

Why our Community and Neighbors Need to Participate in the 2010 Census

In March, the U.S. Census Bureau will mail 2010 Census questionnaires to households throughout the nation. The census is a count of everyone living in the United States and, since 1790, has been conducted every 10 years.

The 2010 Census forms are the shortest in history and only have 10 easy questions. The census form asks general questions about each household. Where you reside on April 1, 2010 is where you need to be counted. You can view the census form online at 2010.census.gov or at charmeck.org/census. Your responses are protected by law (Title 13, U.S. Code) and the Census Bureau cannot share answers with anyone or any other government agency including the IRS, FBI, ICE or CIA.

Filling out and mailing back your census form is one of the easiest ways you can help improve the quality of life in your community. As a result of the 2000 Census, North Carolina gained a seat in the House of Representatives. An accurate census response rate not only increases the chances of better representation, but it also affects how more than \$400 billion each year in federal and state funding will be allocated to communities - that adds up to more than \$4 trillion over a 10-year period.

In the 2000 Census, Mecklenburg County had a return rate of only 68 percent. In 2010, we're hoping that every resident fills out and returns their census forms, because if you live here, you count! You can visit the web site charmeck.org/census for more information about the 2010 Census, including resources outlining what is at stake for our community and how you can get involved with local efforts.

If the 2010 Census questionnaires are not mailed back by April 1, a census taker will follow-up in person. Don't be alarmed if you see a census taker in your neighborhood. Census takers are people from your community who have been hired by the Census Bureau to make sure your neighborhood is represented as accurately as possible. A census taker's primary responsibility is to collect census information from residences that didn't mail back the 2010 Census questionnaire. They will be visiting households and neighborhoods from April – July 2010.

A census taker:

- Will only ask questions that appear on the census form
- Will have an official government ID badge marked with their name
- May carry a binder containing the addresses that didn't mail back a completed census form
- Will leave a door hanger for residents if they are not at home when he or she visits.

A census taker **will not**:

- Ask for your social security number
- Ask to enter your home
- Visit your home before April or after July 2010.

If a census taker visits you, here's what you should do:

- Ask to see their ID. All census workers carry official government badges marked with their name.
- Remember that a census taker will never ask to enter your home
- Call the Charlotte Region Census Center (704-936-5300) to confirm they are employed by the Census Bureau
- Answer the census form questions for your entire household.