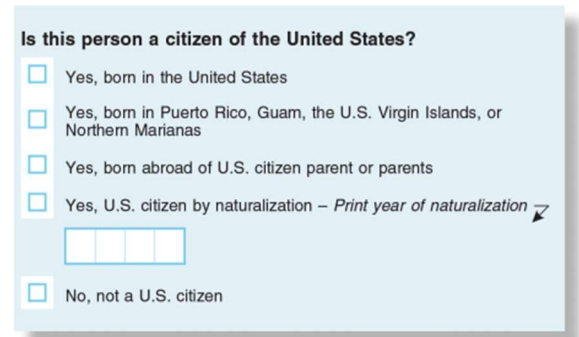


Census 2020 and the Citizenship Question

What is the citizenship question?

The Census Bureau is trying to add a question about citizenship to the decennial census questionnaire for the first time since 1950. There are multiple legal challenges to the question, alleging that it will scare people in immigrant communities and lead to an inaccurate census. The outcome of the legal challenges is unknown. The Supreme Court is deciding whether the Census Bureau can include the question. The question might be on the census; we will not know until June 2019.




Is this person a citizen of the United States?

Yes, born in the United States

Yes, born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas

Yes, born abroad of U.S. citizen parent or parents

Yes, U.S. citizen by naturalization – *Print year of naturalization* 

No, not a U.S. citizen

Do people have to participate in the census? Do people have to answer every question?

Technically, all people who live in the United States are required to participate in the census and are required to answer every question on the census form. It is actually a federal crime to fail to respond to the census, in whole or in part. In truth, millions of people fail to answer at least some questions in census surveys, and enforcement of this law is virtually nonexistent.

Will the Census Bureau share data about respondents with other agencies?

There are extremely strong privacy protections for census data under federal law. Census data about individual respondents cannot be shared with any party outside the Census Bureau, including immigration enforcement or other government agencies. Additionally, 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 someone skip the citizenship question on the census? What happens if they do?

It will be possible to skip the citizenship question when responding to the census on paper, online, over the phone, or with an enumerator. The Census Bureau will still count the response, even if a couple of questions are unanswered. If someone skips a *single* question on the census form, the Census Bureau probably will not send an enumerator to the person's home to ask for an answer. The more questions a person skips when submitting the form, the likelier it is that an enumerator will come to their home to follow up. Enumerators may visit a residence up to six times.

What happens if someone provides a false answer to the citizenship question?

Respondents should not lie when responding to the census. Providing any false answer on the census is a crime, though enforcement of this is rare. There is a very slight risk of immigration-related consequences for respondents who falsely state that they are citizens. It is highly unlikely that there would be criminal and/or immigration-related consequences, because data confidentiality rules prohibit the sharing of personal information with immigration authorities. Nevertheless, lying carries risk.



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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