



NAPAWF Statement on APIs and the 2010 Census

March 17, 2010

Dear NAPAWF family,

Asian and Pacific Islander (API) families will feel the effects of the 2010 Census for the next decade. Everyone living in the United States is required by the U.S. Constitution to be counted every 10 years, regardless of citizenship or residency status. This month, every household will receive a census form in the mail that by law **must be completed and mailed back by April 1, 2010**.

Barriers to Counting Asian Americans

Communities of color are disproportionately under-counted in the census. API communities can be under-counted for many reasons:

- Lower education levels or limited English proficiency affect the ability of many individuals to understand the census
- General misunderstanding of the importance of census participation
- Fears that the census may be used by immigration or law enforcement officials to deport an individual or family member or to disqualify someone for social welfare programs.

It's important to acknowledge and address those fears directly. **Here are some facts that respected community leaders can help deliver between now and April 1, 2010:**

- **Census answers cannot be used against you in any way.** Individual census responses are confidential and protected by the strongest national privacy laws on the books.
- **The census form does not ask about citizenship status.**
- No other government agency - not immigration officials, law enforcement, housing authorities, or the courts - can get any

- person's individual census answers for the next 72 years.
- Every census worker swears an oath to keep information confidential - and anyone who violates that confidentiality can be imprisoned for up to five years and fined \$250,000.

A note for bi-racial households: It is not widely known that the race of the household member who fills out the census form determines the racial designation of a family in one of the census' major statistical tables. Given that people of color are often under-counted by the census, couples or families may want to consider having a person of color identify as "household member #1" when filling out the form for a family.

Make yourself count. Thank you, NAPAWF *More information is available from the Asian and Pacific Islander 2010 Census Network (API Count) at www.apicount.com, the Asian American Justice Center at www.fillinourfuture.org and from the Leadership Conference Education Fund at www.civilrights.org/census.*