

Dear local government officials:

Last week, census takers began hand-delivering questionnaires to 12 million U.S. addresses, mostly in rural areas. Next week, another 120 million U.S. residences will begin receiving the forms by mail.

The 2010 census will play a critical role in determining how the federal government distributes more than \$400 billion each year back to the states for critical programs in education, housing and community development, health care and transportation. More than 200,000 New Yorkers were not tallied in 2000, costing the state tens of millions of federal dollars. Another undercount may even cost us representation in Congress.

In a year in which local budgets are stretched and tax dollars are scarce, ensuring we get our fair share of federal funds through a complete and accurate count is even more essential. To that end, New York state has made a serious commitment to the census – by funding the media and outreach activities of more than 80 local governments and community groups in Western New York, in the North Country, on Long Island and everywhere in between.

In addition, Gov. Paterson has instructed all state agencies to promote the census. That means New Yorkers receiving unemployment benefits and food stamps are getting census materials from the Department of Labor. Census postcards are being sent to all state-run senior housing and rent-stabilized units. New Yorkers are even receiving census information when they enroll in Medicaid and Head Start programs.

All across the state, Complete Count Committees and local leaders have been holding town hall meetings, community discussions and press events to discuss their media and mobilization efforts. Not a single day goes by without earnest census-related activity, and we would love to hear more about events happening in your municipalities and help you publicize them.

Both the state and federal census websites are offering additional resources you can use to help promote the census. For example:

- Beginning on March 22, mail back rates – broken down by neighborhood – will be constantly updated at www.2010.census.gov/2010census/take10map. (Until then, you can visit the site to see Census 2000 mail back rates.) The map will help census partners know where they should increase outreach efforts.
- You can download 2010 census logos, banners and a countdown clock for local government websites at www.2010.census.gov/partners/promotional.
- Census jobs are still available. Visit www.census2010.ny.gov to locate census offices in New York state.

In addition to Census Day on April 1, there are some other important dates you should know:

- **March 10:** The U.S. Census Bureau finalizes and lists online all Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QAC) and Be Counted Sites (BCS). Located in all corners of the state, QACs are staffed by census workers who can help people fill out the census forms if they have questions or need assistance due to language barriers, visual impairment, etc. People who didn't get questionnaires in the mail can go to a BCS to pick up a form, fill it out and send it back.
- **Around March 15:** Census forms are mailed out.
- **March 19:** Questionnaire Assistance Centers and Be Counted Sites open.

Around May 1, census workers will begin knocking on the doors of households that have not mailed in their questionnaires or failed to complete the form properly. It's nearly 60 times more costly to send a census worker to your house than for you to just send back the form in the mail, so encourage your friends and co-workers to help out the Census Bureau – and taxpayers – by mailing the form back.

I am looking forward to hearing from you and working with you during this extremely busy but exciting period leading up to Census Day – and beyond.

Sincerely,
Secretary of State - Lorraine Cortés-Vázquez