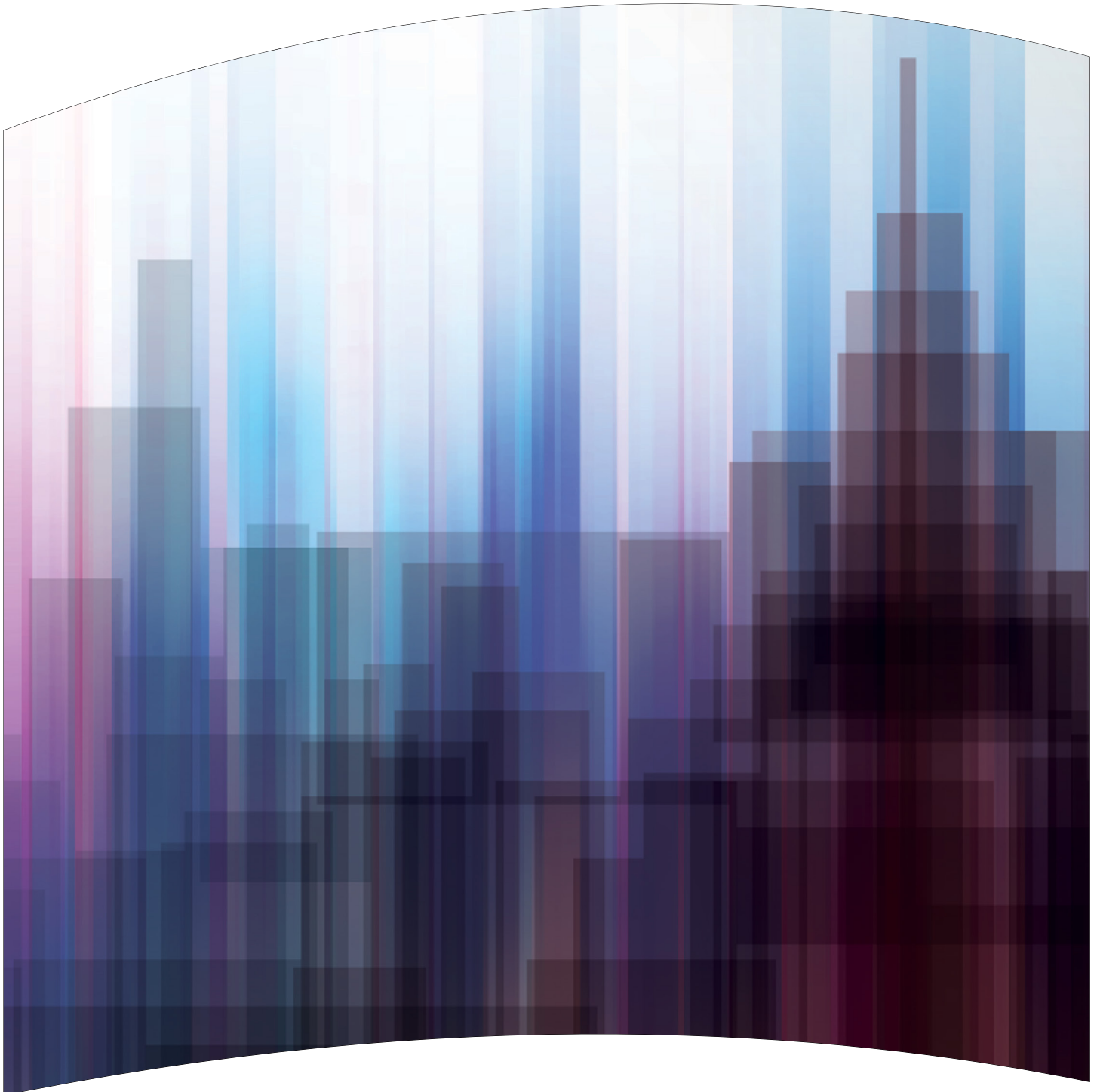


# Questions Planned for the 2020 Census and American Community Survey

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Federal Legislative and Program Uses

Issued March 2018



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# Introduction

## BACKGROUND

Since 1790, a national census of the U.S. population has been conducted every 10 years, as required by the U.S. Constitution. Additional information beyond the population count has been collected with each census in response to the challenges facing the nation and a national desire to understand ourselves.

