2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study (CBAMS)
Survey and Focus Groups Report Findings Presentation
Outline

1. CBAMS Overview
2. Study Design
3. Key Findings
   A. Intent to Respond
   B. Knowledge Gaps
   C. Potential Concerns & Attitudinal Barriers
   D. Potential Motivators & Facilitators
4. 2020 CBAMS Conclusions & Recommendations
5. 2020 CBAMS Mindsets
CBAMS Overview
CBAMS Overview

Purpose

- Understand attitudes, barriers, & motivators toward the census
- Inform & inspire creative strategy
- Increase self-response to the 2020 Census

Research Questions

1. Who intends to respond to the census?
2. Where do gaps in knowledge about the census exist?
3. What barriers would prevent people from completing the census?
4. What would motivate people to complete the census?

Methodology

- Quantitative Survey
- Qualitative Focus Groups
2 Study Design
Study Design: CBAMS Survey

The 2020 CBAMS Survey was administered from February to April 2018 to 50,000 addresses in all 50 states and Washington, D.C.

- Questionnaire consisted of 61 questions
- Adults 18+ were eligible to participate via mail or web
- Households in the sample received a prepaid incentive and up to five mailings inviting them to participate
- Oversampled Asians, Blacks, Hispanics, and other small-sample races.
- Roughly 17,500 people responded to the survey
Study Design: CBAMS Focus Groups

2020 CBAMS Focus Groups held in March and April 2018.

- **42 focus groups** conducted with **11 audiences** across **14 locations**
- **16 focus groups** were **non-English**
- **Focus group transcripts** went through a rigorous process to ensure intercoder reliability
- Transcripts were analyzed to identify themes among response barriers and motivators
### Study Design: CBAMS Focus Groups

2020 CBAMS Focus Groups conducted among the 11 audiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Audience</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian and Alaska Native</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese – Cantonese and Mandarin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Internet Proficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern and North African</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish (Puerto Rico)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish (U.S. Mainland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young and Mobile</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 Key Findings
Key Findings Areas

- Intent to Respond
- Knowledge Gaps
- Potential Concerns & Attitudinal Barriers
- Potential Motivators & Facilitators
Intent to Respond
Two out of three said they were likely to respond

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Type</th>
<th>Measured (%)</th>
<th>Observed (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 CBAMS Survey</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Census</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2018 CBAMS Survey</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mail return rate to the 2010 Census was **10 pts lower** than measured in the 2008 CBAMS Survey.

CBAMS measures those who are “extremely” or “very” likely to fill out the census form if the census were held today.

Note: Due to methodological differences, direct statistical comparisons between 2008 and 2018 survey are not appropriate.
Knowledge Gaps
Many know the census basics but not much more

How familiar are you with the U.S. census?

- Not at all familiar: 8%
- Not too familiar: 13%
- Somewhat familiar: 46%
- Very familiar: 24%
- Extremely familiar: 9%

In their own words

[What comes to mind when I hear ‘census’?] I don’t know. Isn’t that like the people that want to know like everything? They send you letters to your house.”

— American Indian and Alaska Native
Overview of knowledge gaps

As you understand it, will the 2020 Census be used in any of the following ways or not?

- To determine changes in the size, location, and characteristics of the U.S. (True) - 80% Correct, 17% Don't know, 3% Incorrect
- To help the police and FBI keep track of people who break the law (False) - 63% Correct, 31% Don't know, 6% Incorrect
- To determine how many representatives each state will have in Congress (True) - 57% Correct, 31% Don't know, 12% Incorrect
- Counts both citizens and non-citizens (True) - 55% Correct, 29% Don't know, 16% Incorrect
- To locate people living in the country without documentation (False) - 53% Correct, 37% Don't know, 10% Incorrect
- To determine property taxes (False) - 52% Correct, 38% Don't know, 10% Incorrect
- To determine how much money communities will get from the gov't (True) - 45% Correct, 39% Don't know, 16% Incorrect
- To determine the rate of unemployment (False) - 29% Correct, 41% Don't know, 30% Incorrect
Knowledge about funding from census data varies little by race and ethnicity

As you understand it, will the 2020 Census be used in any of the following ways or not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Black/AA, NH (%)</th>
<th>Small sample race, NH (%)</th>
<th>Asian, NH (%)</th>
<th>Hispanic, any-race (%)</th>
<th>White, NH (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To determine changes in the size, location, and characteristics of the U.S.</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help the police and FBI keep track of people who break the law</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine how many representatives each state will have in Congress</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts both citizens and non-citizens</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To locate people living in the country without documentation</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine property taxes</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>False</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine how much money communities will get from the govt</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine the rate of unemployment</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>False</td>
<td>True</td>
<td>True</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Correct by Race/Ethnicity
- Black/AA, NH: 40%
- Small sample race, NH: 41%
- Asian, NH: 43%
- Hispanic, any-race: 43%
- White, NH: 47%
Hispanics & Asians more likely to know census counts citizens and non-citizens than others

