

The 2010 Census Is Coming!

This March, the U.S. Census Bureau is set to start counting people who live in the United States. The Bureau counts the U.S. population every ten years. The last count was done in 2000, so it's time for the counting to start again. This will be the 23rd time a U.S. census has been taken. The first census was done more than 200 years ago -- in the year 1790.



Why does the Census Bureau want to know how many people live in the United States? The census will give an accurate count of the number of people who live in each state, city, and neighborhood. Accurate census data is important because it helps the U.S. government determine where to spend its money. Each year, the government gives more than \$400 billion to states and communities based on their population and need. That money is used to build buildings such as schools and hospitals. It is also used to construct and repair highways and bridges, and to provide services for job seekers and senior citizens. That's why it's so important to every community that every person is counted.

Census information is also used to determine the number of U.S. Representatives each state sends to the U.S. Congress in Washington, D.C. The more people a state has, the more representatives it sends to Washington. For example, many more people live in Texas today than when the last census was done, so Texas might gain as many as four representatives in Washington. The population in Ohio is smaller than it was ten years ago, so the state might lose two representatives. Many other states might gain or lose representatives based on the census results.

NEWS WORD BOX

accurate residence
representative data
determine services

2010 CENSUS TIMELINE

- **March 2010:** Census forms will be mailed to every residence in the country. The head of each household fills out the form. The form asks ten simple questions -- such as name, age, date of birth, and race -- about the people who live in that home.
- **April 1, 2010:** People must mail forms to the Census Bureau by this date.
- **April - July 2010:** Census takers will visit homes that did not return a form by mail.
- **December 2010:** The Census Bureau must report population data to the President.

THINK ABOUT THE NEWS

Getting an accurate count of the U.S. population is no easy task.
What are some of the challenges that might make a census taker's job a difficult one?