



2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators
Study (CBAMS) Survey and Focus Groups:
Key Findings for NAC

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CBAMS Research

- ▶ Purpose: Understand the public's perception of the Census and other gaps in knowledge that may affect returning or completing the Census.
- ▶ Methods:
 - ▶ Surveys with 61 questions and received 17,500 responses
 - ▶ Conducted 42 focus group sessions in



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Focus Groups were:

- ▶ American Indian And Alaska Native
- ▶ Black or African American
- ▶ Chinese – Cantonese and Mandarin
- ▶ Low Internet Proficiency
- ▶ Middle Eastern And North African
- ▶ Native Hawaiian And Pacific Islander (NHPI)
- ▶ Rural
- ▶ Spanish (Puerto Rico)
- ▶ Spanish (U.S. Mainland)
- ▶ Vietnamese
- ▶ Young And Mobile



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Top line result:

- ▶ Survey respondents said that 70% had the intention of returning Census
- ▶ This is an interesting result. Indicates that only 7 out of 10 people who returned a survey (which provided monetary incentives to respond) would submit their Census responses.
- ▶ Sort of depressing.
- ▶ 17,500 individual responses to 50,000 households survey responded to the survey (~35% response rate assuming the individual responses are independent households).
- ▶ Does this mean **absent any additional outreach** the response rate for the US as a whole is $0.70 \times 0.35 = 0.245$ or 24.5%?



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Response is lowest among the same groups as previously:

- Low education groups
- Young people
- Renters
- Low internet proficiency

- Appears to be similar to low-response groups in the past



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Top Line Result:

Knowledge gaps are quite large

- ▶ Believe Census is for keeping track of law breakers;
- ▶ Less than half know that it is to determine funding in communities (45%);
- ▶ Slightly more than half know it determines representation in Congress (57%)



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Top Line Result – Large Barriers:

- Apathy and Confidentiality are important concerns.
- May be an overall function of current attitudes towards governments in general (at all levels):

Striking that distrust of government is:

- 50% for federal and state governments
- 47% for local governments
- Fear that the data or info will be used against them
- Citizenship question – identified as a major barrier to response



CBAMS Research Findings

Local connections and authorities

- Improve the chances of people responding
- Provide assurances that the process is safe and confidential

Ultimately, this seems to reinforce much of the information known about the importance of the local authorities (community leaders, messaging, outreach) in improving Census response rates.



CBAMS Take Away Facts - Summary

- Absent outreach – potentially low response rate to Census
- Approximately similar groups are expected to be low-response again
- Large knowledge gaps on the purpose of the US Census
- Barriers are persistent
- Local connections and authorities – improve the chances of response rates by assuring that the process is secure and confidential and important for local funding.