

# Census Glossary of Terms

Here is Nonprofits Count's list of **12 Terms to Know** about the census. If you can't find the census term you're looking for check out the Census Bureau glossary available in seven languages at [www.nonprofitscount.org](http://www.nonprofitscount.org).

## The Count

**Hard to Count** refers to people and communities that have been shown to be most at risk of being missed in the census. The Census Bureau identifies **hard to count** communities according to twelve different factors, including but not limited to housing status, poverty, population mobility, and language spoken at home.

**Undercount** refers to the number of people estimated to have been missed in a census. For example, a government study of the 2000 Census estimated that about 6.4 million people were not counted. The populations most likely to be **undercounted** were Latino, Native American, children in poverty and populations that corresponded with the hard to count factors identified by the Census Bureau.

**Overcount** refers to the percentage of people potentially counted twice in a census. About three million people were counted twice in the 2000 Census. The greatest **overcount** is people returning a form from a second home or reporting a college student as living at home who was already counted as living in a college dorm. Students living in dorms on April 1st of the census year are counted at their school.

## Census Strategies

**Partnership Specialists** are Census employees who serve as liaisons to nonprofit organizations, local governments, schools, community organizations, and faith communities. **Partnership Specialists** provide support to these community-based organizations and connect them with resources from the Census Bureau to help ensure their communities get counted.

**Complete Count Committees** are formed by state and local governments and community organizations to help ensure that their communities get counted. **Complete Count Committees** can be statewide, citywide or neighborhood-based. Anyone can form a **Complete Count Committee** as a means to help their community be counted. Several states have formed Nonprofit **Complete Count Committees**.

There will be 30,000 Questionnaire Assistance Centers ready to open by March 2010 in hard to count areas.

**Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QAC)** are sites designated by the Census, where community members can receive assistance in filling out their census forms. **Questionnaire Assistance Centers** will be located in hard-to-count communities, generally at a community-based nonprofit or social service agency. There will be 30,000 Questionnaire Assistance Centers ready to open by March 2010 in hard to count areas. The centers are selected by local and regional census offices usually in collaboration with local government officials, complete count committees or nonprofit leaders. Nonprofits can apply to become a **Questionnaire Assistance Center** by contacting their local partnership specialist.

**A Be Counted Site** is a designated site where community members who did not receive or have lost their questionnaire can get a new census question-

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naire to fill out and submit on site. Additionally, people can drop off their completed census questionnaire at a **Be Counted Site**, rather than mailing it in. **Be Counted Sites** are generally located in hard-to-count communities at a nonprofit or government agency. Unlike Questionnaire Assistance Centers there is not a trained Census person on site to help fill out forms. The **Be Counted** program provides a means for people who believe they have not yet been counted to be included in Census.

**Group quarters** are facilities such as nursing homes, military barracks, college dorms, group homes, and prisons. **Group quarters** are counted separately by the census on designated days. The administration of the group quarter does the counting and is responsible for submitting a complete and accurate count of their resident population to the census.

**Service Based Enumeration (Special Counts of Transitional Populations)** is the term used by the census for counting transitional populations such as people experiencing homelessness, people in housing transition or victims of domestic violence. These counts are conducted at service facilities including overnight facilities as well as soup kitchens and mobile food vans. Census counts will also be conducted on designated days at targeted outdoor locations where people experiencing homelessness commonly congregate.

## Redistricting

**Apportionment** is the term used for the process of reallocating the number of Congressional seats a state receives based on Census data. Legislative districts are based on the entire population count of everyone regardless of age or voting eligibility.

**Redistricting** is the changing of legislative and Congressional boundaries according to census counts in accordance with the principle of one person, one vote set as the constitutional standard by the Supreme Court in the 1960s. All Congressional districts in a state must be *exactly* the same size. State legislative or local districts must also be re-drawn to meet the one person, one vote principle, though here the courts allow a variation of up to plus or minus 5% in population size.

## Other

**Regional Census Offices** manage census operations for several states. There are 12 **Regional Census Offices** throughout the country.

**Local Census Offices** manage strategic operations within a state, including Partnership Specialists. Each state has at least one **Local Census Office**, and many states have multiple **Local Census Offices**. A total of over 500 **Local Census Offices** will be open by fall of 2009. These will be the primary point of contact for nonprofits interested in participating in the 2010 Census.

**American Community Survey** is a monthly survey of tens of thousands of households conducted by the Census Bureau to collect more detailed information about American demographics and lifestyles. This survey asks questions similar to the long census form which was included in the last decennial census. Starting in 2010, the Census will no longer distribute the long form, and all households will receive the short form only. The Census is expanding the **American Community Survey** as a more accurate reflection of a rich variety of data.

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