

What is the Census?

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"The actual enumeration shall be made within three years after the first meeting of the Congress of the United States, and within every subsequent term of 10 years, in such manner as they shall by Law direct."

-- Article I, Section 2 of the Constitution of the United States



Watch Census historian,
[Margo Anderson](#), describe the origins of the
census in the Constitution

The U.S. Census counts every resident in the United States. 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 billions in federal funds to local communities.

The 2010 Census represented the most massive participation movement ever witnessed in our country. Approximately 74 percent of the households returned their census forms by mail; the remaining households were counted by census workers walking neighborhoods throughout the United States. [National and state population totals](#) from the 2010 Census were released on December 21, 2010. [Redistricting data](#), which include additional state, county and local counts, will be released starting in February 2011.

[View the 2010 Census data](#)

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