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Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE DECENNIAL CENSUS?

Every 10 years, the federal government conducts a population count of everyone in the United States. Data from the census provide the basis for distributing more than \$675 billion in federal funds annually to communities across the country to support vital programs—impacting housing, education, transportation, employment, health care, and public policy. They also are used to redraw the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts and accurately determine the number of congressional seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ME?

Responding to the census is not only your civic duty; it also affects the amount of funding your community receives, how your community plans for the future, and your representation in government. Specifically, data from the 2020 Census are used to:

- Ensure public services and funding for schools, hospitals, and fire departments.
- Plan new homes and businesses and improve neighborhoods.
- Determine how many seats your state is allocated in the House of Representatives.

WHEN WILL I COMPLETE THE CENSUS?

The next census will take place in 2020. Beginning in mid-March, people will receive a notice in the mail to complete the 2020 Census. Once you receive it, you can respond online. In May, the U.S. Census Bureau will begin following up in person with households that haven't responded to the census.

HOW CAN I RESPOND?

In 2020, for the first time ever, the Census Bureau will accept responses online and by phone. Responding should take less time than it takes to finish your morning coffee. You can still respond by mail.

WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE REQUESTED?

The decennial census will collect basic information about the people living in your household. When completing the census, you should count everyone who is living in your household on April 1, 2020.

WHAT INFORMATION WILL NOT BE REQUESTED?

The Census Bureau will never ask for:

- Social Security numbers.
- Bank or credit card account numbers.
- Money or donations.
- Anything on behalf of a political party.

WILL MY INFORMATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Strict federal law protects your census responses. It is against the law for any Census Bureau employee to disclose or publish any census information that identifies an individual. Census Bureau employees take a lifelong pledge of confidentiality to handle data responsibly and keep respondents' information private. The penalty for wrongful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both. No law enforcement agency (not the DHS, ICE, FBI, or CIA) can access or use your personal information at any time. Data collected can only be used for statistical purposes that help inform important decisions, including how much federal funding your community receives.

The Census Bureau has a robust cybersecurity program that incorporates industry best practices and federal security standards for encrypting data.

WHERE CAN I GO TO LEARN MORE?

You can learn more about the 2020 Census by visiting 2020census.gov.

The 2020 Census and Confidentiality

Your responses to the 2020 Census are safe, secure, and protected by federal law. Your answers can only be used to produce statistics—they cannot be used against you in any way. By law, all responses to U.S. Census Bureau household and business surveys are kept completely confidential.

Respond to the 2020 Census to shape the future.

Responding to the census helps communities get the funding they need and helps businesses make data-driven decisions that grow the economy. Census data impact our daily lives, informing important decisions about funding for services and infrastructure in your community, including health care, senior centers, jobs, political representation, roads, schools, and businesses. More than \$675 billion in federal funding flows back to states and local communities each year based on census data.



Your census responses are safe and secure.

The Census Bureau is required by law to protect any personal information we collect and keep it strictly confidential. The Census Bureau can only use your answers to produce statistics. In fact, every Census Bureau employee takes an oath to protect your personal information for life. Your answers cannot be used for law enforcement purposes or to determine your personal eligibility for government benefits.

By law, your responses cannot be used against you.

By law, your census responses cannot be used against you by any government agency or court in any way—not by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), not by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), not by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and not by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The law requires the Census Bureau to keep your information confidential and use your responses only to produce statistics.



The law is clear—no personal information can be shared.

Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about individuals, households, or businesses, even to law enforcement agencies.

The law states that the information collected may only be used for statistical purposes and no other purpose.

To support historical research, Title 44 of the U.S. Code allows the National Archives and Records Administration to release census records only after 72 years.

All Census Bureau staff take a lifetime oath to protect your personal information, and any violation comes with a penalty of up to \$250,000 and/or up to 5 years in prison.

There are no exceptions.

The law requires the Census Bureau to keep everyone's information confidential. By law, your responses cannot be used against you by any government agency or court in any way. The Census Bureau will not share an individual's responses with immigration enforcement agencies, law enforcement agencies, or allow that information to be used to determine eligibility for government benefits. Title 13 makes it very clear that the data we collect can only be used for statistical purposes—we cannot allow it to be used for anything else, including law enforcement.

It's your choice: you can respond securely online, by mail, or by phone.

You will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone. Households that don't respond in one of these ways will be visited by a census taker to collect the information in person. Regardless of how you respond, your personal information is protected by law.

Your online responses are safe from hacking and other cyberthreats.

The Census Bureau takes strong precautions to keep online responses secure. All data submitted online are encrypted to protect personal privacy, and our cybersecurity program meets the highest and most recent standards for protecting personal information. Once the data are received, they are no longer online. From the moment the Census Bureau collects responses, our focus and legal obligation is to keep them safe.

We are committed to confidentiality.

At the U.S. Census Bureau, we are absolutely committed to keeping your responses confidential. This commitment means it is safe to provide your answers and know that they will only be used to paint a statistical portrait of our nation and communities.

