

Responding to the Census

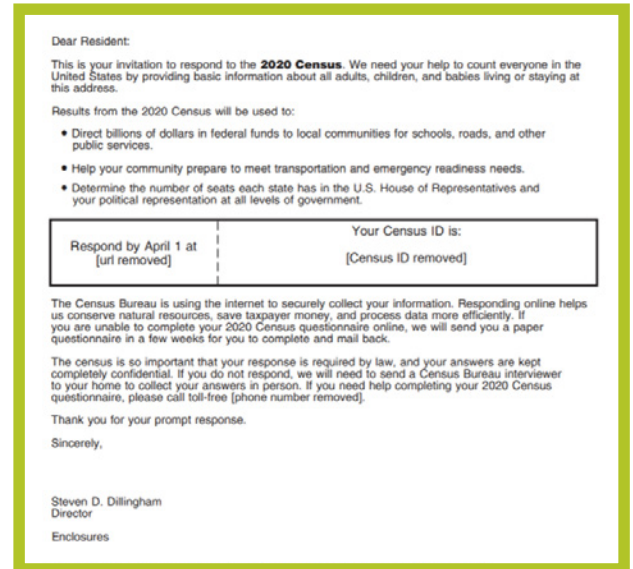
RESPONDING TO THE 2020 CENSUS IS EASY, SAFE, AND IMPORTANT

Easy: Households can respond **online, by phone, or by mail**—it only takes about 10 minutes.

Safe: Responses to the 2020 Census are confidential, secure and **protected by federal law**—answers can only be used to produce anonymous statistics.

Important: The once-a-decade count of every person living in the United States will decide how billions of dollars are distributed each year for **libraries**, schools, and other essential services.

Residents may have questions about responding to the 2020 Census, particularly with the new online response option. Libraries are great places for people to fill out the census form online and get accurate information.



Sample 2020 Census letter arriving March 12–20

WHAT WE WILL SEND IN THE MAIL	
On or between	You'll receive:
March 12-20	An invitation to respond online to the 2020 Census. (Some households will also receive paper questionnaires.)
March 16-24	A reminder letter.
	If you haven't responded yet:
March 26-April 3	A reminder postcard.
April 8-16	A reminder letter and paper questionnaire.
April 20-27	A final reminder postcard before we follow up in person.

Census Bureau mailing timeline

HOW WILL PEOPLE RESPOND TO THE 2020 CENSUS?

Beginning March 12, the Census Bureau will send letters to most households that explain how to respond online or by phone.

- In areas with low internet connectivity, the first mailing will include a paper questionnaire. Between April 8–16, the Census Bureau will send a paper questionnaire to every household that has not yet responded.
- The Census Bureau will use different methods to count people in certain living situations, such as people living in group facilities or whose home is transitory (see [Libraries' Guide to the 2020 Census](#)).

Beginning May 13, households that have not responded will receive visits from a Census Bureau employee. Households can respond online, by phone, or by mail until July 31.

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FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES ABOUT LIBRARIES AND THE 2020 CENSUS, VISIT ala.org/census

Share your library's Census story with the hashtag [#CountOnLibraries](#)

HOW WILL ONLINE SELF-RESPONSE WORK?

Starting March 12, households can respond online at my2020census.gov—including from a smartphone or tablet. Respondents will input the unique code from their Census mailing, or else their street address.

The online questionnaire must be completed in one session; draft responses cannot be saved. There is no time limit to complete the form. However, for security purposes, if there is no activity for 15 minutes, the respondent will be logged out and need to start again. A confirmation page will be displayed after submission; there will not be an email or text message confirmation.

People can respond **online** or by **phone** in 13 languages: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), English, French, Haitian Creole, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Tagalog, and Vietnamese.

HOW CAN LIBRARIES PREPARE?

To facilitate access to the online response option, libraries can:

- Train library staff about the 2020 Census: find resources at ala.org/census.
- Provide guest or “express” internet access without a library card number.
- Temporarily add or dedicate one or more devices for completing the census with <15-minute usage.
- Leave your Wi-Fi on in March and April when the library is closed.
- Ensure users can access my2020census.gov and 2020census.gov through the library’s firewall.
- Make mobile devices available to complete the census at bookmobiles and other outreach efforts.

To learn more, see [Preparing for the First Digital Census](#) and [The Internet Self-Response Portal: What to Expect](#).



HOW CAN LIBRARIES ASSIST PATRONS?

DO: Direct people to their response options:

- **Online:** Respond online at my2020census.gov starting March 12
- **By phone:** Get **assistance** or respond by phone starting March 9.
- **By mail:** Households will receive a paper questionnaire between April 8–16.
- **At home:** Census takers will visit households in person beginning May 13.

DO: Share resources from 2020census.gov, such as:

- **Questionnaire guides** in 59 languages + English
- **Video Guide to Completing the 2020 Census Online**

DO: Explain how to navigate the pages online, change the language, etc.

DON'T: Solicit individuals’ responses or purport to be a Census Bureau representative; see the [Census Bureau’s guidance for partners](#).



Response location poster, downloadable from 2020census.gov



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