

# United States Census 2010

## 2010 Census Q&A

### 1. What is the 2010 Census and why is it necessary?

The U.S. Constitution mandates a count of every person living in the United States every 10 years.

The first Census was conducted in 1790 and the decennial Census has taken place every 10 years since then.

The Census Bureau must get a Census form to – and a completed form back from – every residence in the United States. That's about 135 million addresses. This is why the Census is the largest domestic mobilization our nation undertakes.

Census numbers impact your voice in government. Census numbers are used to determine the number of Congressional seats for each state, as well as to define state legislative districts and many city council districts. Population formulas are used to distribute billions of dollars in funding to states and communities every year.

### 2. When does the Census take place?

Many activities and events to promote the 2010 Census have already taken place. The United States Postal Services will begin delivering Census forms on March 15, 2010. April 1, 2010 is considered the “reference date.” That means when you get your questionnaire in the mail, it will ask you to name everyone living at your address on April 1, 2010.

### 3. What is different about this year's Census?

One of the most significant changes for the 2010 Census is that everyone will get the short form. In the past, about one in six households received the long form, which included questions on socioeconomic and housing characteristics. Those questions are now handled through a different survey the Census Bureau conducts, known as the American Community Survey.

But for the 2010 Census, every household will receive a questionnaire of only 10 questions. The form is expected to take only 10 minutes to complete.

### 4. What kinds of questions are on the form?

To demonstrate how easy the questionnaire is, let's go through the 10 questions right now. The first four questions include:

1. How many people live in the residence?
2. Are there additional people not listed?



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3. Is this house/apartment/mobile home owned or rented?

4. What is a telephone number in case the Census Bureau does not understand one of your answers?

The next six questions are asked for everyone living in the household.

- Name
- Gender
- Age and date of birth
- Ethnicity – this question focuses on Hispanic origins, which are not considered a race.
- Race
- And finally – does the person sometimes stay or live somewhere else?

That's it. We've just gone through all of the questions on the 2010 Census form.

## **5. Why is the Census so important?**

Not only does the Census provide a vital snapshot of our nation's growing and changing population and demographics, it is extremely important in ensuring that communities and residents are able to access the services they deserve.

Census data are used to determine how to allocate more than \$400 billion in federal funds to states and communities every year.

In Arizona, more than a billion dollars in state-shared revenue is distributed by population. On average, each person counted in Arizona equates to about \$1,550 in funding every year.

Since the Census numbers stand for 10 years, communities with undercounted populations risk losing millions of dollars in federal funding for services including hospitals, schools, parks, libraries, public safety (such as police and fire protection), senior centers, youth programs and transportation services.

The Census is very important to you in ensuring you have a voice in Congress. The population determines how congressional seats are distributed by state. In fact, Arizona could gain a ninth, possibly even a 10th, seat in Congress following the 2010 Census.

Population numbers are also used for planning. At MAG it is very important to know how many people will be using transportation systems and where they live. Census data is used for funding purposes such as housing, health care and roads. It's also important for emergency preparedness. How do you know how many people need to be evacuated in an emergency if you don't have an accurate population count in the first place?

## **6. Who should be counted?**

The Census Bureau's mandate is to count everyone "residing" in the United States. That is the language of the U.S. Constitution. This means babies, foster children, relatives, people who may be staying at a home temporarily, teens and adults, regardless of citizenship or immigration status.

## **7. I understand that the Census is recruiting for thousands of jobs in Maricopa County. Are jobs still available?**

Yes, thousands of temporary jobs are being created in Maricopa County. For more information: 1-866-861-2010 or [www.2010censusjobs.gov](http://www.2010censusjobs.gov)

## **8. What happens after April 1?**

On March 15, Census questionnaires are mailed to 135 million households.

In rural areas, forms are hand delivered.

April 1 is the recognized Census Day. Information provided on the Census form should represent the respective household as it exists on this day.

In April, many of the households that do not return their questionnaire will receive a replacement form.

From March to May 2010, the Census Bureau will conduct a “Be Counted” program through which Census questionnaires will be made available at select public sites for individuals who did not receive one by mail.

In April and May, the Census Bureau will conduct counts of group quarters, which involves people living or staying in places such as military barracks, college residence halls, skilled nursing facilities, group homes and correctional facilities.

