

Public Comment for CSAC 2019 Spring Meeting

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To: Census Scientific Advisory Committee (CENSUS) <census.scientific.advisory.committee@census.gov>;

Greetings,

Below is my comment to the Census Scientific Advisory Committee for their March 2019 meeting:

“The Census Bureau has done a great job of making tract-level operational data about the decennial census available, especially the 2010 mail return rate and related variables, and each tract's predicted low response score for 2020, via the Planning Database (PDB).

My team at the City University of New York is helping organizations to map and analyze this and other data so they can plan their Get Out the Count campaigns and prioritize where to focus their census outreach at regional and local levels. My comments relate to additional information from the Bureau that could enhance this outreach and educational work.

In the Census Bureau's 2020 operational plan as well as other reports such as the 2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study (CBAMS) Survey Report, the Bureau has referenced the following information. I'd like to urge the Bureau to make this information available, preferably at the tract level, prior to the 2020 enumeration:

- expected modes of self-response for the 2020 census, in particular the share of households by tract that will be expected to respond online, by phone, or by mailing back a completed questionnaire;
- audience segmentation "mindsets" that are described in the 2020 CBAMS Report (which states that "[t]he geographic distribution of respondents with these six mindsets was then used to determine the distribution of mindsets among groupings of census tracts, referred to as segments"). We are interested to know if the Bureau will publish any tract-level data regarding these segments; and
- which tracts (or households within tracts) will be in the different mailing waves that will begin March 2020.

Also, I understand that yesterday in response to a question, Associate Director Al Fontenot indicated that data on tract-level shares of households that will receive either an "Internet First" or "Internet Choice" invitation from the Census Bureau will not be made public. I would ask that the Bureau reconsider that decision. Many organizations that are planning local field work leading up to the 2020 enumeration are keenly interested in which communities (and which households in these communities) will be receiving an upfront request to submit census information online, vs those who will receive a paper questionnaire upfront. Having that information will help inform their messaging and outreach strategies. I believe that this type of data will only help improve the 2020 self-response rate.

Thank you.”

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