

Census FAQs

The census is a 10-question form that is used to count all people living in the United States. The census is required to be done every 10 years by the U.S. Constitution and it has been done since year 1790.

It's very important to fill out the census. The federal government uses the information from the census to decide where and how much federal money is sent. The money they send pays for many programs, which include health care, education, housing, food and income support, and other services. Plus, it's required by law.

If you are not counted, your neighborhood, city, and state will get less money than it deserves. Your community will receive fewer resources.

What Should I Expect?

In March, you will receive a notice from the U.S. Census Bureau with instructions on how to fill out the census. The letter will encourage you to visit a website address to fill out the census online.

If you don't want to do it online, you will be given an option to request a paper form or complete the census via phone.

Only one person will answer the questionnaire. They will be referred to as 'Person 1'.

There are 10 questions. They ask about how many people live in the household, your relationship (mother, roommate, etc.), and what kind of home you live in (apartment, house, etc.). They ask for one phone number and the names of all who live in the home. They ask for the gender and date of birth of all in the household. Finally, they ask about the race and ethnicity of all in the household. **There are no questions about immigration status.**

What If I Don't Fill It Out?

If the US Census Bureau doesn't receive a response by April 1, 2020, they will send up to five additional mailings to your address. They will also send someone called 'an enumerator' who is a specially trained Census Bureau employee.

For up to six days, the enumerator will come to your house to attempt to get answers from you. They will leave a notice at your door to try to encourage you to fill out the information. After three days of attempting to contact you, they may begin to question neighbors about your household.

*do note that all enumerators carry identification with their name, photographs, a Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. *

If you refuse to fill out the census, you could be subject to a \$100 fine, although no one has been charged for failing to respond since 1970.

What If I Have Someone Undocumented In The Household?

They should be counted as well. There are an estimated 11 million undocumented immigrants living in the United States. Counting everyone in the country is important because if we don't, critical programs and services that serve these communities will lose funding. Undocumented immigrants are a part of the community they live in and should be counted. **There is no citizenship question on the census.**

What Information Is Shared With The Government, How Confidential Is This Information?

The U.S. Census Bureau is required to keep addresses and your personal information (like names) absolutely confidential. They cannot share this information the IRS, the FBI or any other agency of the federal government. [1]

The federal law that requires this. All Census employees also sign an affidavit of non-disclosure, which is a legal agreement that they will not share any information from the census.

If I See/Hear Something Strange About The Census, Where Can I Report?

Call the census at (800)923-8282 or at the NY local office at (212)882-7100.

There are also non-profits and community organizations like Color of Change that are accepting reports. You can find more information at nylag.org/census

I Don't Have A Computer, Where Can I Go To Fill Out The Census Online?

All public libraries will have computers that you can use to fill out the census. Some libraries will even have someone there who can help.

IMPORTANT NOTE

Census Officials should not ask any questions about immigration status and will have badges with ID numbers. You should call (212)882-7100 if you are concerned that someone is posing as a Census worker.

For sample census and guide, and for more information visit:

NYLAG.ORG/CENSUS