

- **Establish benchmarks and set expectations:** Communication of requirements and estimated time and resource commitment to potential CAKs is key. Many organizations have expressed interest in hosting a CAK location but find it challenging to actually commit. In Los Angeles, registrants must provide their own computers, antivirus software, and other supplies, so it is vital that they understand what they are committing to upfront.
- **Focus on communication and branding consistency:** Consistency and continuity in branding is important so that constituents can easily recognize CAK locations.
- **Plan far in advance:** Setting up CAKs can be a significant lift. Be sure to leave your city enough time to mobilize and train volunteers and to build community awareness of the kiosks.

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## IV. Data Privacy & Security

### How Does the Census Bureau Keep Data Private?

Many cities have reported data privacy as a key concern among their constituents in the lead-up to the 2020 Census. To maximize census participation, constituents must feel comfortable providing information about themselves and their households and confident that the Census Bureau will protect the privacy of their personal data. However, given an atmosphere of heightened distrust that disproportionately affects hard-to-count communities composed of immigrants and minorities, it is vital that cities find effective channels to reassure constituents that their personal data is secure.

### What Information Does the Census Collect?

The 2020 Census contains only 10 questions. Some of these questions are asked only once and some are repeated for each individual living in a household. The census asks for respondents to enter basic information such as sex, date of birth, and racial identification. The census **does not** ask respondents to enter personal data such as a Social Security Number or immigration/citizenship status. Many constituents believe that taking the census requires submitting extensive, personally sensitive data. Cities can counter this belief by informing constituents that the census requires less disclosure of personally identifiable information than many other routine transactions, such as applying for a loan or an apartment rental. To review the questions that the 2020 Census will ask, review this [sample questionnaire](#) provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. For more information on why these questions are asked and how the data is used, see the appendix, "[Why Does the Census Ask That?](#)".

### What Data Privacy Measures Does the Census Bureau Employ to Protect Your Constituents?

**U.S. Code Title 13 - Legal Protection of Confidential Information:** Data confidentiality is of utmost importance to the U.S. Census Bureau. Title 13 of the United States Code of Laws legally prohibits anyone at the Census Bureau from divulging any identifying census information. This legal mandate exists to protect against use or access of census data for purposes other than statistical analysis by the Census Bureau. It is prohibited for census workers to share any census data for any purpose. As a result, census data cannot be shared with private companies or organizations, media entities, or other government agencies (including Immigration and Customs Enforcement). In addition, census data cannot be obtained even if a court order is issued. Census enumerators must swear a strict

lifetime oath of nondisclosure and researchers who wish to access census data must undergo thorough background checks and follow strict data security and nondisclosure procedures. Violation of Title 13 is a federal crime with heavy penalties, including at minimum a \$250,000 fine, a five-year prison sentence, or both. No reported breach has occurred since Title 13 was first enacted in 1954.<sup>5</sup>

**Differential Privacy:** Beginning in 2020, the Census Bureau developed a new privacy technique designed to maintain data privacy in the face of modern threats to confidentiality. This technique, called differential privacy, uses advanced cryptographic principles to grant the Census Bureau granular control over census data confidentiality. Differential privacy dramatically reduces the chances that a bad actor could reidentify individuals based on publicly available census data by strategically injecting “noise” or intentional false values into the census dataset. For additional technical details on how differential privacy works, refer to a high-level explanatory blog developed by the Arab American Institute [here](#).

In practical terms, constituents should know that differential privacy prevents their census responses from being linked to their real identities. For example, constituents who may have more household members living in their rental unit than their lease permits should not worry that accurately completing the census may jeopardize their housing security. This is because differential privacy makes it impossible for census data on household size to be cross-referenced against external databases maintained by landlords or rental associations. Similarly, differential privacy prevents census data from being linked to any record of an individual constituent’s immigration or citizenship status.

## Communicating to Build Trust

Trusted community messengers play a key role in reassuring constituents that their census data will be kept confidential. Providing training and materials that explain how the Census Bureau keeps its data safe to respected community members will empower these trusted messengers to accurately answer their communities’ questions about census data privacy. This [factsheet](#) and [web resource](#) offer straightforward explanations of how the Census Bureau ensures confidentiality of responses, which can easily be shared with community messengers. In addition, remember the following tips when communicating about the census to constituents. Sharing these simple facts with trusted messengers and constituents will help to build trust in the security and privacy of census data.

- Ensure that your constituents are aware that the Census Bureau will never ask for sensitive personal information, such as a Social Security Number.
- Constituents can review a copy of the 2020 Census form [here](#). The form that constituents will be asked to fill out (either on paper, online, or over the phone) will contain the same questions.
- The Census Bureau provides a detailed explanation of how they will use the data collected from each question on the 2020 Census. You can view these explanations [here](#).
- Completing the census form requires less disclosure of personally-identifiable information than many other routine transactions, such as filling out an application for a loan or apartment.

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<sup>5</sup> Adapted from Ciurczak, Peter. *Census 2020, Explained* (2018). Boston Indicators. [https://www.bostonindicators.org/-/media/tbf/reports-and-covers/2018/census2020\\_webfinal.pdf?la=en&hash=98C260B954479A900765046D87FA762986E13CB5](https://www.bostonindicators.org/-/media/tbf/reports-and-covers/2018/census2020_webfinal.pdf?la=en&hash=98C260B954479A900765046D87FA762986E13CB5)

- Ensure that your constituents understand that the privacy of census data is strictly protected under U.S. law. Divulging personal census data is a federal crime with heavy penalties, including at minimum a \$250,000 fine or a five-year prison sentence.
- Constituents should know that data privacy is the Census Bureau’s highest priority. The Census Bureau has implemented an innovative data privacy technique that uses advanced cryptography to ensure that census responses cannot be linked to a respondent’s real-world identity.
- The Census Bureau will never ask respondents to reveal their immigration or citizenship status. There will not be a citizenship question on the 2020 Census.

