

Form A Frequently Asked Questions

General Information

What is Form A?

Form A, also known as the Housing Unit and Population Estimate Report, is used by OFM to gather the information that we need to make April 1 population determinations.

Why is population determined as of April 1 each year?

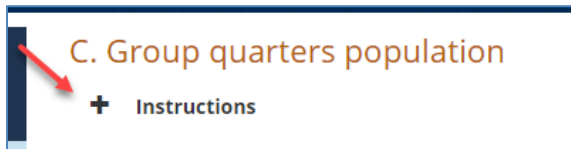
The April 1 date is a statutory requirement specified in RCW 43.62.030. The April 1 date was chosen so that the federal decennial data can be used as the base for estimating populations.

What are the population numbers used for?

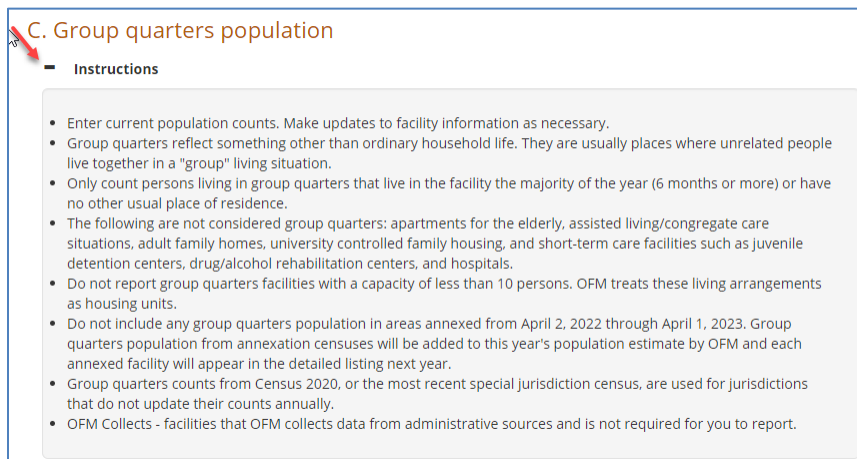
April 1 population estimates are cited in numerous statutes using population as criteria for fund allocations, program eligibility, or program operations, and as criteria for determining county participation under the Growth Management Act.

Where can I get help understanding what should be reported for each section of the on-line Form A through PES?

All pages of Form A in PES include Instructions. You must expand the Instruction section to see all the text. Click on the + symbol next to Instructions.



To hide the instruction details, click the – symbol.



C. Group quarters population

– Instructions

- Enter current population counts. Make updates to facility information as necessary.
- Group quarters reflect something other than ordinary household life. They are usually places where unrelated people live together in a "group" living situation.
- Only count persons living in group quarters that live in the facility the majority of the year (6 months or more) or have no other usual place of residence.
- The following are not considered group quarters: apartments for the elderly, assisted living/congregate care situations, adult family homes, university controlled family housing, and short-term care facilities such as juvenile detention centers, drug/alcohol rehabilitation centers, and hospitals.
- Do not report group quarters facilities with a capacity of less than 10 persons. OFM treats these living arrangements as housing units.
- Do not include any group quarters population in areas annexed from April 2, 2022 through April 1, 2023. Group quarters population from annexation censuses will be added to this year's population estimate by OFM and each annexed facility will appear in the detailed listing next year.
- Group quarters counts from Census 2020, or the most recent special jurisdiction census, are used for jurisdictions that do not update their counts annually.
- OFM Collects - facilities that OFM collects data from administrative sources and is not required for you to report.



Some pages also include examples. Examples work just like Instructions as far as how to expand and hid them.

Form A reporting

How do I get my Form A?

Form A is accessible through the Population Estimate System (PES) application at <https://pop.ofm.wa.gov/>. We encourage you to use PES for data reporting; however a PDF document can be requested by contacting OFM at pop.estimate@ofm.wa.gov or by calling 360-902-0599. We will help you choose the format that works best for you.

I am having trouble accessing Form A through PES, what should I do?

Refer to one of the following documents to help work through your issues:

- [Setting up a SAW Account and Registering with PES](#)
- [PES User Guide](#)
- [PES Frequently Asked Questions](#)

If you are still having problems, contact us at pop.estimate@ofm.wa.gov or by calling 360-902-0599 and we will help troubleshoot your issue.

I got the Form A PDF from OFM, but I can't fill it out electronically. What do I do?

