

## General

### What is the Census?

Everyone living in the United States is asked to complete a simple questionnaire every ten years that asks for basic information about the people who live or sleep in their home. The 2020 Census counts every person living in the 50 states, District of Columbia and five U.S. territories.

### Why does the United States perform a Census count?

The Census provides critical data that nonprofits, lawmakers, business owners, teachers and many others use to provide daily services, products and support for you and your community. Every year, the Great Lakes Bay Region (Bay, Isabella, Midland and Saginaw Counties) receives millions of dollars in federal funding based on Census data. This funding is used for vital community services like Medicare, Medicaid, health center services, SNAP, WIC, school lunch programs, education programs, road and bridge improvements, housing and childcare.

Michigan stands to lose \$1,800 per person per year of federal funding for every person that is not counted.

The results of the Census also determine the number of seats each state will have in the U.S. House of Representatives, and they are used to draw Congressional and state legislative districts.

It's also in the Constitution: Article 1, Section 2, mandates that the country conduct a count of its population once every 10 years. The 2020 Census will mark the 24th time that the country has counted its population since 1790.

<https://2020census.gov/en/what-is-2020-census.html>

### Are my answers confidential?

YES. By law, your response to the Census CANNOT BE SHARED with anyone outside the Census Bureau. This includes ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), police, CPS (Child Protective Services), the IRS, the FBI, your landlord or anyone else. No one can use your Census answers to reduce your benefits, evict you, deport you, fine you or take your children.

### Who gets counted?

Everyone living in the 50 states, District of Columbia, and five U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam and the U.S. Virgin Islands) is required by law to be counted in the 2020 Census. Census forms are filled out by household. Everyone living at the address matters and everyone needs to be counted, including children and non-citizens.

<https://2020census.gov/en/am-i-required.html>

### How is Census information used?

Being counted helps communities create jobs, provide housing, fund K-12 education, prepare for emergencies and build schools, roads, hospitals and libraries.

### How does the Census impact governmental representation?

Census data determines how many seats Michigan gets in Congress. Right now, Michigan is at risk of losing a Congressional seat and having a reduction in the number of Electoral College votes (representation in the U.S. Electoral College, which elects the U.S. president), meaning Michigan could have less voice in the federal government. Also, state and local officials use Census data to draw boundaries for legislative districts and school districts.

### Is Census data and information secure?

By law, individual-level Census information cannot be shared. Also, Census information is secure. The Census Bureau has strong cybersecurity measures in place to protect your information.

### How will I know the Census request isn't a scam?

The Census Bureau will not send unsolicited emails to request your participation in the 2020 Census. The Census Bureau will never ask for:

- Your Social Security number
- Your bank account or credit card numbers
- Money or donations

In addition, the Census Bureau will not contact you on behalf of a political party.

If someone visits your home to collect a response for the 2020 Census, you can do the following to verify their identity:

- First, check to make sure that they have a valid ID badge, with their photograph, a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date
- If you still have questions about their identity, you can call 800-923-8282 to speak with a local Census Bureau representative. If it is determined that the visitor who came to your door does not work for the Census Bureau, contact your local police department

<https://2020census.gov/en/avoiding-fraud.html>

### When will I receive the Census?

In March 2020, Census invitations will be mailed to households. The self-response deadline is July 2020. If you do not receive a unique ID by mail, you can still participate in the 2020 Census.

## Taking the Census

### How do I fill it out?

The 2020 Census is primarily online. You can respond online once you receive your invitation in the mail or during the open period of mid-March-July 2020. If you don't have access to the internet, you can take the Census at a local community resource like the library, a community center, the Secretary of State office, and many local township halls. You can also respond by phone or mail. For help on how to respond using a paper Census form, call 1-877-352-3676. The Census is available in multiple languages both online and over the phone.

## Where can I take the Census in the Great Lakes Bay Region?

Visit your local library to access a computer with internet. In addition, many local nonprofits are partnering with the Great Lakes Bay Regional Census Hub to offer technology, internet access and educational materials to help the community take the Census.

## What will the Census ask?

The Census asks for less personal information than most social media profiles. Below are sample questions.

1. How many people are living or staying at your home on April 1, 2020?
2. Were there any additional people staying here on April 1, 2020 that you did not include in Question 1?
3. Is this a house, apartment or mobile home?
4. What is your telephone number?
5. Is this home owned or rented?
6. Do the people in your home usually live or stay somewhere else?
7. What is the sex of each person in your home?
8. What is the age and date of birth of each person in your home?
9. What is the race of each person in your home?
10. Is anyone in your home Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin?
11. What's your relationship to each person in your home?

<https://2020census.gov/en/about-questions.html> and <https://mivoicerecounts.org/census-preview/>

## Will the Census ask for my social security number?

No. It will never ask for your social security number, money or donations, anything on behalf of a political party or for your bank or credit card account numbers.

<https://2020census.gov/en/about-questions.html>

## Can I skip questions?

The best way to avoid a phone call or visit from a Census worker is to complete all the questions truthfully. And please make sure everyone in your household is counted — every adult, child and baby.

## What happens to my answers?

Your personal information is kept confidential. The Census Bureau is bound by federal law to protect your information, and your data is used only for statistical purposes.

Your responses are compiled with information from other homes to produce statistics, which never identify your home or any person in your home.

## How long does it take?

About 10 minutes.

## Is the Census offered in different languages?

- Online form: 12 non-English languages
- Paper form: English and Spanish
- Telecommunications help for the deaf
- Language guides (video and print): 59 non-English languages, American Sign Language, Braille and large print

## What if I'm living in a shelter or couch surfing?

No matter where you live, your voice counts in the 2020 Census. Funds that come to the community because of the Census support programs that provide food, shelter and housing in our community. You can list the address of the shelter where you're currently staying or be counted if staying at the home of friends/family.

## What happens if you don't respond to the Census?

Every household that doesn't respond to the initial invitation to fill out the Census will be sent reminders in the mail (including, eventually, a paper questionnaire) before someone follows up in person.

## Citizenship

### Will there be a question on the Census asking if I am a citizen?

No, however there are questions about race and ethnicity.

### I am not in the country legally. Should I take the Census?

YES. By law, the Census cannot report your answers to any immigration authorities, law enforcement or people in charge of government benefits. Everyone living in the U.S. at the time of the Census should be counted, no matter their citizenship or immigration status.

## Children

### What if my child is a baby — do I list him or her on the Census?

YES. Please list your baby no matter how old — even if you are still in the hospital! For babies less than 1 year old, do not write the age in months. Write 0 as the age.

### I am pregnant — how should I fill out the Census?

Every child born on or before April 1, 2020 should be counted.  
[bit.ly/2020Census-Children](http://bit.ly/2020Census-Children)

### I have kids living with me who aren't mine — do I list them?

YES. You should count every child who is living at your address, even if only temporarily, on April 1, 2020.

### I have more people living with me than my landlord knows. I shouldn't list them, should I?

Everyone must be listed, according to the U.S. Constitution. The Census will not report your answers to your landlord or anyone else. Please make sure all people living in your household, or property, on April 1, 2020 are counted.

### My child doesn't live with me all the time — do I list him or her?

It depends. Whomever your child lives with most of the time should count your child. If time is split evenly, the adult who has the child on April 1, 2020 should count the child.