

SUPPORTING STATEMENT A
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Census Bureau
Group Quarters Advance Contact
OMB Control No. 0607-XXXX

Abstract

During the years preceding the 2030 Census, the Census Bureau will pursue its commitment to developing a well-managed, cost-effective, high quality decennial census. The Census Bureau will streamline data collection processes and implement new and improved methods to count the U.S. population for the 2030 Census. This includes improved methods for counting individuals residing in Group Quarters (GQs), (i.e. college/university student housing, residential treatment centers, nursing/skilled-nursing facilities and assistant living facilities, group homes, correctional facilities, hospitals, and military barracks).

GQ administrators play a vital role in data collection during Group Quarters Advance Contact (GQAC). They provide critical updates about the facility and residents to prepare for subsequent Group Quarters Enumeration (GQE) operation. The 2026 Census Test will enable the Census Bureau to contact the GQ administrators by phone or in person to collect information about the GQs such as verifying/updating the GQ name, address, GQ type, contact person's name and phone number, and maximum population. In addition, the Census Bureau needs to collect their preferred enumeration method for their residents, the expected population count for the GQ on Census Day, April 1, 2026, and depending on the enumeration method selected, select the date and time they would like to schedule an appointment.

Justification

- 1. Explain the circumstances that make the collection of information necessary. Identify any legal or administrative requirements that necessitate the collection. Attach a copy of the appropriate section of each statute and regulation mandating or authorizing the collection of information.**

During the GQAC operation, the Census Bureau needs to verify/collect information about GQ facilities to ensure we have the most up-to-date data to prepare to count every person who lives or stays in GQs.

We are conducting the 2026 Census Test under the authority of Title 13, U.S. Code, Sections 141, 193 and 221. The Census Bureau is required by law to protect this information (Title 13, U.S. Code, Section 9). The Census Bureau is not permitted to publicly release responses in a way that could identify anyone. By law, the Census Bureau can only use responses to produce statistics.

2. Indicate how, by whom, and for what purpose the information is to be used. Except for a new collection, indicate the actual use the agency has made of the information received from the current collection.

The Census Bureau will contact the GQ contact person using two different methods of data collection: In-Office and In-Field GQAC.

- During In-Office GQAC, office clerks will call the GQ administrator (using the phone number on file for the case or researching it using the internet) and conduct interviews while electronically collecting responses and making entries into a secure GQAC instrument to verify and/or update the GQ information in preparation for conducting the upcoming enumeration.
- During the In-Field GQAC, field staff will visit each identified GQ and conduct an in-person interview with the GQ contact person using an electronic device to capture the same information collected during In-Office GQAC.
- During GQAC, the contact person will:
 - Verify or update the GQ name, address, GQ contact person's information including email address, GQ type code, and maximum population.
 - Provide the following information to assist field staff in conducting the upcoming enumeration:
 - Preferred method of enumeration.
 - Date and time for the Census Bureau to meet with the contact person to conduct the enumeration method selected.
 - Maximum population for the GQ.
 - Expected population for the GQ on Census Day, April 1, 2026.
 - Whether the GQ serves females only, males only, or both.
 - Whether the GQ residents speak languages other than English. If the GQ resident speaks another language, an interpreter or the GQ administrator will assist.
 - Whether there are security, privacy, or confidentiality concerns.
 - Whether there are logistical concerns while conducting enumeration such as facility access requirements and procedures.
 - Whether the contact person was responsible for other GQs.

The Census Bureau's goal is to count everyone once, only once, and in the right place. The results of this information collection will provide an accurate inventory of GQs. The planned usage for the information collected during GQAC is to prepare for the enumeration to count everyone who lived or stayed in the GQ on Census Day, April 1, 2026. The frequency for this information collection is one time during the period of February 2 through March 6, 2026.

Information quality is an integral part of the pre-dissemination review of the information disseminated by the Census Bureau (fully described in the Census Bureau's Information Quality Guidelines). Information quality is also integral to the information collections conducted by the Census Bureau and is incorporated into the clearance process required by the Paperwork Reduction Act.

