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

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 addresses apathy and lack of efficacy
- Informing the public on the census’ scope, purpose, and process addresses privacy and confidentiality concerns and fear of repercussions
- Engaging trusted voices addresses trust-based concerns, especially among the most skeptical and disaffected

From "2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study (CBAMS) Survey and Focus Groups: Key Findings for Creative Strategy" (Full Report Begins on Page 3)
2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study (CBAMS) Survey and Focus Groups: Key Findings for Creative Strategy

October 31, 2018
1 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
The 2020 CBAMS Survey was administered from February to April 2018 to 50,000 households 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
- Concerns & Attitudinal Barriers
- Motivators
4 Baseline
Only 7 in 10 said they were likely to respond

CBAMS Survey and Decennial Census
Measured vs Observed Response Rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Measured Response</th>
<th>Observed Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2008 CBAMS Survey</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Census</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020 Census</td>
<td>TBD</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mail response rate to the 2010 census was **22.5 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.*
Intent to respond is very low among some

Select groups with the lowest intent to respond

- Low levels of efficacy: 48%
- Less than a high school diploma: 50%
- 18-34 year olds: 54%
- Low internet proficiency: 54%
- Asians: 55%
- Low internet proficiency: 55%
- Lives in household with 6+ people: 58%
- Renters: 60%
Experiences with the census varied

Positive

"I thought it was kind of fun...it didn’t bother me. I had some trust that they weren’t going to use it against me or whatever...so I was fine with it.” — Rural

Negative

"The experience was negative because it got to be tedious, monotonous, and you went like, ‘Gosh, what is the purpose of what we’re trying for here? Does it need to be that complicated?’” — Low Internet Proficiency
I didn’t [participate] basically from lack of knowledge. I didn’t know anything about it, so push it to the side. It was quite frankly [a] lack of knowledge.”
— Black or African American

Someone came to our door when we first moved in our neighborhood, and my youngest was a baby. She was almost two when we moved in there and I also had three daughters, so you know – it was going to take a while, and I ended up just telling them that I did not have the time to do it.”
— Low Internet Proficiency
Many know the census basics, but not much more

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

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

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.”
— AIAN
### Overview of knowledge gaps

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Description</th>
<th>Correct</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
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<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>31%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts both citizens and non-citizens</td>
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</tr>
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<td>30%</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Knowledge about funding from census data is low

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

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</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 know census counts non-citizens

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use Description</th>
<th>80% incorrect</th>
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<td></td>
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**% Correct by Race/Ethnicity:**
- Hispanic, any-race: 68%
- Asian, NH: 64%
- Small sample race, NH: 57%
- White, NH: 54%
- Black/AA, NH: 48%
Asians & Blacks are misinformed about use of census

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>6%</td>
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<td>To determine how many representatives each state will have in Congress (True)</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counts both citizens and non-citizens (True)</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To locate people living in the country without documentation (False)</td>
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<td>To determine the rate of unemployment (False)</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

% Incorrect by Race/Ethnicity:
- Asian, NH: 19%
- Black/AA, NH: 19%
- Small sample race, NH: 12%
- Hispanic, any-race: 10%
- White, NH: 8%
Hispanics believe the census would be used to find undocumented people

“I feel that it does go to the immigration agency.”
— Spanish (U.S. Mainland)

For example, let’s say in my house two people would be affected...And sometimes, it is the opposite. Sometimes the others can’t be affected, but we can. The heads of households. So, in any case, one is at risk [by filling out the census].”
— Spanish (U.S. Mainland)

[I would not participate in the census because] they [immigration] will know where we are and what our names are and where we live…”
— Spanish (U.S. Mainland)
5 Barriers
Major barriers to participation in the 2020 Census

- Apathy & Efficacy
- Concerns about data confidentiality & privacy
- Fear of Repercussions
- Distrust in Government
Low levels of efficacy across audience groups

41%

said it only matters “a moderate amount,” “a little,” or “not at all” if they are personally counted in the census.
Select groups with the lowest levels of efficacy

- 18 – 34 year olds: 55%
- Asians: 47%
- Small-sample races: 46%
- Whites: 43%
- Responded to survey in English: 41%
Some were apathetic – they didn’t care

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

[[@] would not fill out the census because] I *just don’t care.*” — Chinese
Others lacked efficacy – it didn’t matter if they were 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
Census’ definition of confidentiality

The U.S. Census Bureau is bound by Title 13 of the United States Code. It provides strong protection for the information we collect from individuals and businesses.

