

It's time. Make yourself count.

Census 2010



Fact Sheet: The 2010 Census and Latino Families

The 2010 census will influence the education of Latino children, the health of Latino families, and the political power of Latino communities for the next 10 years. All Latinos living in the United States have the right and obligation to be counted, regardless of citizenship or residency status. Getting counted will bring communities recognition, respect, resources, and political representation. Every person who is not counted could cost the community more than \$14,000 in funds for schools, health care, and jobs – and will diminish Latino influence at all levels of government.

Basic Facts about the Census

The U.S. Constitution requires every person living in the United States to be counted every 10 years. Governments and private companies use census information to decide where to spend money for schools, housing, health care, job training, economic development and more – more than \$400 billion a year by the federal government alone. Census numbers are used to determine representation in Congress, state legislatures, and local governments. Census figures are also used to enforce civil rights laws that protect Latinos from discrimination in voting, housing and employment. Undercounted communities lose out in all those areas.

How the Census Benefits Latinos

- **Political Power** – Census figures are used to shape federal, state, and local voting districts, which determine whether Latino communities are fairly represented in Congress, state legislatures and local councils and boards. Census numbers are used to enforce the federal Voting Rights Act to protect Latino voters from discrimination.
- **Education** – Billions of dollars in federal education funding are distributed based on census information. Millions of Latino children benefit from these programs.
- **Health Care** – The Public Health Service Act uses data on race and national origin to identify populations that may not have access to adequate medical care. Census data influence the distribution of funding for programs such as the State Children's Health Insurance Program.
- **Jobs** – Census information influences the distribution of community development block grants and is used by state governments and private companies to decide where to build new housing, roads, and shopping centers. Census information also helps the government monitor for discrimination and enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which ensures equal opportunity in the workplace.

Federal Funding

More than \$400 billion in federal funding is distributed every year based on census information. Here's how some major programs influenced by the census affect Latino children, families, and communities.

Education:

Latinos currently represent 20 percent of public school enrollment, up from 11 percent in 1986. In some areas, Latinos represent the majority of public school students. The census influences several major education programs that have a big impact on the lives of Latino children and families.

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- **Title 1: Support for schools serving low-income students -- \$7.5 billion**
Title 1 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act provides financial assistance to local educational agencies and schools with high numbers or high percentages of low-income children to help ensure that all children meet state academic standards. In the 2006-07 school year, Title I served more than 17 million children. About 36 percent of students benefitting from Title 1 funds are Latino. That's more than 6 million Latino students.
- **Head Start -- \$5.7 billion**
The Head Start program provides grants to local agencies to provide comprehensive child development services to economically disadvantaged children and families, with a special focus on helping preschoolers develop the early reading and math skills needed to succeed in school. Between 1992 and 2007 the [percentage](#) of Latino children in Head Start grew from about 19 percent to 32percent.
- **English Language Acquisition Grants – \$647 million**
Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act distributes grants to states based on the size of the immigrant and limited English proficient (LEP) population of each state. Latino students comprise about [80 percent](#) of students enrolled in English language learner classes.

Health:

- **State Children's Health Insurance Program – \$5.5 billion**
SCHIP was created in 1997 to reduce the number of uninsured children by providing subsidized insurance to children of the working poor. SCHIP covers more than 7 million children. About 60 percent of all Latinos eligible for SCHIP participate in the program. According to Census data, Latinos are the most uninsured population group among U.S. children, with one out of five Latino children uninsured.

Housing and Economic Opportunities:

Census data are used by many government agencies, private companies, and foundations to guide investments in housing, transportation, and other job-providing economic development.

- **Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers Program -- \$15.3 Billion**
Section 8, or the Housing Choice Voucher Program, provides housing assistance to low-income renters and homeowners. Section 8 vouchers are the nation's leading source of housing assistance for low-income elderly, people with disabilities, and families with children, helping approximately 2 million households to secure modest, affordable rental housing in the private market. About 16 percent of Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers recipients, or more than 300,000 households, are Latino.
- **Community Development Block Grants – \$4.9 billion**
Federal Community Development Block Grants to larger cities and urban counties are designed to improve the life of low-income communities living at or below the Federal Poverty Guidelines by providing low-income housing and expansion of economic opportunities. Research indicates that out of

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nine million individuals helped by block grants in 2007, 18 percent -- or more than 1.6 million people -- were Latino. In eight states, Latinos made up 30 percent or more of people served by block grants.

Why Latinos Need to Take Action to Get Everyone Counted

Even though the 2000 census is considered one of the most accurate ever, Hispanics and non-white racial groups were undercounted, along with renters and children. Every person who goes uncounted costs the community much-needed resources and fair political representation for the next 10 years.

Latino communities are affected by many of the reasons for undercounts:

- Mail and door-to-door collection methods have lower response rates in lower income areas;
- Lower education levels or limited English proficiency affect the ability of many individuals to understand the census
- General misunderstanding of the importance of census participation
- Distrust or suspicion of government leading to fears that the census may be used by immigration and/or law enforcement officials to deport or incarcerate or may disqualify one for social welfare programs.
- The recession and foreclosure crisis has hit Latino families particularly hard; many families have been displaced and may be sharing living quarters with other families. Everyone should be counted, even if they are living with relatives on a temporary basis.

The Census Bureau and its Partners are Working to Get a Full Count

The Census Bureau is working with its national and local partners to help overcome the barriers to an accurate count of Latinos living in the United States. Millions of census questionnaires will be available in Spanish as well as English. Bilingual assistance will be provided by telephone and through community-based assistance centers. Paid advertising by the Bureau and its partners, including The Leadership Conference Education Fund, will encourage people to participate. The National Association of Latino and Appointed Elected Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund is working with a large number of Latino advocates to mobilize census participation through the "[Ya es hora HAGASE CONTAR!](#)" (It's Time, Make Yourself Count!) campaign.

Overcoming Fears and Distrust

A major obstacle to full participation in Latino communities may be individuals' lack of trust in the government or fear that answering the census questionnaire could be used against them or their family members. It's important to acknowledge and address those fears directly. Here are some messages and facts that respected community leaders can help deliver between now and April 1, 2010.

- Census answers cannot be used against you in any way.
- The census form does not ask about citizenship status. Individual census responses are confidential and protected by the strongest national privacy laws on the books.
- No other government agency -- not immigration officials, law enforcement, housing authorities, or the courts -- can get any person's individual census answers for the next 72 years. *Not even the President of the United States has the power to violate the confidentiality of the census.*

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- Every census worker must swear an oath to keep information confidential – and anyone who violates that confidentiality can be imprisoned for up to five years and fined \$250,000.

Community and civil rights leaders agree that everyone should be counted. They know it's the best way to build stronger and more powerful communities. They would not support the census if they thought it could hurt the people they represent.

Overcoming the Bad Idea of the Boycott

A few Latino leaders have responded to their frustration over the slow pace of immigration reform by encouraging immigrants, especially undocumented immigrants, not to participate in the census. These advocates believe that boycotting the census will somehow help build political pressure to pass immigration reform. But they're wrong. Boycotting the census will take power away from Latino communities, and deprive Latino families of educational and health resources for the next 10 years.

Immigration reform is important. We're more likely to get Congress to pass immigration reform by showing the growing size and strength of our communities and getting the political representation we deserve. A boycott would have the opposite effect. We should channel our frustrations and energy into getting everyone counted, and then building on that show of strength to get immigration reform passed.

More information is available from The Leadership Conference Education Fund at www.civilrights.org/census and from the NALEO Educational Fund at <http://www.naleo.org/census2010.html> and www.yaeshora.info.