

The 2010 Census - FAQs

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What is the Census?

The Census is a count of every person residing in the United States. The count must include people of all ages, races, and ethnic groups, citizens and non-citizens. Article I of the Constitution requires a census of everyone in the United States every ten years, and the next one occurs in 2010. The Census form asks 10 simple questions and can be completed in 10 minutes. Federal law protects the personal information you share during the census. The information collected is used to distribute Congressional seats to states, to make decisions about what community services to provide, and to distribute \$400 billion in federal funds to state and local governments each year. Census Day is April 1, 2010.

What is Census Day?

April 1 is the day established by the Census Bureau as Census Day. Households do not need to wait until April 1st to complete and return their forms. Households should complete and return their forms as soon as possible. Households that have not returned their census forms by April 9th will receive a visit from a Census worker to obtain their responses in person.

Why is the Census important?

Census data shapes the future of your community and defines your voice in Congress.

- Every year, the federal government distributes \$400 billion in funds based on census data.
- Census information helps determine where to build schools, roads, hospitals, child care centers, senior centers and other services that help our families.
- Businesses use the data to build supermarkets, shopping centers, new housing and other construction projects.

- Census data determines the allotment of the 435 Congressional House seats. States with larger increases in population gain more political representation.
- Census data determines key aspects of our civil rights laws.

What should I do after I get the form?

Fill out the form in blue or black ink and mail it back in the enclosed, postage-paid envelope as soon as possible.

What if I lost my return envelope?

If your postage-paid envelope is lost or missing from your package, mail your completed form to:

U.S. Census Bureau

National Processing Center

1201 East 10th Street

Jeffersonville, IN 47132

What happens if I do not return the form?

Each time a person fails to return a form, more than \$11,000 is lost for programs and community services. If you do not respond before April 16, an enumerator will arrive at your home to help you fill out the questionnaire. The law requires that you complete and return the form. Again, all of your information will remain confidential.

Why do you need my telephone number?

The Census Bureau may need to clarify your form responses. Access to your telephone will allow them to do this without having to send a census worker to your home. Your telephone number is kept confidential, as are all your responses.

Why did I receive a second questionnaire?

Second mailings are automatically scheduled for delivery if the Census Bureau does not receive your first questionnaire in time. The Bureau has found that it can save millions of dollars in taxpayer money if a second form is mailed if the first questionnaire has not been received, rather than send a census worker to your house. So please fill out the second questionnaire and return it in the envelope provided.

But will I get counted twice that way?

No, the Census Bureau has procedures to eliminate duplicate questionnaires. There is an ID associated with each household's questionnaire. This prevents them from counting you more than once.

Why does the census form have room for only six people?

Given the small number of households with seven or more people, it is less expensive for the Census Bureau to follow up with those households than it is to produce a print and mail questionnaire with space for seven or more people. However, please note that the bilingual questionnaire (English and Spanish) is extended to allow for eight people. Households with nine or more people that use the bilingual questionnaire will also have additional space on the form to add up to twelve people on the last page of the form.

Where do I put the information if I have more people in my household than the form allows?

There is space for you to record the names, sex, age/date of birth, and relationship for additional people on the last page of your form allowing for up to twelve people on the form. Households with nine or more people that use the bilingual questionnaire will also have this additional space on the form to add up to twelve people on the last page of your form. The Census Bureau checks this page for names and will call the household later and ask for more information about those people to ensure your questionnaire is accurate and complete. Be sure to include your telephone number on your census form.

What is the difference between the race and Hispanic origin questions?

People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino or Spanish may be of any race, so the form asks respondents to answer both questions. There are many options, but you should choose what best describes yourself.

On the Hispanic origin question, you should indicate your specific national origin (Mexican, Cuban, etc.), and then answer the race question. For example, a respondent may indicate that she is a Latina of Puerto Rican descent on the Hispanic origin question and as "White" and "Black" on the race question. Another respondent may indicate himself as Latino of Peruvian descent, and Asian on the race question. Another example may be someone who identifies as Latino of Guatemalan descent, and some other race.

Why does the Census Bureau ask about race and Hispanic origin?

