

Census Bureau Answers Common Questions Regarding Census 2010

I'm concerned that there may be criminals working for the census.

All census workers undergo an FBI name background check, and we added a fingerprinting requirement for the first time for the 2010 Census as an extra precaution. These two security measures screened out about 16 percent of the more than hundreds of thousands of applicants for census operations in 2009. We are confident that these measures will make the 2010 Census the safest decennial census possible.

I'm concerned that intrusive questions will be asked.

The 2010 Census will actually be one of the shortest and simplest in U.S. history. It will ask just 10 basic questions including:

- Name
- Sex
- Age and date of birth
- Hispanic origin
- Race
- Household relationship
- If you own or rent your home



It requires less personal information than a typical credit card application. For example, the 2010 Census **does NOT** ask about bank account information, salary or income, citizenship or immigration status, and we never ask you for your Social Security number. The questions we do ask:

- help us make sure everyone is counted
- paint a portrait of America
- inform planning and funding decisions

I am concerned about sharing my information with anyone.

Census information is protected by law, and everyone who works for the census must swear that they will never disclose any personal information. Penalties for any employee who might share that information are severe: up to five years in prison and a \$250,000 fine. By law, the Census Bureau can't share your information with anyone — including other federal agencies and law enforcement. Your information is safe.

I don't want someone coming to my door asking questions.

A census questionnaire will be mailed to you. If you fill out the form and mail it back, no census taker will need to come to your residence. Most people mail back their form. The Census Bureau would rather get your form back in the mail, and you can help your country save money by sending it back.

I am concerned about the Census Bureau contracting with questionable groups through its partnership program.

A Census Bureau partner is simply an organization that has made a commitment to support the mission of the 2010 Census on a volunteer basis. Census partners are not census employees

and have no responsibility for counting, collecting or processing census data. These are organizations that understand the importance of the census and want to help ensure that everyone is counted in 2010. None of the partners are paid by the Census bureau to help promote awareness with the public.

I have a neighbor or friend who has just recently lost their job and home and I am concerned that they won't be counted.

The Census Bureau plans to count everyone no matter where they live or what their current living situation may be. If your neighbor is living with friends or family, they will be counted in that household. The Census Bureau has special procedures to count everyone, including the homeless and those living in campgrounds, marinas or other unusual housing.

I am concerned the Census Bureau will cook the numbers by using "sampling" to adjust the census.

The U.S. Constitution requires that the census be an actual count of every person living in the United States, and the 2010 Census will be an actual count. We will not use statistical methods (also called "sampling") to adjust the count for the 2010 Census. With that in mind, it is important to note that we need everyone to participate in the census to make sure we get an accurate count of the population.



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Why can't I fill out the census form on line?

We are committed to getting an accurate count of the population in a way that protects the confidentiality of respondents. Earlier in the decade, we researched an Internet option for 2010 and found that it:

- Didn't provide enough protection for individual census responses
- Didn't increase the percentage of people who responded
- Didn't save money

We are designing a test of a secure Internet response option for the 2020 Census and other surveys. Meanwhile, the 2010 Census form is a quick 10-question form that is easy to complete and return by mail.