The Census Bureau has one of the strongest confidentiality guarantees in the federal government.

It is against the law for any Census Bureau employee to disclose or publish any census or survey information that identifies an individual or business.

This is true even for inter-agency communication: the FBI and other government entities do not have the legal right to access this information.
Respondents worry about confidentiality

28% were “extremely concerned” or “very concerned” that the Census Bureau would not keep their answers confidential.
Respondents worry about confidentiality

Select groups with the highest levels of worry about confidentiality

- Asians: 41%
- Low English proficiency: 41%
- Low internet proficiency: 40%
- Blacks/African Americans: 38%
- Less than a HS diploma: 38%
- Born outside the U.S.: 37%
- 65+ years old: 35%
- High efficacy: 32%
Some 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.
Some are concerned the census shares data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Concern Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low English proficiency</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded in Spanish</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than HS diploma</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asians</td>
<td>35%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low internet proficiency</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born outside U.S.</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanics</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-sample races</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65+</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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?’”

— AIAN
Confidentiality Concerns

“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…”

— MENA
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.
Nearly 1 in 4 respondents fear that their answers to the 2020 Census will be used against them.

Select groups with the highest levels of fear:

- Asians: 41%
- Low English proficiency: 39%
- Born outside U.S.: 34%
- Responded to survey in Spanish: 34%
- Less than high school diploma: 32%
- Live in households in HTC census tracts: 31%
Participants believed the government would use their data against them personally...

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.’”

— MENA
[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.”
— NHPI
The 2020 Census benefits the community

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%
Hispanics most likely to believe in community benefits

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: 44%
  - Both benefit and harm: 18%
  - Harm: 1%

- **You**
  - Benefit: 37%
  - Neither benefit nor harm: 44%
  - Both benefit and harm: 18%
  - Harm: 1%

% Benefit by Race/Ethnicity:
- Hispanic, any-race: 62%
- Asian, NH: 55%
- White, NH: 53%
- Black/AA, NH: 52%
- Small sample race, NH: 47%
Small-sample races & Whites perceive fewer personal benefits from responding

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

- **Benefit**:
  - Your Community: 54%
  - You: 37%
  - Neither benefit nor harm: 21%
  - Both benefit and harm: 24%

- **Harm**:
  - Your Community: 1%
  - You: 1%

% Benefit by Race/Ethnicity:
- Hispanic, any-race: 48%
- Black/AA, NH: 43%
- Asian, NH: 40%
- White, NH: 34%
- Small sample race, NH: 33%
## There are misperceptions about the census’ purpose

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

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Correct</th>
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<td>31%</td>
<td>16%</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.
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

“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.”
— MENA

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

“[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)

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

“[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
## Select groups with the highest levels of distrust in the federal government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low levels of efficacy</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low intent to respond</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small-sample races</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Born in the U.S.</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college or associate degree</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High English proficiency</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household not in HTC census tract</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responded to survey in English</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Those 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.’”
— NHPI

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
6 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
**Funding for Public Services** is the **one** most important reason to respond for all races/ethnicities.

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

- **% by Race/Ethnicity**
  - Black/AA, NH: 34%
  - Hispanic, any-race: 33%
  - Small sample race, NH: 29%
  - White, NH: 29%
  - Asian, NH: 27%
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>
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

Schools & Education System

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.”
— Low Internet Proficiency

Better Future for Community

[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.”
— Spanish (U.S. Mainland)
How the community can assuage skepticism

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
7 Select Audiences

Audiences presented in alphabetical order.
Motivators to respond

- Participants expressed a desire to learn more about the census and its process, applications, and impact on them. Some also wanted to know what the Census Bureau is and what it does with census information.

