



Census bureau opens in Monterey Park

By Bethania Palma Markus, Staff Writer

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MONTEREY PARK - The U.S. Census Bureau opened its East LA office Tuesday in preparation for the 2010 Census, with the promise of hundreds of temporary jobs in the midst of an economic downturn.

The Census strives to count every person living in the United States every ten years, officials said. Billions of dollars in federal funding for services are tied to information gathered in the survey.

Anywhere from 600-800 people will be employed to gather information for the office at 1255 Corporate Center Drive, said Celeste Jimenez, assistant regional census manager for the LA Regional Census Center.

The office will be responsible for residents that live roughly from Burbank to Arcadia and as far south as Bell Gardens, she said.

"Our goal is to count everybody," Jimenez said. "It's all about inclusion."

As layoffs daily make the front page, Census Bureau officials said hundreds of thousands of workers will be needed nationally to help gather information on 300 million-plus people living in the US.

Officials expect to see population density and diversity continue to grow in the LA area.

"We're lucky to live in this area where there's diversity within diversity,"

said James Christy, regional director for the US Census Los Angeles.

So the Census will try to hire local workers from diverse backgrounds, he said.

Information is kept confidential, officials said.

"We don't share information with the IRS or Immigration," she said. "This is information that's used to determine where new schools, roads or senior centers are going to be placed."

The information also helps determine how many seats California will get in

the House of Representatives, she said.

While residents can expect to see questionnaires arriving in their mail boxes next spring, workers are already gearing up for the big count by hitting the streets to verify and record addresses.

Local officials stressed the need to participate.

"People here will be working very hard, very hard to get an accurate census," said Board of Equalization Chair Judy Chu, who served on the Census Advisory Commission leading up to the 2000 Census. "I know it's important to get that accurate Census so we can get the funds we need for our area."

Officials from governments strapped for cash want everyone counted.

"This is a call to action," said Pico Rivera Councilman Bob Archuleta. "The government funding is critical."

Alhambra Mayor Barbara Messina agreed.

"We're very happy this office is taking on this responsibility," she said. "It's critical for us to get our fair share, not only from the representation but for the dollars."

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