

It's time. Make yourself count.

Census 2010



The 2010 Census and People with Disabilities: High Stakes and Major Opportunities

The Constitution requires a count of every person living in the United States once every ten years. People with disabilities have a lot at stake in the census; individuals with disabilities are significantly more likely to live in poverty than the rest of the population and many rely on programs whose funding is directly or indirectly allocated based on census data.

The census influences the distribution of more than \$400 billion every year in federal funds for programs in education, health care, community services, economic development and more. In fiscal year 2007, the federal government used census information to guide the distribution of approximately \$15 billion in services specifically to people with disabilities. In addition, census data are used by state and local governments and private corporations to guide investments in transportation, restaurants, shopping centers and other types of economic development.

Here are some of the ways census data are used:

- To help state and county agencies plan for eligible recipients under the Medicare, Medicaid, and Supplemental Security Income programs
- To distribute funds and develop programs for people with disabilities and seniors
- To distribute funds for housing for people with disabilities
- To allocate funds to states and local areas for employment and job training programs for veterans
- To ensure that comparable public transportation services are available for all segments of the population
- To award federal grants, under the Older Americans Act, based on the number of elderly people with physical and mental disabilities
- To allocate funds for mass transit systems to provide facilities for people with disabilities
- To provide housing assistance and supportive services for low-income individuals with HIV/AIDS and their families under the Housing Opportunities for Persons with AIDS (HOPWA) program
- To make available special education for children ages 3-5 through Special Education Preschool Grants

The Census Influences Funding of Programs for People with Disabilities

According to the National Council on Disability, nearly one-third of households in America had at least one member with a disability. This statistic does not include an additional 2.1 million in nursing homes and group homes. In addition to government funding for general federal health care and education programs, the census influences a number of programs that directly serve individuals with disabilities.

Voting Access for Individuals with Disabilities -- \$10.5 million

The Voting Access for Individuals with Disabilities grant program provides support to states to establish, expand, and improve access to the election process for more than 20 million individuals with disabilities who are of voting age. Grant awards have supported a range of activities including the development of training videos for election officials, poll workers, and volunteers on providing assistance to voters with visual impairments and surveying polling places to determine accessibility needs.

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Educational services for children with disabilities

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) provides funding to states and public agencies for services to children with disabilities. IDEA serves more than 6.5 million infants, toddlers, children and youths.

- Part B of IDEA ([\\$10.8 Billion](#)) serves children and youths ages 3-21, providing special education and related services. According to the [Annual Disability Statistics Compendium](#), Part B provided special education services to 5.5 million students in 2007, or more than 11 percent of the nearly 50 million students ages 6-17. In 2006 -2007, there were nearly 400,000 students who exited IDEA Part B programs. Of these, nearly 285,000 graduated with a diploma or received a certificate.
- Part C of IDEA (\$433 Million) provides early intervention services for infants and toddlers with disabilities. Through these grants, evaluation and assessment services are identified to assess the needs (physical, cognitive, social-emotional) of infants and toddlers, while also providing support for families through training and counseling.

Supportive Housing for Persons with Disabilities (Section 811) -- \$70 million

Accessible and affordable housing is one of the most urgent needs facing people with disabilities and their families. This program provides available housing units and support services to individuals with disabilities, allowing them to enjoy the benefits of independent living while also having access to the care they need. Because households with people with disabilities tend to have lower incomes, Section 811 makes up the difference between housing costs and tenants' contribution toward rent.

Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities (5310) -- \$152 Million

The 1990 [Americans with Disabilities Act](#) guarantees equal opportunity for people with disabilities in public accommodations, commercial facilities, employment, transportation, state and local government services, and telecommunications. Through [Section 5310](#) of the Capital Assistance Program for Elderly Persons and Persons with Disabilities, federal funds are allocated to states through grant applications to ensure that seniors and individuals with disabilities can easily access public transportation. The funding goes directly to the state governments, who are then able to either oversee and administer programs directly or provide funding for private not-for-profits that focus on transportation access for these groups.

An accurate census helps empower people with disabilities

In addition to influencing funding for programs directed toward people with disabilities, an accurate count has a huge impact on the financial health and political influence of the communities in which individuals with disabilities live.

- **Political Power** – The census shapes voting districts, which can determine whether individuals and their communities are fairly represented in Congress, state legislatures and local governments. The census is also used to monitor whether people have access to the voting booth.
- **Education** – Billions of dollars in education funding are distributed based on census information, including \$7.7 billion in Title I spending to assist schools with high numbers or percentages of low-income students and \$5.5 billion for Head Start, which provides grants for early childhood education and development programs for economically disadvantaged children and families.
- **Jobs** – The census influences the distribution of community development block grants and is used by governments and private companies to decide where to invest in new housing, roads, and shopping centers. Census information also helps the government monitor discrimination and enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

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Making Sure that Individuals with Disabilities Count

The Leadership Conference Education Fund is working with its national partners and local organizations across the country to make sure that every person is counted in the 2010 census. More information is available at www.civilrights.org/census.

Organizations that serve and advocate for people with disabilities can make a big difference by helping their clients and constituents understand the importance of the census and by helping individuals who have questions or need assistance completing the census form. Census forms will be distributed to households in mid-March. Forms are available in Braille. Help on filling out the forms is available through a toll-free telephone assistance line (1-866-872-6868) and TDD (1-866-783-2010).