

## Census Questions & Answers:

1. Why is the Census an important process? What does a person (or a community) miss out on not being counted? Why does it matter to Asian Americans?

There are many benefits that accrue from the census:

- The Federal Gov't returns funds back to the states on a per capita basis, so the more accurately we count ourselves, the greater the possibility that the funds will be equitably distributed. These funds are used to support educational programs, health care, law enforcement and highways, etc.
  - The Census also shows the demographic changes which allow states to direct funds to address specific issues relating to particular demographic groups.
  - Also, while the total number of members in the House of Representatives remains the same as before a Census, the number allocated to each state after the Census is determined by the population distribution by state, as determined by the Census.
  - Specific to Asian Americans and Asian refugees and immigrants, there are many benefits particularly for low income families, such as, funding for Medicaid, supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP), children's health insurance program (CHIP) and many others, details of which are provided here: [https://www.advancingjustice-aajc.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/Census National Factsheet.pdf](https://www.advancingjustice-aajc.org/sites/default/files/2019-03/Census%20National%20Factsheet.pdf)
2. How often does the Census happen?
    - Every 10 years, the last one was in 2010, next one will be in 2020.
  3. What kind of information does the Census questionnaire collect?
    - It is important to note that **ALL** the data collected by the Census Bureau is **CONFIDENTIAL**. To build confidence in the Census Bureau and the Census process, the Census Bureau would like all to know the details contained in the following URL: <https://www.census.gov/about/what/admin-data.html>
    - The kind of information collected is detailed in this document: <https://www.prb.org/why-are-they-asking-that-what-everyone-needs-to-know-about-2020-census-questions/>
    - There are other websites also that discuss this topic which I urge all to read.
  4. When does the census officially begin and what are the key dates?
    - The key Census date is April 1, 2020,... but there are many key dates relating to the 2020 Census before this date and after that are provided in the following document: <https://2020census.gov/en/important-dates.html>
  5. How does the process take place?
    - See answers provided in Q. 4.
    - It is also important to note that the Census process has already begun. In fact, Census canvassers will soon be visiting neighborhoods to prepare citizens for the upcoming Census in 2020. The following URL addresses privacy and security concerns that these visits may create: <https://2020census.gov/en/census-takers.html>

6. Is the census in English only?
  - Language support for census-related manuals are listed in this document: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/planning-management/language-resources/language-guides.html>
  - The census forms will be available in more languages this year than ever before: <https://www.cnn.com/2019/04/03/us/us-census-languages-trnd/index.html>
7. Who should be counted in the 2020 Census? How should children in boarding schools be counted? How should children away at college be counted?
  - To quote from a website, “Decennial U.S. Census figures are based on actual **counts** of persons dwelling in U.S. residential structures. They include **citizens**, non-**citizen** legal **residents**, non-**citizen** long-term visitors and undocumented immigrants. The Census Bureau bases its decision about whom to **count** on the concept of usual residence.”
  - Who should be counted is also described in the Census Bureau web-page below that provides detailed information, particularly on how to handle children who are underage and away in school as well as children who are staying at home or away at college: <https://2020census.gov/en/who-to-count.html>
8. How are special situations handled, e.g., those in the military, or in prisons, or in elder-care facilities, etc.?
  - Residents in all these special situations will be counted for the upcoming Census, as described in this URL: <https://2020census.gov/en/who-to-count.html>
9. What happens if I don’t respond to the census?
  - Research on this topic confirms that if you are over 18 and refuse to answer all or part of the Census, you can be fined as mandated by law. If you give false answers, you are subject to an even larger fine.
  - This US House of Representatives web-page provides more details in Section 221: <https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?path=/prelim@title13/chapter7&edition=prelim>
10. Can a person choose not to answer any of the questions on the Census form?
  - See answer to Q. 9 above.
11. How can one respond to the 2020 Census?
  - The short answer is that one can respond by postal mail, online or by phone. Detailed answers to this question can also be found at the following Census Bureau web-page: <https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/2019/comm/2020-everyone.html>
  - If one wishes to respond electronically, he / she may do so using one’s computer, smart phone or tablet. If one wishes to respond electronically but does not possess the electronic equipment like a computer, then he / she may go to a library and use the equipment in the library to respond to the Census. More information on the topic of electronic submission, cybersecurity and other related topics may be found

