

Tips for avoiding U.S. Census Scams

The U.S. Census uses the census to try to accurately count every resident in the U.S. It is mandated by Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution and takes place every 10 years. The data collected by the decennial census determine the number of seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives and is also used to distribute federal funds to local communities. **Residents of the U.S. have a legal obligation to answer the questions.** The US Census Bureau is continually polling, performing supplemental censuses in between the ten year census.

Did you get a census form in the mail requesting you supply a whole lot of information about yourself? Or maybe you received a phone call or someone at your door asking personal questions? **Your first instinct may be that it's a scam. It very well could be, but it may be real.** It certainly is understandable that you would have concerns. It is easy to verify these requests with a quick phone call to the Census Bureau.

The US Census Bureau goes to great lengths to protect your personal information. Below are tips to help you.

If you suspect “phishing” or other scams, contact the [Regional Office](#) or [National Processing Center](#) immediately for verification and further instructions. The Regional office in New York handles Massachusetts concerns:

United States Census Bureau New York Regional Office

32 Old Slip, 9th Floor

New York, NY 10005

(212)584-3400 or 1-800-991-2520 / E-mail: New.York.Regional.Office@census.gov

The National Processing Center can be reached at 800-392-6975 or at https://www.census.gov/about/npc.Contact_Us.html.

Phishing is when scammers try to get personal information - usernames, passwords, social security numbers, bank account or credit card account info, etc. - by pretending to be an entity you trust. Phishing e-mails often direct you to a fake website that looks authentic and may be infected with malware.

You may be the victim of a scam if someone claiming to be from the Census Bureau asks you for certain information. The Census Bureau never asks for:

- your full Social Security number
- money or donations
- anything on behalf of a political party
- your full bank or credit card account numbers
- your mother's maiden name

What you can do

Should you suspect fraudulent activity, the U.S. Census Bureau recommends the following:

- If you get **mail**:
 - check that the return address is Jeffersonville, Indiana
 - If you continue to question the authenticity of the letter or form, call the Regional Office for your state to verify the household survey.
- If someone **calls** your household to complete a survey:
 - call the [Nat'l Processing Center](#) to verify the caller is a Census Bureau employee
- If someone **visits** your residence to complete a survey:
 - check first for a valid U.S. Census Bureau ID badge
 - If you are still unsure, call the [Regional Office](#) listed above to verify you are in a legitimate survey and the visitor is a Census Bureau employee.
- If you get an **e-mail** and think it is bogus:
 - do not reply, do not click on any links, and do not open any attachments
 - forward the e-mail or website URL to the Census Bureau at ois.fraud.reporting@census.gov
 - delete the email and wait for the US Census Bureau to investigate and notify you.