

How Smart Use of Existing Data Is Making the 2020 Census Easier and More Efficient

The U.S. Census Bureau is using existing government and third-party records to streamline census operations, reduce the burden on people who respond, and save taxpayer money. However, it remains important for everyone to respond to the 2020 Census.

Here's a look at why we use these data:

- **It saves tax dollars.** By using existing records where it makes sense, we're streamlining the census process and being good stewards of taxpayer money. For example, we can use existing records to remove vacant or nonexistent addresses from census takers' workload and concentrate resources on following up with occupied households.
- **It reduces the burden on people who respond.** We can validate and confirm responses by comparing to existing records, so we don't have to contact people again.
- **It gives you flexibility to respond when it's most convenient for you.** You can respond to the census even if you don't have the Census ID from your census invitation on hand. You can provide your address instead. We'll use existing records to verify your address and match your response to where you live—to make sure you're counted in the right place.
- **It provides a way to count people who otherwise don't respond.** We still prefer people to respond online, by phone, or

by mail. If a household doesn't respond, a census taker will visit to try to collect their information in person. If the census taker can't reach these households at home, we may try to count them using high-quality, existing data.

You still need to respond to the 2020 Census. The most accurate information about you comes directly from you, so it's important that you respond online, by phone, or by mail when you receive your invitation. If you don't respond and a census taker can't reach you at home, we'll try to count you using existing data. If you don't answer one or more questions, we may also use existing data rather than contacting you again. Your response matters, so please respond and answer every question.

Your data are strictly protected by law. The law requires the Census Bureau to keep your information confidential whether it comes from your response or from existing records. While the Census Bureau may receive information from other agencies, the law prohibits us from sharing individual data back. This is a one-way data exchange.

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