

Every ten years the census records everyone living in this country. The United States Constitution requires the census. Article 1, Section 2, mandates that the country conduct a count of its population once every ten years. The 2020 Census will mark the 24th time that the country has counted its population since 1790. The count is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, a nonpartisan government agency. The 2020 Census counts the population in the United States and five U.S. territories (Puerto Rico, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands). Each home will receive an invitation to respond to a short questionnaire—online, by phone, or by mail.

Overall Timeline

Counting every person living in the United States is a massive undertaking, and efforts begin years in advance. Here's a look at some of the key dates along the way:

Date	Census Event
January 21, 2020	U.S. Census Bureau begins counting in a remote part of Alaska.
March 12-20, 2020	Households began receiving official Census Bureau mail with detailed information on how to respond to the 2020 Census online, by phone, or by mail.
April 1, 2020	Census Day is observed nationwide. When you respond to the census, you'll tell the Census Bureau where you live as of April 1, 2020.
May-July 2020	Census takers will begin visiting homes that haven't responded to the 2020 Census to help make sure everyone is counted.
December 2020	The Census Bureau will deliver apportionment counts to the President and Congress as required by law.
March 31, 2021	By this date, the Census Bureau will send redistricting counts to states. This information is used to redraw legislative districts based on population changes.

How will the Census Data be Used?

The census provides critical data that lawmakers, business owners, teachers, and many others use to provide daily services, products, and support for you and your community. Every year, billions of dollars in federal funding go to hospitals, fire departments, schools, roads, and other resources based on census data. 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. Recent estimates have shown that Illinois has been losing population over the past ten years. This would risk losing one of its 18 congressional seats (in the U.S. House).

Census and Citizenship

Everyone living in the United States is supposed to be counted by the census, whether they are citizens or not. The Supreme Court blocked the Trump administration from putting a citizenship question on the census. However, even though that question is not in the mix, there are still concerns about whether the months-long debate will influence response rates. Census officials stressed that Title 13 of the U.S. Code guarantees that personal information provided for the census is confidential.

Compare the 1790 and 2020 Census

The chart below shows the differences over the 230 year span from the 1790 Census to the 2020 Census.

category	1790 census	2020 census
<i>area counted</i>	The original 13 states, districts of KY, ME, & VT, and the South-west Territory (TN).	The 2020 Census counts everyone living in the United States and its five territories
<i>conducting the count</i>	By horseback and on foot, approximately 650 U.S. marshals	Households can now respond online, by phone, or by mail.
<i>Representatives in Congress</i>	65 - increased to 105 based upon the results of the 1790 Congress.	435 - The total number of representatives was set by the Apportionment Act of 1929
<i>Population</i>	3,929,214	Coming soon! (but 2010 was 308,745,538)
<i>Leading the Effort</i>	Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State	Steven Dillingham, Census Bureau Director

Spread the Word

Share information on your social media channels about the upcoming census and why it is essential to respond. 2020 Census partners and stakeholders, media members, government officials, and others can all play a role in ensuring that everyone is counted once, only once, and in the right place.

QUESTIONS

TRUE OR FALSE? Write a **T** or **F** in the space provided.

1. A census is taken every 25 years.
2. The first census was taken in 1790.
3. The census is based on how many people live in your household as of April 1, 2020.
4. Population changes will effect the number of U.S. Senators each state receives.
5. Non-citizens should not participate in the census.

Answers: 1-F, 2-T, 3-T, 4-F, 5-F