at: [https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/10/smartphones-online-responses-among-census-technological-innovations.html?utm\\_campaign=20191007msacos1ccstors&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2019/10/smartphones-online-responses-among-census-technological-innovations.html?utm_campaign=20191007msacos1ccstors&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

12. What address must one use in his / her Census form?
  - This is an easy question for most respondents but a complicated one for some. The simple answer is that one must use his / her “usual residence” address. Usual residence is defined as “the place where a person lives and sleeps most of the time. This place is not necessarily the same as the person's voting residence or legal residence.”
  - A detailed description and discussion on this topic can be found at the following Census Bureau webpage: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/2020-census/about/residence-rule.html>
  - And another useful website to look at that provides lots of details is: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2018/02/08/2018-02370/final-2020-census-residence-criteria-and-residence-situations?#>
  
13. Is it safe for immigrants, legal or illegal, to fill out the form?
  - As mentioned in Q. 3 above, the data collected is confidential.
  - This webpage from the Census Bureau best answers this question as well: <https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/factsheets/2019/comm/2020-confidentiality-factsheet.pdf>
  
14. If someone I know has a language barrier, are there resources to assist?
  - Language support for the upcoming Census is provided in the following URL: [https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/program-management/memo-series/2020-memo-2018\\_06.pdf](https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/program-management/memo-series/2020-memo-2018_06.pdf)
  - The Asian American Complete Count Committee (AACCC) in Austin and Asian Pacific Islander American Political Affairs (APAPA) – Austin Chapter which will be supporting the Census in Travis and Williamson counties and in the Austin-Round Rock MSA realizes that the support above may not still be sufficient to support the Asian American residents here and are implementing plans to provide additional support.
  
15. How has participation for Indian Americans been in previous years?
  - Even though Asian Indians were considered an identifiable category in 2010, results were presented in relation to Asian Americans. For this group in the Greater Austin area, it was much better in 2010 than in 2000 but that was true for all other minorities. There is however concern that Asian Americans nationwide will be reluctant to respond in 2020 based on worries and questions that are circulating in the community. According to the “2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study Survey Report” (<https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/program-management/final-analysis-reports/2020-report-cbams-focus-group.pdf>) released by the U.S. Census Bureau, Asians are least familiar with the Census, least likely to say being counted matters to them, most

concerned their Census data will be shared with other government agencies, therefore least likely to respond to the 2020 Census among all major ethnic groups.

- To counteract the above, AACCC in Austin and APAPA – Austin Chapter organization have established a close relationship with the Census Bureau (CB) in this effort. The CB has conducted a one-day training session for Asian American leaders who will lead this effort. In parallel, APAPA has established a partnership with AA-focused community organizations, faith organizations representing the broad range of faith traditions from Asia, AA-owned business enterprises and higher educational institutions, including The University of Texas at Austin.

16. Where can I learn more? What are my resources?

- One possible, and very reliable, information source is the Census Bureau: <https://www.census.gov/partners/2020.html>
- And here is another more detailed resource from the Census Bureau: <https://www2.census.gov/about/ocia/2020-census-congressional-toolkit.pdf>
- You can also contact the Census Bureau, details of which are provided at: <https://www.census.gov/about/contact-us.html>

17. What does the 2020 Census form look like?

- A sample form can be found at: <https://www2.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial/2020/technical-documentation/questionnaires-and-instructions/questionnaires/2020-informational-questionnaire.pdf>

18. When are the results released?

- Results will be released in different forms on different dates, so please see details provided in the URL in in Q. 4.