

Census 2020 and Confidentiality

Why should I participate in the Census?

Census participation is critically important. Census data are used to distribute more than \$800 billion for essential public services, like schools, libraries, transportation, and healthcare. When you participate in the census, you help your family and community get its fair share of resources and services. Census data are also used to divide up political representation. When you participate in the census, you help your community have a voice in our government. All people who live in the United States are required by law to participate in the census.

What information does the Census ask for?

The Census asks basic information about you and the people who live in your household, including name, age, sex, race, and ethnicity. The Census will not ask about immigration status or citizenship, and will not ask for identification numbers (SSN, driver's license).

Will the Census Bureau share my information with other agencies?

There are extremely strong confidentiality protections for census data under federal law:

- Census data about individual respondents cannot be shared with anyone outside the Census Bureau, including immigration enforcement and other federal, state, and local government agencies.
- Census data cannot be used for any purpose other than statistical analysis.
- If a Census Bureau employee wrongfully discloses census data, they could be given five years in prison and/or a \$250,000 fine.

Can these confidentiality laws be changed?

Census confidentiality laws are codified in federal statute, under Title 13 of the United States Code. This means that it would take an act of Congress to change the rules. The Trump Administration cannot change the confidentiality laws by itself.

Can I skip a question on the Census? What happens if I do?

Federal law requires that everyone respond to the census in full. However, millions of people fail to answer at least some questions on every census and enforcement of this law is virtually nonexistent. It will be possible to skip a question when you fill out the census form on paper, online, over the phone, or in-person. Your form will still be counted as long as you give your name, address, and answer one or two additional questions. The Census Bureau might follow up if you skip questions, to ask for the missing information, either by phone or by sending a Census Bureau employee to your home. The fewer questions that you skip, the less likely it is that the Census Bureau will follow up.



Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus is ready to provide free legal information to any community organizations working on Census. Please contact us if you have any questions. Contact: Julia Marks, juliam@advancingjustice-alc.org

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