

Census 2010 Important for All Levels of Government Orland Park Officials Stress Importance of Participation

ORLAND PARK, IL - The foundation of American democracy is dependent on fair and equitable representation in Congress. To achieve an accurate assessment of the number and location of the people living within the nation's borders, the U.S. Constitution mandates a census of the population every ten years.

In March, 2010 more than 130 million addresses will receive a 2010 Census form. The 2010 Census will document the changes in the United States since the last decennial census in 2000.

"Orland Park has conducted a number of special censuses over the last ten years to document growth in different parts of the village," explained Mayor Dan McLaughlin. "This year's census is the nationwide count that occurs every ten years," he said, adding, "We're calling on everyone in Orland Park to cooperate and participate in the census."

Census totals determine which states gain or lose representation in Congress. Data will directly affect how more than \$4 trillion is allocated to local, state and tribal governments over the next ten years. So that this allocation is accomplished fairly and accurately, the goal of the decennial census is to count everybody, count them only once and count them in the right place.

Orland Park's participation is being coordinated through the Village Clerk's Office. "The importance of the 2010 Census is highly significant," said Village Clerk Dave Maher.

"The federal government uses these numbers for the rest of the decade to make decisions about public health, neighborhood improvements, transportation, education, senior services and more," he explained.

The goal of the 2010 Census is to count everyone by April 1, 2010. United States residents are encouraged to use April 1 as their personal deadline to return the completed census form. The U.S. Census Bureau does not ask about the legal status of respondents in any of its surveys and census programs.

Census questionnaires, available in a variety of languages, are available on request. Census figures estimate 310 million people residing in the United States.

"This year's census is described as one of the shortest questionnaires in history," McLaughlin noted, "We're asking everyone to take ten minutes to answer the ten questions on the mailed surveys."

Some area residents have received the American Community Survey, conducted every year throughout the decade, replacing the Census 2000 long-form questionnaire.

"We've heard from residents who have received the American Community Survey, a longer questionnaire that is randomly sent to different households," Maher explained, adding that not every household has received the longer questionnaire.

The short questionnaire that will be mailed to every household asks for name, gender, age, race, ethnicity and whether the respondent rents or owns their home.

Census staff will be available at Orland Park's Frederick T. Owens Village Hall and at the village's Sportsplex fifteen hours each week, March 19 to April 19. "They're going to have an information tables available to answer questions and help those who need assistance," Maher explained.

Residents who don't return their census surveys can expect a visit from a census enumerator.

"Area residents who scored highest at the recent census testing are being hired to physically visit the houses that don't return their questionnaires so that everyone is included," Maher explained.

Enumerators will visit homes April through July. By law, the Census Bureau must deliver the population information to the President in December, 2010. The Census Bureau must complete delivery of redistricting data to states by March, 2011.

"Everyone's participation in the census is important for our country, the State of Illinois and, in particular, Orland Park," McLaughlin said.

Responses to the 2010 Census questionnaire are required by law. All responses are used for statistical purposes only and all are strictly confidential. Further information is available at www.2010.census.gov.

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PHOTO CAPTION

Orland Park residents can expect their 2010 Census Questionnaires to arrive by mail during the month of March. Census officials report that the ten question survey takes ten minutes to complete. All questionnaires should be mailed back by April 1, 2010. (photo courtesy of the United States Census Bureau)

