

The 2010 Census Count is Only Six Months Away

The Minneapolis Complete Count Committee (CCC), an action team of community leaders from across the city appointed by the Mayor and the City Council, has been working to get the word out about the upcoming 2010 Census. Now with Census Day less than six months away, Committee Members are working harder than ever to ensure that everyone in Minneapolis is counted. The CCC has established a speakers' bureau of community leaders and promoted the Census in the Somali community, high rise communities, and at community meetings and events. KMOJ and Lalnvasora radio stations featured announcements and interviews regarding the Census.

"We need to do this work early on so that it will benefit people who need awareness about why the Census is safe and important for their community. Also, it takes a long time to build trust around the Census, especially in immigrant communities that have never participated in the Census and may have suspicions about how information is used," explains Complete Count Committee Co-chair, Saeed Fahia.



There is a lot at stake in the 2010 Census. It's estimated that every 100 people missed in the Census count leads to a \$1 million loss to the people of Minneapolis over the next decade. That means a lack of funding for schools, social services, transportation, businesses and more. In Minneapolis, that \$1 million would be enough to:

- ✓ Place nearly 350 people into full time employment
- ✓ Prevent 2,000 foreclosures
- ✓ Provide gap funding assistance for 40 rehabilitated affordable housing units
- ✓ Provide more than 10,000 medical or dental visits for uninsured patients at a community clinic
- ✓ Help at least 25 new businesses get started by providing low interest loans, creating hundreds of new jobs

An accurate census count is also critical in making sure Minnesota retains its full congressional representation. Based on current population trends, the state demographer is projecting a loss of one congressional seat in Minnesota.

"We need to make our numbers count for the good of the community," says Bishop Richard Howell of Shiloh Temple. VJ Smith of MAD DADS explains, "It's not only our vote that counts, but our actions and our plans for the future that count, that's why we need to participate in the Census."

However, there are many barriers and challenges to achieving accurate representation in the Census. Many fear that the information they share during the Census may be shared with immigration, welfare, or housing agencies, but in fact, sharing Census responses with others is a federal crime. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share individual information with anyone, including landlords and other government agencies and officials.

Census questionnaires will arrive in mid March. The process, even for people who have language barriers, should be much simpler and has been shortened to a simple 10 question form, which takes just a few minutes to complete. The Complete Count Committee is working with City, County, and Census Bureau staff to ensure that there will be Questionnaire Assistance Centers available throughout key communities where paid staff with appropriate language skills can provide information about how to fill out the census form.

In order to achieve a strong count, leaders from different ethnic groups, communities of faith, public institutions, and grassroots organizations are working together as the Minneapolis Complete Count Committee. For more information:

www.ci.minneapolis.mn.us/2010census/

www.2010census.gov

Jeff Schneider, City of Minneapolis 2010 Census Contact, 612.673.5124