

How the 2020 Census will invite everyone to respond

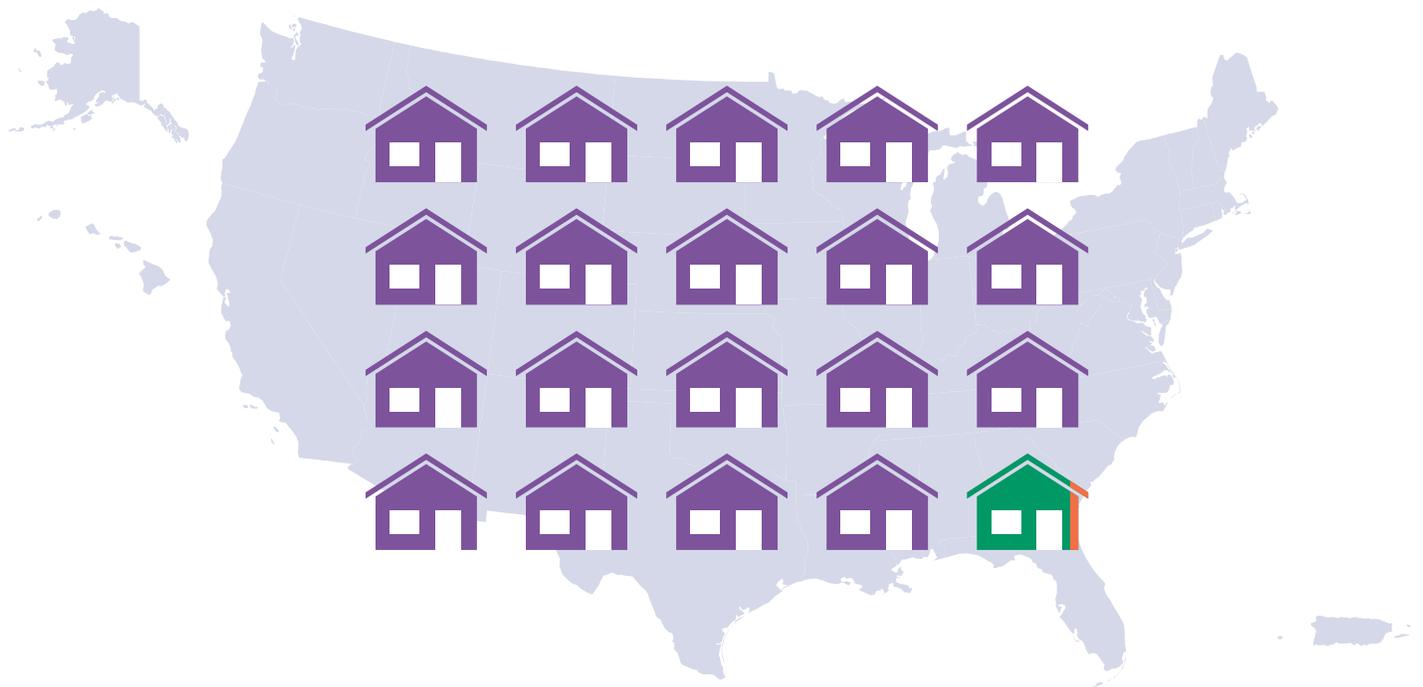


Every household will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone.

Nearly every household will receive an invitation to participate in the 2020 Census from either a postal worker or a census worker.



95% of households will receive their census invitation in the mail.



Almost 5% of households will receive their census invitation when a census taker drops it off. In these areas, the majority of households may not receive mail at their home's physical location (like households that use PO boxes or areas recently affected by natural disasters).



Less than 1% of households will be counted in person by a census taker, instead of being invited to respond on their own. We do this in very remote areas like parts of northern Maine, remote Alaska, and in select American Indian areas that ask to be counted in person.

Note: We have special procedures to count people who don't live in households, such as students living in university housing or people experiencing homelessness.

How the 2020 Census will invite everyone to respond



What to Expect in the Mail

When it's time to respond, most households will receive an invitation in the mail.

Every household will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone.

Depending on how likely your area is to respond online, you'll receive either an invitation encouraging you to respond online or an invitation along with a paper questionnaire.

Letter Invitation

- Most areas of the country are likely to respond online, so most households will receive a letter asking you to go online to complete the census questionnaire.
- We plan on working with the U.S. Postal Service to stagger the delivery of these invitations over several days. This way we can spread out the number of users responding online, and we'll be able to serve you better if you need help over the phone.

