

# It's time. Make yourself count.

Census 2010



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## Confidentiality and Privacy

**Make Yourself Count! Census answers cannot be used against you in any way.** Answering the 2010 census questionnaire is a simple way to do a lot of good for your community.

Some people are worried that their answers to the census questionnaire will be used against them, or members of their family, or other people in their household. It's not true. Individual census responses are confidential and protected by the strongest national privacy laws on the books.

- The U.S. Department of Justice has issued a statement declaring that no other law – not even the PATRIOT Act – overrides the confidentiality of the census.
- No government agency – not immigration officials, law enforcement, housing authorities, or the courts – can obtain access to any person's individual census answers for the next 72 years.
- No private company – not banks, landlords, credit companies or debt collectors – can get your personal census information.

***Not even the President of the United States has the power to violate the confidentiality of the census.***

Even if you don't trust the government, you can trust the confidentiality of the census.

- Census confidentiality is backed up by harsh legal penalties. Every census worker – including the Census Bureau director -- has to swear an oath to keep information confidential – and anyone who violates that confidentiality can be imprisoned for up to five years and fined \$250,000. *These laws are strictly enforced.*
- The statement by the Justice Department means that information given to the Census Bureau is safe and that people can trust the Bureau to protect their privacy.
- National civil rights organizations and immigrant rights organizations have lawyers working with the Census Bureau – and ready to go to court if necessary -- to make sure everyone's privacy is protected.

The easiest way to avoid contact with Census Bureau officials is to complete the form that will come in the mail in March 2010. Households that don't return the form by April 1 will get phone calls or be visited by Census Bureau employees to get basic information about each person living there.