



2020 CENSUS

*Counting Everyone,
Because Everyone Counts!*

AN OVERVIEW OF THE 2020 CENSUS

WHAT IS THE CENSUS?

The “Decennial” Census is so named because it is conducted every ten years, as required by the U.S. Constitution. The Census is administered by the U.S. Census Bureau. The purpose of the Census is to count everyone living in the U.S. and its territories.

DO I NEED TO BE CONCERNED ABOUT ANSWERING THE CENSUS?

No, absolutely not! There are strict laws forbidding the Census Bureau from releasing any identifying or personal information about you or the persons living with you. Census data can only be used to present general population data in the form of geographic totals and averages. Census Bureau workers take a lifetime oath to protect all identifying and personal information, and releasing it will result in severe penalty.

No court of law can subpoena identifying or personal Census information, and no federal or local law enforcement can obtain it, including the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

In addition, the Census Bureau takes strong precautions to keep online responses secure. All data submitted online are encrypted to protect personal privacy, and the Bureau’s cybersecurity program meets the highest and most recent standards for protecting personal information. Once the data is received, it is no longer online.

IT'S NOT SOMETHING NEW, AND IT'S THE LAW

The Decennial Census has been conducted every ten years since 1790. Every residence in the U.S. receiving a notice must answer the Census form completely. Failure to answer the form completely, or providing false information on the form, is against the law and may result in penalty.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Beginning March 12, 2020, residences will receive a notice – in English and Spanish – in the mail to take the Census either online, by phone, or on a mail-in paper form. The Census Bureau will have forms and instructions available in a number of different languages. You may also receive reminders in the mail. If you don’t respond, Census Bureau workers will follow up in person at your residence.

WHO HAS TO BE COUNTED?

Anyone who is living most of the time in the U.S. as of April 1, 2020 must be counted on the Census – regardless of citizenship status or nationality – this includes persons with green cards and visas. *However, there are no questions on the Census form asking about citizenship status or nationality.* Everyone living most of the time at the residence receiving the Census form must be counted. This includes infants and children, other relatives, and non-relatives.

WHAT KIND OF QUESTIONS ARE ASKED?

The Census form only asks a few questions, but they pertain to everyone who lives most of the time at the receiving address as of April 1, 2020, so you may have to answer the questions more than once. The questions asked on the Census form include:

- How many people live here most of the time as of April 1, 2020?
- Is the residence owned or rented?
- What is your telephone number (in case the Census Bureau needs to ask you about the information you provide)?
- What is the name, relationship, gender, age, race, and ethnicity of each person living here?

There are also questions about people who may be associated with the residence receiving the form, but who live somewhere else most of the time – such as persons serving in the military or attending college. Those persons will be officially counted at those other locations where they live most of the time, but this is a way to double check – the aim is to count everyone, *and in the right place*.

WHY IS THE CENSUS SO IMPORTANT?

The primary purpose of the Decennial Census is to determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives. The more people, the more seats. It's estimated that Texas could gain three additional congressional seats based on the 2020 Census, more than any other state. Census data determines how boundaries are drawn for congressional as well as state legislative districts.

Census data informs businesses about where to locate, developers where to build homes, and local governments how to allocate critical resources. Census data also forms the basis of much federal funding to the states. For example, Texas receives about *\$60 billion annually* through a number of federal programs based on the Census count. These programs include, just to name a few: medical assistance, nutritional assistance, housing assistance, college student loans and grants, K-12 public education, highway planning and construction, public transit, community facilities, crime victim assistance, public water and waste disposal systems, and substance abuse prevention.

WHAT ARE CENSUS BUREAU SURVEYS?

Whereas the Decennial Census is administered every ten years, the Census Bureau also administers annual surveys, such as the American Community Survey and the American Housing Survey. And, whereas the Decennial Census strives to reach every residence in the U.S., these surveys are administered to a relatively small sample of residences around the country. But, based on the sample data collected, national, state, and local estimates are statistically determined. Just like the Decennial Census, participation in these surveys is a legal requirement. If you happen to receive a Decennial Census notice and a survey notice in the same year, you must complete both.

BEWARE OF SCAMS

The Census Bureau will never ask you for your Social Security number, money or donations, anything on behalf of a political party, or your bank or credit card account numbers. Census Bureau workers who go door to door carry official proof of government employment. Immediately report to the Census Bureau any suspicion of a scam, at 800-923-8282.

HOW DO I RECEIVE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION?

The Census Bureau maintains an extensive website on the 2020 Census at 2020census.gov. The general information telephone number of the Census Bureau is 800-923-8282.

This information was prepared by the Austin Independent School District. AISD is collaborating with the Texas Chapter of the American Planning Association to distribute this information across the state.