For much of the 20th century, most addresses received a “short” form, while a portion of addresses received a more detailed “long” form. The Census 2000 short form was designed to collect basic demographic and housing information (i.e., age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, relationship, and tenure) to be used for congressional apportionment and to provide data to states for intrastate redistricting. The long form, sent to approximately 1 in 6 households, collected social, housing, and economic information (e.g., educational attainment, disability status, employment status, income, and housing costs) that was used to plan and determine funding for a wide array of federal, state, local, and tribal programs.

Since 2005, in order to provide communities, businesses, and the public with the detailed long-form information more frequently, these data have been collected monthly (and released annually) through the American Community Survey (ACS).<sup>1</sup> This innovation enabled the 2010 Census to be a “short-form-only” census. Decoupling the collection of short- and long-form data allowed the U.S. Census Bureau to focus decennial census efforts on the constitutional requirements to produce a count of the resident population, while employing technology in both collections to improve efficiencies, improve accuracy, and reduce costs. The result has been the dissemination of more current and detailed information than has ever been available.

The 2020 Decennial Census Program, comprised of the 2020 Census and the ACS, will provide an official count through a “short-form-only” census (i.e., age, sex, race, Hispanic origin, relationship, tenure, and citizenship), as well as a portrait of communities counted across the nation through data collected by the ACS. This program is the only data-gathering effort that collects information from enough people to

produce comparable data for every geographic area recognized by the Census Bureau.

## SUBMISSION OF QUESTIONS PLANNED FOR THE 2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS PROGRAM

The Census Act requires that the questions to be included in the next census be submitted to Congress no later than 2 years before the census date. The contents of this handbook describe the questions that will be asked on the 2020 Census and the ACS.

## ABOUT THE QUESTIONS PLANNED FOR THE 2020 DECENNIAL CENSUS PROGRAM

Throughout each decade, regular content reviews are conducted to ensure that the information collected through the decennial census program is required by federal programs.<sup>2</sup>

To prepare for the 2020 Census, the Office of Management and Budget and the Census Bureau embarked on a comprehensive review including chartering the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy (ICSP) Subcommittee on the ACS and conducting the 2014 ACS Content Review. This effort was designed to examine and confirm the value of each question on the ACS, and to confirm and update the statutory and regulatory authority for the questions with federal agencies. In 2016, the Census Bureau asked federal agencies to provide any updates to this documentation.

The resulting information about federal uses is presented throughout the descriptions of the questions on the following pages. These descriptions are designed to give the reader a clear understanding of 1) the relationship between questions asked of respondents and the summarized data that are released in published tables, 2) how federal agencies use the resulting data, and 3) the benefits of the data at the community level.

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<sup>1</sup> The ACS also collects short-form data on its questionnaire. However, the ACS asks for basic demographic and housing information from a sample of households, while the decennial census asks for basic demographic and housing information from all households.

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<sup>2</sup> Selected statutory uses of each subject are published in the “Subjects Planned for the 2020 Census and American Community Survey,” available at <[www.census.gov/library/publications/2017/dec/planned-subjects-2020-ac.html](http://www.census.gov/library/publications/2017/dec/planned-subjects-2020-ac.html)>.

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## Protecting the Information Collected by These Questions

The Census Bureau has an obligation to produce accurate, relevant statistics about the nation's economy and people, but we recognize that the information collected by these questions is often private. We depend on cooperation and trust, and promise to protect the confidentiality of this information.

Federal law protects this information; Title 13 of the U.S. Code protects the confidentiality of all collected information. Violating this law is a crime with severe penalties. Please visit [www.census.gov/about/policies/privacy/data\\_protection/federal\\_law.html](http://www.census.gov/about/policies/privacy/data_protection/federal_law.html) for details.

### OUR PRIVACY PRINCIPLES

We recognize the value of respondent trust, and we believe that when a person answers the 2020 Census or the ACS we must serve as caretakers of the information. The Census Bureau's Privacy Principles remind us of this promise and help ensure the protection of respondent information throughout all of our activities.

The Privacy Principles are our guidelines. They help us as we determine content to consider respondents' rights and concerns. Every principle embodies a promise to the respondent.

#### **Necessity: Do we need to collect information on this question?**

Every time we prepare to ask a question, we determine whether the information is truly necessary. All of the information we collect is used for federal programs.

- We promise to collect only information necessary for each survey and census.
- We promise that we will use the information only to produce timely, relevant statistics about the population and the economy of the United States.

#### **Openness: Do respondents know why we are collecting this information?**

We collect information only for statistical purposes, and it is never used to identify individuals. Before participating, respondents have the right to know why we are conducting the survey or census, why we are asking specific questions, and the purposes for which the information will be used.

