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Important Information for the LGBT Community on Completing the 2010 Census Form

Same-sex couples everywhere can report as “husband or wife”

The 2010 Census will be the first to report counts of both same-sex partners and same-sex spouses. These counts will be very important to give an accurate representation of the actual lives of gay and lesbian couples and their families in our nation.

One of the shortest census forms in history, the 2010 Census form will be mailed or delivered to your household in March. Census takers will visit households that do not return their forms starting in May. The form asks just 10 questions, takes less than 10 minutes to complete and is completely confidential. By law, the Census Bureau cannot share respondents' answers with anyone, including other federal agencies and law enforcement entities. All Census Bureau employees take the oath of nondisclosure and are sworn for life to protect the confidentiality of the data. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to five years, or both.

How does the 2010 Census count lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people?

The 2010 Census does not ask about sexual orientation or gender identity. LGBT people living with a spouse or partner can identify their relationship by checking either the “husband or wife” or “unmarried partner” box.

How do same-sex couples answer the relationship question?

The 2010 Census will be the first to report counts of both same-sex partners and same-sex spouses. The person filling out the form (Person 1) is asked to identify how all other individuals in the household are related to him or her.

Census data are based on how individuals self identify and how couples think of themselves. Same-sex couples who are married, or consider themselves to be spouses, can identify one other adult as a “husband or wife.” Other same-sex couples may instead

decide to use the term “unmarried partner.” In general, people who identify as unmarried partners are in a close personal relationship but are not married or do not think of themselves as spouses.

Census data are based on how individuals self identify. This includes same-sex couples who live somewhere their relationship is not recognized.

What about transgender individuals?

The 2010 Census asks a question about each person’s sex. Transgender respondents should select the sex with which they identify. Mark only one box.

How do I answer the race and ethnicity question?

The 2010 Census includes two questions about race and ethnicity. Note that the question about ethnicity is separate from the question about race. Further, the race question allows respondents to check all boxes that apply.

A note to bi-racial/ethnic couples:

Census reports some statistics on the race/ethnicity of the “household.” Bi-racial/ethnic couples should note that this is determined using the race/ethnicity of Person 1, the person who fills out the Census form for the household.

For more information about the 2010 Census, go to 2010census.gov.

For inspiration watch: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wb6ee9AOD7I>

All our families count!!

The U.S. Census Bureau thanks Dr. Gary Gates, The Williams Distinguished Scholar of The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law, for his contributions and research of same-sex headed households. More information is available at <http://www.law.ucla.edu/williamsinstitute/home.html>.

“Census data have done more to make LGBT families and their needs visible than any other source of data we have.”

Lee Badgett, Research Director

The Williams Institute, UCLA School of Law