See table below which includes justification for collecting the information stated above.

Table - Justification for Collecting Information

Item #	Requirement	Form #	Needs and Uses
1	Preferred enumeration method	D6-QFE-GA	Used by the Census Bureau to prepare for the enumeration method as selected by the GQ administrator
2	Expected population count on Census Day	D6-QFE-GA	Used by the Census Bureau to confirm the number of people expected to be at the GQ on Census Day.
3	Maximum population count for the GQ	D6-QFE-GA	Used by the Census Bureau to plan enough materials to count the maximum number of people who can live or stay at the GQ.
4	Serve females only, males only, or both	D6-QFE-GA	Used by the Census Bureau to plan the appropriate field staff to visit the GQ to conduct the enumeration method.
5	Schedule a date and time to conduct enumeration method	D6-QFE-GA	Used by the Census Bureau to assign field staff to conduct the enumeration method according to the date and time selected by the GQ administrator.
6	Residents speak languages other than English	D6-QFE-GA	Used by the Census Bureau to plan a method to conduct the enumeration method with the residents at the GQ in a language other than English.
7	Security, privacy, or confidentiality concerns	D6-QFE-GA	Used by the Census Bureau to advise the field staff of any protocols that must be adhered to regarding security, privacy or confidentiality prior to visiting the GQ.
8	Logistical concerns while conducting enumeration method such as facility access requirements and procedures	D6-QFE-GA	Used by the Census Bureau to advise the field staff of any logistical processes or procedures that must be adhered to prior to visiting the GQ.
9	Email address for GQ administrator	D6-QFE-GA	Used by the Census Bureau to communicate with the GQ administrator.
10	Contact person who is responsible for other GQs	D6-QFE-GA	Used by the Census Bureau to associate GQs with the parent GQ (e.g., college dorm with college).

3. **Describe whether, and to what extent, the collection of information involves the use of automated, electronic, mechanical, or other technological collection techniques or other forms of information technology, e.g. permitting electronic submission of responses, and the basis for the decision for adopting this means of collection. Also, describe any consideration of using information technology to reduce burden.**

The Census Bureau plans to reduce the paper data collection method used during previous GQAC operations and conduct all information collection using electronic data collection instruments. Electronic data collection may minimize respondent burden and improve operational efficiencies.

In-Office GQAC

During In-Office GQAC, office clerks will call the GQ administrator (using the phone number on file for the case or researching it using the internet) and conduct interviews while electronically collecting responses and making entries into an electronic instrument to verify and/or update the GQ information in preparation for conducting the upcoming enumeration.

The In-Office GQAC phone operation will include the following:

- Initial GQAC workload

The contact strategy for the In-Office GQAC is as follow:

- Three phone attempts: attempt 1, attempt 2, attempt 3 (final).
- After the attempt 3 (final), case(s) will be assigned to the Census Field Supervisor for In-Field GQAC.

In-Field GQAC

The In-Field GQAC operation will include all unresolved cases from the In-Office GQAC.

- Field staff will follow-up with GQs for which pre-enumeration information such as contact information was not obtained.
- Field staff will visit each identified GQ and conduct an in-person interview with the GQ contact person using an electronic device to capture the same information collected during In-Office GQAC.
- During the 2020 Census and previous decennial censuses, In-Field GQAC was conducted by field staff visiting each identified GQ and collecting response data using a paper questionnaire.

Since the Census Bureau released the 60-day Federal Register Notice for this information collection, it had to descope the web-based GQAC for GQ administrators for programmatic reasons. As a result, emails to GQ administrators with instructions on how to complete web-based GQAC have also been descoped.

4. Describe efforts to identify duplication. Show specifically why any similar information already available cannot be used or modified for use for the purposes described in Question 2.

The Census Bureau needs to confirm whether the information maintained in the Master Address File about the GQ is the most up-to-date and high-quality to prepare to count people living or staying in GQs. The content of the GQAC reflects topics that are required by the GQAC operation to enable the GQE in the larger 2026 Census Test, which in turn will inform improvements for the 2030 Census. The Census Bureau has determined this data collection effort is not duplicative of another agency's data collection

5. If the collection of information impacts small businesses or other small entities, describe any methods used to minimize burden.

