



September 1, 2016

Dear Resident,

Your address has been randomly selected by the U.S. Census Bureau to participate in the **American Housing Survey**. The Census Bureau conducts this survey every other year to provide an up-to-date picture of our nation's housing and challenges faced by homeowners and renters. It is important that you complete this survey to help meet critical needs in your area. You can help us understand your community.

In past years, the American Housing Survey has found that, on average, households spend 19% of their income on housing. The President and policymakers use this information to create programs that may lessen the burden of this expense on American households.

The Census Bureau is using the Internet to conduct this survey to save taxpayer money, conserve natural resources, and process data more efficiently. Instructions for completing the American Housing Survey online can be found on the card enclosed in this envelope.

**Respond now to the American Housing Survey:**  
**<https://respond.census.gov/ahs>**

To thank you for your participation, we have enclosed a \$40 debit card. Instructions for using the debit card are included.

There are answers to the most frequently asked questions about the American Housing Survey on the back of this letter. If you need help with the survey or have other questions, please call 1-800-923-8282.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

{SIGNED}

John H. Thompson  
Director, U.S. Census Bureau

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What is this survey all about?**

The American Housing Survey collects up-to-date information on housing quality and costs in the United States. There is a great need for information about the places where people are living. As the population increases, so does the demand for housing. Information from the survey helps to measure the changes in our housing supply resulting from losses and new construction. It also measures the structural makeup of the housing and characteristics of the occupants. The information also helps to evaluate the effects of proposals on tax reform and assistance programs.

### **How was I selected for this survey?**

The U.S. Census Bureau chose your address, not you personally, to participate in this survey. We randomly selected a sample of addresses throughout the United States. We need a response from every home in our sample to get a complete picture of housing quality and housing costs across the country. Your answers represent not only your home, but also thousands of other homes like yours. If you move, this address will stay in the survey and we will interview the household that moves here.

### **I completed this survey two years ago. Why are you asking me to do it again?**

It is important that someone at this address complete the survey again so that we may measure the changes (or lack of changes) in the number of houses available in the United States, the physical condition of the housing, and the characteristics of the occupants. Some addresses in the American Housing Survey are asked to complete the survey once every two years. Other addresses are asked to complete the survey every few years.

### **I thought that the Census Bureau only counts people every ten years. What is the Census Bureau doing now?**

Besides the decennial census, which we conduct every ten years, we collect many different kinds of statistics through other censuses and surveys to provide current information on such topics as housing, transportation, unemployment rates, health, manufacturing, and education.

### **Is this survey authorized by law? What protection do I have?**

Congress requires the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to collect this information under the Housing and Urban-Rural Recovery Act of 1983 (Title 12 of the U.S. Code). The Census Bureau conducts the survey on behalf of HUD. The Census Bureau has the authority to collect this information under Title 13 of the U.S. Code Section 8. The U.S. Census Bureau is required by U.S. Law (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9) to keep your answers confidential. Your participation in this survey is important; however, you may decline to answer any or all questions. Your answers may be combined with information that you give to other agencies to enhance the statistical use of these data, but all data will be kept strictly confidential. To request that your information not be combined with information from other agencies, please call 1-800-923-8282.

### **How long will it take?**

We expect it will take about 40 minutes for you to provide this information, but it may be somewhat shorter or longer, depending on your circumstances. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number is 0607-0725 for this survey. This number confirms that we have approval from OMB to conduct this survey. Approval for this survey expires on XX/XX/2016. If you have any comments on this survey or have recommendations for reducing its length, please send them to the Director, Housing and Demographic Analysis Division, Office of Policy Development and Research, Office of Economic Affairs, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC 20410.