The Form A PDF is not a "fillable" document. It must be printed prior to completing it. Use the PES application which allows for online data entry and submission.

How should the PDF version of Form A be submitted to OFM?

You may submit the form to OFM by email, fax or regular mail using the information shown below.

OFM - Forecasting and Research Division

P.O. Box 43124

Olympia, WA 98504-3124

Fax: 360-586-1988

Email: pop.estimate@ofm.wa.gov

Section A: New frame housing

What is the difference between Section A1 and A2?

Sections A1 and A2 separate the most current data collection year from prior years in which permits were reported but not completed.

- **Section A1** is for recording the number of structures permitted and the number of units associated with these permits that were completed during the current reporting period from April 2, <last year> through April 1, <this year>. These permits and completed units have not previously been reported to OFM.
- **Section A2** is for reporting the number of units completed for permits that were issued prior to April 1, <last year> but have not yet been reported as completed. The units associated with these permits are hereafter referred to as "carryover units".

Section A2: Why does OFM separate carryover units into two time periods?

OFM is concerned about the over- or under-reporting of completed units over time.

Table 1: Units permitted since 2020, not yet reported as completed

Column 1: This column shows the number of permitted units reported by the jurisdiction on Form A from April 2, 2020 through April 1, <last year> that have not been reported as completed.

Column 2: Report the number of carryover units listed in Column 1 that were completed during the current reporting period from April 2, <last year> through April 1, <this year>.

Table 2: Units permitted before 2020, not yet reported as completed

Column 1: This column shows the number of non-completed units permitted by the jurisdiction from April 2, 2010 to April 1, 2020.

Column 2: Report the number of housing units that were completed during the current reporting period from April 2, <last year> through April 1, <this year> associated with permits issued prior to April 2, 2020.



Do not include units, especially those associated with large apartment buildings, that were in place during the April to May 2020 period that had a roof, windows, and doors. The Federal Census defined such structures as "weather tight" and included them in the 2020 census housing counts, even though they were not certified for occupancy. These housing units are already part of the jurisdiction's 2020 base count.

If you have revisions to these carryovers from the prior decade, please let us know in the comments and attach documentation with your Form A submission.

What do I do about residential building permits that have expired and have been renewed?

OFM recognizes that some residential building permits will expire and will eventually be renewed. Do not report renewed permits on Form A if they have previously been reported to OFM.

What does “Do the data in Section A1 include permits issued in annexed areas by other jurisdictions?” mean?

If a jurisdiction annexed territory with buildable land, owners or builders may have applied for housing permits from the county before the annexation. Your answers will help clarify whether these permits have already been reported to OFM by the county or jurisdiction. Jurisdictions should work with the county to get a list of all permits issued in annexed areas prior to becoming part of the jurisdiction. You will need to provide supporting documentation to your population analyst.

How do I report micro housing units on Form A?

Micro housing units are known by a variety of names including aPodments, congregate-style housing, workforce apartments, etc. These structures are intended to house individuals in private rooms with access to some shared living areas such as a kitchen and laundry room. If your jurisdiction is issuing permits for micro housing units, please contact your population analyst to discuss how these units should be reported to OFM. We want to make sure you are getting an accurate estimate of the population living in these units.

How do I report tiny homes on Form A?

The reporting of tiny homes depends on the situation. If they are permitted by the jurisdiction as regular long-term housing, the jurisdiction should report them under framed housing as accessory dwelling units (ADUs). If the tiny homes serve a particular population like homeless or college students or have wheels and are located in an RV or manufactured home park, please contact your population analyst. We may decide to track this housing as group quarters or special housing.

Section A3: What do you mean by conversions and why are they reported with demolitions in Section A.3?

An existing residential structure may be converted to a non-residential use, or a physical alteration can occur that results in the addition/removal of housing units to/from the housing stock. There are two basic types of conversions, each with different reporting requirements:

Residential to non-residential conversion: A housing unit may be converted to a non-residential use. As such, the unit is technically eliminated from the housing stock. Report

the number of structures removed from the housing stock in Column 1 and the associated number of units in Column 2.

Conversion from one residential structure type to another residential structure type: A housing unit can be converted from one residential structure type to another. For example, a large single-family house may be converted to a 4-unit apartment. In this case, report the original single-family structure as a conversion in Section A3. The new 4-unit apartment should be reported as a new 4-unit structure (fourplex) in Section A1. Please leave a note in the comment section regarding the conversion.

Do I count the removal of a dilapidated structure as a demolition in Section A.3 even if it hasn't been lived in for many years?

