IS YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION SAFE?

Yes. The U.S. Census Bureau is required by law to protect your information. The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release your responses in a way that could identify you.

Per the Federal Cybersecurity Enhancement Act of 2015, your data are protected from cybersecurity risks through screening of the systems that transmit your data.

WHAT IS THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY (ACS)?

The ACS is a part of the U.S. Census Bureau’s Decennial Census Program and is designed to provide timely and accurate social, economic, housing, and demographic estimates throughout the decade. The questions on the ACS supply the tribes with data they may need for a range of programs affecting education, veterans, employment, housing and community development, public health care, services for the elderly and disabled, and assistance programs for low-income families and children. Statistics produced by the ACS can guide tribes and tribal organizations as they make important decisions.

WHY IS TRIBAL PARTICIPATION IMPORTANT?

Responses to the questions on the ACS supply the statistics needed to assess a variety of programs. When American Indians and Alaska Natives (AIAN) complete the ACS, they are helping to ensure that the best statistics are available to their communities to inform future decisions. This need for accurate and complete data is particularly important for tribes and tribal organizations.

HOW DO WE COMPLETE THE ACS?

The Census Bureau samples addresses—not individuals. Most households selected to participate in the ACS receive a letter with instructions to access and complete the survey online.

A paper questionnaire is mailed if the online survey is not completed within a few weeks.

If you have questions about the survey or you prefer to complete the survey by phone, please call the Telephone Questionnaire Assistance Line at 1-800-354-7271.

If we are still unable to reach a household or if the address is in an area that is difficult to reach by mail and phone, such as parts of Alaska, we conduct interviews by personal visit. In these cases, field representatives will conduct personal interviews using laptop computers. Field representatives may be tribal members.
WHAT QUESTIONS DOES THE ACS ASK?

The topics included on the ACS were chosen because the federal government requires the data to manage or evaluate programs.

For example, information on income is required by the Social Security Administration, the National School Lunch Program, the Low Income Energy Assistance Program, and the U.S. Department of Education for grant allocation. The following federal laws and programs affecting AIAN also use ACS estimates:

• Civil Rights Act (1964)
• Native American Programs Act (1974)
• Indian Health Care Improvement Act (1976)
• State Children’s Health Insurance Program (1997)
• Veterans Benefits Improvement Act (1994)

You can find factsheets that explain why we ask each question and provide common uses of each question on the Census Bureau’s Web site at <www.census.gov/ACSWhyWeAsk>.

HOW CAN TRIBAL COMMUNITIES USE ACS DATA?

Tribal planners and administrators, as well as national organizations serving the AIAN community, may find ACS estimates useful in accessing funding for tribal programs and initiatives or planning for future economic development, housing needs, and access to health and educational services for the people in their communities.

In combination with information from tribal administrative records, ACS estimates complete the portrait of a community and provide an enhanced view of a community’s current and future needs. However, to ensure that these estimates are accurate, we need your help to encourage your tribal community members to respond.

HOW DOES THE CENSUS BUREAU HELP TRIBAL COMMUNITIES ACCESS ACS ESTIMATES?

ACS estimates are available at <factfinder.census.gov>. The ACS Web site, <www.census.gov/acs>, also provides a free series of handbooks, presentations, and data user guidance that make accessing this important information easier.

Local data dissemination specialists are available to give presentations and help people find, use, and understand ACS statistics. You can find contact information for these local specialists by e-mail at <census.askdata@census.gov> or by calling 1-844-ASK-DATA (1-844-275-3282).

You can also find contact information for the many groups that participate in the Census Bureau State Data Center and Census Information Center programs, including those serving the AIAN community, at <www.census.gov/about/partners/sdc.html>.

WHO CAN WE CONTACT FOR ADDITIONAL HELP?

For additional questions or assistance with completing the survey, please contact our Telephone Questionnaire Assistance line at 1-800-354-7271.

To get more information about AIAN participation in the ACS and other Census Bureau surveys, please contact a member of the Tribal Affairs Team by e-mail at <OCIA.TAO@census.gov> or by calling 1-301-763-6100.

Census Regional Offices:

Atlanta: 800-424-6974
Chicago: 800-865-6384
Denver: 800-852-6159
Los Angeles: 800-992-3530
New York: 800-991-2520
Philadelphia: 800-262-4236

For more information about the ACS, please visit <census.gov/acs>.

Issued November 2018