- We promise to inform respondents about the purpose and uses for every survey or census we conduct before respondents provide answers.

#### **Respectful treatment of respondents: Are our efforts reasonable and do we treat people with respect?**

- We promise to minimize the effort and time it takes for respondents to participate in the data collection by efficient designs.
- We promise to use only legal, ethical, and professionally accepted practices in collecting data.
- We promise to ensure any collection of sensitive information from children and other sensitive populations does not violate federal protections for research participants and is done only when it benefits the public good.

#### **Confidentiality: How do we protect this information?**

In addition to removing personally identifiable information (i.e., names, telephone numbers, and addresses) from our data files, we use various approaches to protect personal information—including computer technologies, statistical methodologies, and security procedures.

Our security measures ensure that only a restricted number of authorized people have access to private information and that access is only granted to conduct our work and for no other purposes. Every person who works with census confidential information collected by the Census Bureau is sworn for life to uphold the law.

Violating the confidentiality of a respondent is a federal crime with serious penalties, including a federal prison sentence of up to 5 years, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both.

- We promise that every person with access to respondent information is sworn for life to protect respondent confidentiality.
- We promise that we will use every technology, statistical methodology, and physical security procedure at our disposal to protect respondent information.

## **Questions Planned for the 2020 Census**

## Age asked since 1790.

**What is this person's age and what is this person's date of birth?** For babies less than 1 year old, do not write the age in months. Write 0 as the age.

Age on April 1, 2020      *Print numbers in boxes.*      Month      Day      Year of birth

<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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years

**ANSWERS TO THE AGE AND DATE OF BIRTH QUESTION PROVIDE THE DATA THAT HELP US UNDERSTAND THE SIZE OF DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS AND HOW OTHER CHARACTERISTICS MAY VARY BY AGE.**

Age data are used in planning and funding government programs that provide funds or services for specific age groups, such as children, working-age adults, women of childbearing age, or the older population. These statistics are also used to enforce laws, regulations, and policies against age discrimination in government programs and in society.

### AGE DATA HELP COMMUNITIES:

#### Provide Assistance to Older Americans

Knowing how many people in a community are aged 60 and older helps local officials provide programs and services that enable older adults to remain

living safely in their homes and communities (Older Americans Act). Age data are also used in programs that provide services and assistance to seniors, such as financial assistance with utilities (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program).

#### Provide Assistance to Children and Families

Knowing the numbers and ages of children in families can help communities enroll eligible families in programs designed to assist them. For example, age data are used in targeted efforts to enroll eligible people in Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

#### Educate Children and Adults

Knowing how many children and adults depend on services through schools helps school districts make long-term building, staffing, and funding decisions.


#### Ensure Equal Opportunity

Knowing the age distribution of a community's population helps government and communities enforce laws, regulations, and policies against discrimination based on age.

# Citizenship

asked since 1820.<sup>1</sup>

## Is this person a citizen of the United States?

- Yes, born in the United States
- Yes, born in Puerto Rico, Guam, the U.S. Virgin Islands, or Northern Marianas
- Yes, born abroad of U.S. citizen parent or parents
- Yes, U.S. citizen by naturalization – *Print year of naturalization* 
- 
- No, not a U.S. citizen

### A QUESTION ABOUT A PERSON'S CITIZENSHIP IS USED TO CREATE STATISTICS ABOUT CITIZEN AND NONCITIZEN POPULATIONS.

These statistics are essential for enforcing the Voting Rights Act and its protections against voting discrimination.

### CITIZENSHIP DATA HELP COMMUNITIES:

#### Enforce Voting Rights Law

Knowing how many people reside in the community and how many of those people are citizens, in combination with other information, provides the statistical information that helps the government enforce Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and its protections against discrimination in voting.

#### Understand Changes

Knowing how many citizens and noncitizens live in the United States, in combination with other information, is of interest to researchers, advocacy groups, and policymakers.

<sup>1</sup> Citizenship asked 1820, 1830, 1870, and 1890 to present.

# Hispanic Origin

asked since 1970.

## Is this person of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin?

- No, not of Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin
- Yes, Mexican, Mexican Am., Chicano
- Yes, Puerto Rican
- Yes, Cuban
- Yes, another Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish origin – *Print, for example, Salvadoran, Dominican, Colombian, Guatemalan, Spaniard, Ecuadorian, etc.* ↕

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### A QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER A PERSON IS OF HISPANIC, LATINO, OR SPANISH ORIGIN IS USED TO CREATE STATISTICS ABOUT THIS ETHNIC GROUP.

