Census Fact Sheet

What is the U.S. census?

Every 10 years, the government reports the number of people who live in the United States by conducting a count called the census. This count is required by the U.S. Constitution.

Why is the U.S. census county necessary?

Census data are used to determine the number of representatives your state receives in the U.S. Congress, as well as your county's representation in the state legislature. Government agencies use the data to distribute more than $675 billion in federal funds each year, including:

- Public school funding
- College grant and loan programs
- Public transportation
- Road and community improvements
- Public health services and hospitals
- Neighborhood improvements
- Senior services

How is the census taken?

- Census questionnaires are given to everyone living in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.
- The information is collected in two ways: by a questionnaire that is sent to every home, and through confidentiality-bound census workers who travel door-to-door.

Who should be counted?

Everyone! All children, babies, and adults who live in a household should be counted, regardless of nationality, citizenship status, race, age, or gender.

Why are some people reluctant to be counted?

The U.S. Census Bureau believes these are the most common deterrents to census participation:

- Privacy: Some people are reluctant to give the government personal information.
- Confidentiality: Some people worry that the information they provide could be used against them. However, census information is completely confidential. It is never shared with other government agencies, including the IRS, any office of immigration, or the FBI. Sharing census data is a federal offense.
- Immigration and citizenship concerns: People may not want to draw attention to themselves. However, every person in every home should be counted as part of the census.

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