Treat the removal of a structure as a demolition only if it is likely that the Census Bureau counted the structure as housing in the most recent federal census (i.e., the structure had a roof, windows, and doors and could be considered "weather tight").

Why is there no place to report frame housing units from recent annexations?

Population associated with recently annexed housing units from an approved annexation census will be added directly to this year's population estimate by OFM. The annexed housing units will become part of city's base housing stock the following year.

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Section B: Manufactured/mobile homes

Why does OFM collect data on manufactured/mobile homes separately from frame housing structures?

Based on information from prior censuses, manufactured/mobile homes are associated with different occupancy rates and household sizes compared to single-family, frame housing structures. OFM's population estimation model requires that this information be tracked separately.

The list of manufactured/mobile home parks OFM provides is different from what I have. What do you want me to do?

Section B1: This section includes a list of manufactured/mobile home parks reported on prior Form As. In some cases, new entries have been added by OFM based on analysis of administrative records. In the first column, enter the total number of manufactured/mobile homes that are in the park. Do not include travel trailers, recreational vehicles, etc. since these are considered special housing (see the Special Housing section for more information).

In the last column, enter the total number of spaces available in the park (i.e., the maximum capacity of the park).

Please verify with the park manager that all of the information is correct. Update address and contact information as needed.

Enter any manufactured/mobile home parks within your jurisdiction not listed in the empty cells at the bottom of the table. Use the blank space at the bottom of the page to explain each new entry.

Section B2: Enter the requested data concerning manufactured/mobile homes located on individual lots outside of manufactured/mobile home parks.

Why is there no place to report manufactured/mobile homes from recent annexations?

Population associated with recently annexed manufactured/mobile homes from an approved annexation census will be added directly to this year's population estimate by OFM. The annexed manufactured/mobile homes will become part of city's base manufactured/mobile home count the following year.

My jurisdiction has an RV park, and I don't see a place on Form A to add an RV park. Are we losing the population counts?

No, the population in an RV park is considered to be part of the jurisdiction's base 2020 Census population count. Please see the Special Housing section for more information.

Section C: Group quarters (GQ) population

Why is this year's/last year's population for a GQ facility different from what I reported?

OFM keeps track of reported GQ populations on a per facility basis. If the newly reported number differs significantly from that of prior years, the analyst will call the facility. The reason for the difference is sometimes due to the definition of a resident. Some facilities report numbers that include short term stay populations who typically reside elsewhere in the region. At other times, the facilities will report counts that include persons living in a part of the facility that is not considered a group quarter (e.g., assisted living center/retirement apartments). Definitional issues aside, what is most important is that the GQ population that is counted is consistent with what was counted by the jurisdiction in the base census year (2020).

OFM collects population counts for many of the state's larger GQ facilities on an annual basis. These include state-managed facilities (i.e., DOC, DSHS, etc.), military installations and college/university dormitories. In many cases, OFM will use these numbers rather than those reported by the jurisdiction on Form A.

Why can't I provide data for some Group Quarters?

OFM receives population data for some group quarters from administrative sources. Jurisdictions using PES to enter their Form A data will see group quarters where administrative data is available grayed out. Jurisdictions will not be able to enter any counts for those group quarters.

Why does the GQ list not include a GQ facility that has been recently annexed?

Population associated with recently annexed GQ facility from an approved annexation census will be added directly to this year's population estimate by OFM. The GQ facility will be automatically listed on Form A the following year.

What about a GQ facility that is not on the GQ list and is not in a recently annexed area?

The empty cells are for reporting GQ facilities that are either new or missing. Enter the requested information concerning facility name, location, contact information, resident population count, etc.

Be sure to include the source of the facility (i.e., newly constructed, always here but not reported, annexed, etc.). If the facility was present before April 1, 2020, the April 1, 2020 resident population count is needed.

Why did OFM stop collecting data for GQ facilities with a capacity of less than 10 people?

A facility with less than ten people usually represents a small number of persons being cared for in a structure that is typically classified as "housing" by the Census Bureau. The number of people living on-site is small and stable. Annual tracking of such facilities has no discernible effect on the jurisdiction's population estimate, and not tracking these facilities will save both jurisdiction and OFM staff time. Because these smaller facilities can alternate between housing and GQs over the course of the decade, it is reasonable to treat them as part of the regular household population.

What should I do about a new GQ facility with a capacity of less than 10 persons?

