

COLONIE COUNTS - CENSUS 2020

Every 10 years, the federal government conducts a population count of everyone in the United States, regardless of their citizenship status. Data from the census provide the basis for distributing more than \$675 billion in federal funds annually to communities across the country to support vital programs—impacting housing, education, transportation, employment, health care, and public policy. They also are used to redraw the boundaries of congressional and state legislative districts and accurately determine the number of congressional seats each state has in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Responding to the census is not only our civic duty; it also affects the amount of funding our community receives, how our community plans for the future, and our representation in government. Specifically, data from the 2020 Census are used to: ensure public services and funding for schools, hospitals, and fire departments; plan new homes and businesses and improve neighborhoods; and determine how many seats our state is allocated in the House of Representatives.

As a result of apportionment, New York State has lost 16 (37 percent) of its Congressional seats since 1950. After the 2010 Census, New York lost two seats to bring our number of Representatives to the current 27, and one study of population trends predicts that New York will lose at least one seat after the 2020 Census. Any decrease may wind up costing New York important committee assignments and ultimately federal dollars. Another thing to consider is that each state's number of electoral votes, which determine presidential elections, is linked to the number of members of Congress a state has.

Census 2020 commenced in mid-March when people began receiving a notice in the mail to complete the 2020 Census. People can respond online, by phone or by mail if preferred. In May, the U.S. Census Bureau will begin following up in person with households that have not responded to the census.

The census collects basic information about the people living in your household. When completing the census, you should count everyone who is living in your household on April 1, 2020. The census questionnaire will ask:

How many people were living or staying in your house, apartment, or mobile home on April 1, 2020?

Were there any additional people staying there on April 1, 2020 that you did not include in Question 1?

Is your house, apartment, or mobile home — owned (with/without a mortgage) or rented?

What is your telephone number?

And for each household member it will ask the person's name, sex, date of birth, ethnicity, race, and relationship to person completing the questionnaire.

The Census Bureau will never ask for your Social Security number, bank or credit card account numbers, money or donations, or anything on behalf of a political party.

Strict federal law protects your census responses. It is against the law for any Census Bureau employee to disclose or publish any census information that identifies an individual. Census Bureau employees take a lifelong pledge of confidentiality to handle data responsibly and keep respondents' information private. The penalty for wrongful disclosure is a fine of up to \$250,000 or imprisonment for up to 5 years, or both. No law enforcement agency (not the DHS, ICE, FBI, or CIA) can access or use your personal information at any time. Data collected can only be used for statistical purposes that help inform important decisions, including how much federal funding your community receives.

The Census Bureau has a robust cybersecurity program that incorporates industry best practices and federal security standards for encrypting data.

You can learn more about the 2020 Census by visiting 2020census.gov or contacting the Town of Colonie Community Development Department at (518) 783.2718.