



Census 2020:

Research and Messaging

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Presented by

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RESEARCH AND MESSAGING GOALS

To test key ideas:

Interest/awareness of the Census

Empowerment/resistance messages

Understanding of convenience/compliance

Understanding of community benefit

To identify concerns about Census participation across response formats (online, in-person, paper, phone)

To identify trusted messengers, especially on traditional media and social media platforms

To determine messages that move people to action

To test behavioral outcomes, not just attitudes

To increase understanding of the Hard-to-Count Latino community

To complement research conducted by the Census Bureau and other organizations



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

With Latino Decisions, NALEO Educational Fund Conducted:

NATIONAL POLL

Nationally representative sample of the adult Latino population (Surveyed 1,600 Latinos between April 11-20, 2018)

Participants were assigned to four treatment groups and a control group to test message

FOUR FOCUS GROUPS

Messages from the survey experiment were tested to evaluate what refinements are needed, given local and demographic nuances (Conducted May 8 in Charlotte, North Carolina and May 9 in Rio Grande Valley, Texas)

- 40 participants in two locations:
 - Each location had an English group and a Spanish group
 - All scientifically-selected participants knew people who are not citizens; they described the mixed status nature of their local communities.
 - 29 were U.S. citizens
 - 11 were not U.S. citizens
 - 31 had both parents born outside the United States
 - Only five (all in the Rio Grande Valley) had both parents born in the United States



GENERAL VIEWS ON CENSUS

Participants had a **generally positive view** of the Census.

Hesitation, fear, and cynicism arose among focus group participants when they saw a version of the actual questionnaire

- The citizenship question raised the most concerns, anxiety increased as participants considered the reality of providing their information to the current administration

There was **lack of confidence that the data provided would be kept confidential.**

"You know in Spanish the word, 'desconfianza'? Ok that's how I feel about it... ...So, for me personally, this gives me that "desconfianza" feeling, asking about citizenship. I don't think this Census is going to be very effective."



VIEWS ON RESPONSE MODES

Survey respondents overwhelmingly expressed a preference to complete the Census by mail on a paper form (75 percent)

Nearly 40 percent of respondents said it is **not convenient to complete the form online**

"There's people that don't have internet service down here in the Valley [Texas], some areas just don't have it."

"My mom is 61 years old and she's not going to go on the computer. She'll think it's a trick, won't like it, and won't fill it out. If I go help her out, yes, she'll do it. They are going to lose people who aren't comfortable online."

Over 64 percent of respondents said that **sending a Census worker to their home was not convenient**



2020 CENSUS MESSAGES

- **Any message is better than none:** all four messages tested - *Convenient, Safe, Required; Civic/Community Duty; Funding; Resistance/Defend Community* - performed better than the control group which received no message
- Messages about Census participation being **“Convenient, Safe and Required”** showed the most positive response in the survey

“Participating in the Census is safe and really easy, just a few clicks online. The Census protects your personal data and keeps your identity anonymous. By federal law, your response is required, and your information cannot be given out or shared”

- Messages about the role of Census data in providing **funding for local schools and community programs** were the most effective in the focus groups

“The government relies on the Census population count to determine funding for state and local services, including education, police, fire, and health care. Our community schools, hospitals, and first responders are depending on us to do our part and participate in the Census”



2020 CENSUS MESSAGES (continued)

Subgroup differences of note on the survey experiment

- **Immigrants** were especially **responsive to the convenience, safety, and required** message with **75 percent** saying they would definitely participate in response to the message. This is consistent with the serious privacy concerns voiced in the study
- **Women** were most **responsive to the civic and community duty** message with **57 percent** saying they would definitely participate in response to the message
- **Latinos under age 40** were most **responsive to the resistance** message, with **53 percent** saying they would definitely participate in response to the message



2020 CENSUS MESSENGERS

MESSENGERS

- Consistent with previous NALEO voter engagement research, **“Family Members”** were the most trusted messengers
 - Our previous voter engagement research also suggested that women in the household, in particular, were effective messengers
- **Nurses, doctors, health providers and Latino community organizations** were also highly trusted as messengers
- **People who speak for “the children” or “the schools”** – such as teachers -- were especially trusted and convincing (our previous research on voter engagement had comparable findings)
- **Elected officials were among the least trusted** as a reliable source for information



2020 CENSUS: NEWS AND INFORMATION SOURCES AND PLATFORMS

- **For Spanish-speakers**, Spanish-language media were trusted source of information
- **Younger participants** had more favorable views of social media as a source of information
- **85 percent of survey participants were regularly (daily) online via smartphones** (less than half said they used a laptop or desktop computer on a daily basis)
- **Survey participants frequently search online** to get more information or verify what they have heard on social media or the news
- **Email and Facebook** were the most frequently used (daily basis)
- **Twitter** was the least frequently used (more than half said they used it on a monthly basis or rarely/never)



2020 CENSUS: LOCAL CONTEXT

- **Local context** must be considered in Census planning, outreach and implementation. Focus groups in Charlotte referenced the December 2017 countywide data hack in discussing Census data security
- **Participants in all four focus groups** discussed increased immigration enforcement, and traffic stops for minor infractions that have made people fearful about interactions with law enforcement and government

"Last week they stopped my cousin because he didn't have a blinker and he didn't have papers. So, just because of the blinker, the cop called immigration. So, I know if my tia or anybody in the family read this [Census form], they wouldn't fill it out. They'll be scared."



2020 CENSUS: UNDERCOUNT OF CHILDREN

Households with children age seventeen and younger

- 53 percent of survey respondents stated that they have one or more children age seventeen and younger in the household
- Among respondents with children age seventeen and younger in the home, 11 percent said they would not count them or do not know if they would

Households with children age four and younger

- 24 percent of survey respondents stated that they have one or more children age four and younger in the household
 - Among respondents with children age 4 and younger in the home, 15 percent said they would not count them or do not know if they would
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More research is needed to assess these attitudes toward excluding children in the household from the Census



TAKE ACTION!

JOIN OUR CENSUS 2020 CAMPAIGN!

#SaveTheCensus

Visit www.NALEO.org/Census2020

Email to censusGOTC@naleo.org with "**Subscribe**" in the subject line to join our Census email list.

Text "**CENSUS**" to **97779** to join our SMS/Census Get Out the Count list.

(Standard messaging rates apply).



Thank you.

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