

Gov. Rendell Says Accurate Census Count Key to Fair State Share of Federal Funding

With more than \$4 trillion in federal funding at stake over the next decade, Gov. Ed Rendell says it is essential for every Pennsylvania resident to answer the 2010 U.S. Census.

“Each year, more than \$400 billion in federal funds are allocated based in all or in part on the results of the Census,” Gov. Rendell said. “That’s more than \$4 trillion over a 10-year period for critical things like schools, senior centers, job training centers, bridges, highways, public transit, and local emergency response services and training – a larger amount than many people realize.”

The governor said Pennsylvania cannot afford for any resident to skip participating in the Census, which involves answering only 10 questions and takes just 10 minutes to complete.

“According to the accounting firm PricewaterhouseCoopers, Pennsylvania’s population in the 2000 Census was undercounted by 102,000 people. That’s the equivalent of missing the cities of Altoona and Lancaster combined, or failing to count the entire city of Erie. We cannot let that happen again; there is too much at stake.”

As an example, the governor said that state and public transportation providers receive a combined \$330 million from the federal government for public transit, and the funding formula is based to a significant degree on the state’s population count. If Pennsylvania is undercounted, it will receive fewer dollars for transit. In addition, federal funding of LIHEAP – the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program – is determined, in part, by the Census.

The governor said the state and the Census Bureau also want to assure residents that the process is safe and the information collected is confidential.

“Filling out the form will not increase your chances of getting called for jury duty; it will not mean that immigration agents will show up at your door; and no one will come looking for you for unpaid parking tickets,” the Gov. Rendell said. “In fact, the Census asks for less personal information than does a typical credit card application. The bottom line is that answering the 10 questions on the Census form is completely safe as well as something that is good for your community.”

The Census Bureau will start mailing out forms in mid-March. The form comes with a postage-paid envelope. Citizens are encouraged to mail back their completed census forms by April 1, “National Census Day.” For more information, go to 2010.census.gov.