Learn more about the Census Bureau's data protection and privacy program at www.census.gov/privacy.



Laws protecting personal census information have withstood challenges.

In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed that even addresses are confidential and cannot be disclosed through legal discovery or the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In 2010, the U.S. Justice Department determined that the Patriot Act does not override the law that protects the confidentiality of individual census responses. No court of law can subpoena census responses.

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Census
2020

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2020 CENSUS KEY DATES

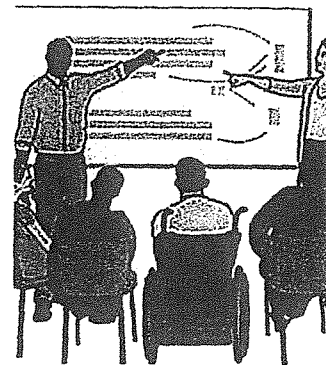
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – OFFICES – DATA COLLECTION OPERATIONS

January 2018 through December 2019	Engage & Educate Local Leaders, Partners & Communities	
January 2019	Early Area Census Offices Open (these offices run the Address Canvass Operation)	
June 2019	Additional Area Census Offices Open (ACOs)	
August 2019 through October 2019	Address Canvassing Operation	
March 2020	Call to Action for Residents to Respond (starting March 23 rd)	
February 2020 through June 2020	Group Quarters Operations (Count of Residents in Shelters, Dorms, Nursing Homes, Transitory Locations, Prisons, Military Bases, RV Parks, etc. Local governments & Census identify & plan these operations)	
Mid-March 2020	Residents Invited to Respond	
Individual Housing Units (Hus) Invited by either:		
Mail (to USPS Mailable Addresses)	or	Hand Delivery (to Rural/PO Box, non-USPS HU delivery)
1. Letter Mailed		1. List Housing Units (operation is called Update Leave)
2. Reminder Postcard		2. Leave Questionnaire (Spanish in certain areas) &
3. Then Paper Questionnaire		Letter w/other Response Options (internet & Phone
Options to Self-Respond (all residents will have these 3 options & decide what is best for them)		
Internet	Telephone	Paper
March 23, 2020	Self-Response Begins	
April 1, 2020	Census Day – Reference Date = where you live on April 1	
April 2020	Early Non-Response Follow-up begins (primarily areas around Colleges/Universities where the population leaves before early May)	
May 2020	Non-Response Follow-up (NRFU) begins for households that do not self-respond (Households can continue to self-respond during this time)	
Late August 2020 through September 2020	Areas Census Offices Begin Closing	
August 2020 through December 2020	Quality Evaluation (re-contact of select Housing Units)	
December 31, 2020	Deliver Counts to the President	

Education Phase

Now to December 2019

- CCC Chair & Subcommittee chairs educate respective members on the mission of the CCC.
The message to each member is that census is a civic activity that affects people of all ages, races, cultures and ethnicities, regardless of citizenship.
- Hold regular meetings to report on tasks, other activities, including subcommittee reports.
- Proceed with census awareness-building activities.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of CCC activities.
- Saturate the community with at least one census awareness-building activity each month.



Awareness Phase

January 2019 to February 2020

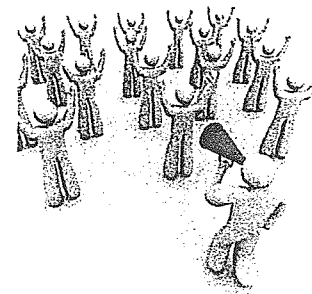
- Government and community leaders participate in activities highlighting the message that the 2020 Census is easy, important and safe.
- Hold regular CCC and subcommittee meetings.
- Review task lists and subcommittee plans.
- Finalize plans for activities to encourage residents to complete and respond to the census.
- Finalize plans for activities for motivating residents who do not participate to cooperate with census takers during non-response follow-up.



Motivation Phase

March 2020 to May 2020

- Review and Update plans to increase activities aimed at encouraging households to respond
- Implement Census Day Activities.



2020 Census Complete Count Committee Timeline

United States
Census
2020

U.S. Department of Commerce
Economics and Statistics Administration
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU
CENSUS.GOV

- Encourage households to respond quickly and accurately to the census.
- Ensure that the committee is using the right activities in the right place and adjust as needed.
- Review and Modify plans as needed
- Send a news release highlighting the 2020 Census Activity Schedule.
- Prepare to implement activities in areas of low response. The Census Bureau plans to provide response rate numbers starting April 2020. Response rates may be used to determine where more outreach is needed.

Reminder Phase

May - July 2020

- Encourage every household that did not respond that they can still respond online or by phone or wait for the census takers to knock at their doors.
- Continue to meet and review the response rates and implement your plans to encourage cooperation.
- Encourage the community to cooperate in the Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU) phase when Census workers knock on their doors.



Thank You Phase

August- December 2020

- Prepare a summary report of committee activities and member feedback.
- Share the report with the Census Bureau.
- Celebrate the success of the 2020 Census and recognize the efforts of CCC members.
- Thank your community for the support and response.

