

Census 1990

✓ Census helper is here

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SANTA CRUZ — Need instructions in Croation or Hindi on how to fill out your census form?

Elizabeth Schick has them. Also in Creole, Russian, French and Tagalog too. Schick, the census assistance center coordinator for the city of Santa Cruz, opened for business Monday at 212 Locust St., the old Pacific Bell office. It's the same place where the Federal Emergency Management Agency operated its assistance centers after the earthquake.

For the next three weeks, from noon to 8 p.m., Monday through Saturday, Schick will provide help with census forms mailed last week.

Schick will not have forms available. The Census Bureau strictly controls access to the forms. If people want help filling out the form they will need to bring one with them, she said.

Santa Cruz allocated \$3,000 to hire Schick and operate the center in an effort to get as complete a count of its citizens as possible. Census figures are used to determine funding for a variety of state and federal programs.

Watsonville budgeted \$8,000 and will operate eight centers throughout the town and four others at the FEMA trailer parks. One, at the Teamsters union hall, 163 W. Lake Ave., is open now from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Schick said she is hoping to attract volunteers to post flyers advertising the center and to provide assistance to others needing help. A training session is scheduled for Wednesday at 6 p.m. at 212 Locust St.

Schick is the only paid employee. "The center is here, but we don't have much of a budget," she said. "It's a real short shoestring."

Originally, the city planned to publicize the census but not operate an assistance center, Schick said.

The Census Bureau has been criticized for not providing more help to cities.

Schick, who is a Spanish interpreter and translator, got a head start Sunday, handing out Census Bureau



Dan Coyro/Sentinel

Elizabeth Schick offers a hands-on approach to census forms.

brochures at the Skyview Drive-in flea market on her own.

The Census Bureau only mails forms in English. Spanish language forms are available but must be requested. But Schick said the 800 number to request a form in Spanish "has been overwhelmed with calls" since Friday. She said she called area legislators in an effort to open up more telephone lines.