



***2020 Census:
What You Need To Know***
March 30, 2020

1. What is the census?

Congress [enacted legislation](#) creating the Census Bureau in [1902](#). The U.S. census is an official count of the population every ten years. April 1, 2020 is Census Day.

2. Why is the census important?

Census data is used for [apportionment](#), a process [mandated by the Constitution](#) determining the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. Projections for the 2020 census [predict substantial changes in congressional representation](#). The community also benefits from census participation because it informs the [distribution of federal funding to states](#) for schools, hospitals, roads, public works, and more.

3. Are noncitizens counted in the census?

Yes. Regardless of citizenship or immigration status, everyone with a usual residence in the United States is counted in the census. The 2020 Census has several [language resources](#), providing guides and glossaries in 59 non-English languages.

4. What will the census ask me?

The census is organized by address so you will answer a questionnaire about yourself and everyone living with you. This questionnaire will collect basic information such as age, sex, and race. To [avoid potential fraud](#), it is important to know for the upcoming census that the Census Bureau will *never* ask for your social security number, money or donations, anything on behalf of a political party, or your bank and credit card number. The list of questions for the 2020 census is [available on the Census Bureau's website](#).

5. Is there a citizenship question on the census?

No, there will not be a citizenship question. On June 27, 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court [blocked](#) the citizenship question from appearing on the 2020 census. Administrative law requires a “reasoned explanation” for important agency decisions and the Court held the administration’s explanation was insufficient to meet that requirement. However, the initial threat of a citizenship question is likely to have a chilling effect on the participation of underrepresented groups. The Census Bureau published a [national survey](#) reflecting widespread confidentiality concerns about census information being used against immigrants or Latinx by immigration enforcement agents or the current administration. The confidentiality of census information is protected by federal law and cannot be shared with other government agencies or used against you in court, including but not limited to, immigration enforcement.

The goal of this document is to provide general information and is not meant to act as a substitute to legal advice from an attorney.

6. Will my information be kept confidential?

Yes. [Under Title 13 of the United States Code](#), the Census Bureau cannot release identifying information about you, your home, or your business. Title 13 also prohibits the Census Bureau from sharing your answers with law enforcement or other government agencies like Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). [Your personal information cannot be used against you by any government agency or court.](#)

7. How is my information protected?

Data security is a legitimate concern. [Your answers can only be used to provide statistics](#) so the published data is aggregated, gathered and presented in a summary form, to prevent the release of any identifiable information. Census Bureau employees are sworn and legally required to protect the confidentiality of your data. Violation is a federal crime with severe penalties. Furthermore, the Census Bureau follows industry best practices and federal requirements to protect your data.

8. How do I know if it's a census representative at my door?

To [verify the identity of a census representative](#), check for a valid ID badge with (1) their photograph, (2) a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and (3) an expiration date. Additionally, representatives will conduct their work between the hours of 9am and 9pm. Further, representative bags and electronic devices bear the Census Bureau logo. Lastly, their identity can be confirmed by calling 1-800-923-8232 and speaking with a local Census Bureau representative. Contact information for local Complete Count committees can be found [online](#). If the visitor at the door is fraudulently claiming to be a census representative then contact your local police department.

9. What are the alternatives to a knock on my door?

The census can be completed by [phone, mail, and online](#). [Households have been receiving invitations to participate in the 2020 census since mid-March](#). If you did not receive a Census ID in the mail, [you can still fill out the census online](#). The Census Bureau will follow up with households that do not respond by April 23rd.

10. How is the 2020 census affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

During this period of [social distancing](#), it is encouraged to respond by phone, mail, or online. According to residence criteria, [students should respond with their school addresses](#) irrespective of where they are located right now if their campus closed in response to COVID-19.

11. Where can I find more resources?

See the [Penn State Law Center for Immigrants' Rights Clinic](#) website for other immigration policies. For more resources on the 2020 Census, also visit:

- [America's Voice Education Fund \(AVEF\)](#)
- [Fair Immigration Reform Movement \(FAIR\)](#)
- [American Civil Liberties Union \(ACLU\)](#)
- [Count Us In 2020](#)
- [NALEO Educational Fund](#)

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