



Frequently Asked Questions on the census and Census 2020

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.

Are my answers safe and secure?

Yes. 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

What are Hard-to-Count areas?

Hard-to-count areas are, generally, census tracts where populations have been historically undercounted and/or do not self-report as well as others (self-report: meaning – not returning the Census questionnaire by mail). Examples of hard-to-count populations include persons of color, recent immigrants, young children, renters who move often, persons experiencing homelessness, and low-income households.

Will the citizenship question be on the 2020 census?

The citizenship question may be off the 2020 Census, per the U.S. Supreme Court decision of June 27, 2019. But it seems that the question will still be on the 2019 Census Test.



Can I simply ignore census forms, or enter false information?

No. Individuals who refuse to answer census forms, or who willfully provide false information, may face a fine (see 13 U.S.C. § 221(a) and (b), and 18 U.S.C. § 3571). In either case, you may also receive either a phone call or a visit from a Census Bureau representative.

When should I complete the census?

Census Day is April 1, 2020. But census-taking will begin before that date. Around 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 – by responding to the hard copy questionnaire – if you prefer. Responding should take less time than it takes to finish your morning coffee.

Can I refuse to answer a census question?

You can skip questions, submit an incomplete census form, and still be included in the head count. But you can be fined for refusing to answer a census question or intentionally giving a false answer, although the penalty has been enforced rarely in the past.

How is the census taken?

The 2020 count will be the first one to allow all U.S. households to respond online. Paper forms will still be available, and, for the first time, you can call 1-800 numbers to give responses over the phone. Households in the rest of the U.S. that do not respond themselves by early April may start receiving visits from door knockers trained to conduct census interviews and collect responses using smartphones.

Can I respond to the census in a language other than English?

While paper forms will only be available in English and Spanish, you can respond online or by phone in Spanish, Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Tagalog and Vietnamese. The bureau is also providing video and printed guides in 59 non-English languages, as well as a video in American Sign Language.

What questions will the 2020 census ask?

Most of the questions will be similar to what census forms have asked for in recent counts:

- The number of people living or staying in a home on April 1, 2020.
- Whether the home is owned with or without a mortgage, rented or occupied without rent.
- A phone number for a person in the home.
- The name, sex, age, date of birth and race of each person in the home.
- Whether each person is of Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin.



- The relationship of each person to a central person in the home.

Where should I be counted?

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.

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.

How does the U.S. Census Bureau help me identify 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.

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.



Is the Census Bureau hiring? How can I apply?

Yes. The U.S. Census Bureau is recruiting thousands of workers for temporary jobs nationwide (and in the Lehigh Valley) in advance of the census-taking day on April 1, 2020. A wide range of positions like recruiting assistants, office operations supervisors, clerks, census field supervisors and census takers are available, with flexible work hours, including daytime, evenings and weekends.

In Allentown (visit in-person):

- Allentown City Hall, 435 Hamilton Street, Allentown, PA 18101
- Mondays, 11:00 am to 3:00 pm
- Telephone (Leave a message): 770-722-4531

Via the Internet (visit the Census website):

- <https://2020census.gov/en/jobs>

How can my organization assist in raising awareness and increasing response rates?

Your organization may devise other strategies to raise census awareness and promote census participation in undercounted areas and populations in Allentown. Attached is a list of sample activities you may consider implementing in coordination with other member organizations of the Allentown Complete Count Committee.

Where can I go to learn more about Census 2020?

- [Frequently Asked Questions in Census 2020. Lehigh Valley Community Foundation.](#)
- [US Census Bureau. On our way to 2020.](#)
- Allentownpa.gov/Census2020



Sample Activities (Allentown Complete Count Committee)

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| 1 | Be the Non-Profit Organization to manage the Census Hub Staff. |
| 2 | Be the Non-Profit Org to act as the fiscal agent for the CCC. |
| 3 | Be a Census Hub in a hard-to-count area. |
| 4 | Print promotional bags, pins, and similar items with your organization, Census logo, and approved messages to show importance of everyone counted, only once and in the right place |
| 5 | Air or run Census promotions through TV/Radio/Billboards /Buses /Other public transportation. |
| 6 | Display/distribute digital materials through social media website, your organization's website and newsletters. |
| 7 | Encourage constituent's participation in the Census beginning in March 2020. 2020 Census takes 10 minutes to complete and can be completed online, paper, or by phone in several languages. |
| 8 | Host a parade, fair or event with Census in attendance. |
| 9 | Provide testing space, computer banks and meeting space. |
| 10 | Link to Census website from organization's website. |
| 11 | Host special events or meetings in your neighborhood /office and have a Census Partnership Specialist as a resource speaker. |
| 12 | Identify job applicants; Assist in recruiting for the Allentown Census Hubs and Census jobs. |
| 13 | Print materials, flyers and other promotional items showing participation in Census is Easy, Important and Safe with complete confidentiality. |
| 14 | Educators can participate in Census Statistics in Schools ; informational program for students which stresses the importance of their participation in 2020 Census. |