

WHAT IS THE CENSUS? WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

The U.S. Constitution requires a count every 10 years of every person living in the United States.

Census results determine how the federal government allocates more than **\$800 billion each year** for services that communities rely on, like Head Start, food assistance, and the Library Services and Technology Act.

Census data also determine representation in Congress and the Electoral College, as well as in state and local governments.

Historically, certain groups of people have been disproportionately undercounted in the census, including young children, people of color and indigenous people, and people experiencing homelessness.

If the census misses people, undercounted communities won't get fair funding for critical programs, and officials won't have the reliable information they need to make decisions.



HOW WILL THE 2020 CENSUS WORK?

Beginning on March 12, 2020, the Census Bureau will mail every household in the United States an invitation to respond to the census, **including a new option to respond online.**

- + In areas without reliable mail delivery or traditional mailing addresses, Census Bureau staff will visit households in person instead.
- + The Census Bureau will use other methods to count people in group living situations, such as college dorms and military bases, and people experiencing homelessness.

April 1 is known as “Census Day,” although households can respond before or after that date. Households will receive several mailings from the Census Bureau in March and April 2020.

Beginning in May 2020, Census Bureau staff will visit households that have not yet responded to collect their responses in person.



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**LEARN MORE ABOUT THE 2020 CENSUS
AND HOW YOUR LIBRARY CAN GET INVOLVED**

Read the *Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census* and other resources at ala.org/census

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HOW CAN PEOPLE RESPOND TO THE 2020 CENSUS?

Households can respond to the census online, by phone, or on a paper questionnaire.

- ✦ The online and phone questionnaire will be available in 13 languages.
- ✦ The online form will be optimized to allow people to respond on a smartphone, tablet, or computer.
- ✦ The online form is secure, and responses will be encrypted.
- ✦ The Census Bureau will send paper questionnaires to households that have not responded after several reminders, and will follow up in person if needed.



The questionnaire takes about 10 minutes to complete.

The Census Bureau will have a toll-free phone hotline in 13 languages for people who have questions or need help responding to the census.

Census responses are confidential. U.S. law strictly prohibits the Census Bureau from sharing personal census responses with anyone—including law enforcement, courts, or any other government agency.

WHAT CAN LIBRARIES DO, AND HOW CAN LIBRARIES PREPARE?

Prepare for increased use of library computers and the internet. In March and April 2020, many people may come to libraries to complete their census form online. The 2020 Census will be the first one to encourage online response as the primary way to participate.

Help community members apply for census jobs. The Census Bureau will hire about 500,000 temporary workers. Jobseekers must apply online. Libraries can spread the word and host job fairs with the Census Bureau.

Participate in Complete Count Committees. Local communities establish Complete Count Committees to increase awareness and encourage residents to respond to the 2020 Census.

Fight misinformation, disinformation, and scams. People may have questions and concerns about the 2020 Census—libraries can provide accurate information.

Share information about the 2020 Census—particularly among hard-to-count populations.

Hosting programs and events is a great way to increase awareness about the upcoming census. The more people know about the census, how the data are used, and how it impacts them and their communities, the more likely they are to participate.



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