There are no special provisions related to the information collection during the GQAC operation that affect small businesses.

6. Describe the consequence to Federal program or policy activities if the collection is not conducted or is conducted less frequently, as well as any technical or legal obstacles to reducing burden.

The Census Bureau's goal is to count people once, only once, and in the right place. Census data guides how federal funding is distributed to states and communities each year. The results of the GQAC operation provides the opportunity for GQ administrators to update our address frame for GQs. If the collection is not conducted to get the most up-to-date and high-quality address and data collection information, federal funding for the community may be negatively impacted.

7. Explain any special circumstances that would cause an information collection to be conducted in a manner:

- No, there are no special circumstances requiring respondents to report information to the agency more often than quarterly.
- No, there are no special circumstances requiring respondents to prepare a written response to a collection of information in fewer than 30 days after receipt of it.
- No, there are no special circumstances requiring respondents to submit more than an original and two copies of any document.
- No, there are no special circumstances requiring respondents to retain records, other than

health, medical, government contract, grant-in-aid, or tax records for more than three years.

- No, there are no special circumstances in connection with a statistical survey, that is not designed to produce valid and reliable results that can be generalized to the universe of study.
- No, there are no special circumstances requiring the use of a statistical data classification that has not been reviewed and approved by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).
- No, there are no special circumstances that includes a pledge of confidentiality that is not supported by authority established in statute or regulation, that is not supported by disclosure and data security policies that are consistent with the pledge, or which unnecessarily impedes sharing of data with other agencies for compatible confidential use.
- No, there are no special circumstances requiring respondents to submit proprietary trade secret, or other confidential information unless the agency can demonstrate that it has instituted procedures to protect the information's confidentiality to the extent permitted by law.

8. If applicable, provide a copy and identify the date and page number of publications in the Federal Register of the agency's notice, required by 5 CFR 1320.8 (d), soliciting comments on the information collection prior to submission to OMB. Summarize public comments received in response to that notice and describe actions taken by the agency in response to these comments. Specifically address comments received on cost and hour burden.

Consultation with representatives of those from whom information is to be obtained or those who must compile records should occur at least once every 3 years - even if the collection of information activity is the same as in prior periods. There may be circumstances that may preclude consultation in a specific situation. These circumstances should be explained.

In developing this test, the Census Bureau consulted with a variety of stakeholders, including, but not limited to, academics, national researchers, community and organizational leaders, and the Census Bureau's Advisory Committees. In addition, external consultants from the National Academy of Sciences provided feedback about the Census Bureau's objectives for the 2026 Census Test. Recommendations from audits by the Government Accountability Office and the Department of Commerce's Office of Inspector General were also factored in.

The results from this test will be shared with decennial census stakeholders and released to the public. To help evaluate and assess the results of the 2026 Census Test, the Census Bureau will conduct debriefings with field staff who worked on the test.

The notice for public comment, titled, "2026 Census Test – Group Quarters Advance Contact (GQAC)," was published in the *Federal Register* November 4, 2024 (Vol. 89, No. 213, pp. 87540-87542, FR Doc No. 2024–25592). The Census Bureau did not receive comments in response to that notice.

9. Explain any decision to provide any payment or gift to respondents, other than remuneration of contractors or grantees.

The Census Bureau does not plan to provide any payment or gift to respondents.

10. Describe any assurance of confidentiality provided to respondents and the basis for the assurance in statute, regulation, or agency policy. If the collection requires a system of records notice (SORN) or privacy impact assessment (PIA), those should be cited and described here.

The “Privacy Act Notice” will be provided to the GQ contact person to inform them about the importance of the census, why the information is collected and how it is used, their responses are mandatory and that the Census Bureau is required by law to protect their responses.

The systems of records notice for this collection is Census-5 Decennial Census Program available at <https://www.commerce.gov/node/4939>.

