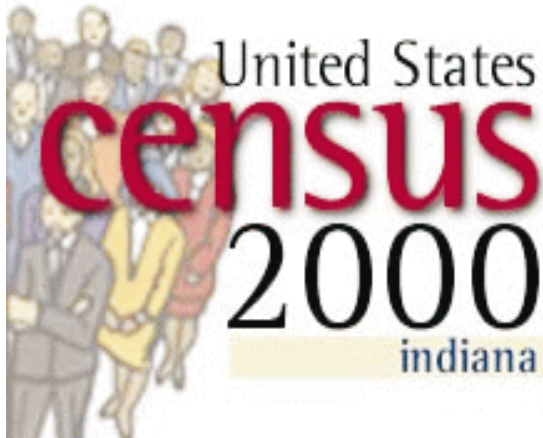


Most Hoosiers Will Be Counted--But Most Isn't Enough



Over the decades, people have grumbled about answering the census questions that roll around every ten years. Even one hundred years ago, a Fort Wayne Sentinel headline proclaimed on May 30, 1900:

CENSUS MAN COMING: HE'LL ASK BLUNT QUESTIONS, BUT HIS ORDERS ARE TO BE FIRM AND ALWAYS POLITE

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Although people have grumbled about doing the census and likely always will, Indiana had one of the highest mail return rates in the country in 1990. Hoosier households have traditionally filled out the form and sent it back. But with the stakes high in terms of federal monies coming back to our state based on population and the potential loss of a congressional seat (see *Indiana Business Review*, Volume 73, Number 10, October 1998), it is imperative that Indiana be counted as completely and accurately as possible. Most households sending back their forms isn't enough; we need every household to fill out that form, designate accurately the number of persons in that household, and send it back to the Census Bureau. Having those forms sent quickly also helps save dollars. The Census Bureau wants the initial return rate to be high, thus helping put resources on more difficult areas to count.

Hard-to-Enumerate Areas in Indiana Counties

A tool developed recently by the Census Bureau to assist in locating what might be hard-to-count areas within a county or community is now available to us in Indiana. It is a database that has information, by census tract, detailing 1990 data on mail-response rates, non-response rates, and socio-economic variables that – based on research by the Census Bureau and academicians – tend to correlate with households that don't respond to the Census. Those variables, taken together, were used to devise a hard-to-count "score" if you will, or index.

We have taken these scores and produced maps that are now available on Indiana's Census 2000 web site

(www.iupui.edu/it/ibrc/2k). We also have the rather lengthy documentation that accompanied the database if the reader would like to gain a fuller understanding of what and how these scores were determined.

Local communities can use these maps to see which census tracts were more difficult to enumerate than others in 1990 and use their local knowledge to determine if that may still be true and focus efforts in those areas. Keep in mind that the data are from 1990 and therefore may not be particularly useful in census tracts where there has been significant change in housing and households.

Indiana Census Awareness and Use Statewide Effort (ICAUSE)

A program to create awareness of the importance of the Census in Indiana is underway and is being funded by the State of Indiana. The establishment of the Indiana Statewide Complete Count Committee in June was the first step in this program and already many of those committee members have gotten out the word about the census. The Indiana State Department of Health (ISDH) distributed Census 2000 bags and informational materials at the Indiana State Fair in August and reported "they are the best bags in the Exposition Building and people were asking really good census questions." ISDH also inspects migrant labor camps and will be distributing Census 2000 information to them, both in Spanish and English.

The Indiana Department of Revenue will put a census awareness message on the IT-40 form that will go to millions of Indiana households in early 2000. The Indiana Department of Education is encouraging schools to participate in the Census in the Schools program that will incorporate Census 2000 into the curriculum of K-12 schools. The Governor and Lt. Governor and members of the Census Data Advisory Committee of the General Assembly are passing along the census message in many or all of their speeches around the state. All of these efforts help create awareness among the residents of Indiana and will help "get the count out" as it were.

At least 50 more cities and towns in Indiana have signed proclamations and begun complete count committee efforts. Local communities are working with businesses, chambers of commerce, schools, libraries, utilities and others to spread the word that the census is coming next April and that having a complete count will help all of us.

Hungry for more information about the Census in Indiana? Use the web site at www.iupui.edu/it/ibrc/2k. Want to know more about what the feds are doing? Check out the Census Bureau site at www.census.gov/dmd/www/2khome.htm.