The Census Bureau collects these data according to guidelines provided by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget, and are based on self-identification. The racial categories included in the census form generally reflect a social definition of race recognized in this country, and are not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically or genetically.

It is recognized that the categories of the race item include racial and national origin or socio-cultural groups. People may choose to report more than one race to indicate their racial mixture, such as "American Indian and White." People who identify their origin as Hispanic, Latino or Spanish may be of any race. It's also recognized that the categories of the race item include either racial and national origin or socio-cultural groups. You may choose more than one race category.

Information on race is required for many federal programs and is critical in making policy decisions, particularly for civil rights. States use these data to meet legislative redistricting principles. Race data also are used to promote equal employment opportunities and to assess racial disparities in health and environmental risks.

How do I make corrections on the form?

If the error is in a write-in box, carefully draw a line through the incorrect entry and write the correct information as close as possible to the entry you lined through. This way, the person who reviews your form will know what you intended. If you checked the wrong box, just draw a line through it and mark the correct box for the question.

What kind of assistance is available to help people complete the questionnaire?

For more information on seeking assistance, call 1-866-872-6868. (En Español 1-866-928-2010.) The lines will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (your local time) seven days a week from February 25, 2010 through July 30, 2010. For the hearing-impaired, TDD 1-866-783-2010 (during the times noted above). Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QAC) will also assist those unable to read or understand the questionnaire. Large-print questionnaires are available to the visually impaired upon request, and a Teletext Device for the Deaf (TDD) program will help the hearing impaired.

I had difficulty completing the form and waited for a Census worker to come to my house, but no one has come. What do I do?

Please call the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance center at 1-866-872-6868. (If you need assistance in Spanish dial 1-866-928-2010). The lines will be open from 8a.m. to 9 p.m. (your local time) seven days a week from February 25, 2010 through July 30, 2010.

For the hearing-impaired, dial 1-866-783-2010 (during the times noted above).

How do I know the form I received is real and not a scam?

The official Census form should look like this. If you have questions about your form, please call the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance center at 1-866-872-6868.

Any request for census information from the Census Bureau will be clearly marked as coming from the U.S. Census Bureau and as OFFICIAL BUSINESS of the United States. It is a federal offense for anyone to pretend they represent the Census Bureau or any other office of the U.S. Government. When the 2010 Census takes place, you will receive a letter from the Census Bureau Director notifying you that, in a few days, your household will receive a form in the mail, or a phone call from the Census Bureau, or a visit from a Census Bureau representative.

People saying they are from the Census Bureau have stopped by saying I have not returned my form and want me to fill it out with them. How do I know they are really from the Census Bureau?

Census workers will be in your neighborhood completing interviews with households who did not return their Census questionnaire. They may have left a notice of visit on your door to notify you that a worker visited your address to complete an interview with you. You may contact the worker using the contact information listed on the Notice of Visit form to schedule a time to complete the interview with them. Otherwise, you can expect another visit from the Census worker to complete a questionnaire for your household.

All census workers carry official government badges marked with just their name. You also may ask them for a picture ID from another source to confirm their identity. In addition, some census workers might carry a 'U. S. Census Workers' bag. If you still are not certain about their identity, please call your Local Census Office to confirm they are employed by the Census Bureau. A list of phone numbers are available here.

The questionnaire I received has the wrong city or zip code listed on it. What should I do? Will I be counted in the wrong city?

If your form has a different city name or zip code than the one you are used to seeing on your mail, but it otherwise correct, please note the following:

The actual location of your address has been verified for accuracy. The 20-digit identification number on your form links back to our master address and geographic files where we store the information about the correct geographic location to which your housing unit belongs. This geographic information was verified last year by census workers who physically located each housing unit on the ground and assigned the housing units a "geocode" using special census maps and GPS coordinates.

The address on your census form or advance letter may not list the city name or ZIP code you identify with or are used to seeing on your mail. This is a result of a cost-saving measure that streamlines how the forms are sorted and delivered to you by the U.S. Postal Service. It will NOT affect which city, town or block your household's responses will be assigned to when we tabulate census results. You can view this video for more information.

If the address on the form is completely wrong, it must have been delivered to you by mistake. Please destroy this form and call 1-866-872-6868 (English) or 1-866-928-2010 (Spanish) to request a new form.

