Michigan Nonprofit Association

Background
The U.S. Constitution requires that all residents (including non-citizens and undocumented immigrants) be counted every ten years through a labor-intensive, nationwide census. The census is essential to ensuring all Americans are represented in our democracy and well served by it. Yet due to delays in planning during the past several years and an inadequate level of funding, it is anticipated that federal and regional implementation of the 2010 census will be highly problematic. Here are three reasons why we must ensure a full and accurate accounting.

- **The census affects federal and state funding.** Nationally, the census helps determine the distribution to state and local governments of roughly $400 billion a year in federal funds – or $4 trillion over a ten-year period. Census experts estimate that for every person not counted in 2010, local government will lose $12,000 during the next ten years in federal funding alone; in other words, every 10,000 additional people counted would mean $120 million more in federal funding for the area.
- **The census affects community and economic planning.** Census data guide both government and private sector planners on where to build new roads, schools, and businesses; provide services for the elderly; locate job training centers; and more.
- **The census affects Michigan's voice in the federal government.** The census determines how many seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives and influences how congressional and legislative districts are drawn. Population projections show that Michigan could lose one if not two congressional seats after the 2010 census due to national population shifts.

Barriers to Achieving an Accurate Count in 2010:
Historically, certain populations have been consistently hard-to-count. This year, there are additional challenges to achieving an accurate count, including:

- **Census response rates are likely to decrease.** Americans are more mobile than ever, public participation in surveys of all kinds is declining, and people are more concerned about the confidentiality of their personal information, especially in the post 9-11 environment.
- **Immigrants are reticent to participate.** In the 2010 census cycle, because of state and local anti-immigrant measures, counting the country's immigrant population, both legal and undocumented, is certain to be more difficult than in the past.
- **The economy and housing/foreclosure crises pose new challenges.** As a result of the recession in general and the housing/foreclosure crisis in particular, more people may be doubling up with family or otherwise living in temporary quarters, increasing the chances of not being counted.

Michigan's Response
The Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA) has launched a foundation-funded initiative to help ensure an accurate count in the state for the 2010 Census. MNA is willing to work with the State of Michigan and individual legislators and elected officials to communicate the importance of filling out the Census forms to local communities. MNA can supplement information from the US Census Department for newsletters, e-communications and town hall gatherings.

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