



EDITORIAL

Questioning the Census?

The 2020 U.S. Census is right around the corner. Most people are ready for it, but since it doesn't happen very often, many people still have questions. Let's take a moment to dispel some myths and learn more about the 2020 Census questionnaire. Beginning the middle of March 2020, every household will receive notification from the U.S. Census Bureau by mail that the Census questionnaire is available. This notification will have step-by-step instructions on how to complete the Census, either online, by phone, mail-in paper form, or in-person. The questionnaire will refer to April 1, 2020, as Census Day. You will enter your responses based on your situation on that particular date.

The Census primarily asks questions about your household and your housing situation. It does not ask about citizenship status. It cannot be used against you or shared with any government agency outside of the Census Bureau. It does not ask for full Social Security numbers. It does not ask to give up your first-born child or how much you have in your bank account. It will ask for your telephone number in case there are questions about your responses. Let's face it, the Census questionnaire is far less intrusive than an auto loan or even a Facebook account.

However, we should still be cautious. Be aware that a Census worker visiting your home will have photo identification from the U.S. Census Bureau. They will provide you with an official letter from the Census Bureau. They will also provide the contact information for their supervisor upon request. They will not ask for your full Social Security number, or money, or donations, or any financial banking information like bank accounts or PIN numbers. They will not ask for your political party affiliation. Census workers will only visit you if you have not completed the Census form online, by phone, or by mail by the end of April 2020. They will visit people door-to-door as early as April and as late as August, collecting information. If someone acting as a Census worker cannot provide U.S. Census Bureau identification, a contact for their U.S. Census Bureau supervisor, or asks for bank information or money, you should stop the interview and ask for their name and phone number. This will help in the slim chance someone is fraudulently seeking your personal information.

The Census is important. It helps us plan for our future, retain political representation, and secure public funding for critical programs and projects. Let's exercise our duty to be counted. For more information about the 2020 U.S. Census, visit www.mn.gov/admin/2020-census.

See a sample Census survey here:

<https://2020census.gov/content/dam/2020census/materials/partners/2019-08/2020-informational-questionnaire.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions about the Census

<https://mn.gov/admin/2020-census/learn-about/faqs/>

Nate Dorr, Vice President for Advocacy

Northwest Minnesota Foundation

Bemidji, MN

www.nwmf.org