## Appendix

### “Why Does the Census Ask That?”: A Guide to How Census Data is Used

Many people erroneously believe that filling out the census will require them to divulge highly personal or sensitive information to the government. It is important that cities communicate that the census consists of only 10 basic demographic questions. In addition to emphasizing the Census Bureau’s data protection safeguards like Title 13 and differential privacy, explaining why the Census Bureau asks for certain information may help to make the census feel less invasive to constituents who are anxious about the privacy of their data. Below you can find an overview of how the data from key census questions is used by the Census Bureau.<sup>6</sup>

#### Age

**Question:** What is [household member]’s age and date of birth?

**Asked of:** Each household member

**Asked since:** 1790

**Reason:** Age data helps the government plan and fund specific programs that provide funding or services to specific age groups, like children or older adults.

**Examples:**

- Age data is used in programs that provide financial assistance to senior citizens. For example, the federal Low Income Housing Energy Assistance Program relies on census data to allocate funding to help older adults pay their utility bills.
- School districts use census data to identify how many school-aged children live in an area, enabling better planning for long-term staffing, funding, and facilities needs.

<sup>6</sup> Adapted from *Questions Planned for the 2020 Census and American Community Survey: Federal Legislative and Program Uses* (2018). U.S. Census Bureau.

<https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/decennial/2020/operations/planned-questions-2020-acr.pdf>

## Sex

**Questions:** What is [household member]'s sex?

**Asked of:** Each household member

**Asked since:** 1790

**Reason:** Data disaggregated by sex helps in planning and funding government programs targeting men or women and to enforce anti-discrimination laws and policies.

**Examples:**

- Census data on sex is used to allocate funding to colleges and universities to increase participation of minority women in science, engineering, and technology programs under the Higher Education Act.
- City planners use census data that is disaggregated by sex to predict future need for childcare, health care, and other services.
- Census data disaggregated by sex is used by local law enforcement and policymakers to evaluate and reduce instances of gender discrimination in housing, education, and employment.

## Race

**Question:** What is this person's race? [Select one or more race options and print national/tribal/ethnic origins if applicable].

**Asked of:** Each household member

**Asked since:** 1790

**Reason:** Race data is used to plan and fund government programs that provide services to specific groups and to ensure equal opportunity. The census race categories are based on self-identification of race and selection of multiple categories or "other" is permitted.

**Examples:**

- Race data is used to monitor and enforce local compliance with the Voting Rights Act and the Civil Rights Act, which mandate equal opportunity in employment.
- Census data on an area's American Indian and Alaska Native population is used by federal and local governments to understand how many people are eligible to participate in certain government programs, such as the Indian Health Service and Indian Community Development Block Grant program.

## Hispanic Origin

**Question:** Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin? [Select yes or no and print national or ethnic origins if applicable].

**Asked of:** Each household member

**Asked since:** 1970

**Reason:** Data on Hispanic origin is used to help enforce antidiscrimination laws and policies. This question is separate from race because people of Hispanic origin may be of any race.

**Examples:**

- Hispanic origin data is used to monitor and enforce equal employment opportunity under the Civil Rights Act.
- Local governments use Hispanic origin data to identify portions of the population who may not be getting necessary medical services and plan interventions to connect these populations with the healthcare they need.

## Relationship

**Question:** How is this person related to Person 1? [Select one option. Available options include opposite-sex and same-sex spouse or partner, family relationships such as child, sibling, and parent, and options for unrelated household members such as roommates].

**Asked of:** Each household member except Person 1. Person 1 is the household member who owns the residence or pays the rent, if applicable. If not applicable, Person 1 can be any adult living at the residence.

**Asked since:** 1880

**Reason:** Relationship data helps governments and planners to understand the size and composition of families and provide services and policies to meet local household needs.

**Examples:**

- Understanding family composition, such as the number and ages of children, helps local governments to target programs such as Head Start and the Children's Health Insurance Program to families that need them most.
- Census data on household size and type (i.e., single people, couples, families with children, multi-generational families, etc.) helps city planners to ensure sufficient housing is available to meet local needs.

## Tenure (Owner/Renter)

**Question:** Is this house, apartment, or mobile home owned with a mortgage/loan, owned free and clear, rented, or occupied without payment of rent?

**Asked of:** Person 1. Person 1 is the household member who owns the residence or pays the rent, if applicable. If not applicable, Person 1 can be any adult living at the residence.

**Asked since:** 1890

**Reason:** Tenure data are used by governments to ensure that adequate housing is available to meet an area's needs, to allocate funding for housing assistance programs, and to monitor for and combat housing discrimination.

### Examples:

- Planners use census tenure data to understand changes in local private housing markets and implement taxes, housing assistance, and zoning policies accordingly.
- Property developers use tenure data to evaluate local need and demand for new housing developments.
- Tenure data, in combination with other census data on age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, is used by government to enforce the 1968 Fair Housing Act, which made housing discrimination illegal.

## Operational Questions

### Questions:

- How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2020?
- Were there any additional people staying here on April 1, 2020, that you did not include in Question 1?
- What is Person 1's telephone number?
- What is [household member]'s name?
- Does this person usually live or stay somewhere else?

**Asked of:** Person 1. Person 1 is the household member who owns the residence or pays the rent, if applicable. If not applicable, Person 1 can be any adult living at the residence.

**Reason:** These operational questions will not be used in any counts published by the Census Bureau. Operational questions are asked to better administer the data collection process and ensure greater accuracy of collected data. Contact information, along with all collected census data, is carefully protected under federal law to maintain the confidentiality of respondents.

## Acknowledgements

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