

Help Our Community Get What it Needs for the Next 10 Years

In March 2010, more than 130 million addresses will receive a 2010 Census form by mail or hand delivery. The 2010 Census will document the changes in our nation since the last decennial census in 2000, and tell us how we've evolved as a country. Because census data affect how more than \$400 billion in federal funding is distributed to tribal, state and local governments, the census also will frame the future of our country and our community for the next 10 years.

During Census 2000, the mail participation rate was 72 percent as of the April 2000 cut-off. About \$85 million is saved for every one percent increase in mail participation. For these and many other reasons, we must work to encourage everyone's participation in the census.

Here's what you should know about the 2010 Census:

It's easy. One of the shortest census forms in history, the 2010 Census form asks 10 questions and takes about 10 minutes to complete. The individual in whose name the housing unit is rented or owned should complete the form on behalf of every person living there, both relatives and nonrelatives.

It's important. Census data are used to reapportion seats in Congress and ensure proper district representation in state and local governments. Information from the census helps determine locations for child-care and senior centers, new roads, hospitals, schools and community centers.

It's safe. By law, the U.S. Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. All Census Bureau employees take an oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both.

Finally, the most efficient way to respond to the 2010 Census is to complete the form as soon as it arrives and return it in the postage-paid return envelope. Census workers will visit households that do not return forms to take the count in person.

The City of Vinton, Benton County and the Vinton-Shellsburg Community School District rely heavily on the results of the census to determine allocation of vital funds and grant applications. For example, the amount of road use funds that the City receives from the State that are used to take care of the streets in the City is based upon the number of people living in Vinton. By fully accounting for the number of people living in Vinton, we can assure that Vinton gets the full amount of eligible funding.

For more information about the 2010 Census, visit 2010census.gov.