These data are required for federal and state programs and are critical factors in the basic research behind numerous policies, particularly for civil rights. Hispanic origin data are used in planning and funding government programs that provide funds or services for specific groups. These data are also used to evaluate government programs and policies to ensure they fairly and equitably serve the needs of the Hispanic population and to monitor compliance with antidiscrimination laws, regulations, and policies. States also use these data to meet legislative redistricting requirements.

Though many respondents expect to see a Hispanic, Latino, or Spanish category on the race question, this question is asked separately because people of Hispanic origin may be of any race(s) in accordance with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget standards on race and ethnicity.

## HISPANIC ORIGIN DATA HELP COMMUNITIES:

### Ensure Equal Opportunity

We ask about the Hispanic or Latino origin of community members to help governments and communities enforce antidiscrimination laws, regulations, and policies. For example, data on the Hispanic population are used to:

- Establish and evaluate the guidelines for federal affirmative action plans under the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program.
- Monitor compliance with the Voting Rights Act.
- Monitor and enforce equal employment opportunities under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Identify segments of the population who may not be getting needed medical services under the Public Health Service Act.

### Understand Changes

Researchers, advocacy groups, and policymakers are interested in knowing if the distribution of the Hispanic and non-Hispanic population changes by age, sex, relationship, and housing tenure.

# Race

asked since 1790.

## What is this person's race?

Mark  one or more boxes **AND** print origins.

- White – Print, for example, German, Irish, English, Italian, Lebanese, Egyptian, etc. ↴

- Black or African Am. – Print, for example, African American, Jamaican, Haitian, Nigerian, Ethiopian, Somali, etc. ↴

- American Indian or Alaska Native – Print name of enrolled or principal tribe(s), for example, Navajo Nation, Blackfeet Tribe, Mayan, Aztec, Native Village of Barrow Inupiat Traditional Government, Nome Eskimo Community, etc. ↴

- |   |                                     |  |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chinese  | <input type="checkbox"/> Vietnamese | <input type="checkbox"/> Native Hawaiian   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Filipino   | <input type="checkbox"/> Korean     | <input type="checkbox"/> Samoan  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Asian Indian   | <input type="checkbox"/> Japanese   | <input type="checkbox"/> Chamorro  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other Asian –<br>Print, for example,<br>Pakistani, Cambodian,<br>Hmong, etc. ↴ |                                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Pacific Islander –<br>Print, for example,<br>Tongan, Fijian,<br>Marshallese, etc. ↴ |

- Some other race – Print race or origin. ↴

### A QUESTION ABOUT A PERSON'S RACE IS USED TO CREATE STATISTICS ABOUT RACE AND TO PRESENT OTHER STATISTICS BY RACE GROUPS.

These data are required for federal, state, and tribal programs and are critical factors in the basic research behind numerous policies, particularly for civil rights. Race data are used in planning and funding government programs that provide funds or services for specific groups. These data are also

used to evaluate government programs and policies to ensure they fairly and equitably serve the needs of all racial groups and to monitor compliance with antidiscrimination laws, regulations, and policies. States also use these data to meet legislative redistricting requirements.

The U.S. Census Bureau collects race data in accordance with the 1997 Office of Management and Budget standards on race and ethnicity. The categories on race are based on self-identification and generally reflect a social definition of race. The categories are not an attempt to define race biologically, anthropologically, or genetically.



### RACE DATA HELP COMMUNITIES:

#### Ensure Equal Opportunity

Knowing the races of community members helps government and communities enforce antidiscrimination laws, regulations, and policies. For example, race data are used in the following ways:

- Establish and evaluate the guidelines for federal affirmative action plans under the Federal Equal Opportunity Recruitment Program.
- Monitor compliance with the Voting Rights Act.
- Monitor and enforce equal employment opportunities under the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- Identify segments of the population who may not be getting needed medical services under the Public Health Service Act.

#### Understand Changes

Researchers, advocacy groups, and policymakers are interested in knowing if the distribution of the different racial groups changes by age, sex, relationship, and housing tenure.

#### Administer Programs for Specific Groups

Knowing how many people are eligible to participate in certain programs helps communities, including tribal governments, ensure that programs are operating as intended. For example, the Indian Housing Block Grant program, Indian Community Development Block Grant program, and Indian Health Service all depend on accurate statistics of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Data for the American Indian and Alaska Native population come from the question about a person's race.

