

It's time. Make yourself count.



Census 2010

“Is this a real census form?” [Alternative Census Forms and the American Community Survey](#)

The standard census form for the 2010 census is the shortest our lifetimes, with just 10 questions on six basic topics (Name, Age, Sex, Ethnicity, Race, and Type of Housing). Almost everyone has received this standard census form.

During the 2010 census, however, some households may receive two other types of forms.

[Alternative Census Forms](#)

To help the U.S. Census Bureau plan for the next census in 2020, some households will receive 2010 census forms with one or two questions that have been slightly modified from the standard form. These alternative census forms are just as legitimate and official as the standard 10-question form, and they play a big part in helping the Census Bureau improve the fairness and accuracy of the information it collects in future censuses and surveys.

[American Community Survey \(ACS\) Forms](#)

Some households will also receive an additional questionnaire from the Census Bureau for the **American Community Survey (ACS)**. The ACS is an on-going survey of households that was begun after the Census Bureau decided to discontinue using the “long form” that some households used to receive during the decennial census.

Both the alternative 2010 census forms and the ACS forms are important and your responses are required by law. Here are basic facts about both forms:

[Alternative Forms](#)

Why did I get a different census form in 2010?

- As part of every census, the Census Bureau tests different questions and different ways to collect information to help it plan for improvements in the next census and in other important Census Bureau surveys.
- The form you received is part of the *2010 Census Alternative Questionnaire Experiment*, a research program to improve the collection of data on race and Hispanic origin (ethnicity).
- About 450,000 homes nationwide will receive one of 15 different alternative forms.
- The Census Bureau considers it important to conduct this research in a “census-like” environment to get the most reliable results.

Why should I fill out the alternative form?

- By filling out the alternative form, you are helping the Census Bureau plan for the next decennial census so that the questionnaire used in 2020 offers the best choices for Americans to identify their cultural heritage and ethnic identity.
- Filling out the alternative form helps to save the government money on testing for the next census.
- You can help shape the census of the future!

Will I still be counted if I fill out the alternative form?

- Yes, absolutely! You will be fully and accurately counted in the 2010 census as if you had received the standard questionnaire.

What's different about the alternative form?

It's time. Make yourself count.

Census 2010



- The alternative form will include slightly different questions on Hispanic origin (Question 8 for Person 1) and race (Question 9 for Person 1).

Will any other questions on the alternative form be different?

- No, the Alternative Questionnaire Experiment only affects the questions on Hispanic origin (Question 8 for Person 1) and race (Question 9 for Person 1).

Are my answers on the alternative form protected?

- Yes. Like the standard census form, the alternative form will not ask for your Social Security number, bank account number, or any other personal information beyond the basic six topics (Name, Age, Sex, Race, Ethnicity, and Type of Home).
- Also, like the standard census form, answers given on the alternative form are protected by strong privacy laws and cannot be used against you in any way.

How can I confirm that I received a legitimate, official census form?

- The alternative census forms will have a special assistance number printed on them for both English and Spanish speakers that can be used to verify the legitimacy of the form.

American Community Survey (ACS)

I thought the 2010 Census asks only 10 questions and is supposed to take only 10 minutes to complete. My household received a much longer questionnaire with dozens of questions. What's going on?

- For the 2010 Decennial Census, every household in the country received the standard 10-question form (covering six topics) in either English or in English-Spanish.
- In previous decennial censuses, the Census Bureau also selected a sample of households to receive a "long form" that asked for more detailed household information.
- In 2005, the Census Bureau replaced the "long form" with an ongoing survey of households called the **American Community Survey (ACS)**.

What is the ACS and how does it work?

- The ACS collects important information in greater detail about our population and neighborhood conditions to help lawmakers, civic leaders, and community-based organizations evaluate, monitor, and address the needs of our communities.
- About 250,000 homes a month nationwide (3 million a year) receive the ACS.
- The Census Bureau publishes data from the ACS annually to help national and local lawmakers and businesses understand the up-to-date conditions and needs of our communities.
- Households in the ACS sample will receive a letter of notification before they receive the questionnaire, which consists of 42 questions related to the people in the household and 25 housing-related questions.
- If you do not mail back the ACS questionnaire, a census worker will call to collect your answers by phone. Census workers will visit only a sample of homes that still haven't responded by mail or telephone.

Do I have to fill out the ACS if I already filled out my 2010 Census form?

- Yes, response to both the 2010 Census and the American Community Survey is required by law.
- It's important to take the extra time to fill out the ACS if your household is in the sample. The information you provide will help policymakers and businesses understand the needs of your community and develop ways to improve education, transportation and public transit, housing, recreation, health care, job training, and other quality-of-life services and programs, as well as to ensure equal voting rights.