Every 10 years the U.S. Census Bureau conducts a thorough census, counting everyone that lives in the United States and its territories. The census information is used to determine redistricting election boundaries based on changing population trends and gauging the need for federal and state programs such as the senior nutrition program.

You should have received your 2020 Census packet in March, and April 1 is the official Census Day. The census questions should be answered based on your family’s living arrangements on that day.

The 2020 Census asks just nine simple questions about who is living with you on April 1; how you are related; the age, sex and race of those living with you, and whether you rent or own your home. No census questionnaire will ever ask for your Social Security number, Medicare number or banking information.

You are required by law to complete and return the census information, and it is best if you do so promptly. After May 1, census workers will begin visiting those who have not responded to the census. If you get your 2020 Census submitted by the end of April, you will not have to be concerned about an unknown census worker showing up at your door.

For the very first time, the U.S. Census Bureau is allowing and highly encouraging people to respond to the census online. Not only will this make their job easier, but it will also ensure that your information gets to the Census Bureau quickly.

If you would like to complete your census on a computer, but either don’t have one or aren’t comfortable doing so, LIFE Senior Services is here to help. Beginning April 1, you can call LIFE’s SeniorLine at (918) 664-9000, and a staff person will walk you through the questions, enter your information and then submit the completed census online.

According to LIFE CEO Eileen Bradshaw, “LIFE Senior Services has worked so closely with seniors preparing and e-filing their taxes, and also comparing and enrolling in Medicare Part D plans online, that it only makes sense for us to extend the same type of service for the 2020 Census. We are encouraging all seniors to complete their census before census workers begin going door-to-door, and this is a logical way for us to help facilitate that.”

There is a separate “Community Census” that some homes have received, and it asks more in-depth questions regarding education, income levels, type of home, etc. This is a legitimate US Census Bureau survey, and by law you must respond to it. It is not, however, the official 2020 Census.