Will Alaskans’ responses to the census remain confidential?

There are strong, long-standing legal protections in place that prohibit the Census Bureau or any other part of the federal government from using census data against the Alaskans who supply it.

1

Your individual responses to the 2020 Census are confidential and can only be used to produce statistics.¹ This includes responses on census questionnaires, names, addresses, and residential locations.

2

By law, the U.S. Census Bureau cannot share an individual’s information with immigration enforcement agencies, law enforcement agencies, or allow it to be used to determine your eligibility for government benefits. In other words, individual census data may not be used “to the detriment” of any census respondent or other person to whom the data relates.² This means that a landlord, employer, or business will never have access to your responses to the census.

3

It is a felony for census workers or Census Bureau employees to publish or distribute individual responses or any information that would identify an individual, business, or organization.³ Employees who view individual census responses are sworn to protect the confidentiality of those data for life – anyone who wrongfully discloses census data is subject to a fine of up to $250,000 and a prison sentence of up to five years.⁴

**Legal Protections to Protect Confidentiality of Census Responses**

- The Confidential Information Protection and Statistical Efficiency Act
- The Census Act
- The Privacy Act
- The Internal Revenue Code

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¹ 13 U.S.C. § 9(a)(1) (Census Bureau may not “use the information furnished under the provisions of this title for any purpose other than the statistical purposes for which it is supplied”).


³ 1 13 U.S.C. § 9(a)(3) (Census Bureau may not “permit anyone other than the sworn officers and employees of the Department or bureau or agency thereof to examine the individual reports”).