

## *The Success of the Census, IT'S IN OUR HANDS MARYLAND!*

### **2010 Census Now Less Than 6 Months Away - But Who's Counting**

The decennial census is right around the corner, at least for the U.S. Census Bureau and State, local governments and community leaders, or any other group that wants to make sure that all of their residents and constituents are counted.

For States the U.S. decennial census is an event of major importance. It is the basis for congressional, state and local political reapportionment and redistricting based on one-person one vote.

Census counts also underlie most statistics used by the federal government to allocate federal funds. Each year more than \$300 billion in federal funds are allocated based on the decennial census counts. In Fiscal Year 2007 Maryland received over \$ 5.8 billion in federal funding based on formula grants using census data. This amounts to over \$1,000 per person per year.

In some cases the funds are distributed based on the actual decennial population count. In other instances annual population estimates benchmarked to the decennial census are used for determining eligibility for federal funds.

#### **Information on 2010 Census Jobs**

<http://www.census.gov/hrd/www/index.html>

#### **What is Different for 2010 Decennial Census**

##### **1. "Short Form Only" in the Decennial Census**

The 2010 decennial Census will be a "short form only" census, expected to take about 10 minutes to complete. The survey will collect basic information, such as age, race, gender, ethnicity, household relationship and tenure – whether the home is owned or rented. These few items provide the information necessary for reapportionment and redistricting as well as for mandated federal programs.

In early March 2010 the Census Bureau will send out an advance letter to each household stating that the 2010 Census questionnaire is coming. Census questionnaires will arrive in the mail in mid March for persons that receive mail delivery at home. For those that pick up their mail at the U.S. Postal Office, census employees will drop off questionnaires at each dwelling. English/Spanish bilingual forms will be mailed to areas with a high concentration of households where no person over 15 years of age speaks English "very well".

Census forms are to be filled out and returned in the mail April 1<sup>st</sup>. Reminder postcards will be mailed out in late March. Households that do not send back their survey will receive a replacement questionnaire April 6-15. In April through June census enumerators will contact households that did not return a census form.

##### **2. "Long Form Data" Now Part of American Community Survey**

Past Decennial Censuses sent a long form survey to 1 in 6 households to collect more detailed information on characteristics of population (e.g. income, education, travel time to work, employment and occupation, veteran status and housing (e.g. monthly housing costs, house heating fuel, number of bedrooms). These questions are considered by some to be more intrusive even though the data acquired by these questions are used to determine eligibility for services such as adult education programs, transportation needs for roads and mass transit and job training for those unemployed.

The Decennial Census long form survey has been replaced by the American Community Survey (ACS), an annual survey. The ACS has been collecting data since 2005 and is sent to a small percentage of households each month. Detailed information for 2007 on areas such as counties and towns that have a population greater than 20,000 persons are now available from ACS for the first time. By 2011 the ACS will provide small area data for census tracts and block groups comparable to what in the past was derived from the Decennial Census Long Form.

ACS data collected over the course of the year are aggregated to derive annual population and housing characteristics for large geographic areas such as states, and larger cities and counties. Data for small areas such as census tracts are derived by aggregating the results of multiple year ACS data. Collecting data monthly and reporting results annually instead of once every 10 years provides a more current picture of what is going on in communities.

### Why Fill Out the Census Form?

- **It's important.** – Census data affect funding for your community, your community's representation in Congress, and in State and local legislative bodies as well as your community planning decisions.
- **It's easy.** – The census questionnaire takes only a few minutes to answer and return by mail. With the "Short Form" only Census in 2010 this is particularly true.
- **It's confidential.** – Your responses are protected by law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9). This means that information from individual Census forms is never released to the public or other government or private sector agencies. All Census Bureau employees take an oath to protect confidentiality and are subject to a jail term, a fine – or both – for disclosing any information that could identify a respondent or household.

### Census Timeline

- December 2008 - Local Census Offices begin to open in Maryland
- Spring 2009 - Address canvassing to verify the mailing list for census questionnaires
- Fall 2009 - MDP reviews feedback on address canvassing
- March 2010 - Census forms mailed to households, special populations (nursing homes, correctional institutions, college dormitories)
- *April 1, 2010* - Census Day
- December 31, 2010 - Apportionment counts for Congressional seats by State delivered to the President
- April 1, 2011 -- Redistricting data delivered to the states for redrawing Congressional & Legislative districts

