

# 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](http://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.

# CENSUS 101: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

The 2020 Census is closer than you think!  
Here's a quick refresher of what it is and why it's essential that everyone is counted.

## Everyone counts.

The census counts every person living in the U.S. once, only once, and in the right place.

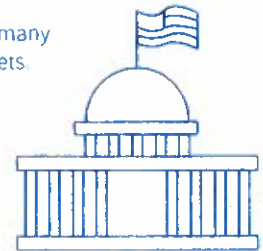


## It's in the constitution.

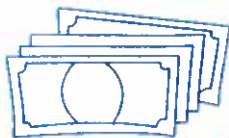
The U.S. Constitution mandates that everyone in the country be counted every 10 years. The first census was in 1790.

## It's about fair representation.

Every 10 years, the results of the census are used to reapportion the House of Representatives, determining how many seats each state gets.



## It's about \$675 billion.



The distribution of more than \$675 billion in federal funds, grants and support to states, counties and communities are based on census data.

That money is spent on schools, hospitals, roads, public works and other vital programs.



## It's about redistricting.

After each decade's census, state officials redraw the boundaries of the congressional and state legislative districts in their states to account for population shifts.

## Taking part is your civic duty.

Completing the census is mandatory: it's a way to participate in our democracy and say "I COUNT!"



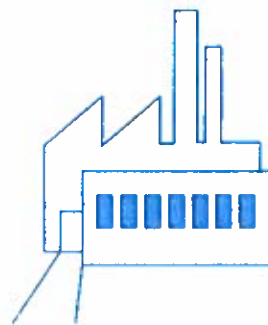
# Census data are being used all around you.



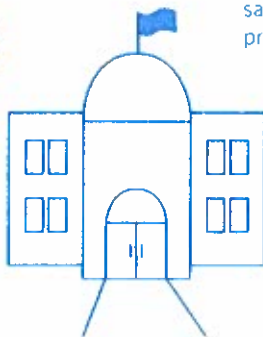
Residents use the census to support community initiatives involving legislation, quality-of-life and consumer advocacy.



Businesses use census data to decide where to build factories, offices and stores, which create jobs.



Local governments use the census for public safety and emergency preparedness.



Real estate developers use the census to build new homes and revitalize old neighborhoods.



## Your privacy is protected.

It's against the law for the Census Bureau to publicly release your responses in any way that could identify you or your household.

By law, the Census Bureau cannot share your answers with any other government agency.



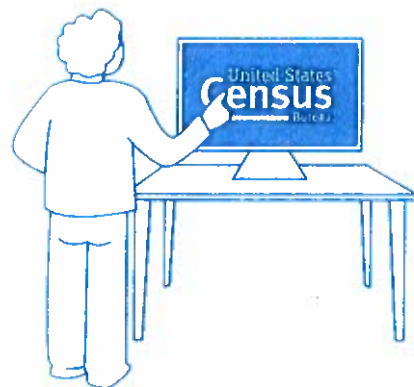
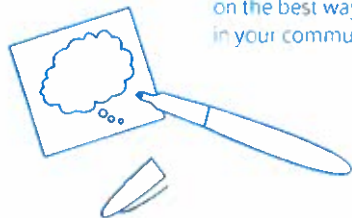
## 2020 will be easier than ever.

In 2020, you will be able to respond to the census online.



## You can help.

You are the expert—we need your ideas on the best way to make sure everyone in your community gets counted.



United States  
**Census**  
Bureau

U.S. Department of Commerce  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU  
[census.gov](https://www.census.gov)

FIND OUT HOW TO HELP AT  
[CENSUS.GOV/PARTNERS](https://www.census.gov/partners)