

What is Census 2020?

Every 10 years, the federal government is required to count ALL RESIDENTS in the United States through a national census. This information is used to make sure everyone is equally represented in our political system and that government resources are allocated fairly. The next National Census Day is April 1, 2020.

NOTE: The Census Bureau also fields an on-going survey called the American Community Survey, which asks more in-depth questions of a sample of the population. It is different than the decennial Census 2020.

Why is Census 2020 important?

The national census is central to our democracy. It makes sure everyone is equally represented at local, state, national levels. Census data determines the number of U.S. representatives each state sends to Congress and sets district boundaries for congressional, state senator, state assembly member, county supervisor, and city council elections.

Census data also informs how the federal government will allocate over *\$675 billion per year* in funding to state and local governments based on the number of people living there. These funds go towards critical programs that support education, housing, health, and transportation services in our community.

Lastly, census data is used to make other important decisions in our community:

- City governments use census data to decide where to provide utilities and build parks, schools, libraries, and other community buildings.
- Businesses use census data to decide where to open facilities and what types of services/products to provide.
- Developers use census data to decide where to build new homes and revitalize old neighborhoods.
- Transportation planners use census data to decide on public transit routes.
- Citizen organizations rely on census data to identify community needs, request and fund programs, monitor trends and assess program effectiveness.
- Residents use census data to support community legislation and advocacy initiatives.

The Census 2020 count will serve as our national statistics that shape political representation, funding, community programs and much more for the next decade.

What information will be collected for Census 2020?

The government needs to know how many people live in an area. Census 2020 will collect basic information about each household (number of people living there, home ownership, phone number) as well as the people living in that household, including:

- Name
- Sex
- Age/Date of Birth
- Race/Hispanic Origin

The Census 2020 will not ask about citizenship or immigration status.

Will Census 2020 include a question on citizenship?

No, the Census 2020 will not ask about citizenship or immigration status. It will only ask basic information: name, sex, age/date of birth, and race/ethnicity. Personal information will not be shared with the public or any government agency (local or federal).

NOTE: The Trump Administration did issue an executive order to gather already existing citizenship data from federal databases. This is not a new policy.

How will the government collect information for Census 2020?

Starting in mid-March 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau will contact all housing units in the U.S. through mail. Most people will receive a letter with instructions on how to complete the questionnaire online or over the phone. Some might receive a paper form to mail back. In early May 2020, the Bureau will begin sending census workers (called enumerators) out to visit households who have not yet responded to gather the information in person.

The U.S. Census Bureau will also collect information from residents who are homeless, living in group quarters (like dorms, nursing homes, shelters), or transitory housing.

NOTE: A housing unit is any place people live, including house, apartment, cabin, mobile home, etc. One person from each housing unit is required to fill out the census. All people living in the unit should be counted, regardless of age and whether they are related or not to the person filling out the form. Multiple census forms can be filled out for a housing unit if no one person has all the necessary details to complete the form for everyone living there.

What does the government do with the information they collect through the census?

The Census Bureau collects data for statistical purposes only. It combines your responses with information from other households to produce data, which never identify your household or any person in your household. Your information is confidential. By law, the Census Bureau will never identify you individually or share individual or household information with any other government agency. Census statistics are reported publicly so they can be used to make policy, program, and budget decisions.

Are individual census records ever shared?

Federal law protects individual-level records for **72 years** after the census is taken. After this, they are released for genealogical research purposes. Individual records from 2020 Census will be released April 2, 2092.

How do I know the information I provide is going to be safe?

The Census Bureau collects information only to produce statistics. By law, they cannot share your data with federal agencies, immigration authorities, welfare, or law enforcement. Federal law also does not allow your personal census information to be used against you by immigration authorities, a court of law, local housing agencies, any law enforcement agency, or any other government officials, for any reason whatsoever. You are protected in many ways.

All Census Bureau employees take an oath of privacy and are sworn for life to protect all information that could be used to identify individuals. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine up to \$250,000 and/or imprisonment up to 5 years.

The Census Bureau follows federal requirements and industry best practices to ensure data security from the beginning of the data collection process through the final storage of information. This includes data encryption and two forms of authentication to secure system access.

Who should be counted in Census 2020?

The Census Bureau needs to count every person living in the U.S. on April 1, 2020, regardless of age, citizenship status, or criminal history. Every residence will receive an invitation to complete the Census 2020 questionnaire. Make sure someone in your household is responsible for filling out the form. Every person living there, whether related or not, of all ages (don't forget young children) should be included.

