Complete Count Committees Key to a Successful Census in 2010

Every 10 years, as mandated by the U.S. Constitution, our nation conducts a census — an effort to count every person living in the United States. This multibillion-dollar operation requires years of planning and more than a half million temporary workers.

The key to this endeavor is having every household fill out and mail back a completed census form. Participation is critical, as the results determine how Congress is apportioned and how more than $300 billion in federal funds are distributed annually to state, local and tribal areas.

One way to help ensure that everyone is counted is to form Complete Count Committees in communities, municipalities, cities, counties, states and tribal governments across the country.

Complete Count Committees are volunteer teams consisting of community leaders, faith-based groups, schools, businesses, media outlets and others who are appointed by elected officials and work together to make sure entire communities are counted.

"We want the 2010 Census to be the most accurate yet, and we are again calling upon Complete Count Committees to help us achieve that goal," said Tom Mesenbourg, acting director of the U.S. Census Bureau. "To ensure an accurate count and distribution of funds for schools, roads and elderly services, the support of local Complete Count Committees is vital."

A variety of state, county, municipal, tribal and community-based organizations formed 11,800 Complete Count Committees during Census 2000. These committees developed targeted outreach plans specific to their communities to supplement what the Census Bureau was already doing through paid advertising and partnership efforts. As a result, these committees helped

inform local residents — including those historically hard to reach in census counts — of the importance of responding to the census. In part because of these efforts, the response rate for Census 2000 increased for the first time in 30 years and the undercount of those historically missed during a decennial census was reduced. In short, the efforts of nearly 12,000 local Complete Count Committees, when combined with the Census Bureau's paid advertising and partnership program, made a huge improvement in the quality and accuracy of Census 2000.

In 2010, we need even more of these committees to help educate and inform our increasingly diverse nation. Complete Count Committees can start now to create awareness within their communities about the upcoming 2010 Census. They can donate space for testing and training temporary census workers, publicize recruiting efforts and obtain endorsements from local leaders. They can conduct census rallies or parades, media luncheons, and interfaith breakfasts and weekend events as we get closer to Census Day.

The 2010 Census will have one of the shortest census questionnaires in the history of the United States, dating back to the first census in 1790. The 2010 Census will ask just name, gender, age, race, ethnicity, relationship and whether the householder owns or rents their home. The census form will take only about 10 minutes on average to complete, and answers are protected by law and strictly confidential.

For more information about forming a Complete Count Committee, contact your Census Bureau regional office and ask to speak with a Partnership staff member. Staff can provide you with training materials, timelines, suggested activities, and a Complete Count Committee

handbook to make your committee a success. Visit the Census Bureau's Web site at

<http://www.census.gov> and click on "Regional Offices" for contact information.

Contact:
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