

You are here: [Census.gov](#) › [Data Protection and Privacy Policy](#) › [Data Protection](#) › [Our Privacy Principles](#)

Our Privacy Principles

We depend on your cooperation and trust, and we promise to protect the confidentiality of your information.

The Census Bureau's Privacy Principles remind us of this promise and help ensure the protection of your information throughout all of our activities.

The Privacy Principles are our guidelines. They help us as we design surveys to consider respondents' rights concerns. Every principle embodies a promise to you, the respondent.

▮ **Necessity:** Do we need to ask this question? Do we need to collect this information?

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 economy of the United States.

▮ **Openness:** Do you know why we are collecting your information?

We collect information only for statistical purposes, and it is never used to identify individuals. Before participating you 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 you about the purpose and uses for every survey or census we conduct **before** you provide your answers to us.
- ▮ **Respectful Treatment of Respondents:** Are our efforts reasonable and did we treat you with respect?
 - ▮ We promise to minimize the effort and time it takes for you to participate in the data collection by efficient design.
 - ▮ We promise to use only legal, ethical and professionally accepted practices in collecting data.
 - ▮ We promise to ensure that 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 your information?

In addition to removing personally identifiable information, such as names, telephone numbers, and addresses from our data files, we use various approaches to protect your personal information; including computer technology, 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 five years, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau | Privacy Office | Last Revised: December 17, 2009