



**Request for City Council Committee Action  
from the Department of  
Community Planning and Economic Development**

**Date:** December 16, 2010

**To:** Council Member Robert Lilligren, Chair  
Committee of the Whole

**Referral to:** None

**Subject:** Final Report on Minneapolis' 2010 Census Preparation and Outreach

**Recommendation:**  
a. Receive and File

**Previous Directives:** Approval of \$100,000 in 2009 budget for 2010 Census preparations; authorization of Mayor and Council President to appoint Complete Count Committee members; authorization of contract with U of M/Center for Urban and Regional Affairs to coordinate outreach and education efforts.

**Department Information**



**Financial Impact**

- No financial impact: action is within current budget

**Community Impact**

- Neighborhood Notification: Along with many other stakeholder groups, all neighborhood organizations were regularly notified of various Census activities as part of the outreach process

**Supporting Information**

CPED and CURA staff have jointly prepared a final report about the City's efforts to prepare for and promote the 2010 Census. The full report appears as a separate document; this transmittal letter contains summary highlights.

The purpose of this report is threefold:

- To report back to the Mayor and Council as well as our local partners about our 2010 Census preparation and promotion work;
- To provide some evaluative comments about that effort and suggestions on how to improve it for the next decennial Census;
- To provide a complete record of the City's 2010 Census efforts as an archive and starting point for those who will work on the next Census.

The report summarizes key city and community efforts to prepare for and promote the 2010 Census in Minneapolis. These activities began in 2006 and culminated in the spring of 2010, when the City's outreach efforts ended, and federal Census staff's follow up door-knocking work began. The city's role included both technical tasks and promotional work and was done in conjunction with a broad range of local community and governmental partners.

The report includes a timeline of major activities for the 4 years of work leading up to last spring. The first few years consisted of various technical steps that are a part of the decennial Census process: verifying city boundaries, checking the Census address files for accuracy, and requesting several minor modifications to Census tract / block group boundaries in order to have Census information better align with neighborhood boundaries. Beginning in 2009, city's work focused on Census promotion and outreach. An internal staff team was formed including staff from several city departments. City Communications staff created a city web page to help publicize and report on this work. Connections were formed with other jurisdictions such as Hennepin County, St Paul, the state of Minnesota, and especially the regional and local offices of the Census Bureau.

In the spring of 2009, the Mayor and City Council appointed a 2010 Census "Complete Count Committee" [CCC], a group of residents who gave countless hours of time over the ensuing twelve months to help promote the importance of the Census in communities throughout the city. Using one time funding approved as part of the 2009 budget, the City also engaged the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs to staff the CCC and manage our overall Census outreach effort. The CCC, co-chaired by Sarah Hernandez of the McKnight Foundation and Saeed Fahia of the Confederation of Somali Communities of Minnesota, began meeting monthly in May of 2009. [See full report for a list of CCC participants.] In order to better connect with various communities and neighborhoods, their meetings were held in different locations across the city each month. Summary highlights of their meetings were posted on the City's Census web site.

The primarily goal of Census outreach and education locally and nationally was to motivate people to mail back the Census questionnaire form when received. Not only is this less expensive than sending out Census takers to collect questionnaires, the Bureau believes they are more accurate, and that higher voluntary participation rates tend to result in more accurate overall final Census reporting. For these reasons, the Census Bureau uses "participation rates" as a key metric in tracking its progress on voluntary responses, and provided daily updates for all cities and census tracts throughout the peak promotion period of March/April. In October, the Bureau announced "final mail participation rates" nationwide: Minneapolis was tied for the 5<sup>th</sup> highest participation rate for cities over 100,000, and was the highest for cities over 300,000:

<b>Final Census Participation Rates: 2000 and 2010</b>				
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>National Ranking</b>
Minneapolis	73%	78%	+5%	Tied for 5 <sup>th</sup> for cities over 100,000 1 <sup>st</sup> for cities over 300,000
St Paul	78%	79%	+1%	4 <sup>th</sup> of cities over 100,000
Minnesota	81%	81%	NC	2 <sup>nd</sup>
U.S.	74%	74%	NC	-

The key to success in achieving a five point improvement compared to Census 2000 and the 5<sup>th</sup> highest rate nationally was using a community-based approach led by an energetic group of community leaders, using culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach methods, staffed by a skilled team of community organizers based at CURA. This success would not have been possible without the partnerships with over 40 trusted community groups who utilized their local knowledge, expertise, and leadership to both design and implement a long-term awareness campaign that targeted and engaged their organizations and communities.

One of the major reasons this approach was successful was because the coordinators and organizers devoted much of their energy to encouraging and supporting community lead plans often independent of many federal Census Bureau plans, opinions, and pressures. Although the Minneapolis Complete Count Committee still worked to coordinate their efforts with government agencies as much as possible, the most effective approach was to do what made the most sense for individual communities according to their community leaders and organizations. For this reason, the City of Minneapolis and other government agencies intentionally took a supportive rather than leadership role in the outreach efforts and allowed for community to truly utilize their expertise and build an active community-lead movement around the Census in Minneapolis.

Over the course of a year, members of the Minneapolis Complete Count Committee and other community partners promoted the Census continuously at community events, through community media, held countless community meetings, trainings, forums, and many outreach and action days including over 14 canvass events covering 13 of the hardest to count communities. The amount of work the committee was able to accomplish was only possible because such a large number of leaders and organizations from multiple undercounted communities took leadership in *owning* a Census campaign within their communities.

Some of the key observations about the work follow; they are discussed in more detail in the full report.

- Starting the campaign a year ahead of Census day was about the right timing. Establishing relationships with key community and governmental contacts early on was important to lay the foundation for working together throughout the year.
- Identifying a broad based group of community leaders to serve on the Complete Count Committee was important.
- The community organizing approach was essential to achieving a successful Census participation rate in Minneapolis.
- A strong recommendation for the future is that leaders consistently connect the Census to important issues in their community through outreach in places and media that are trusted and frequented by the people of their community so that they hear often about the benefits of the Census.
- Although it was helpful to have the support of local Census partnership staff as well as substantial national media coverage and promotional materials, frequent changes in Census staff assignments and the Bureau's approach of managing all outreach from their regional Kansas City office created difficulties in carrying out a coordinated local campaign. Working independently of, yet parallel with the Census Bureau was a major lesson learned early on in 2010 and helped staff and leaders to avoid problems and be more efficient and targeted with their work.

The full report contains a much more detailed chronology of local Census preparation activities, further comments about the outreach campaign, and some recommendations for the next decennial Census.