I did not receive a Census questionnaire. How do I get one?

Be Counted forms are Census forms that are available at various community locations for use by people who either did not receive a Census form in the mail or who believe they were not otherwise included on any other Census form. Be Counted forms will be available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Russian. The form should be picked up and mailed back in the attached postage-paid envelope. The deadline for mailing a Be Counted form is May 1, 2010.

Will I receive the form in Spanish?

You can. The Bureau will mail about 13 million bilingual forms (English and Spanish) to neighborhoods with a need for assistance in Spanish. You can also request a form in Spanish by calling the number on the Census form or by simply phoning the Bureau.

Telephone Questionnaire Assistance Center:

- English: 1-866-872-6868
- Spanish: 1-866-928-2010

The lines will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., seven days a week from February 25, 2010 through July 30, 2010.

What if I lost or misplaced my Census form?

If you lost or misplaced your questionnaire, call the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance Center at 1-866-872-6868. (If you prefer a Spanish-speaking operator, then dial 1-866-928-2010.) The lines will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (your local time) seven days a week from February 25, 2010 through July 30, 2010.

For the hearing-impaired, dial 1-866-783-2010 (during the times noted above).

Will there be a replacement bilingual questionnaire?

No, the Census Bureau does not plan on distributing bilingual replacement questionnaires. However, you can call the phone number on the back of the English form to request a questionnaire in Spanish, Simplified Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, or Russian.

What if there is more than one housing unit at the same address but the apartment number is not shown on the form?

If the unit designation (i.e. apartment number) is not on the form, please complete and send in the form for one of the housing units. You may call Telephone Questionnaire Assistance at 1-866-872-6868 for any other units that did not receive a questionnaire and request a form for each one. (If you need assistance in Spanish dial 1-866-928-2010.) The lines will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (your local time) seven days a week from February 25, 2010 through July 30, 2010.

For the hearing-impaired, dial 1-866-783-2010 (during the times noted above).

Can I fill out the census form online?

No, not this time. The Census Bureau is experimenting with Internet response options for the future.

Can I fill out the census form by phone?

After April 12th you can. Call the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance line at 1-866-872-6868 (or 1-866-928-2010 for Spanish operators).

What should I do with the questionnaire I received at my vacation home?

If you own two homes, you should complete the questionnaire you receive at your primary residence- where you live more than 6 months out of the year. If you also received a

questionnaire at your second home, you can enter a "0" for number of people living there, and write in "Vacation Home". You should also provide your phone number in case census workers need to verify this information.

Should I count people who do not live or stay here most of the time?

No - include only those people who live or stay there most of the time. If the person has no other permanent place to stay and will be there on April 1, 2010, you should count the person.

If no one lives at the address the form was mailed to, enter a zero in question 1 for the number of people. Do not mark any other items. Then, mail back the questionnaire in the enclosed prepaid envelope.

How does the Census Bureau count people without a permanent residence?

Census Bureau workers undertake extensive operations to take in-person counts of people living in group quarters, such as prisons, jails, college dormitories, military barracks, nursing homes and shelters, as well as those who have been displaced by natural disasters.

Will the Census Bureau collect information on people experiencing homelessness?

Yes, the Census Bureau will count those experiencing homelessness in an operation called Service-Based Enumeration (SBE). The SBE was designed to provide an opportunity for people experiencing homelessness to be included in the Census, by counting them at service-based locations. Service-based locations include emergency and transitional shelters for people experiencing homelessness, soup kitchens, regularly scheduled mobile food vans, and pre-identified outdoor locations.

Be Counted forms will also be available at various locations throughout the community for people who believe they have not been counted.

What if this address is not a residence or home?

If there is an apartment, mobile home, room or group of rooms where people live or stay at this address, then a household member who is at least 15 years of age can fill out and return the questionnaire by mail in the postage-paid envelope provided.

If the address is non-residential, that is, if people do not live or stay at that address, then do not complete the questionnaire. A Census worker will visit to verify that the address is nonresidential and remove the address from the census. If you receive additional letters or forms in the mail, simply ignore them.

What if there is more than one housing unit at the same address but the apartment number is not shown on the form?

