



IT'S TIME, AGAIN, TO BE COUNTED!

Once every 10 years, our nation undertakes a massive effort to count every person living within the United States. Information about the nation's population – how we've grown and changed – is important for planning for our future. The Census provides a picture of the entire country as well as a picture of states, counties, townships, boroughs and cities. Is the population growing or declining? Is the population aging? Has the school age population increased over time? Are more people renting than owning their homes? How has the ethnic and racial character of our country changed?

Information collected through the U.S. Census, which began in 1790, helps to shape policies and programs at the national, state and local levels. The information also determines the allocation of federal and state funds for education, public transportation, road rehabilitation and construction, housing, programs for elderly, and family support programs, among others. Census data serve as a guide to planners and housing providers about housing needs of the future. Census data are useful to school districts in determining how to address the educational needs of a growing and changing population. Census data are used by businesses and nonprofit entities in determining appropriate locations for commercial or service enterprises to serve the needs of a changing population. For example, census information helps determine the location of hospitals, child care and senior citizen centers as well as retail centers and recreational facilities. Finally, Census data affect your voice in Congress by determining how many seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Census Day is April 1, 2010. Every address in the United States will receive a simple 10-question 2010 Census questionnaire during the month of March. Questionnaire responses should represent the household as it exists on April 1. All people living at that address should be counted – people of all races and ethnic groups, both citizens and non-citizens must be counted. Upon completion, the questionnaire must be mailed back to the U.S. Census Bureau.

All information obtained through the Census is confidential. By federal law, every Census Bureau employee, including the Census Bureau director and every Bureau representative and field worker, must take an oath and will be subject to a jail term of up to five years, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both, if he or she discloses *any* information collected by the questionnaire. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share an individual's answers with anyone, including welfare, immigration, or local zoning or code enforcement officials.

The cooperation of all residents of Lancaster in completing and returning the short Census 2010 questionnaire will reduce the door-to-door follow-up that Census Bureau Field Representatives must undertake. Since *everyone* in the United States must be counted, the Census Bureau will be hiring thousands of Field Representatives, all who must take the oath of confidentiality, to knock on doors across the country to obtain the necessary information. Field Representatives must present their ID badges and will ask *only* the 10 questions related to members of the household. *From April to July 2010, Census field representatives will knock on the door of every household that does not mail back a completed 2010 Census form.* An improved mail-back response saves many millions in taxpayer dollars.

For more information, go to www.census.gov/2010census or to www.2010censusjobs.gov .

To help your country, to help the Lancaster community, and to avoid that knock on your door, *please complete and return the 2010 Census questionnaire.*