

## Top five reasons to fill out the 2010 census form

Written by Better Business Bureau Tips for Consumers  
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Every ten years the US federal government is required to count every man woman and child in the country. Not surprisingly, the census is a massive undertaking requiring the work of more than a million people to accurately count the hundreds of millions of people living in the country. Contrary to the myths, participation in the census is extremely safe and easy, and the Better Business Bureau (BBB) of Minnesota and North Dakota encourages everyone to take a few minutes to fill out their census form when it arrives in the mail in March.

According to a survey by the Pew Research Center, 12 percent of US residents said they weren't sure if they would fill out their census form and 6 percent said that it was unlikely, or that they definitely would not return the form. The main reason respondents gave for not returning the form was that they were just too busy, not interested or uninformed. However, a quarter of respondents said they didn't trust the government.

"Some myths are floating around that are leading people to believe that the census is inconvenient or unsafe, but the opposite is true," said Dana Badgerow, president and CEO of the BBB of Minnesota and North Dakota. "Not only has the Census Bureau made safety and ease a priority, it's also in the public's best interest to respond to the census because it will help the individual's voice be heard."

In order to dispel some myths surrounding the census, the BBB offers up five reasons why everyone should participate:

**It's safe** - By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, including the IRS, FBI, CIA, INS or any other government agency. All Census Bureau employees take the 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 and/or imprisonment of up to five years.

**It's easy** - The mail-in census form is only ten questions long and, for many households, won't take longer than ten minutes to answer. If you don't return the form, you'll be visited at your home by a census taker at least three times. Avoid the hassle and just fill out the form.

**It allocates money and resources to help you** - The information the census collects helps determine how more than \$400 billion dollars of annual federal funding is spent on infrastructure and services that go to benefit the public including hospitals, job training centers, schools, bridges and roads.

**It saves you money** – For every 1 percent increase in mail response, the government—and ultimately taxpayers—save \$80 to \$90 million.

**It helps your voice be heard** - Redistricting is the process of changing electoral district and constituency boundaries, usually in response to periodic census results. Census information affects the numbers of seats your state occupies in the U.S. House of Representatives.

For more advice on filling out your census form and identifying a census employee, visit [www.2010census.gov](http://www.2010census.gov).

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