Letter Invitation and Paper Questionnaire

- Areas that are less likely to respond online will receive a paper questionnaire along with their invitation. The invitation will also include information about how to respond online or by phone.

WHAT WE WILL SEND IN THE MAIL	
On or between	You'll receive:
March 12-20	An invitation to respond online to the 2020 Census. (Some households will also receive paper questionnaires.)
March 16-24	A reminder letter.
	If you haven't responded yet:
March 26-April 3	A reminder postcard.
April 8-16	A reminder letter and paper questionnaire.
April 20-27	A final reminder postcard before we follow up in person.

We understand you might miss our initial letter in the mail.

- Every household that hasn't already responded will receive reminders and will eventually receive a paper questionnaire.
- It doesn't matter which initial invitation you get or how you get it—we will follow up in person with all households that don't respond.

2020 Census at a Glance

The census is much more than just a head count. It provides a picture of our nation that helps determine where to build new schools, hospitals, and businesses; how federal funding is distributed; and how congressional seats are apportioned. It also helps us see how our communities have changed over time. That's why an accurate count is so important.

UNDERSTANDING THE CENSUS

Once every decade, the federal government conducts a census of the entire population to count everyone in the United States and record basic information about them. Our nation's founders believed this data was so important that they mandated the decennial census in the Constitution.



Easy and Convenient

In 2020, for the first time ever, the U.S. Census Bureau will accept responses online, but you can still respond by phone or mail if you prefer.



Confidential and Secure

Strict federal law protects your census responses. It is against the law for any Census Bureau employee to disclose or publish any census information that identifies an individual or business. Census Bureau employees take a lifelong pledge of confidentiality to handle data responsibly and keep respondents' information private. The penalty for wrongful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both. No law enforcement agency (not the DHS, ICE, FBI, or CIA) can access or use your personal information at any time. Data collected can only be used for statistical purposes that help inform important decisions, including how much federal funding your community receives.

The Census Bureau will never ask for your Social Security number, bank or credit card account numbers, money or donations, or anything on behalf of a political party.

The Census Bureau has a robust cybersecurity program that incorporates industry best practices and federal security standards for encrypting data.

To make sure you and your community are counted, learn more about the 2020 Census by visiting 2020census.gov.

KEY MILESTONES FOR THE 2020 CENSUS

- **September 2018**—The Census Bureau’s recruitment Web site went live: 2020census.gov/jobs. For each decennial census, the Census Bureau begins recruiting thousands of paid census takers to help ensure a complete and accurate count. Interested applicants can visit the Web site to apply for a variety of jobs beginning in 2019 and through summer 2020.
- **April 2019**—The 2020 Census Web site goes live: 2020census.gov. This site will be available in multiple languages and will provide downloadable materials, answers to frequently asked questions, and more information about how individuals and organizations can help spread the word about the 2020 Census.
- **August 2019**—New Statistics in Schools classroom activities are available online: census.gov/schools. The Statistics in Schools program provides resources for teaching and learning with real-life data.
- **January 2020**—The first enumeration of the 2020 Census takes place in Toksook Bay, Alaska. Local census takers must get a head start while the frozen ground allows easier access to remote areas with unique accessibility challenges.
- **March 2020**—The public can begin responding to the 2020 Census online at 2020census.gov. Replying by mail or phone will also be an option.
- **April 2020**—Every 10 years, we observe Census Day on April 1.
- **June 2020 through July 2020**—Census takers go door to door to count people who have not responded to the 2020 Census. Census takers are Census Bureau employees and will provide proof that they are official government personnel.
- **December 31, 2020**—By this date, as required by law, the Census Bureau reports to the President of the United States the population count and the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives to each state.
- **2021**—Initial 2020 Census data are made available to the public on census.gov.

The 2020 Census and Confidentiality

Your responses to the 2020 Census are safe, secure, and protected by federal law. Your answers can only be used to produce statistics—they cannot be used against you in any way. By law, all responses to U.S. Census Bureau household and business surveys are kept completely confidential.

Respond to the 2020 Census to shape the future.

Responding to the census helps communities get the funding they need and helps businesses make data-driven decisions that grow the economy. Census data impact our daily lives, informing important decisions about funding for services and infrastructure in your community, including health care, senior centers, jobs, political representation, roads, schools, and businesses. More than \$675 billion in federal funding flows back to states and local communities each year based on census data.



Your census responses are safe and secure.

The Census Bureau is required by law to protect any personal information we collect and keep it strictly confidential. The Census Bureau can only use your answers to produce statistics. In fact, every Census Bureau employee takes an oath to protect your personal information for life. Your answers cannot be used for law enforcement purposes or to determine your personal eligibility for government benefits.

