



# CENSUS 2020



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Is there a sample of the 2020 Census form available?

Yes, you can see the census form, including all the questions, here:

<https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-08/2020-informational-questionnaire.pdf> (and attached to this FAQ).

### 2. When will I receive the Census form?

Most people will not receive the 2020 Census form in the mail, they will receive a postcard instructing them on how to respond to the census online or via phone, or how to request a paper form (in areas with low internet access, some communities will receive the Census form as their first mailing). You can expect to receive your first Census mailing March 12-20.

A reminder letter will be mailed between March 16-24.

If no response by March 24, a reminder postcard will be mailed between March 26-April 3.

A reminder letter and paper questionnaire will be mailed out between April 8-16 to those who have not yet responded.

And between April 20-27, a final reminder postcard will be sent before the Bureau follows up in person. The Bureau will attempt about six contacts to obtain a completed form.

### 3. Why does the Census Bureau ask these specific questions?

*Name:* Ensures everyone in the household is counted, aids in keeping ancestry records, and assists in reporting all members.

*Sex:* Creates statistics about males and females, helps ensure government programs and policies fairly and equitably serve the needs of males and females. These statistics are also used to enforce laws, regulations, and policies against discrimination in government programs and in society.

*Age and date of birth:* Aid in understanding the size and characteristics of different age groups and to present other data by age. Local, state, tribal, and

federal agencies use age data to plan and fund government programs that provide assistance or services for specific age groups, such as children, working-age adults, women of childbearing age, or the older population. These statistics also help enforce laws, regulations, and policies against age discrimination in government programs and in society.

*Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin:* Needed to create statistics by race and is also by federal agencies to monitor compliance with anti-discrimination provisions, such as the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act.

*Whether a person lives or stays somewhere else:* Helps ensure a complete count (to avoid people being counted at multiple addresses)

*Relationship:* Helps create estimates about families, households, and other groups. Relationship data is used in planning and funding government programs that provide funds or services for families, people living or raising children alone, grandparents living with grandchildren, or other households that qualify for additional assistance.

**4. Will my responses be shared with other government agencies?**

No. By law, your census responses cannot be used against you by any government agency or court in any way—not by the FBI, CIA, DHS, or ICE. The law requires the Census Bureau to keep your information confidential and use your responses only to produce statistics. There are no exceptions.

**5. What happens if I lose the piece of mail that had my Census ID On it? Can I still fill out the census online?**

Yes, On the 2020 Census response website, select the link under the login button that says, “If you do not have a Census ID, click here.”

**6. Do I have to answer every question? What happens if I choose not to answer questions about race, sex, etc.?**

You should fill out your form as completely as you feel comfortable. Leaving blanks on the form may result in additional calls/visits from the U.S. Census Bureau to complete the data. There is no penalty for skipping questions, but keep in mind the Census Bureau needs complete and accurate data for its community analyses.

**7. If I choose to skip a question, can I continue to the rest of the Census form online or will I be stuck on a screen?**

You will be able to proceed through the form even with incomplete answers.

**8. What happens if there are accidentally multiple census forms filed for our household? For example, online and on paper?**

The Census Bureau has ways to resolve duplicate responses if multiple people at the same address respond separately.

**9. Can I submit multiple census responses from the same IP address?**

Yes, the Census Bureau expects that this will happen. Currently, there is not a limit on the number of submissions per device or IP address.

**10. Can community organizations create stationary questionnaire assistance centers? What guidelines and support will be available for those organizations?**

Yes, organizations are allowed to create stationary questionnaire assistance centers - however, organizations should not collect census data. More guidance is available at <https://2020census.gov/en/partners/outreach-materials.html>.

**11. Is the Census Bureau creating guidelines for what partners can and cannot say, such as scripts or messaging guidance?**

Yes, message guidance will be available for people and organizations to adapt to their outreach strategies. Links to resources are available through the Census 202 Resource Guide.

**12. Will I automatically receive the Census mailers in Spanish or do I have to request one?**

About 13 million households across the nation (roughly 9 percent) will receive bilingual English/Spanish invitations. Bilingual invitations will be sent to all households in "census tracts" where 20 percent or more of the households need Spanish assistance. All households—regardless of whether they are in an area that receives English/Spanish bilingual invitations to respond— will receive information about how to respond in Spanish online and by phone.

**13. What are some other ways that I can receive language assistance?**

If filling out the form by internet or phone, English plus 12 other languages are available. Instructional materials such as guides, glossaries and ID cards are available in English and 59 other languages.

**14. How do I count children, family, or friends that are staying with me (e.g. crashing on my couch, between apartments, etc.)?**

Children, families, or friends without a permanent residence who are staying temporarily with a friend or family on April 1, 2020 should be counted at that address.

**15. I have joint custody of my children. How do I respond to the Census?**

If a child's time is divided between more than one home, count them where they stay most often. If their time is evenly divided, or you don't know where they stay most often, count them where they are staying on Census Day—April 1, 2020.

**16. How do I count a newborn if they aren't home yet on Census Day?**

Count newborn babies at the home where they will live and sleep most of the time, even if they are still in the hospital on April 1, 2020.

**17. How do people in nursing homes, correctional facilities, and other group homes get counted?**

Those living in most group facilities, including college dorms, nursing homes, psychiatric and other medical facilities, correctional facilities, group homes, and some shelters, are counted as residents of those facilities. Usually, the Bureau will work with a representative of the facility to include group facility residents in a count, but sometimes, you may be asked to fill out a census form indicating you reside there.

**18. How do roommates renting an apartment together fill out the Census form?**

One renter should be designated head of household and fills out the Census form for all of the residents of the rental unit. Remember, the Census counts people by households, not by familial status.

**19. I am a college student. Do I get counted on campus or at my parent's house back home?**

If you live in private, off-campus housing, you should count yourself at your off-campus address, even if you go home or spend time somewhere else during school breaks. If you live in on-campus student housing like residence halls, off-campus residence halls, or other student housing facilities that are owned, leased, or managed by your college or university, Bureau employees will work

with representatives from your building to ensure that you are counted. You may be asked to complete an individual census form.

**20. I am an active service member. How should members of the military respond to the Census?**

Unless you are staying in military barracks or dormitories on April 1, 2020, you should fill out a 2020 Census form for your household and list everyone who lives there. If you live in military barracks or dormitories on April 1, 2020, Census Bureau employees will work with a representative of the building to ensure you are counted. They may or may not ask you to complete an individual census form. If your family is living off base, they should fill out a 2020 Census form for that household, but they should not list you on that form. If you are serving overseas, the Census Bureau will use data from the U.S. Department of Defense to count you (and any family members that are living with you overseas). If your family is living in the United States, they should fill out a 2020 Census form for that household, but they should not list you on that form.

**21. I am blind/low vision. How can I respond to the Census?**

If you have blindness or low vision, you can print a guide to the questionnaire in braille or large print from [2020CENSUS.GOV](https://www.census.gov/2020census.gov), or you can respond to the Census via phone.

**22. I have substantial hearing loss. How can I respond to the Census?**

Telephone contact centers will utilize Telephone Device for the Deaf (TDD) technology for the phone questionnaire and the internet questionnaire will also be accessible to individuals with disabilities. You can also access video guides to the questionnaire in American Sign Language on [2020CENSUS.GOV](https://www.census.gov/2020census.gov). You can also request a visit from a census taker who uses American Sign Language.

**23. When will the TTY/TDD hotline go live?**

The TDD hotline will be available starting March 1st, and live support will be available starting March 9th.