

U.S. CENSUS 2020

SAFETY AND CONFIDENTIALITY



WHAT IS THE CENSUS?

The Constitution requires the U.S. Census Bureau to conduct a count of **every person living in the United States**, including U.S. territories like Puerto Rico, every ten years. This count considers all people in the U.S. regardless of age, immigration status, ethnicity, race, or nationality.

WHY DOES THE CENSUS MATTER?

An accurate population count can ensure a fair and equitable distribution of needed resources and political influence to underserved communities like ethnic minorities, children and youth, urban and rural low-income households, and immigrants. **The statistical data collected from the census is used to determine congressional representation and allocate \$800 billion in federal funds by formula.** These programs directly affect you and your community's schools, health care offices, emergency departments, children and senior care facilities, infrastructure, and other critical services.



ARE MY RESPONSES SECURE?



All census records and individual respondent data are confidential and protected by many federal laws and regulations, including the Census Act, the Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act, the Privacy Act, and the U.S. Tax Code. The Census Act specifically prohibits the Census Bureau from sharing any personal information to any government agency or official (federal, state, or local), outside entity (such as a business), or court of law for any reason. It is illegal to use any census information for purposes other than the production of statistical data sets. **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.**

CAN MY DATA BE USED IN OTHER WAYS?

All information collected from the census is only used for statistics production. By law, the Census Bureau and is not permitted to share your responses to immigration enforcement or law enforcement agencies. Your information cannot be used to determine eligibility for government benefits, and landlords cannot access or use your responses for any purpose. Responses can neither be disclosed in legal proceedings without your consent nor be used against you by any government agency or court in any way—this includes the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The census is not to be used for regulation of immigration or enforcement of federal, state, or local laws.

YOU MATTER. THE CENSUS MATTERS.

Visit <https://2020census.gov> for more information on the 2020 Census



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ARE THESE PROTECTIONS AT RISK?

The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Legal Counsel maintains that **no current law, or any agency or government official, can override the Census Act confidentiality protections – not the Patriot Act, the IRS, Homeland Security, ICE, or even the president. No private company, landlord, or employer can get any household's census information, even with a court order.** Census records can only be released after 72 years.

IS MY INFORMATION SAFE ONLINE?

The 2020 census will be the first to offer an online response option. You will now have the opportunity to participate in the census through your computers, smartphones and/or tablets. The Census Bureau takes strong precautions to keep all online responses safe. **All data are encrypted to protect your privacy**, and the bureau's cybersecurity program meets the highest standards for protecting personal information. If you prefer, you can answer the census by phone, in 13 languages, or you can fill out a paper form that will be mailed to you in April.

The Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015 granted the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) access to the network traffic of federal agencies' information systems, including that of the Census Bureau. **However, all census data is encrypted and DHS does not have access to your personal information.** By law, the only use of the network traffic information is to "protect information and information systems from cybersecurity risks." (6 U.S.C.151(c)(3)). DHS is not authorized to use any information for any other purposes, including immigration or law enforcement. Such actions would be considered illegal.



WHAT WILL I BE ASKED?



The 2020 census will only ask you questions related to household composition and homeownership as of April 1, 2020, Census Day. You will be asked about: the number of people living or staying in your home; whether your home is owned or rented; the age, race, and ethnicity of all household members; and the relationship of each household member to you. Nothing else will be asked.

The census has nothing to do with and will not ask you about your citizenship status or immigration status. You will never be asked for your Social Security Number, money or donations, any bank account or credit card information, or anything on behalf of a political party.

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