If the unit designation (i.e. apartment number) is not on the form, please complete and send in the form for one of the housing units. You may call Telephone Questionnaire Assistance at 1-866-872-6868 for any other units that did not receive a questionnaire and request a form for each one. (If you need assistance in Spanish dial 1-866-928-2010.) The lines will be open from

8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (your local time) seven days a week from February 25, 2010 through July 30, 2010.

For the hearing-impaired, dial 1-866-783-2010 (during the times noted above).

Are people living in group quarters included in the Census?

Yes, people living in group quarters such as prisons, jails, college residence halls, group homes, and skilled nursing facilities will be counted. During April and May of 2010, Census staff will visit group quarters to count the population who were at the facility on April 1, 2010.

How will dormitories and residence halls be counted?

College dormitories and residence halls are considered Group Quarters, and will be enumerated during Group Quarters Enumeration (GQE) between April 1 - May 15, 2010. During the Group Quarters Validation (GQV) operation this fall, we will collect information about each GQ (contact person, name of facility, maximum number of persons that stay or live at the GQ, etc).

Prior to GQE, Local Census Offices will conduct a Group Quarters Advance Visit at each dormitory and residence hall to make final arrangements for the enumeration operation. This includes collecting ideal date and time for enumeration, setting an appointment date, and ensuring access to the facility. Dormitories will be enumerated via the use of Individual Census Reports (ICRs) provided to the students to fill out and return. Census enumerators will coordinate with the Residential Assistants and Housing Staff to distribute and collect the ICRs. We have the authority to request administrative record data from the school for those students who do not return their ICR.

The same procedures detailed above will apply to fraternity and sorority houses.

As to the privacy issues, all Title 13 data that is collected is certainly protected by the Census Bureau, and no one without sworn status is allowed to see it. In the event we need to obtain administrative record information, we will provide information to the school/dorm contact on our authority to get those data. Census enumeration procedures are in compliance with the Family Education Rights Privacy Act (FERPA).

What if the housing unit at the address is vacant on Census Day (April 1)?

If the housing unit is vacant on Census Day, then do not complete the form. Census worker will visit the address and collect information from a knowledgeable respondent on the status of the unit. If you receive additional letters or forms in the mail, simply ignore them.

We are all visitors at this address. Should we fill out the form?

No, include only those people who live or stay there most of the time. But if you have no other permanent place to stay, you should fill out the form. If no one lives there most of the time, then enter a zero in question one for the number of people. Do not mark any other items, and return the form in the enclosed postage-paid envelope.

Do I fill out the form if I am moving out before April 1, 2010, or if the unit will be vacant on April 1, 2010?

No, please do not complete the form. The census counts people where they live on April 1, 2010; look for a form to be delivered to your new address.

Where do I get counted if I am living in a temporary housing unit, or staying temporarily with family or friends?

You should get counted where you will be living on Census Day, April 1, 2010.

How do individuals in correctional institutions, including prisons, jails, detention centers, or halfway houses get counted?

Census Bureau workers undertake extensive operations to take in-person counts of people living in group quarters, such as in prisons, jails, detention centers, or halfway houses and get counted at the institution.

I have a newborn, do newborn babies get counted?

Newborn babies are counted at the residence in which they will be living.

How will migrant and seasonal farm workers get counted?

Migrant and seasonal farm workers get counted where they live and sleep most of the time if they report a residence otherwise they may get counted at the workers' camp where they stay most of the time. If you believe you were not counted, you can also pick up a *Be Counted* form available at various community locations.

Will my information be kept confidential?

Yes, absolutely. The Census Bureau can only use its information for statistical purposes, such as for counting large groups. By statute, the Bureau cannot share personal information with any person, company, or government agency like the IRS or Immigration. It is the law!

What happens if I report that I live in an illegal dwelling?

Nothing. The information on your form is not shared with anyone, including government housing offices. So it is safe-and important-to include all persons living in a household. If you do not receive a form call the Census Bureau at 1-866-872-6868. (If you prefer a Spanish-speaking operator, then dial 1-866-928-2010.) The lines will be open from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. (your local time) seven days a week from February 25, 2010 through July 30, 2010. For the hearing-impaired, TDD 1-866-783-2010 (during the times noted above).