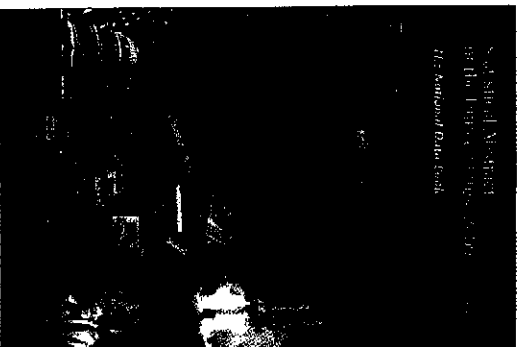


Are You Ready for the Census?

BY BRIAN DAY, STAFF ATTORNEY, IML

The 2010 federal Census kicks off on April 1, 2010. Local officials have an opportunity to raise awareness of and encourage participation in the census. By doing so, you can help ensure that your community receives its fair share of both revenue and representation.



The federal government relies heavily on census data for much of their programs. Each year, the federal government can allocate more than \$400 billion to states and communities throughout the country based, at least in part, on census data. That data is also used for planning and funding of schools, hospitals, roads and other infrastructure. A myriad of other federal programs and grants also depend on census data. Even representation in Congress is determined by the census.

There are also a number of state and local issues that rely on census data. Perhaps most important to your community is the allocation of state-shared revenues. Communities receive portions of the state income tax, use tax and motor-fuel tax on a per-capita basis. An accurate census count will help ensure that your community receives all of the revenue to which it is entitled. Additionally, accurate census data can also help your community better target economic development opportunities and make more insightful planning, zoning and other policy decisions.

In order to get accurate census data, your community will need the active participation of its residents. One way to encourage census participation is to take part in a "Complete Census Count Committee" (CCC). The purpose of these committees is to make people aware of the census and to motivate residents to complete and return their census questionnaire.

The CCCs consist of state and local officials and community leaders. The committees often include a cross section of community representatives, including government agencies, education, business and faith-based organizations, and the media. History has taught us that there are various racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic and geographic issues that can be a factor in census participation. The members of a CCC,

being experts on their communities, are in the best position to address these various issues that may be present in your community. By using its local knowledge, expertise and influence, a CCC plans and implements census awareness campaigns that address the special characteristics of its community. Local campaigns are designed to reach traditionally undercounted populations by stressing the importance of an accurate census count, including how data are collected and used.

From now until May 2010, CCCs across the country will be conducting key activities, which often include activities such as:

- Holding events that generate census interest and participation.
- Distributing census information and materials through websites, newsletters and at events.
- Partnering with organizations in their communities to include census messaging in their communications.

Even if you do not participate in a CCC, there are ways in which you can encourage census participation. By using your website, newsletters and other resources, you can let your citizens know the importance of returning their census questionnaires.

For more information about the upcoming census, the U.S. Census Bureau has created a website with a number of resources. You can find that site at <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/>.