

2020 CENSUS PROCESS BASICS FAQs

Adapted from the [Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census](#)

COME TO YOUR
CENSUS

The United States Constitution requires a count every 10 years of every person who is residing in the U.S., regardless of immigration status or citizenship. The Census Bureau's goal for the 2020 Census is to "count everyone once, only once, and in the right place."

-  **When does the 2020 Census start?**
The census count starts in remote Alaska on January 21, 2020, but most households will receive their census materials by U.S. mail or hand-delivery starting in mid-March. The online and telephone response options will be available starting on March 12, 2020.
-  **How long does it take to fill out the form?**
The Census Bureau estimates that it will take about 10 minutes to complete the census questionnaire.
-  **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.
-  **Do people have to respond online?**
No, households can respond in one of three ways: *online, by telephone, or using a paper questionnaire.*
-  **How will the online response option work?**
Almost all households will receive an invitation letter in the mail with instructions for responding to the census online. *The invitation will include a unique identification code called a Census ID or User ID. However, the Census ID is not required in order to respond online or by telephone. If respondents don't have their Census ID handy, they can use their address instead.*
-  **In what languages will the online form be available?**
The *online form* will be available in English and 12 non-English languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, Haitian Creole, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.
-  **In what languages will the paper form be available?**
The *paper form* will be available in English and bilingual English-Spanish.
-  **In what languages will telephone assistance be available?**
Phone assistance will be available in English and the same 12 non-English languages referenced above, with Mandarin and Cantonese. People will also be able to use their Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD) when calling.
-  **What about people who don't live in a household?**
People living in group facilities, or whose home is transitory, are counted through different methods. Anyone who is not sure how they will be counted will be able to call Census Questionnaire Assistance for more information.
-  **What happens if a person misses a question?**
The Census Bureau encourages respondents to answer every question, but will allow submission of incomplete questionnaires. Returning a partially filled-out questionnaire may result in a follow-up phone call or visit from a census worker.