

How Are Group Homes Being Counted in the Census?



The 2020 Census is coming! It is so important that everyone is counted – but there are questions in the disability community about *how exactly* individuals living in group homes will be counted. It can be confusing because the process for counting people in group homes may vary within regions or states.

The information below can help group home administrators determine how the individuals in their homes will be counted and the next steps.

What is the first step in understanding how a particular group home will be counted?

Each group home will either be counted through the regular process or the group quarters process.

- 1) If a household is being counted in the regular process, it will receive a letter sometime in March with instructions on how to complete the census.
- 2) If a household is being counted through the group quarters process, the administrator of the group home will be contacted by a census worker, generally in February or early March.

If the administrator of a group home does not hear from a census worker about group quarters, they can assume the group home is being counted through the regular process.

What are “group quarters”?

Group quarters is a term used by the Census Bureau to mean places where people live or stay in a group living arrangement. Common examples of group quarters are some (but not all) group homes, nursing homes, college dorms, homeless shelters, and residential treatment centers for adults.

The Census Bureau includes “Group Homes Intended for Adults” as group quarters. This category of group home is defined as “community-based group living arrangements in residential settings that are able to accommodate three or more clients of a service provider. The group home provides room and board and services, including behavioral, psychological, or social programs. Generally, clients are not related to the caregiver or to each other.”

How will I know if my group home will be counted in the regular process?

If a group home is going to be counted in the regular process, it will receive a letter with instructions on how to complete the census sometime in March.

One person should respond for everyone living in the household. People with disabilities can seek assistance from family members, trusted friends, direct support workers or others to help complete the census. [The Arc has developed resources](#) to help educate individuals, family members, direct support professionals, service providers and others about completing the census. Providers may want to prepare to help people answer the questions by downloading a census form. [Here is a sample 2020 census form](#).

How will I know if my group home will be counted in the group quarters process?

If a group home is going to be counted in the group quarters process, the administrator of the group home will be contacted by a census worker to arrange which option they want to use to complete the census.

Generally, the Census Bureau will reach out to the administrator of a group home in February or early March to confirm it is a group quarter and make arrangements for how the census will be answered.

Once it is determined that a group home is going to be counted by the group quarters process, what happens next?

The Census Bureau provides 5 options for group quarters counting. The group home administrator and census bureau worker will work together to determine the best option:

1. Electronic Response Data Transfer (eResponse) – The group quarters administrator fills in the data for each person living at the facility on April 1, 2020 and electronically sends information to the Census Bureau.
2. In-Person Interview – A census worker conducts a face-to-face interview with each person staying at the facility on April 1, 2020.

3. Drop-Off/Pickup of Questionnaire – A census worker leaves census questionnaires to be completed by or for each person who is at the facility on April 1, 2020. The census worker then picks up the completed questionnaires at an agreed-upon time.
4. Paper Response Data Collection – A census worker meets with the administrator of the facility to obtain a paper listing of census response data for each person who is staying at the facility on April 1, 2020.
5. Facility Self-Enumeration – A census worker swears in and trains the group quarters facility administrator and then leaves behind census materials so that the administrator can conduct the count for each person who is living or staying at the facility on April 1, 2020. A census worker then returns to pick up the completed questionnaires at an agreed-upon time. Only military installation group quarters, correctional facilities, and health care facilities can select this option.

Does helping someone with the census form violate the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA)?

The census form does not have questions related to health or health issues and therefore does not conflict with HIPAA.

Is census information protected? Answers to census questions are kept anonymous and only used to produce statistics. The U.S. Census Bureau is bound by law to protect the information and keep it confidential. The law ensures that private information is never published and that answers cannot be used against the person responding by any government agency or court.

Does everyone have to answer the census?

Yes, the U.S. Constitution requires that everyone in the country be counted every 10 years. Neither citizenship or guardianship status matters when it comes to ensuring that everyone in a household is counted.

Where can I get more information?

For more information about group quarters, visit: <https://2020census.gov/en/conducting-the-count/gg/gqe.html>.

[For more information and resources about the census and people with disabilities, visit thearc.org/census.](https://thearc.org/census)