# Relationship asked since 1880.

How is this person related to Person 1? Mark  ONE box.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opposite-sex husband/wife/spouse | <input type="checkbox"/> Father or mother              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Opposite-sex unmarried partner   | <input type="checkbox"/> Grandchild                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Same-sex husband/wife/spouse     | <input type="checkbox"/> Parent-in-law                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Same-sex unmarried partner       | <input type="checkbox"/> Son-in-law or daughter-in-law |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological son or daughter       | <input type="checkbox"/> Other relative                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Adopted son or daughter          | <input type="checkbox"/> Roommate or housemate         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Stepson or stepdaughter          | <input type="checkbox"/> Foster child                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister                | <input type="checkbox"/> Other nonrelative             |

**A QUESTION ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP OF EACH PERSON IN A HOUSEHOLD TO ONE CENTRAL PERSON IS USED TO CREATE ESTIMATES ABOUT FAMILIES, HOUSEHOLDS, AND OTHER GROUPS, AND TO PRESENT OTHER DATA AT A HOUSEHOLD LEVEL.**

Relationship data are used in planning and funding government programs that provide funds or services for families, people living or raising children alone, grandparents living with grandchildren, or other households that qualify for additional assistance.

## RELATIONSHIP DATA HELP COMMUNITIES:

### Provide Adequate Housing

Knowing about the different types of households in a community (single people, couples, families, roommates, etc.) helps communities understand whether available housing meets the needs of residents.

When housing is not sufficient or not affordable, relationship data can help communities enroll eligible households in programs designed to assist them, and can help communities qualify for grants from the Community Development Block Grant, HOME Investment Partnership Program, Emergency Solutions Grant, Housing Opportunities for Persons With AIDS, and other programs.

### Provide Assistance to Families

Knowing more about families, such as the ages of children, can help communities enroll eligible families in programs designed to assist them, such as Head Start and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and can help communities qualify for grants to fund these programs. Relationship data are also used to ensure that programs like Temporary Assistance for Needy Families are making a difference for families.

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## Relationship asked since 1880—Con.

### Understand Changing Households

Information about living arrangements and how they are changing, including whether older residents are staying in their homes as they age, whether young people are living with parents or moving in with roommates, and which kinds of households include

young children, can help communities plan future programs and services for residents. For example, the Social Security Administration estimates future program needs based on the current relationships of working people.

What is this person's sex? Mark  ONE box.

Male  Female

**A QUESTION ABOUT THE SEX OF EACH PERSON IS USED TO CREATE STATISTICS ABOUT MALES AND FEMALES AND TO PRESENT OTHER DATA BY SEX.**

Data disaggregated by sex are used in planning and funding government programs and in evaluating other government programs and policies to ensure they fairly and equitably serve the needs of males and females. These statistics are also used to enforce laws, regulations, and policies against discrimination in government programs and in society.

**DATA DISAGGREGATED BY SEX HELP COMMUNITIES:**

**Provide Resources for Education**

Data disaggregated by sex are used to allocate funds to institutions of higher learning that increase participation, particularly of minority women, in scientific and engineering programs under the Higher Education Act.

**Ensure Equal Opportunity**

Data disaggregated by sex are used to evaluate employment practices under the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, using sex-disaggregated data, establishes and evaluates guidelines dealing with equal employment opportunity. Data disaggregated by sex are used to evaluate housing policies and practices under the Civil Rights Act.

**Understand Changes**

State and local planners analyze social and economic characteristics of males and females to predict future needs for housing, education, childcare, health care, transportation, and employment.

## Tenure (Owner/Renter) asked since 1890.

3. Is this house, apartment, or mobile home — Mark  ONE box.

- Owned by you or someone in this household with a mortgage or loan? *Include home equity loans.*
- Owned by you or someone in this household free and clear (without a mortgage or loan)?
- Rented?
- Occupied without payment of rent?

### A QUESTION ABOUT WHETHER A HOME IS OWNED OR RENTED IS USED TO CREATE DATA ABOUT TENURE, RENTERS, AND HOMEOWNERSHIP.

Tenure is the most basic characteristic to assess housing inventory. Tenure data are used in government programs that analyze whether adequate housing is available to residents. Tenure data are also used to provide and fund housing assistance programs. These statistics are also used to enforce laws, regulations, and policies against discrimination in private-market housing, government programs, and in society.

