participants could include Complete Count Committee representatives, active community, social service and faith-based leaders and/or a Census Bureau Regional Census Center contact.

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- Expert interviews. Consider asking experts to speak at town hall meetings or be interviewed for television programs. Where do you find qualified experts? Reach out to members of a local Complete Count Committee or call a Regional Census Center. Inviting experts to participate in town hall presentations and television interviews demonstrates your support of the 2010 Census, further informs constituents about the benefits of census participation and reinforces messages constituents likely are receiving about the 2010 Census through other channels (i.e. media, advertising, posters and fliers).

Suggested Planning Steps

1. Develop your action plan and timeline, which will drive what 2010 Census messages are delivered.
2. Contact your Regional Census Center to identify panel participants or experts. Regional Census Center information is located at the end of this toolkit or at 2010census.gov.
3. Pitch story ideas and experts to television cable access programs in your target markets, if you do not have your own show.
4. Focus town hall meetings on the 2010 Census and invite 2010 Census experts and community members to participate.
5. Reference talking points provided by the Census Bureau (see below) to make your job easy and effective. These messages can help shape a panel Q&A discussion, guide responses to interview questions and be incorporated into speeches or become topics for discussion on social media platforms.

Talking Points to Introduce the 2010 Census and its Benefits

- The 2010 Census will create hundreds of thousands of temporary employment opportunities nationwide.
- Every year, the federal government distributes more than $400 billion to state, local and tribal governments based on census data. Census data help guide local planning decisions, including where to provide additional social services, build new roads, hospitals and schools, and where to locate job-training centers.
- Community planners and governments rely on census data to determine where there is need for additional social services and funding.

- Census data can be used for forecasting future needs such as transportation, housing, safety and health care for all segments of the population.
- Census data determine how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Talking Points to Describe Important Census Operations or Information

- One of the shortest census forms in history, the 2010 Census form asks 10 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete.
- Participation in the 2010 Census is easy, important, and safe, and your personal information cannot be shared with anyone or used against you.
- The U.S. Constitution requires a national census once every 10 years for the purposes of reapportioning the U.S. House of Representatives.
- Every person living in the United States must be counted. This includes people of all ages, races, ethnic groups, citizens and noncitizens.
- More than 130 million addresses across the nation will receive a census form in March 2010. Households should complete and mail back their forms upon receipt. Census workers will visit households that do not return forms to take a count in person. (Census workers can be identified by a census badge and bag.)
- Census Day is April 1, 2010. Responses to the census form should include everyone living at that address.