NOTE: People with unstable housing (including those who are homeless) will be counted in March 2020. The Census Bureau counts people at shelters, encampments, where food is distributed, and where people are known to sleep outdoors. People living in nursing homes, correctional facilities, mental hospitals, dorms, barracks, group homes and other group quarters will be counted in April 2020 by the Census Bureau.

Why should I participate in Census 2020?

Participating in census is an important civic responsibility and powerful tool for making your voice heard. It directly affects the programs and services in your community because it influences how more than \$675 billion in federal funding per year is distributed. That is why it is critical that you – and *everyone in your community* - be counted in the Census. Every person counted can make a difference.

When you fill out the census, you help:

- Determine how many seats your state gets in Congress.
- Guide how government funding is distributed for critical community programs and services like healthcare, education, transportation, and emergency response.
- Bring support to your local community, including jobs, housing, schools, roads, and hospitals.

This is why everyone is legally required to respond to the U.S. Census. You could be subject to a fine for not responding or providing false answers. However, the U.S. Census Bureau has not historically enforced penalties.

What languages is the form available in?

The Census 2020 will be available:

- **Online and By Phone** in English, Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Russian, Arabic, Tagalog, Polish, French, Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Japanese
- **By Mail** in English and Spanish

The Census Bureau will provide video and print language guides and language glossaries in 59 non-English languages (including the 13 listed above).

How will Census 2020 be made accessible to people with disabilities?

- **Online:** The 2020 online questionnaire will follow the latest web accessibility guidelines. A video in American Sign Language will also be available to guide people through responding online.
- **Phone:** People can respond in English by Telecommunication Device for the Deaf (TDD) at 844-467-2020 if they choose to respond by phone.
- **Mail:** People can access braille and large print guides online to assist them with completing the paper questionnaire if they want to respond by mail.

What happens if I don't participate in Census 2020?

Everyone is legally required to respond to the U.S. Census. You could be subject to a fine for not responding or providing false answers. However, the U.S. Census Bureau has not historically enforced these penalties.

Every person who does not participate means we won't have an accurate count of who lives in our county, which could affect districting, representation, and funding. It is estimated that each person not counted could result in a loss of up to \$1000 in federal funding to CA per year for the next decade. This will directly impact the programs and services you, your family, and your community rely on.

I live in more than one place. Where should I be counted?

The Census Bureau tries to count everyone once at their usual residence, which is the place where they live and sleep most of the time, even if the living arrangement is temporary. If you spend equal time between two homes or don't have a regular place to live, use the address where you are staying on April 1, 2020.

I don't have a mailing address. How should I make sure I'm counted?

You do not need a permanent address to complete the census questionnaire. You can still respond online and enter in an address, intersection, or public place where you sleep most of the time. If there is no place where you sleep most of the time, enter the location where you are on April 1, 2020.

I don't have my household ID number sent by the Census Bureau. Can I still complete Census 2020?

You do not need a household ID number to complete the census. You can still respond online or by phone once you have verified your address.

What should I do if I'm not sure someone else in my housing unit counted me already?

If you are not able to confirm that you were counted, you can provide your information directly online or by phone to make sure you are counted. You can do so even if you don't have the household ID number sent by the U.S. Census Bureau, only your address is required.

What should I do if I don't have the necessary details to complete Census 2020 for others living with me?

If you aren't able to complete the questionnaire for others in your housing unit, you can ask them to complete it for themselves online or by phone.

Can there be more than one census form filled out per housing unit?

Yes. While it is ideal to have one census questionnaire filled out per housing unit, it will be possible for multiple people to complete it directly online or by phone. Only one paper questionnaire will be mailed per address (and only if there has been no response from that address by April).

What happens if I skip questions on the Census 2020?

By law, you are required to accurately complete all questions asked on the census. It will be possible to skip questions and still have it count. However, skipping questions on the census form will increase likelihood that a Census Bureau worker (enumerator) will follow up in person to collect the information.

How can fix a mistake or add someone to my Census 2020 questionnaire?

If you have already submitted your Census 2020 questionnaire and need to change or add information, you should submit a new, complete, and accurate form. The Census Bureau will resolve duplicate responses.

How can I avoid potential scams or fraud related to Census 2020?

The Census Bureau will send you an official letter in the mail that invites you to participate in Census 2020 with directions on how to complete it online or by phone. The Census Bureau will not email you.

If a Census Enumerator visits your home, you can check that they have a valid Census Bureau ID badge. You can also confirm that they work for the Census Bureau by contacting the Regional Census Center at 800-992-3520 (TDD 818-904-6249 for people with hearing disabilities). If you get a call claiming to be the Census Bureau, you can opt to call back to provide any necessary information.

The Census Bureau will NEVER ask for your Social Security Number, bank account or credit card numbers, money, or donations. And they will not contact you on behalf of a political party.