

Why the 2010 Census is Important to Indian Country

By Claire Wood, Data Coordinator, Tribal Planning,

Content from a new website entitled www.indiancountrycounts.org – check it out.

Did You Know?

- Census data is the basis for more than \$1 billion that annually flows into Indian Country to build Tribal housing and make improvements, maintain and construct roads and provide employment and training programs.
- American Indians and Alaska Natives historically have experienced some of the highest census undercounts of any population in the United States – 12.2 percent of Natives on reservations were missed in the 1990 census compared to 1.2 percent of all people in the United States and about 4.5 percent of Tribal people were missed in 2000.
- Native people were entirely excluded from the first six censuses and undercounted for generations, up to and beyond 1962, when the last American Indians were granted the right to vote.
- Census answers are private and confidential. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share an individual's or a household's answers with any person

or agency, e.g. not the IRS, not law enforcement entities nor Tribal housing authorities.

Why You Should be Counted in the 2010 Census

Power: In the same way that Native people have begun to flex our muscles at the polls through Native Vote, it's time for Tribal citizens to be fully counted in the 2010 Census. An accurate count of American Indians and Alaska Natives is necessary for the upcoming state redistricting processes. The same skills and tools that Tribes used in recent Native Vote campaigns are valuable to census outreach and the Indian Country Counts efforts.

Funding and Community Resources: Being counted as Native will directly benefit you, your family and your Tribal community.

The census taken every 10 years is the only uniform count of the U.S. population, producing figures for the nation as a whole and for every geographic area within it – down to the smallest American Indian reservation and Alaska Native village. The census is the only source of this kind of data, with thousands of uses that benefit all American Indians and Alaska Natives. Just a few of the potential uses of Census data include:

- Analyzing the need for Head Start services in each area of a reservation. The census provides counts of American Indian and Alaska Native children for every community within an American Indian or Alaska Native area.
- Planning the development of facilities for Tribal Elders. By showing the distribution of American Indian and Alaska Native people by age, census figures can help determine appropriate locations for community facilities in Native areas.
- Strengthening programs for Tribal members living in big cities. Census numbers provide the only detailed profiles available of off-reservation American Indian and Alaska Native people, profiles used by the urban Native centers that serve them.
- Supporting reservation economic development. Tribal entrepreneurs and prospective investors use statistics about the size of the potential market for local services, along with the size of the potential labor force needed to produce the goods and services a business might offer.

If you, members of your family, friends and neighbors refuse to be counted or are missed:

- This denies your community money to which it is entitled on the basis of its population size.
- This reduces the political representation of your community in Congress as well as state and local legislative bodies.
- This leads to poor judgment in planning community services and facilities and in locating new business enterprises.

Participating in the census by completing your household's questionnaire is easy. The form is short and simple, asking only basic questions about each person's sex, age and race and whether the house, apartment or mobile home is owned or rented.

It should take the average household only about 10 minutes to complete the form. Being counted means standing up for yourself, your family and your Tribal community as an American Indian or Alaska Native.

The U.S. Census Bureau will have an informational booth at the Siletz Tribal Restoration Pow-Wow on Nov. 14. Please stop by for more information.

If you can't see us there, you can check the census website at <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/> or www.indiancountrycounts.org; or call me with questions at (toll free) 800-922-1399, ext.1276, or 541-444-8276.

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They've lived with Rex's brother, Ross, in Otis for the last two-and-a-half years.

"I'm on Social Security and disability and am not working," said Rex, who has diabetes and has had two open heart surgeries. "It took a long time to get here, but the wait was worth it."

Rex also described the services he's received through the Siletz Tribe's Elders and Housing programs, including Meals on Wheels, Lifeline, home health aide services and someone to help clean.

"This is a place where I can live out my retirement and be comfortable," said Rex

Then in August, the Tribe received notice it would get \$2.9 million in additional Recovery Act funds through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. These funds were designated to build eight additional units at Neachesna Village plus eight more on Gwee-Shut Road.

These Indian Community Development Block Grant and Native American Housing Block Grant funds are provided through the Recovery Act to help American Indian Tribes improve the quality of their housing, develop viable communities, promote energy efficiency and create jobs.

HAPPY COUPLE
– Kathy and Rex Standiford stand in their new duplex during the open house.



Recovery Act Funds Spur More Housing

As the Neachesna Village units were being built, the Tribe got word it would receive \$1,468,998 in American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds, which were designated for 11 new low-rent apartments on Gwee-Shut Road in Siletz.

RECOGNITION – The Siletz Tribal Housing Department staff is congratulated during the open house. From l to r: Terry Fisher, Rob Smith, Val Hibdon, Jessica Garcia, Gail Johnson, Rachelle Endres, Jeanette Aradoz, Christina McCord, Yvonne Messmer, Marci Simmons, Frank Aspria, Marcos Muniz-Strong, Perry Johnson, Jerry Howell, Mike Fisher, Randy Christensen, John Pfeiger and Brandon Hammett.



Photos by Diane Rodriguez