11. Provide additional justification for any questions of a sensitive nature, such as sexual behavior or attitudes, religious beliefs, and other matters that are commonly considered private. This justification should include the reasons why the agency considers the questions necessary, the specific uses to be made of the information, the explanation to be given to persons from whom the information is requested, and any steps to be taken to obtain their consent.

None of the questions asked during GQAC would be considered of a sensitive nature.

12. Provide estimates of the hour burden of the collection of information.

- Indicate the number of respondents, frequency of response, annual hour burden, and an explanation of how the burden was estimated. Unless directed to do so, agencies should not conduct special surveys to obtain information on which to base hour burden estimates. Consultation with a sample (fewer than 10) of potential respondents is desirable. If the hour burden on respondents is expected to vary widely because of differences in activity, size, or complexity, show the range of estimated hour burden, and explain the reasons for the variance. Generally, estimates should not include burden hours for customary and usual business practices.
- If this request for approval covers more than one form, provide separate hour burden estimates for each form and aggregate the hour burdens.
- Provide estimates of annualized cost to respondents for the hour burdens for collections of information, identifying and using appropriate wage rate categories. The cost of contracting out or paying outside parties for information collection activities should not be included here. Instead, this cost should be included under ‘Annual Cost to Federal Government’ (Item

#14).

Table - Estimated Annualized Respondent Burden Hours

Information Collection Instrument	Type of Respondent (e.g., Occupational Title)	# of Respondents (a)	Annual # of Responses/ Respondent (b)	Total # of Annual Responses (c) = (a) x (b)	Burden Hours/ Response (d)	Total Annual Burden Hours (e) = (c) x (d)
A	GQ Administrator	600	1	600	15/60	150

Table - Estimated Annualized Respondent Costs

Type of Respondent/ Occupational Title	Number of Respondents	Number of Responses per Respondent	Average Burden per Response	Hourly Wage Rate*	Total Burden Costs
GQ Administrators	600	1	15/60	\$50.33	\$7549.50
Total	--	--	--	--	\$7549.50

*Based on the median hourly wage for facilities managers from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics available here <https://data.bls.gov/oesprofile/>

The proposed annual burden hours have decreased from the 217 hours that the Census Bureau estimated in the 60-day Federal Register Notice for this information collection to 150 hours. The number of respondents grew from 434 submitted in the 60-day Federal Register notice to 600, but the average time per response was reduced from 30 minutes to 15 minutes when the calling script was updated based on the final GQAC specification following the submission of the 60-day FRN, leading to the reduction in proposed annual burden hours.

13. Provide an estimate for the total annual cost burden to respondents or record keepers resulting from the collection of information. (Do not include the cost of any hour burden already reflected on the burden worksheet).

There are no capital/start-up or ongoing operation/maintenance costs associated with this information collection.

14. Provide estimates of annualized cost to the Federal government. Also, provide a description of the method used to estimate cost, which should include quantification of hours, operational expenses (such as equipment, overhead, printing, and support staff), and any other expense that would not have been incurred without this collection of information.

Any costs related to GQAC will be reflected in the Paperwork Reduction Act package for the entire 2026 Census Test – Peak Data Collection, which will be released Fall 2025.

15. Explain the reasons for any program changes or adjustments reported in ROCIS

This is a new data collection. Hence, there was nothing previously reported in ROCIS.

16. For collections of information whose results will be published, outline plans for tabulation and publication. Address any complex analytical techniques that will be used. Provide the time schedule for the entire project, including beginning and ending dates of the collection of information, completion of report, publication dates, and other actions.

The Census Bureau plans to develop an operational summary report of GQAC with an expected completion date of December 2026. This report will be for internal use only.

17. If seeking approval to not display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection, explain the reasons that display would be inappropriate.

The Census Bureau plans to display the expiration date for OMB approval of the information collection on all data collection instruments.

18. Explain each exception to the certification statement identified in "Certification for Paperwork Reduction Act Submissions."

The Census Bureau certifies compliance with 5 CFR 1320.9 and the related provisions of 5 CFR 1320.8(b)(3).