

# Frequently Asked Questions about the Census

## What's the Census for?

The U.S. Constitution (Article I, Section 2) mandates a headcount every 10 years, of everyone residing in the United States: in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and the Island Areas. This includes people of all ages, races, ethnic groups, citizens, and noncitizens. The first census was conducted in 1790 and has been carried out every 10 years since then.

The population totals from the 2020 census will determine the number of seats each state has in the House of Representatives. States also use the totals to redraw their legislative districts.

The U.S. Census Bureau must submit state population totals to the President of the United States by December 31, 2020. The totals also affect funding in your community, and data collected in the census help inform decision makers how your community is changing.

## Why doesn't the Census only count citizens?

The framers used the term "citizen" 11 times in the Constitution, but in Article 1, Section 2 (3), they expressly said that the census is an enumeration of **persons**. The 14th Amendment of the Constitution repeats this point, stating:

"Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, **counting the whole number of persons in each State...**

**What this means is that in accordance to the United States Constitution, the US Census counts everyone including citizens, non-citizen legal residents, non-citizen long-term visitors, illegal immigrants and prisoners in jails and penitentiaries.**

## Why does the Census Bureau ask the questions they do?

The Census Bureau asks the questions they do on the surveys because of federal needs and for community benefits. The information the Census Bureau collects helps determine how more than \$400 billion dollars of federal funding annually is spent on infrastructure and services. Your answers help federal, state and local leaders make decisions about: schools, hospitals, emergency services, roads, bridges, job training centers, and many other projects that affect your community.

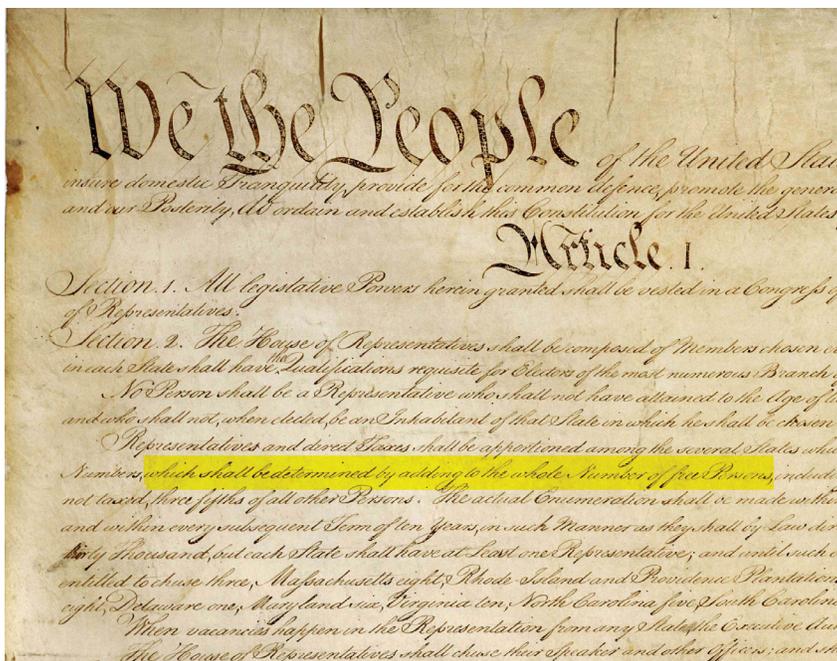
## Will there be a question about citizenship on the 2020 Census form?

In December 2017, the Justice Department has requested that the US Census Bureau include a question about citizenship status in the 2020 Census form.

At this time, the matter is still pending. The Census has until the end of March, 2018 to submit proposed questions to Congress. It's up to Congress to enact legislation stating what the Census questions will be.

Advocates for a fair and complete count generally oppose adding questions regarding citizenship status, for fear that it will discourage census participation among non-citizens, a group that has historically been undercounted in previous censuses.

To share your views on this question, contact your Congressional representatives.



## What is the American Community Survey?

Launched in 2005, the American Community Survey (ACS) is part of the Decennial census program and is essentially what used to be the Census long form. It collects more detailed information on housing, population, and the economy. ACS data are collected continuously throughout the year and throughout the decade from a sample (fraction) of the population (about 3 million addresses annually).

Like the 2020 Census participation in the ACS is mandatory by law and the American public's participation is vital to provide data that impacts policy decisions on the local, state, and federal level.

## Are my answers safe and secure?

The Census Bureau collects data for statistical purposes only. They combine your responses with information from other households or businesses to produce statistics, which never identify your household, any person in your household, or business. **Your information is CONFIDENTIAL.** They never identify you individually.

Title 13 of the U.S. Code protects the confidentiality of all your information and violating this law is a crime with severe penalties. In addition, other federal laws, including the Confidential Statistical Efficiency Act and the Privacy Act reinforce these protections. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment of up to 5 years, or both.

It is against the law to disclose or publish any of the following information:

- Names
- Addresses, including GPS coordinates
- Social Security numbers
- Telephone numbers

## How does the U.S. Census Bureau help me identify fraudulent activity and scams?

The Census Bureau will never ask for:

- full social security number
- money or donations
- anything on behalf of a political party
- your full bank or credit card account numbers

If you are visited by someone from the United States Census Bureau, here are some recognition tips to assure the validity of the field representative;

- Must present an ID Badge which contains: photograph of field representative, Department of Commerce watermark, and expiration date.
- Will provide you with supervisor contact information and/or the regional office phone number for verification, if asked.
- Will provide you with a letter from the Director of the Census Bureau on U.S. Census Bureau letterhead.
- May be carrying a laptop and/or bag with a Census Bureau logo.

## What if I am away from my residence on April 1, 2020?

People away from their usual residence on Census Day, such as on a vacation or a business trip, visiting, traveling outside the U.S., or working elsewhere without a usual residence there (for example, as a truck driver or traveling salesperson) are counted at the residence where they live and sleep most of the time.

## What if I have more than one residence or no residence on April 1, 2020?

People who live at two or more residences (during the week, month, or year), such as people who travel seasonally between residences (for example, snowbirds or children in joint custody) are counted at the residence where they live and sleep most of the time. If usual residence cannot be determined, they are counted at the residence where they are staying on Thursday, April 1, 2020 (Census Day).

College students living away from their parental home while attending college in the U.S. (living either on-campus or off-campus) are counted at the on-campus or off-campus residence where they live and sleep most of the time.

Those staying in shelter or living outdoors are counted where they are staying on April 1, 2020.

## When will the results from the census be available?

The nation should see the very first results from the 2020 Census in the form of total population counts for the nation and each state in late 2020 or early 2021.

In 2021 each state receives local-level 2020 Census data on race and the voting age population. As required by law, the Census Bureau will provide these key demographic data to the states (on a state-by-state basis), so the state governments can redraw the boundaries of their U.S. Congressional and state legislative districts. Public Law 94-171 requires that the redistricting data must be delivered to state officials responsible for legislative redistricting within one year of Census day or no later than April 1, 2021.