

# 2020 U.S. Census Frequently Asked Questions

*The federal government is getting ready to ask some personal questions for the 2020 census. By next April 1st, the Census Bureau plans to send a letter or a door knocker to every U.S. household. It's part of a once-a-decade tradition of counting every person living in the United States of America.*

## Why is the census important?

The census is required by the Constitution, which has called for an "actual enumeration" once a decade since 1790. The 2020 population numbers will shape how political power and federal tax dollars are shared in the U.S. over the next 10 years. The number of congressional seats and Electoral College votes each state gets are determined by census numbers. They also guide how an estimated \$880 billion a year in federal funding is distributed for schools, roads and other public services in local communities. The demographic data are used by businesses to determine, for example, where to build new supermarkets and by emergency responders to locate injured people after natural disasters.



## When does the 2020 census officially start?



Most households can start participating around mid-March, when letters with instructions are scheduled to be sent to 95 percent of homes around the country.

## 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. Census workers will make home visits to remote to gather census information in person. 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.



## When will census results be released?

The Census Bureau is expected to announce the new population counts by December 31, 2020. That's the bureau's deadline for sending to the president numbers for the reapportionment of congressional seats, which goes into effect beginning with the 2022 elections. 2020 census data used for state and local redistricting are set to be released by March 31, 2021. The bureau is planning to release other new census data beginning in spring 2021.



## Who gets counted in the census?

The Census Bureau includes every person living in the U.S. — regardless of citizenship or immigration status. International visitors on vacation or work trips to the U.S. during the census are not included. Residents are counted at the address where they usually live and sleep. The Census Bureau has a detailed breakdown of how the 2020 census will count deployed troops, college students, incarcerated people, those displaced by natural disasters and other groups in unique living situations.



## Are census responses confidential?

Under current federal law, the bureau cannot share census responses identifying individuals with the public or other federal agencies, including immigration authorities and other law enforcement, until 72 years after the information is collected. The Census Bureau, however, can release anonymized census information about specific demographic groups at a level as detailed as a neighborhood.



## 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.



## Why is Hispanic or Latino not a category?

The Census Bureau is required to ask about ethnicity in terms of Hispanic or Latino origin before asking about race. The ordering is designed to capture the racial diversity among people of Hispanic or Latino origin.



[www.NBCensus.org](http://www.NBCensus.org)