As you understand it, will the 2020 Census be used in any of the following ways or not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>Incorrect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To determine changes in the size, location, and characteristics of the U.S. (True)</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help the police and FBI keep track of people who break the law (False)</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine how many representatives each state will have in Congress (True)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts both citizens and non-citizens (True)</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To locate people living in the country without documentation (False)</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine property taxes (False)</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine how much money communities will get from the govt (True)</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine the rate of unemployment (False)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Correct by Race/Ethnicity:
- **Hispanic, any-race:** 68%
- **Asian, NH:** 64%
- **Small sample race, NH:** 57%
- **White, NH:** 54%
- **Black/AA, NH:** 48%
Some misperceive the census’ purpose

As you understand it, will the 2020 Census be used in any of the following ways or not?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>Incorrect</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To determine changes in the size, location, and characteristics of the U.S.</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To help the police and FBI keep track of people who break the law</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine how many representatives each state will have in Congress</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts both citizens and non-citizens</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine how much money communities will get from the gov't</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To determine the rate of unemployment</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To locate people living in the country without documentation</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- 37% are unsure if it used this way
- 10% mistakenly think that the census is used to locate people living in the country without documentation
Potential Concerns & Attitudinal Barriers
Potential barriers to participation in the 2020 Census

- Apathy & Efficacy
- Concerns about data confidentiality & privacy
- Fear of Repercussions
- Distrust in Government
- Few Perceived Personal Benefits
Does it matter if I’m personally counted?

- A great deal: 33%
- A lot: 26%
- A moderate amount: 23%
- A little: 10%
- Not at all: 8%

How much, if at all, do you think it matters if you personally are counted in the 2020 Census?
Does it matter if I’m personally counted?

Lack of Efficacy

“

They won’t ever come into the hood, give us stuff that we need, or give us anything. You go out where she at [a suburb] and you see parks and they get cleaned up, you see areas and centers and everything. Well, we have none of that. That’s why I see a thousand kids on the block every day...So many high schools been closed. [It’s connected to the census] because they not helping. They not giving us no money. Then they up there counting, taking counts for everybody for what?”

— Black or African American
Does it matter if I’m personally counted?

Apathy

[I would not fill it out] just for not wanting to do it. Just not feeling like it... it kind of seems like taking a survey or something. Almost kind of pointless, like it doesn’t mean anything. It’s not going to help anyways or do anything. It’s more bothersome or more of a nuisance than anything, I guess.”
— Low Internet Proficiency

[I would not fill out the census because] I just don’t care.” — Chinese
About one-quarter of respondents worry about confidentiality.

Were “extremely concerned” or “very concerned” that the Census Bureau would not keep their answers confidential.
About one-quarter of respondents are concerned the census shares data.

24% were “extremely concerned” or “very concerned” that the Census Bureau would share their answers with other government agencies.
Privacy and confidentiality concerns in focus groups

Privacy Concerns

“Privacy [is a reason why people would not fill out the census]. I think there’s a lot of people that are out there – I work in health and we have to keep things private – they probably think, ‘Why do I have to give you this?’”

— American Indian and Alaska Native
Every single scrap of information that the government gets goes to every single intelligence agency, that’s how it works...individual level data. Like, the city government gets information and then the FBI and then the CIA and then ICE and military…”

— Middle Eastern and North African
Nearly 1 in 4 respondents fear that their answers to the 2020 Census will be used against them.

22% were “extremely concerned” or “very concerned” that their answers would be used against them.
Some focus group participants felt the government would use their data against their community.

Harm to the Community

“They could say, ‘Look, this community has, like, X amount of race or something; let’s avoid them, or let’s define that area’... you can see it sometimes where they don’t fund certain schools because it’s in certain ‘bad areas.’”

— Middle Eastern and North African
...or them personally

Harm to them Personally

[Someone might choose not to participate because] it can come back and haunt them...Like if you get food stamps, ...and they will be afraid that it’s going to affect their food stamps if they report somebody else is there.”

— Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander
The citizenship question may be a major barrier

1. Its purpose is to find undocumented immigrants
2. The political discourse is targeting their ethnic group – residents and citizens may also feel endangered

"[The purpose is] to make people panic… Some people will panic because they are afraid that they might be deported.”
— Vietnamese

"For this census, a lot of people are afraid. It doesn’t matter if they ask you whether or not you’re a citizen. The first question they ask you, are you Hispanic or Latino? And that’s enough. That’s all they need. And people are scared.”
— Spanish (U.S. Mainland)

"ICE is working with different groups on deportation sweeps, and it would make me feel like I’m aiding in that. They’re doing a lot of illegal stuff, and so I wouldn’t fill out any of the questions.”
— Middle Eastern and North African

"[Latinos will not participate] out of fear…[there] is practically a hunt [for us]…Latinos are going to be afraid to be counted because of the retaliation that could happen - it’s like giving the government information, saying, ‘Oh, there are more here.’”
— Spanish (U.S. Mainland)
Distrust is highest for the federal government

- 59% said they did not trust the federal government
- 55% said they did not trust their state government
- 47% said they did not trust their local government
Focus group participants who distrust the government do so strongly

“[The government will sell personal information] in a heartbeat.” — Rural

“The government has always been intrusive as it is, and it’s probably a level of intrusion. That’s why people are like, ‘Hold on, what you want to know what’s in my bed, at my house, and who’s using my toilet? You should go mind your business.’” — Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander

“The U.S. Census Bureau is connected to the U.S. government. I don’t trust the government not one bit, so I wouldn’t even if they told me this is what we’re going to do I wouldn’t.” — Black or African American
More feel the 2020 Census benefits the community than them personally

Do you believe answering your 2020 Census form could benefit or harm [your community/you] in any way?

