

Frequently Asked Questions: Nonresponse Follow-up

What is Census Nonresponse Follow-up (NRFU, or “ner-fu”)?

- Until now, people have been completing the census online, by mail, or by phone.
- Non-response follow-up (NRFU) is when census takers visit all the homes that have not yet completed the census.

When does Nonresponse Follow-up begin, and when does it end?

- Nonresponse Follow-up will start as early as August 6 in New York City.
- Most of the operation will begin on August 11, 2020.
- The operation will currently end on September 30.

Why is NRFU starting so late this year?

- Because of COVID-19, the US Census Bureau had to delay the process. The start of NRFU was moved from mid-May to mid-August.
- The end of the period where you can still respond online, by phone, or by mail has also been extended from July 31 to September 30, 2020.

Can I still fill out the census even after NRFU starts?

- Yes, during NRFU you can still self-respond to the census online at My2020Census.gov, by phone at 1-844-330-2020 or by mail.
- In fact, all New Yorkers should self-respond NOW.

What if I do not want a census taker to come to my home?

- If you do not want a census taker to knock on your door, you should complete the census online, by phone, or by mail before August 11.
- If you self-respond completely and accurately, you will probably not get a knock on your door during NRFU.

What if I have concerns about speaking to someone in-person due to COVID-19?

- If you do not want to conduct the interview in person, you can give the census taker your phone number to complete it over the phone.
- All responses to the census are completely confidential and protected by federal law.
- The census-taker and the Census Bureau cannot share your responses with anyone – not immigration; not the police; not your landlord; not even with the City of New York.

How will census takers make sure that they aren't putting communities at risk of COVID-19?

- All census takers have to do training on social distancing and other health and safety protocols before beginning their work in neighborhoods. Specifically, census takers will be trained to:
 - Always wear a mask
 - Never enter your home
 - Stay 6 feet away when conducting interviews
 - Follow healthy hygiene habits, like frequent hand-washing
 - They will all be given hand sanitizer
 - They will stay home from work if they feel sick

What if the census taker does not speak my household's language?

- If the census taker does not speak your language, you can request another visit from a census taker who does speak your language.
- Census takers will also have materials with them to help identify your household's language.
 - For example, you will be able to point to a language on a card to tell the census taker which language you speak.
- There are language guides and videos online in 59 non-English languages, including American Sign Language and braille and large print, to help you complete the 2020 Census. <https://2020census.gov/en/languages.html>
- The Census Questionnaire Assistance centers have staff that can help in 13 languages. <https://2020census.gov/en/contact-us.html>

How do I identify a U.S. Census Bureau worker?

- If a census taker visits your home, first check to make sure that they have a valid ID badge with their photograph, a U.S. Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date.
- You can also call 212-882-7100 to speak with a Census Bureau representative and identify the person at your door.
- You reduce the likelihood of having a census taker visit your home if you self-respond to the census completely and accurately.
- [Follow these links](#) to learn more about census takers and how they can be identified.

Are there certain questions census takers aren't supposed to ask?

- **Census takers will never ask about:**
 - Immigration status or a citizenship question
 - Your Driver's License or State ID
 - Your Social Security or ITIN Number
 - Your bank account or credit card numbers
 - Anything on behalf of a political party
 - Money or donations
- If you think someone approached you and is not a real census taker, please report this to the multilingual Office of New Americans Hotline at 1-800-566-7636.

Is it safe to speak to the census taker if I'm not documented?

- This is not a problem. The census does not ask about your immigration status or any question about citizenship.
- Your answers cannot be shared with immigration authorities, the police, or any other law enforcement agency.

How do I know a census taker will keep my information safe?

- Census takers will keep your information safe.
- Census Bureau employees are required by law to keep your information confidential, under federal law.
- If they violate Title 13, they face up to 5 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000.

Where do census takers come from?

- Census takers are New Yorkers. They are hired from local communities and often work in the same communities where they live. Your census taker might live just a few blocks away from you or might even be your neighbor.

How will I know whether a census taker stopped by my home if I am away or at work?

- If no one is home when the census taker visits, the census taker will leave a note about their visit. That note will have information about how to respond online, by phone or by mail.
- You can call 212-882-7100 to verify the employment status of a census taker.

What happens if I do not fully answer a census taker’s question or skip certain questions altogether? Will there be some sort of follow up from another census taker?

- Households should try to complete the questionnaire in its entirety. But if you do not know the answer or would like to skip certain questions, the census taker will continue the interview.
- A few things are definitely required: your address, name, and the number of people in your household.
- There are a minimum number of questions that must be answered in order for the form to be considered “complete.”
- If you answer more questions, it is less likely that someone will knock on your door.
- The gender question can be skipped.
- Census takers will collect information for all people living in the housing unit. They will ask you to report everyone living in your household, even if they are not related to you.
- You should provide information for everyone living in the household. If you can’t provide information about another family that lives in your home, then that other family would also need to self-respond online, by phone, or by mail.