#### TENURE DATA HELP COMMUNITIES:

##### Provide Adequate Housing

Knowing the rates of home rental and ownership helps communities understand whether available housing meets the needs of residents.

When housing is not sufficient, data about owners and renters can help communities enroll eligible households in programs designed to assist them.

##### Plan Community Development

Knowing how the balance of rented homes, mortgaged homes, and homes owned free and clear changes over time can help communities understand changes in local housing markets; identify opportunities to improve tax, assistance, and zoning policies; and reduce tax revenue losses from vacant or abandoned properties.

##### Ensure Equal Opportunity

Knowing the characteristics of people who rent and people who own homes in the community, such as age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin, helps government and communities enforce laws, such as the 1968 Fair Housing Act, designed to eliminate discrimination in housing.

##### Understand Changing Households

Knowing whether older residents are staying in homes as they age or moving into rented homes, and whether young people are staying with parents, renting with roommates, or buying homes, can help governments and communities distribute funds appropriately between homeownership and rental housing programs and services for residents.

# Operational Questions for use in the 2020 Census.

How many people were living or staying in this house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2020?

Number of people =

2. Were there any additional people staying here on April 1, 2020 that you **did not include** in Question 1?

Mark  all that apply.

- Children, related or unrelated, such as newborn babies, grandchildren, or foster children
- Relatives, such as adult children, cousins, or in-laws
- Nonrelatives, such as roommates or live-in babysitters
- People staying here temporarily
- No additional people

4. What is your telephone number?

We will only contact you if needed for official Census Bureau business.

Telephone Number

-  -

Please provide information for each person living here. If there is someone living here who pays the rent or owns this residence, start by listing him or her as Person 1. If the owner or the person who pays the rent does not live here, start by listing any adult living here as Person 1.

What is Person 1's name? Print name below.

First Name

MI

Last Name(s)

Does this person usually live or stay somewhere else?

Mark  all that apply.

- No
- Yes, for college
- Yes, for a military assignment
- Yes, for a job or business
- Yes, in a nursing home
- Yes, with a parent or other relative
- Yes, at a seasonal or second residence
- Yes, in a jail or prison
- Yes, for another reason

Some operational questions will appear on the 2020 Census that will not result in published counts. These questions are asked to better administer the data collection process and to ensure greater accuracy of the data collected. Contact information is not part of published estimates and is carefully protected, as mandated by federal law, to respect the personal information of respondents.

**Appendix A:  
Year the Planned Questions Were  
First Asked in the Decennial Census Program**

## Year the Planned Questions Were First Asked in the Decennial Census Program

Questions Planned for 2020 Census and/or ACS	Year Question First Asked in Decennial Census or ACS	Years Not Asked
Acreage	1960	
Age	1790	
Agricultural Sales	1960	
Ancestry	1980	
Bedrooms	1960	
Citizenship	1820	1840-1860, 1880
Class of Worker	1910	
Commuting (Journey to Work)	1960	
Computer and Internet Use	2013	
Condominium and Mobile Home Fees	1990	
Cost of Utilities	1940	
Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Service-Connected Disability Rating	2008	
Disability	1830	
Educational Attainment	1940	
Fertility	1890	
Grandparent Caregivers	2000	
Health Insurance Coverage	2008	
Health Insurance Premiums and Subsidies	2019	
Hispanic Origin	1970	
Home Heating Fuel	1940	
Home Value and Rent	1940	
Income	1940	
Industry	1820	1830, 1850-1900
Insurance	1980	
Kitchen Facilities	1940	
Labor Force Status	1890	
Language Spoken at Home	1890	1950
Marital History	1850	
Marital Status	1880	
Migration	1930	
Mortgages	1940	1950-1970
Occupation	1850	
Period of Military Service	1890	1920
Place of Birth	1850	
Plumbing Facilities	1940	
Race	1790	
Relationship	1880	
Rooms	1940	



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## Year Current Questions Planned First Asked in Decennial Census Program—Con.

Questions Planned for 2020 Census and/or ACS	Year Question First Asked in Decennial Census or ACS	Years Not Asked
School Enrollment	1850	
Sex	1790	
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)/ Food Stamps	2005	
Taxes	1940	1950-1970
Telephone Service	1960	
Tenure (Owner/Renter)	1890	
Undergraduate Field of Degree	2009	
Units in Structure	1940	
Vehicles	1960	
Veteran Status	1890	1920
Work Status Last Year	1880	
Year Built	1940	
Year Moved In	1960	
Year of Entry	1890	1940-1960