From April to August, follow up interviews will be conducted when clarification is needed to determine if changes should be made to respondents’ household rosters as reported on initial Census returns.

From May to July, the Census Bureau conducts non-response follow up; this is when Census workers visit housing units that did not mail back a completed questionnaire to conduct a personal interview.

In December 2010, the Census Bureau delivers apportionment counts to the President that will include state populations and the number of seats apportioned to each state in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Final official counts will be delivered to states in April 2011.

## **9. How do I know that the Census information I provide is going to be kept safe?**

In this time of heightened awareness about protecting our personal information, it is good to know that the information you provide on the Census questionnaire is completely confidential.

Personal Census information is not shared with any other government agency or organization. There are no exceptions. Census workers take a lifetime confidentiality oath and can go to jail for revealing Census information.

Penalties are incurred under Federal Law, Title 13. The penalty for unlawful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both.

## **10. What are some of the Census challenges in Arizona?**

Our region faces significant challenges for a complete count in terms of reaching hard-to-count populations, including those who are:

- Homeless
- Jobless
- Winter visitors
- New or undocumented immigrants
- Or those who are in danger of losing their homes to foreclosure

Our county has experienced tremendous population growth since 2000 – new immigrants, legal and otherwise, pose a significant challenge. Many immigrants are from countries or cultures that do not conduct a Census, or if they do, it is very different from the U.S. Census. Maricopa County also has been hit hard by foreclosures, which adds to the transitory nature of our local population.

## **11. Who are some of the key players in the Census?**

Of course the biggest player is the U.S. Census Bureau, which is responsible for conducting the count and tabulating results. One big responsibility for the 2010 Census is hiring Census workers. The Census Bureau hires about 1.4 million temporary employees but has to recruit about three times that amount.

The Census Bureau determines where some of the hardest to count populations are, and assists cities in staffing Questionnaire Assistance Centers in those areas. These are locations where you will be able to go with questions or if you need help filling out the forms. The Census Bureau conducts the count and analyzes the results.

As the regional planning agency, the Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) serves as a liaison between the Census Bureau and our member agencies. MAG created a Count to 10 Census Outreach Group of public information officers from member agencies to develop local media strategies and outreach.

## **12. I've heard about spam e-mails going out about the Census.**

### **How will I know if a Census taker is legitimate?**

If a U.S. Census Bureau employee knocks on your door, here are some recognition tips to assure the validity of the employee:

- The Census taker must present an ID badge that contains a Department of Commerce watermark and expiration date. The Census taker may also be carrying a bag with a Census Bureau logo.
- If asked, the Census taker will provide you with supervisor contact information and/or the Local Census Office phone number for verification.
- The Census taker will ONLY ask you the questions that appear on the Census form if he or she is working on the 2010 Census.

Your best safeguard for reducing the likelihood that someone will be knocking on your door will be for you to mail back your form as soon as you get it.

If you don't return the questionnaire by the end of April, a Census representative will contact you by phone or visit your home as many as six times seeking your answers.

If you still don't respond, your neighbors may be asked about the people residing in your home. This costs all of us money. About \$85 million in taxpayer dollars are saved for every one percent increase in mail response.

## **13. How does the Census Bureau guarantee that every household receives a form?**

It began in 2007, when jurisdictions submitted to the Census Bureau an address list for every housing unit in their jurisdiction. The Census Bureau took that address list and hired address canvassers to walk up and down neighborhood streets verifying the addresses on the list actually existed. After the Census Bureau address canvassing operation was complete, jurisdictions were given a final opportunity to review their original address list with additions, deletions or corrections made during address canvassing.

In addition, cities and towns added any new housing units to the list via the Census Bureau New Construction Program.

The Census Bureau works directly with the U.S. Postal Service to mail the questionnaires to each household. If you have a PO Box, you will not get a questionnaire in the mail – Instead, you will receive a personal visit from a Census enumerator. Also, it is important to note that other living quarters, like nursing homes, prisons and college dormitories will be counted separately, so they also will not receive a questionnaire in the mail.

## **14. Where can I find more information?**

[www.magcensus.com](http://www.magcensus.com)

[www.2010.census.gov](http://www.2010.census.gov)