

## 2010 US Census Committee for the People of Burma

FAQ      Version:                      0.4

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**Q.** What is the Census?

**A.** The **Census** (the US Population Census) is a count of everyone (not just citizens, but also residents, refugees, ...) living in the United States every 10 years. It is done in a year ending with 0. The census collects **demographic** data for use in national planning.

- The census is **mandated** by the U.S. Constitution.
- The **forthcoming** census is in 2010.
- Your participation in the census is **required** by law.
- It takes **less than 10 minutes** to complete. (Various levels of help are available if you find difficulty in filling the Census form.)
- Census uses **statistical** data and does not collect sensitive data. Census reports display tables and figures at the group level, and never at the individual level.
- Federal law **protects** the personal information you share during the census. Accessing/abusing the personal information is a Federal offense with harsh penalties.
- Census data are **used** to for national planning, to distribute Congressional seats (e.g. number of the House of Representatives) to states, to make decisions about what community services to provide, and to distribute \$300 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments each year.

For additional information, feel free to visit the US Population Census websites or contact the local/area Population Census offices (e.g. San Francisco, Oakland, ...)

**Q.** Why is it important to take part in the 2010 US Population Census?

**A.** It is imperative to have an **accurate** count of our **community's population** data in the census, if government services are to be provided to our people and decision-makers (at the Federal, State, County, City, ...) are to understand the community's importance and influence. Feel free to get 2010 Census related brochures from your faith-based organizations (e.g. monasteries, churches, temples, mosques, ...) and the various Outreach Subcommittees of **2010 US Census Committee for the People of Burma**.

**Q.** Why is it important to fill in the Census form uniformly as Burmese?

**A.** According to 2000 Census, there were 32000+ Burmese residing in the US; that number is unbelievably low. The number did not meet the **threshold** used by the US Government to recognize the **Burmese Community**. Note *that even though there are references to both Burmese Community and Myanmar Community*, the United States government, Congress and all the agencies such as *Office of Refugee Resettlement* only **recognizes and accepts the term** Burmese or Burma in referring the people from Burma. Therefore, "Burmese" (in the widest sense without reference to ethnicity, religion, ...) could/should be used as a **place holder of our community** in the 2010 Census The term should encompass as many people as possible. It would not only include people who are **born** in Burma and currently **residing** in US (includes **all visa status**: citizens, green

card holders, refugees, ...), but also encompass people who have Burmese **ancestors**. We can easily surpass the threshold that we missed in 2000 Census, and get ourselves counted as "Burmese". This will also help us get short term and long term benefits of having the "Burmese" Community recognized by Census, State, Federal, etc.

**Q.** What benefits can the Burmese Community get from local, state, and Federal agencies?

**A.** If our population data is **entered accurately** in 2010 Census and is **uniformly counted**, we can ask for help and make lives easier for the "Burmese" especially for those who cannot converse well in English. With a larger community population count is reported by the census data, the following and more benefits can be reaped.

- Get free translation service for patients who do not speak [fluent] English  
Similar translation services can be provided for other administrative tasks (e.g. in filling forms at the local, state, and Federal levels).
- Get priority when applying to prestigious high schools and/or universities
- Get grants/aids for setting up "Community Center" (or similar projects)
- Get help to take care of youth and elderly
- Take tests for driver's license in Burmese
- Get prescriptions in Burmese

Although California recognizes Burmese as one of the 59 languages used by its residents, the public signs and documents do not use/display Burmese.

**Q.** How can we show that we have a larger Burmese Community?

**A.** You can take part in the Burmese Community meetings (especially those conducted by the members of **2010 US Census Committee for the People of Burma**) that discuss about the forthcoming **2010 Census**. You can coordinate with similar committees in the other States (where the Burmese population is considerably large) to raise the awareness at the national level. You can volunteer to help with the **grassroots efforts** involving the members of **all Burmese associations** and their extended families to make sure that everyone in the community is aware about the 2010 census and the importance of getting the Burmese community counted accurately and uniformly. For details, read the presentation given by the Laos community leaders.

**Q.** Where can I get more information about the Burmese (Myanmar) Community's involvement in 2010 Population Census?

**A.** Feel free to visit <http://www.usburmesecensus.net/>

**Q.** How can we get the critical mass needed for the project?

**A.** Responding to **informal** calls for coming together as a unified community, several brain storming session on Burmese Community Census 2010 meeting were held and an ad hoc committee was formed to reach out to more Burmese Community organizations

A broader community meeting with the San Francisco Bay Area Burmese Community Leaders was held on **Jan 3, 2009** at Room # 208, **Serramonte Del Rey**, ("former" Jefferson High School) Serramonte Blvd., Daly City 1 - 3 p.m. The ad hoc committee

was disbanded, and the attendees voted to form **2010 US Census Committee for the People of Burma.**

We have compiled a preliminary list of Burmese associations in the Bay Area. It includes social, professional, religious, and alumni, associations with actual/estimated # of members, EC and/or Point of contact (POC). The wide participation of these associations is vital to the success of this project.

Another community meeting was held **Jan 25, 2009** at the Omega Room, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Fremont Myanmar Christian Fellowship, 38451 Fremont Blvd., Fremont, CA 94536 to request volunteers and supporters for the various subcommittees of **2010 US Census Committee for the People of Burma.** With their help, we can reach out to all the People of Burma residing in the San Francisco Bay Area and beyond (hopefully to the whole of United States.). We will share our experiences with similar committees in other areas of the United States.

We appreciate knowledge dissemination via media (newspaper, web sites) and may be presentation(s) during the gatherings (e.g. New Year dinners, Lunar/Chinese New Year, Thee Lay Thee concert, ...). Grapevine says that there are numerous alumni gatherings (in state and out of state). The grassroots campaign will utilize flyers, phone calls, e-mails, ... and most importantly viral marketing (known as “word of mouth”).

2010 Census is an opportunity to highlight and showcase the cooperation and collaboration of Burmese communities transcending ethnicity, faith, profession, and age.

**Q.** Where are the closest US Census Offices?

**A.** The **headquarters** for the West Coast Census Bureau is in Seattle, Washington. Regional offices for North America have been set up in San Francisco and Oakland.