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## 2020 Census: Fact vs. Fiction

*by Colleen Tressler, Consumer Education Specialist, Federal Trade Commission*

The Federal Trade Commission is partnering with the U.S. Census Bureau to help you guard against potential census scams. Knowing how the [2020 Census](#) process works, what information you will — and won't — be asked for, and some red flags will help you spot and report scams.

### The Process

In mid-March 2020, the Census Bureau will start mailing out (and, in some areas, hand delivering) invitations to participate in the 2020 Census. You should get yours by April 1. You can respond online, by phone, or by mail.

The Census Bureau has an important job: to count every person living in the United States. Starting in May 2020, census takers will start visiting homes that haven't responded to make sure everyone is counted. If you aren't home or can't come to the door, the census taker will come back up to six times. Each time, they'll leave a door hanger with a phone number, so you can call to schedule a visit.

### The Questions

The census questionnaire asks how many people are in the home at the time you complete the form; their sex, age, race, ethnicity; their relationships to one another; phone number; and whether you own or rent the home. For the full list of questions on the 2020 Census, visit [Questions Asked](#).

## Signs of a Scam

[Scammers](#) may pose as census takers to get your personal information — and then use it to commit identity theft and other frauds. But there are ways you can identify official census takers.

Census takers must show a photo ID with the U.S. Department of Commerce seal and an expiration date. If you ask, the census taker will give you a supervisor's contact information and/or the [census regional office](#) phone number for verification.

The Census Bureau will never ask for your full Social Security number, bank account or credit card numbers, money or donations, or anything on behalf of a political party. The 2020 Census will not ask citizenship status.

The Census Bureau may call you as part of their follow-up and quality control efforts. They also might call if you're not home when a census taker stops by or when a personal visit is not convenient. Calls will come from one of the Census Bureau's contact centers or from a field representative.

Make sure you have the latest and most accurate information about the 2020 Census. Visit [2020 Census Rumors](#) to fact-check and ask questions.

If you suspect fraud, call 800-923-8282 to speak with a local Census Bureau representative. You also can file a report with the FTC at [FTC.gov/Complaint](#). Your reports may help law enforcement agencies launch investigations that could stop imposters and other fraudsters in their tracks.

### Verifying a Call is Really from the Census Bureau

The Census Bureau uses two contact centers, one in Jeffersonville, Indiana, and the other in Tucson, Arizona. The caller will identify themselves and the name of the survey. If they are unable to reach you, they will leave a message with a case ID associated with your survey.

Most Census Bureau calls asking you to participate in a survey originate from one of the following numbers:

- (812) 218-3144, Jeffersonville Contact Center
- (520) 798-4152, Tucson Contact Center

If you receive a call and wish to independently verify that a number is from the Census Bureau, you can call one of the following numbers:

- 1-800-523-3205 Jeffersonville, IN
- 1-800-642-0469 Tucson, AZ
- 1-800-923-8282 Customer Service Center

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