

## **Census 101: Everything You Need to Know about the 2020 Census**

### **What is the census?**

The census is a nationwide count of every single person living in the United States. The U.S. Constitution requires a census every 10 years. The first one took place in 1790.

### **Why is the census important?**

- Our population determines how many seats Maryland has in the U.S. House of Representatives.
- The Federal government distributes billions of dollars for government services and community programs based on census data. This includes things like school meals, preschool programs, healthcare access, road projects, affordable housing, and more.
- Census information helps to determine where we locate schools, immigrant resource facilities, hospitals, public safety facilities and other important services and resources.
- Businesses make important investment decisions based on census data.
- It is estimated that in the Maryland, every person NOT counted will cost the State \$18,250 in federal funding over a ten-year period.

### **Who gets counted?**

Every person in your household must be counted, including newborns. It doesn't matter their age, relationship to you, ethnicity, or immigration status. Count everyone in your household. If you have relatives or children that split time in your home, they should be counted where they live and sleep most of the time.

### **When does the counting start, and how do I respond?**

Your household will receive a mailing from the Census Bureau in mid- to late March 2020, inviting you to respond to the census online or by phone. You can use a smart phone, tablet or desktop computer. Note that residents who live in group homes, campus housing, shelters, etc. will be counted using a separate process. Only one person in the household has to respond, and should answer for all other people in the household.

### **What happens if I don't respond?**

If the Census Bureau has not heard from you by late April, after several reminders by mail, you will be mailed a paper questionnaire. If you don't return the paper questionnaire, a census worker, called an enumerator, will knock on your door and ask you the questions in person. The enumeration efforts take place in May, June and July.

### **Is the Census available in other languages?**

You can respond online or by phone in 13 different languages. The postcard with instructions to respond online will be in Spanish for select neighborhoods in Gaithersburg. While the census questionnaire itself is available in 13 different languages, language guides to help respondents complete the census are available in 59 languages.

### **How long does it take to respond to the census?**

For most households it will take 10 minutes or less to respond.

### **What questions are on the census?**

The census asks certain questions in order to provide funding for programs that fit the needs of the community and to ensure that election districts are drawn fairly. You'll be asked for the name, age, date

of birth, gender, relation, race, and ethnicity of every person in your home, and also whether your home is rented or owned. And that's it. Answer all questions as fully and honestly as possible.

**What questions will not be asked?**

The census will NOT ask for your immigration status, Social Security number, email address, ID, financial or banking information, or your political party. Please note that if you are asked to respond to the census via email, the request is fake and should be reported to the Census Bureau at [rumors@census.gov](mailto:rumors@census.gov) or 800-923-8282.

**Will my information be shared?**

By law, your personal data cannot be shared with any other government agency, court, or law enforcement agency. In fact, census workers take a lifetime oath to not share your information. They risk prison and a fine if they do so. Your responses are aggregated with others, and statistical information for a community is derived from that. Note that your data remains private for 72 years, so, for example, the information from the 1950 census won't be available to those doing family research until 2022.

**What does a Census worker look like?**

If you do not respond in a timely manner, a census worker, or enumerator, will visit your home. He or she will have a name badge and a bag with the census logo on it. The badge will have their photo, a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date. You can ask for their identification at any time, but they CANNOT ask for yours. Please call 800-923-8282 if you would like to verify that the person is a Census worker.

Have more questions? Visit [2020census.gov](https://2020census.gov).