Can my child (under 18 years old) serve as a translator if my census taker does not speak my native language? Or will another census taker have to return to that address to collect my responses?

- Yes, a child can be the translator for their parent. If no one is available to help translate and there is a language barrier, the census taker will transfer the case to another census taker who speaks the language.

For people who relocated outside NYC due to COVID and filled out their census listing a second, non-NYC address, as their primary home, how can they amend their responses and list that they actually live in NYC?

- You cannot change a census response you have already sent. If you completed the census at a different location, you will need to complete the Census again for the household where you usually spend most of your time (as of April 1, 2020).
- People can submit multiple responses. The Census Bureau has a process to make sure you will not be counted twice.
- The Census Bureau still needs a completed response for both housing units. This includes seasonal homes that are empty right now. [The Census Bureau has a flyer to help explain this process in more detail.](#)

How many times will a census taker come to my home? How frequently will they show up?

- Census takers will try to reach you several times when you are most likely to be home. They need to get a response for every housing unit.
- After a household has completed the census, there may be additional visits to make sure they have all the data they need.
- Visits could happen during nights and weekends.

What happens if I do not respond to any of the census takers solicitations? Will the census bureau still be able to get my information?

- Census takers may be able to get information from other people (like your neighbors), but this is their last resort and it is usually less accurate.
 - It is estimated that 15 percent of the population “disappears” during this process, which is called imputation. That means that the funding your grandfather or your child deserves may not come to your neighborhood if the census is not completed properly. Remember that the census determines \$1.5 trillion dollars in federal funding for schools, hospitals, and senior centers.
- In addition, the Census Bureau may need to use other existing government records for households that don’t respond.

Can I speak with the census taker through the door?

- You can do this, but you might want to leave the door slightly open so that you don’t share your information too loudly. Census takers will have Census identification and will be wearing a mask.
- You can also ask to do the interview in a different location, including outside.
- As a reminder, you can also complete your census form online or over the phone.

Will the census bureau be contacting my property manager before census takers come?

- When it’s possible, census takers will contact property managers before or as they are conducting interviews. This is so that they can make sure to reach every household.

Will multiple census takers be sent to one building?

- Yes.

How will my doorman know to let the census taker in?

- All Census employees wear valid Census identification.

What about basement apartments? How do census takers know how to get through, particularly illegally subdivided units?

- Census takers are trained to find all possible housing units at every address. It does not matter whether an apartment is legal or not, who is on the lease, or anything else -- all that matters is if people live there.

Will census takers follow my building’s rules? My building may require the census taker to meet with people in the lobby or a common area and might not allow the census taker to roam freely throughout the building.

- Census takers will follow state and local health guidance. Census takers will always wear a mask. They will do their best to follow building rules that are in place.

How is NYCHA planning to deal with census takers? What guidance is NYCHA giving property managers, tenant leaders, and tenants?

- NYCHA is making sure everyone has the information they need to cooperate with the 2020 Census. Property managers, tenant leaders, and tenants are being informed about the timeline for NRFU, what they need to do, how the Census Bureau is ensuring safety during COVID-19, and how to avoid scams.
- Since the Fall of 2019, NYCHA began educating tenants about how to complete the census online or via phone through teach-ins, a mailing to all households, newsletters, social media, and outreach through tenant leaders. NYCHA will continue to encourage online completion as the safest means for participating in the 2020 Census in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Can you provide a photo of what a census takers badge looks like for educational purposes?

- The Census Bureau does not share this kind of image with outside groups because of security concerns.
- However, census takers will carry identification that includes their name, their photograph, a Department of Commerce watermark, and an expiration date.
- You can also call 212-882-7100 to check if they are an official census taker.

What is the phone number that New Yorkers should call to verify that a door knocker is indeed a census taker?

- First check and see if they are wearing their valid Census identification. Then call 212-882-7100 to check if they are an official census taker.

Will there be a count of people experiencing homelessness who live outside of shelter? Will this commence on September 22 per this factsheet?

- The Census Bureau has a special operation for this. It is from September 22 to September 24.

Will survey responses collected by census takers count towards NYC's "self-response" rate despite the census takers' involvement?

- Responses collected by census takers will count toward NYC's population count, but will not count towards the self-response rate.

Can you provide a copy of the notes census takers will leave behind in case they cannot reach a household?

- Please see a [sample Notice of Visit here](#).

Will most census takers be from New York City?

- Yes, most Census takers working in NYC live in NYC.