- **Your Community**
  - Benefit: 54%
  - Neither benefit nor harm: 21%
  - Both benefit and harm: 24%
  - Harm: 1%

- **You**
  - Benefit: 37%
  - Neither benefit nor harm: 44%
  - Both benefit and harm: 18%
  - Harm: 1%
Potential Motivators & Facilitators
Survey respondents chose **funding for public services** as the **single** most important reason to respond.

What is the **one** most important reason to fill out the census?

- **30%** Helps determine funding for public services in my community
- **25%** It is my civic duty
- **17%** Contributes to a better future for my community
- **15%** Provides information for my local government to plan for changes
- **9%** Determines my state’s number of elected representatives
Public services are important to nearly all respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Most Important Motivators</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals and healthcare</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire departments</td>
<td>94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police departments</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roads and highways</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcement of civil rights laws</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools and education system</td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic duty</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to a better future for community</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
According to the focus groups, what would motivate people to participate?

Conditions that need to be met to be most compelling

1. Information about the census and its impact
2. Tangible evidence
3. Connection to a better future

— Spanish (U.S. Mainland)

[I would fill it out] because that data is going to impact my community. And if it's not my community, because I die, then my grandchildren and my children.”

— Low Internet Proficiency

Our schools need help. The schools here do need help. It hasn't been that long since the school system was shook up pretty bad, so it does need help, and I don't know about the fire departments.”

— Spanish (U.S. Mainland)
Focus group results imply community can assuage skepticism

According to many focus group participants, trusted voices and organizations with deep community roots may facilitate participation among the most skeptical by:

• **Providing information** about the community funding and the general census process

• **Assuring people** that participation is safe
Trusted voices and organizations

Those who are representing and helping the Hispanic communities [would assure me my information is safe]...Those who are independent, who support all the Hispanics. Those who are now helping [with] DACA and all those young people.” — Spanish (U.S. Mainland)

Most definitely [my church would assure me if I had concerns about filling out the census form].” — Rural

Somebody raised in the city, knows the hardships, and something like that, not somebody that just got elected to be somebody.” — Black or African American
2020 CBAMS
Conclusions & Recommendations
Although people identified “helps determine funding for public services in my community” as the most important reason to fill out the census...

...only 45% of people know that the census is used to determine community funding.
Big Picture Conclusions

Knowledge Gaps
• There is a general lack of knowledge about the census’ scope, purpose, and constitutional foundation

Barriers
• Apathy and lack of efficacy
• Privacy concerns
• Fear of repercussions
• Distrust of government
• Few Perceived Personal Benefits

Motivators
• Funding for community needs is the most influential motivator across audiences
• Services such as hospitals, fire departments, and schools are important to many respondents

✓ Connecting census participation to support for local communities may address apathy and lack of efficacy
✓ Informing the public on the census’ scope, purpose, and process may address privacy and confidentiality concerns and fear of repercussions
✓ Engaging trusted voices may address trust-based concerns, especially among the most skeptical and disaffected
5 2020 CBAMS Mindsets
Creating Candidate Mindsets

For the 2020 mindsets, we used a mathematical approach to balance two goals:

1. Cluster individuals into cohesive groups with similar attitudes/behaviors.
2. Have mindset groupings that are distinct from each other.

Creating the candidate mindsets involved five steps:

• Step 1: Use principal component analysis (PCA) to distill 50+ CBAMS questions into a smaller number of factors.
• Step 2: Cluster algorithms to group into candidate mindsets.
• Step 3: Select a final mindset solution.
• Step 4: Name the mindsets and develop easy-to-understand personas.
• Step 5: Use mindsets to inform the communications program.
Big Picture: Mindsets

**Eager Engagers**
- 19% of U.S. Population
- Intent to Respond: 82%

**Fence Sitters**
- 32% of U.S. Population
- Intent to Respond: 71%

**Confidentiality Minded**
- 15% of U.S. Population
- Intent to Respond: 63%

**Head Nodders**
- 9% of U.S. Population
- Intent to Respond: 60%

**Wary Skeptics**
- 14% of U.S. Population
- Intent to Respond: 59%

**Disconnected Doubters**
- 10% of U.S. Population
- Intent to Respond: 51%

Note: U.S. population percentages do not add to 100% due to rounding error.
Questions?

monica.j.vines@census.gov

gina.k.walejko@census.gov