By law, your responses cannot be used against you.

By law, your census responses cannot be used against you by any government agency or court in any way—not by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), not by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), not by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and not by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). The law requires the Census Bureau to keep your information confidential and use your responses only to produce statistics.



The law is clear—no personal information can be shared.

Under Title 13 of the U.S. Code, the Census Bureau cannot release any identifiable information about individuals, households, or businesses, even to law enforcement agencies.

The law states that the information collected may only be used for statistical purposes and no other purpose.

To support historical research, Title 44 of the U.S. Code allows the National Archives and Records Administration to release census records only after 72 years.

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.

There are no exceptions.

The law requires the Census Bureau to keep everyone's information confidential. By law, your responses cannot be used against you by any government agency or court in any way. The Census Bureau will not share an individual's responses with immigration enforcement agencies, law enforcement agencies, or allow that information to be used to determine eligibility for government benefits. Title 13 makes it very clear that the data we collect can only be used for statistical purposes—we cannot allow it to be used for anything else, including law enforcement.

It's your choice: you can respond securely online, by mail, or by phone.

You will have the option of responding online, by mail, or by phone. Households that don't respond in one of these ways will be visited by a census taker to collect the information in person. Regardless of how you respond, your personal information is protected by law.

Your online responses are safe from hacking and other cyberthreats.

The Census Bureau takes strong precautions to keep online responses secure. All data submitted online are encrypted to protect personal privacy, and our cybersecurity program meets the highest and most recent standards for protecting personal information. Once the data are received, they are no longer online. From the moment the Census Bureau collects responses, our focus and legal obligation is to keep them safe.

We are committed to confidentiality.

At the U.S. Census Bureau, we are absolutely committed to keeping your responses confidential. This commitment means it is safe to provide your answers and know that they will only be used to paint a statistical portrait of our nation and communities.

Learn more about the Census Bureau's data protection and privacy program at www.census.gov/privacy.



Laws protecting personal census information have withstood challenges.

In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court confirmed that even addresses are confidential and cannot be disclosed through legal discovery or the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). In 2010, the U.S. Justice Department determined that the Patriot Act does not override the law that protects the confidentiality of individual census responses. No court of law can subpoena census responses.

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT IS THE DECENNIAL CENSUS?

Every 10 years, the federal government conducts a population count of everyone in the United States. Data from the census provide the basis for distributing more than \$675 billion in federal funds annually to communities across the country to support vital programs—impacting housing, education, transportation, employment, health care, and public policy. They also are used to redraw the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts and accurately determine the number of congressional seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO ME?

Responding to the census is not only your civic duty; it also affects the amount of funding your community receives, how your community plans for the future, and your representation in government. Specifically, data from the 2020 Census are used to:

- Ensure public services and funding for schools, hospitals, and fire departments.
- Plan new homes and businesses and improve neighborhoods.
- Determine how many seats your state is allocated in the House of Representatives.

WHEN WILL I COMPLETE THE CENSUS?

The next census will take place in 2020. Beginning in mid-March, people will receive a notice in the mail to complete the 2020 Census. Once you receive it, you can respond online. In May, the U.S. Census Bureau will begin following up in person with households that haven't responded to the census.

HOW CAN I RESPOND?

In 2020, for the first time ever, the U.S. Census Bureau will accept responses online, but you can still respond by phone or mail if you prefer. Responding should take less time than it takes to finish your morning coffee.

WHAT INFORMATION WILL BE REQUESTED?

The decennial census will collect basic information about the people living in your household. When completing the census, you should count everyone who is living in your household on April 1, 2020.

WHAT INFORMATION WILL NOT BE REQUESTED?

The Census Bureau will **never** ask for:

- Social Security numbers.
- Bank or credit card account numbers.
- Money or donations.
- Anything on behalf of a political party.

WILL MY INFORMATION BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

Strict federal law protects your census responses. It is against the law for any Census Bureau employee to disclose or publish any census information that identifies an individual. Census Bureau employees take a lifelong pledge of confidentiality to handle data responsibly and keep respondents' information private. The penalty for wrongful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both. No law enforcement agency (not the DHS, ICE, FBI, or CIA) can access or use your personal information at any time. Data collected can only be used for statistical purposes that help inform important decisions, including how much federal funding your community receives.

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WHERE CAN I GO TO LEARN MORE?

You can learn more about the 2020 Census by visiting 2020census.gov.