

AAJC TALKING POINTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

RESPONDING TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why should I care about the Census since it is not really going to help my family?

Data collected by the census shapes the quality of life for our families and communities.

- Census data is used to determine where to build new schools, roads, hospitals and other vital infrastructure projects, and which community programs to fund and for how much, like English-language learning and language assistance programs in hospitals.
- Accurate census data ensures that health-promoting initiatives, such as health insurance programs, children's nutritional programs and vaccination and prevention programs, are available in the areas of highest need.
- Government funding for education is distributed by census data. In the last census, as many as two million children were not counted. The lost funding could have been used to pay for new schools and teachers, programs for the linguistically isolated, students with special needs and many other programs.

Will the Census Bureau share my information with other agencies, such as law enforcement or immigration agencies? Aren't I putting myself and my family in harm's way by answering the Census?

By law, all of the answers you give in the Census are confidential.

- Your responses and information cannot be shared with any person or any government agency such as the Department of Homeland Security, the Internal Revenue Service or any law enforcement agency.
- Every person with access to your data is sworn for life to protect your information and understands that penalties for violating this law apply for life. If anyone violates this law, it is a federal crime; penalties are severe, including a federal prison sentence of up to five years, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both.

I don't understand the race question (question #9). How should I respond?

The person filling out the form should check the box next to the response that they believe represents their race.

- There are numerous check boxes for some Asian and Pacific Islander subgroups, including: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro and Samoan. If you identify with a different group, please check the box "Other Asian" or "Other Pacific Islander" and write-in the race you identify with. For example, if you are Thai, check the box for "Other Asian" and write in "Thai" in the space provided on the form.
- The Census Bureau defines "Asian" as referring to people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asian, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.
- The Census Bureau defines "Native Hawaiian" and "Pacific Islander" as people having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. It includes people who indicate their race as Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro and Samoan

You are able to check more than one category in response to the race question.

- This allows, for example, a person who has a White parent and a Bangladeshi parent to check both the White box and the Other Asian box and write in "Bangladeshi".

If you report a faith or religious affiliation in response to the race question, the Census Bureau will not report that response.

- Although religious affiliation can be a component of identity, the U.S. Census Bureau is prohibited by law (Public Law 94-521) from asking a question on religious affiliation on a mandatory basis. Because participation in the 2010 census is mandatory, the Census 2010 form does not ask about religious affiliation.
- If a person writes in a faith affiliation for the race question, the Census Bureau will not tabulate or use religious responses in any way. The Census Bureau would have to recode the person as one of the existing racial categories.
- If you prefer to self-identify your race rather than have the government make its best guess as to your race, you should report your race rather than a faith affiliation.

I don't understand who I should count in my census form? And where should I be counted?

You should be counted where you live and sleep most of the time.

- Make sure to count everyone living in your household, regardless of relationship status.
- Make sure that college kids living away from home are counted where they attend college.

I keep hearing about a Census Taker. What is that and how does that impact me?

A census taker is a person from your community who is hired by the Census Bureau to make sure that your neighborhood gets represented as accurately as possible. The census taker's primary responsibility is to collect census information from residences that have not sent back their 2010 Census form.

- The census taker will ONLY ask the questions that appear on the census form and can be identified by a census badge and bag.
- Fill Out Your Census Form! Census Day is April 1st! Households that have not responded will be visited in person by a census worker beginning in late April through July. If you don't want a census worker to visit you, fill out and mail back your census form by April 1, 2010!

I missed the April 1st deadline and forgot to mail my form back. What should I do?

Mail it back, no matter when! Even if it is past April 1st!

- Just realize, the later you send you form the greater the likelihood that your house is visited by a census taker. The census taker might have to ask for your information again – please cooperate and provide the census taker with your information even if you mailed in your form. The Census Bureau has processes to un-duplicate your responses.

Can I drop my form off somewhere or go somewhere to turn it in?

No. You must mail back your form (e.g. go to a post office, put it in a Post Office drop box, or give it to your letter carrier with outgoing mail).

- While you can go to Be Counted sites to PICK UP a census form if you did not receive one at your address, you cannot return your form at a Be Counted site.

I received something in the mail called the American Community Survey (ACS). What is this? Is it the same as the Census 2010? Do I have to complete both?

Every household will receive a 2010 Census survey. But only some households will also receive an ACS survey. If you receive both, you must complete both.

- The ACS is not the same survey. The ACS is a survey conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau every month and provides communities with critical economic, social, demographic and housing information every year.
- These surveys are important tools for ensuring that your community has political representation and adequate government funding.