

What is the City of Fall River Annual Census?

The General Laws of Massachusetts mandate an annual street listing of residents as of January 1st each year (M.G.L. ch. 51 § 4). The Fall River Election Commission sends out census forms to every household in Fall River each year, at the end of January or beginning of February. Forms are due back to our office within 10 days. The census form asks for your name, gender, date of birth, occupation, and nationality if not a US citizen.

Is the information collected public information?

Records of residents 17 years of age or older are public information. A street list book is published each year containing the names and addresses of every resident 17 years of age or older, in accordance with M.G.L. ch. 51 § 6

What should I do with my Census Form?

If the information that is pre-printed on your census form is correct, please sign the form and send it back to the Election Commission within 10 days. If the information needs to be updated, you can add, delete or make changes on your form and mail it back to the Election Commission.

What if I live in a multi-unit apartment building?

If you live in an apartment building with more than 8 units, your landlord or management company is legally required to provide census data to our office for all residents of the building (M.G.L. Ch. 51 § 10A). Residents of large apartment buildings will receive individual census forms by mail as well.

Why is the Census important?

If you are a registered voter, failure to respond shall result in removal from the active voting list and may result in removal from the voter registration rolls.

If you are not a registered voter, it is still important for you to return your census form – many public benefits require proof of residency, which our office can provide for any resident who has been counted in the Census. In addition, an accurate count of residents in Fall River leads to better municipal services.

What is an inactive voter?

An inactive voter is a voter who failed to answer the census. Every summer, registered voters who failed to respond to either the first or second census mailing are made inactive. Voters who are made inactive are immediately sent confirmation cards, which the voter can send back to be reinstated as active or to report an address change. Voters can also be reinstated to the active voting list by either voting in an election or signing a petition or nomination paper. When inactive voters arrive at the polling place, they will be asked to show identification and will need to fill out an Affirmation of Current and Continuous Residence. After the election, they will be reinstated to the active voting list.

If a voter remains inactive for two federal election cycles, which means that he or she did not answer the census or vote for four years, the voter will be removed from the voter registration rolls.

Can I tell if I am registered to vote from my census form?

If you are registered to vote, there will be a letter on the census form next to your name in the column titled “voter.” The letter in the voter column represents your political party – D=Democrat, R=Republican, J=Green-Rainbow, U=Unenrolled (no party), and any other letters refer to [political designations](#).

Does turning in my census form register me to vote?

No, it does not. You can only register to vote in person or using a mail-in voter registration form. You can find a mail-in voter registration form at any post office or library in Fall River, or you can return the request form that you received with your census form, and we will mail you a voter registration form. You can also download and print your own voter registration form: <http://www.sec.state.ma.us/ele/elepdf/Voter-reg-mail-in.pdf>

Can I update my name, party or address with my census form?

If you are a registered voter and you would like to update your name, party, or address, make the change on your census form and make sure that you have signed the form. If the form is signed by another member of your family, your census will be counted but we will not be able to make the change to your voter registration. If more than one person in your family would like to make a change to their voter registration, each person would have to sign the form.

I did not receive a census form?

If you didn't receive your census form, you have the following options:

Upon receipt of the census form, residents review it and make any necessary corrections such as occupation, apartment number, new family members, dates of birth, or deaths.

- Anyone temporarily away from home, such as students, men and women in the service or federal personnel who wish to be counted as a Fall River resident should be listed with parents or other relatives.
- Once completed, forms must be returned to the Board of Elections. All forms, including those without corrections, need to be returned in order for the City to update its census information.