

# Census 2010: Indiana's Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: How many questions are on the Census 2010 questionnaire, and how long does it take to complete it?**

A: There are 10 questions that take about 10 minutes to complete.

**Q: Why should I fill out the form?**

A: The U.S. Constitution mandates that a census of all people living in the United States – whether citizen or non-citizen, legal or undocumented, homeless or housed– be conducted every 10 years. The information collected is used to assist government leaders in making major decisions, such as the apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. The data are also used to help distribute more than \$435 billion in federal funds back to state and local governments each year.

**Q: What will happen to me and my family if I don't fill out the form?**

A: Participation in the survey is required by law. If there is not an accurate count of people, a community will not receive the federal resources it is entitled to. And most importantly, we might lose political representation and federal dollars

**Q: How confidential is the information I give to the Census?**

A: Absolutely confidential. All U.S. Census Bureau employees take a life-long oath not to disclose the information, even after they leave the Bureau. Otherwise, they will face a \$250,000 fine and five years' imprisonment. The specific law that protects our confidentiality is Title 13 of the U.S. Code, Section 9.

**Q: What's the timeline of the census?**

A: The Census Bureau will mail out the questionnaires to street addresses (not P.O. boxes) in mid March 2010. Everyone is expected to return their completed survey on by April 1, 2010. Census workers will follow up with visits to every address from which they received no response.

**Q: I already got a census form, one with lots of questions – why will I need to do this again in 2010?**

A: You received what is called the American Community Survey (ACS), which is the replacement to what used to be the "long form" for the census. The ACS is taken of a small sample of households across America every year now, but please be sure to answer the short-form when it arrives next March.

**Q: I'm a full-time college student living away from home – won't my parents handle the census?**

No, since everyone must answer the census where they normally reside during 2010, so if you are a full-time student living at college, either in a dorm or an renting in town, fill out the census there.

**Q: If don't see my race or ethnic origin on the survey, what should I do?**

A: You can use the box for "other" to report your ethnic or ancestral identity.

**Q: The elderly who live in assisted living or nursing homes and away from their families, how will they be counted?**

A: There will be special outreach programs targeting assisted-living facilities for elders, retirement homes, apartments and private single occupancies, etc. Social services agencies will make the survey materials in larger print to make them easier for elders to read. Elderly people's adult children and representatives with power of attorney can also fill out the form on their behalf.

**Q: What's the Paid Media Plan?**

A: The Census Bureau's Paid Media Plan encompasses all media types and is skewed towards those segments of the populations that are considered hard to count. For the first time, the Census will have advertisements in 14 different languages, including English, Spanish, Cantonese, Mandarin, Tagalog/Taglish, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Khmer, Hindi, Arabic, Russian, Polish, and French Creole.

**Q: What are the qualifications for media to participate in the 2010 Census Paid Media Plan?**

A: Media don't need to be certified by the government, but they need to demonstrate their circulation to join the program.

**Q: What is Census in the Schools?**

A: It is a nationwide social studies program offered to schools to use census data in school projects, lesson plans, and other ways. More information available at Scholastic.

**Q: What is the difference between race and ethnicity? Why is Hispanic separated from the race categories?**

Actually, the federal Office of Management and Budget defines race and ethnicity categories. People who identify their origin as Spanish, Hispanic, or Latino may be of any race. According to the revised OMB standards, race is considered a separate concept from Hispanic origin (ethnicity) and, wherever possible, separate questions should be asked on each concept.

**Q: Are the questionnaires available in languages other than English?**

Yes, the Census Bureau will provide forms in Spanish, Chinese, Japanese and many other languages.

**Q: What does the Census Bureau do the other nine years?**

The 10-year (decennial) census is the largest activity of the Census Bureau, they also conduct monthly, quarterly and annual surveys on health, population, work, and the economy.

**Q: What is a Special Census?**

A Special Census is one that is requested and paid for by a local community "between censuses". These cannot be conducted within two years of a regular Census Count. In Indiana, cities such as Fishers, Carmel and Greenwood have had special censuses done for all or parts of their towns.

However, if a city or town wants a special census because their corporate boundaries changed, it likely be better to request a "special tabulation" from the Census Bureau, providing them with the new city boundaries and asking them to re-tabulated the 2010 results.

**Q: Why does Indiana freeze annexations before a census count?**

To assure that the census block boundaries are established and not changed just prior to the census, the General Assembly enacted the following law: Indiana Code 36-4-3-7:

**Sec.7 (b) An ordinance described in subsection (d) or adopted under section 3, 4, 5, or 5.1 of this chapter may not take effect during the year preceding a year in which a federal decennial census is conducted. An ordinance that would otherwise take effect during the year preceding a year in which a federal decennial census is conducted takes effect January 2 of the year in which a federal decennial census is conducted.**

Cities and towns can request a "special tabulation" (not to be confused with a "special census"), where the Census Bureau re-tabulates from the collected data but based on the new boundaries provided by the city.

**Q: I've heard the Census is used to hand out federal funds. How are these funds used by communities? (or something to get to specifics on census data being used to provide education, transportation, etc.)**

Recently, the Census Bureau estimated that close to \$400 billion dollar a year is allocated across the nation based on Census population figures. That can be equated to more than \$1200 per person. What are the funds for? Schools, free and reduced fee lunch programs, athletics, roads, transportation needs, helping the elderly and the poor.

**Q: Do Census numbers only determine representation in U.S. Congress, or are they used to apportion state and local representation as well?**

No, they are also used by States to redistrict their legislatures and by communities to redistrict their councils or other forms of government.

**Q: Does the Census Bureau share information with the IRS, INS, or local law enforcement?**

No. There are strictly enforced laws, with severe penalties, to protect the information collected. No other agency, anywhere, is allowed to access those confidential data.

**Q: I don't understand how to fill out the form. Where can I go for help?**

There is a toll free number to call 1-866-872-6868 and there will be Census Question Assistance Centers and Be Counted Centers throughout Indiana closer to Census Day.

**Q: I am retired and spend part of my time in Florida. Should I fill out the Census in both states?**

No, fill it out based on where you live most of the time (most of the year).

**Q: Can I fill out my Census form online?**

For privacy reasons, the Census is not conducted online. We will have to do it the old-fashioned way, with a pencil and the form! But keep in mind, the postage is pre-paid!

**Q: It is April 1 and I still did not receive a Census form. What should I do?**

Call 1-866-872-6868 to report that you didn't receive the form yet. The Bureau will mail another as soon as possible.

**Q: If I claim dependents on my taxes but they do not live with me, should I put them on my Census form?**

No, they should be counted where they actually live most of the time.

---

The FAQs with their short answers were prepared by Carol O. Rogers, State Census Liaison and Deputy Director, IBRC. If you would like further explanation (or just longer answers!), don't hesitate to e-mail her at [rogersc@indiana.edu](mailto:rogersc@indiana.edu)