Jurisdictions should report newly constructed GQ facilities (after April 1, 2020) with a capacity of less than 10 persons as new construction (i.e., as a new frame housing unit).

If a new facility involves conversion of an existing residence to a GQ (e.g., an adult family home), OFM will not accept it as a new GQ since:

- 1) it has fewer than ten people,
- 2) it would have to be deducted from the count of household population
- 3) there is a high likelihood it will change back to regular housing at some point in the future.

Section D: Annexation and municipal boundary changes

Why do I need to report annexations on Form A?

This section is for reporting annexation activity between April 2, <last year> and April 1, <current year>. This reporting verifies that our annexation information is consistent with your jurisdiction's records. It is not unusual to discover annexations that have never been reported to OFM.

There is at least one annexation that was reported to OFM that is not on the list. Why?

Form A only includes annexations that have been approved by OFM for population purposes at the time the form was printed. If you have any questions about an annexation, please call us at 360-902-0599. You may also check on the status of your annexation by visiting our website at: <https://ofm.wa.gov/washington-data-research/annexations-and-municipal-boundary-changes/central-annexation-tracking-system-2022>. Annexations are listed by calendar year in which the paperwork was received by OFM.

My city annexed territory this year. Will we get credit for the population and housing in the newly annexed area in this year's April 1 population estimate?

Not always. Population and housing in annexed areas cannot be included in population estimate until the annexation has been officially approved by OFM. The annexation must have been approved by April 1, <last year> and have an OFM file number. If the OFM approval date is after April 1, <this year>, the population will be included in your April 1, estimate for this year.

All annexations are included in a quarterly annexation filing. Even if an annexation is not included in your April 1 population estimate, your city will start receiving tax money after it is included in a quarterly annexation filing. Revenues start being disbursed in the calendar quarter following the filing. Answers to processes and timing can be found on our website at: <https://www.ofm.wa.gov/sites/default/files/public/legacy/pop/annex/annexinfo.pdf>.

Why is it important to report annexations to OFM?

By law, population and housing units in an annexed area cannot be used for population purposes until its certificate has been approved by OFM.

Special Housing

How will OFM track changes in special population and housing since Form A no longer collects data for special units?

OFM is no longer classifying special housing units as a separate housing type because of changes in data collection at the federal level. The 2020 federal census counted permanent residents living in travel trailers, RVs, boats, sheds, tents, etc. as household population. Although special housing is no longer considered a separate housing type, cities may continue to collect information related to populations living in special housing if they so choose and OFM will continue to estimate population living in special housing.

City options for counting special populations

Do nothing: Special population and housing are currently included in the total population and housing count because they are included in the base 2020 census counts by default. The costs associated with annual enumeration often outweigh any potential revenue increases.

If cities wish to track their special population and housing separately for the next decade, they must conduct a census of the special housing units in 2020. OFM will continue to use the most recent set of numbers for the base counts of special population and housing for the next decade unless otherwise instructed. The city reported counts of special population and housing will be subtracted from the 2020 federal population and housing counts and estimated separately.

The city might choose to conduct a door-to-door census to count permanent residents living in special housing under the following conditions: 1) there have been significant changes in the number of people living in special housing units since last time the city counted them or 2) an RV park has been built or an existing RV park has been expanded since April 1, 2020. Note that a census of special housing units does not need to be conducted every year.

Important: Contact OFM by the end of March of the current April year at 360-902-0599 if you wish to enumerate special housing units and population. Special census forms are required.

Adjusted Counts

Why does OFM use adjusted counts rather than jurisdiction-reported counts of mobile homes and group quarters populations? How does OFM calculate these adjusted counts?

OFM has determined that jurisdictions and the federal census often report manufactured/mobile homes and group quarters populations inconsistently. Residency rules are not always applied, assisted living facilities are sometimes reported incorrectly as group quarters facilities, and mobile homes are sometimes misclassified as single-family residences.

In order to mitigate inconsistencies, OFM calculates adjusted counts as follows: we start with the federally reported count from the most recent decennial census, and we then use jurisdiction-reported counts to either raise or lower this number based on the change in jurisdiction-reported counts from the most recent census.

For example, assume a jurisdiction had a 2020 census GQ population of 100. If the jurisdiction reported a 2020 GQ population of 110, and a 2022 GQ population of 120, OFM would calculate an adjusted 2022 GQ population as follows: $100 + (120 - 110) = 110$. This GQ population is equal to the census population plus the jurisdiction-reported change in population since the federal census date.