



Spotting a Census Scam

The Census is here! Although it can be intimidating to fill out personal questions about yourself and your household, there are few things that you can do that are as important for our democracy. Having an accurate count of people in Clallam County is important for monetary benefits as well as for Clallam County representation in Olympia and Washington, D.C.

That being said, it's good to be aware of uncommon but still potential scams. The following information from the Consumer Protection Division of the Washington State Attorney General's Office (www.atg.wa.gov/consumer-issues) advises that there are three primary ways that scams can be perpetrated:

1. **By physical mail:** The Census Bureau will NEVER ask you for your full Social Security number, money, or anything on behalf of a political party. Your **first contact** from the Census Bureau is via physical mail. It provides information on where to go on-line to fill out your census or a toll-free number to call. If you don't respond via one of these methods, you will then receive a follow-up in paper form.
2. **In person or on the phone:** Census Bureau employees will NEVER: ask to come into your home; ask for your full bank or credit card account numbers; ask for your mother's maiden name; or threaten you with arrest if you do not comply. Census Bureau workers will have a badge with a Department of Commerce watermark that includes: their name, photograph and an expiration date. **They will only come to your residence if you haven't responded to the initial contact or if your response was incomplete.**
3. **Online:** Legitimate Census Bureau e-mails and links will ALWAYS have a "census.gov" domain and will be encrypted. The Census Bureau will NEVER initiate contact via email. If you receive an e-mail claiming to be from the Census Bureau and if the e-mail address ends with ".com" and includes suspicious links, DO NOT REPLY OR OPEN ANY LINKS. Delete it or forward it to ois.fraud.reporting@census.gov. ALWAYS look for "https://" or a lock symbol in the browser window.

Need help verifying? Call the Los Angeles Regional Census Office at 1-800-992-3530. If you have questions you may also call the Washington Attorney General's Office at 1-800-551-4636 or go to the website: www.atg.wa.gov/consumer-issues. There is also a local number you may call, 360-504-6290. A member of the League of Women Voters of Clallam County or someone will answer this number from Peninsula Behavioral Health. These two organizations are working together to ensure a complete and accurate count of citizens in Clallam County.

The quickest and easiest way to fill out the census is on-line. The phone number to call listed on the mailing is toll-free. Information on how to do this was in your initial contact in the mail. Again, someone will come to your home only if you have not responded to the mailings. Clallam County has a good record of self-response, 81% in 2010; let's keep up the good work to insure good representation and monetary benefits for our County!

Cordially,

Clallam County League of Women Voters
LWVCLA.org