

**Date:** January 26, 2010

**To:** Kenneth Darga, State Demographer  
Michigan Department of Information Technology

**From:** David W. Sheppard, Chief  
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Population Division  
U.S. Census Bureau

**Subject:** Updated guidance on 'snowbird' enumeration

Recently you contacted my office to get clarification on how the census will handle people who live most of the year in one state but spend the winter in another state with a warmer climate, I wanted to share with you our official guidance.

From now on, people who contact the Census Bureau on this topic with receive the following information:

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### **Counting “Snowbirds” in the 2010 Census**

#### **Where Should Snowbirds Be Counted?**

Some people live in one state but spend the winter in another state with a warmer climate. These people are often referred to as snowbirds, and the Census Bureau considers them to be on a yearly cycle of travel between the two residences.

They should be counted in the census at their usual residence. This is where they spend most of their time during the year.

- This is not necessarily the state they vote in;
- This is not necessarily the state they have lived most of their life in; or
- This is not necessarily the state they consider their home, their permanent residence, or their legal residence.

Here are two examples of how to determine usual residence for a snowbird.

- If you spend 4 months of the year in State A and 8 months in State B, your usual residence is State B. You should be counted in the 2010 Census in State B.
- If you spend equal parts of the year in State C and in State D, you have no usual residence. If you happen to be living in State C on April 1, 2010, you should be counted in State C in the 2010 Census.

#### **Filling Out Your Census Forms**

In most of the country, people in snowbird situations will receive a census form at each residence. If you are a snowbird, you should return BOTH census forms if you are able

to do so. If you are unable to return both forms, we may contact you for additional information.

If you receive a form at your usual residence where you spend most of your time during the year:

- Complete the entire census form you receive at that address and mail it back.
- This is where you will be counted in the 2010 Census.
- If you are NOT at your usual residence at the time of the census, as soon as you return to your usual residence you should complete the entire census form and mail it back.

If you receive a form at the other place, where you do NOT spend most of your time during the year:

- Enter '0' in Question 1 (household count question) on that census form.
- Do not answer any other questions, and then mail it back.

In some cases, we may contact you for additional information.

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Thank you for your work helping to spread the word about how people should be correctly counted in the 2010 Census. If you have any further questions about where people should be counted, feel free to contact me.