- Participants stated a need for funding of community improvement projects. They identified the key institutions of schools and hospitals as the leading beneficiaries of such funding.

- Emphasizing the importance of trusted voices, some said they participated because they knew the person at the door.

Attitudinal barriers

- Among all AIAN groups, concerns of privacy proved to be the most widely cited barrier for filling out the census form.

- In multiple cases, participants attributed their lack of previous or potential future participation to privacy concerns—whether it was not feeling comfortable divulging personal information to an unknown enumerator or sending private information through a form.

Note: Audience insights are based on focus group data only because there were concerns about the ability to obtain unbiased data for this group using a quantitative survey.
Intent to respond (55%) was lower than average

Top misconceptions about the census the marketing campaign could address
- Used to locate people living in the country without documentation (false, 19% incorrect)
- Used by the FBI and police to keep track of people who break the law (false, 18% incorrect)
- Used to determine how much money communities get from government (true, 15% incorrect)

Top attitudinal barriers
- Concern about confidentiality of answers (41%)
- Fear of repercussions (41%)
- Distrust in government (41%)

Other considerations
- Focus group participants emphasized that language is a significant potential barrier to participation.
- Many Asian focus group respondents were particularly guarded about potential scams surrounding the census. Their concerns were heightened at the prospect of direct interactions with or visits to their homes by strangers in part because they are providing what they see as personal information.
- Many referred to filling out the census as a “responsibility as a citizen.” – but, particularly in multiple-family households, did not want to/feel it appropriate to fill out the census for others.
Intent to respond (64%) was lower than average

Top misconceptions about the census the marketing campaign could address
- Used to count citizens and non-citizens (true, 21% incorrect)
- Used to locate people living in the country without documentation (false, 19% incorrect)
- Used to determine number of representatives in congress (true, 18% incorrect)

Top attitudinal barriers
- Concern about confidentiality of answers (38%)
- Fear of repercussions (34%)
- Concern that answers will be shared with other government agencies (34%)

Other considerations
- Focus group participants had little hope that the 2020 Census would benefit their communities, as they had not seen change result from the census in the past.
- The focus group discussions revealed that participants strongly distrusted the government (all levels) and, by extension, the census. Participants related this to personal experience and unmet expectations.
- Some focus group participants said the government uses the census to “control” aspects of the population, leading to poor conditions in their communities compared to other communities.
Intent to respond (65%) was slightly below average

Top misconceptions about the census the marketing campaign could address
- Used to determine how much money communities get from gov’t (true, 17% incorrect)
- Used to determine number of representatives in congress (true, 16% incorrect)
- Used to locate people living in the country without documentation (false, 10% incorrect)

Top attitudinal barriers
- Concern about confidentiality of answers (34%)
- Concern that answers will be shared with other government agencies (32%)
- Fear of repercussions (33%)

Other considerations
- Focus group participants expressed intense fear that information will be shared with other government agencies to help them find undocumented immigrants. Participants worried that their participation in the census could harm them personally or others in their communities/households they care about.
- When presented with the Census Bureau’s promise of confidentiality, participants did not believe the promise would be kept.
- In Puerto Rico, Hurricane Maria displaced many people, and multiple families now occupy a single address, creating significant confusion about how to define a household.
Audience: Households with Young Children

Intent to respond (60%) was lower than average

Top misconceptions about the census the marketing campaign could address

- Used to determine how much money communities get from government (true, 19% incorrect)
- Used to determine number of representatives in congress (true, 15% incorrect)
- Used to count citizens and non-citizens (true, 14% incorrect)

Top attitudinal barriers

- Distrust in government (57%)
- Believe participating in the census will neither benefit nor harm them personally (43%)
- Fear of repercussions (24%)

Note: Audience insights are based on survey data only. Households with young children is defined as households with children 5 years old and younger.
Intent to respond (67%) was average

Top misconceptions about the census the marketing campaign could address

- Used to count citizens and non-citizens (true, 14% incorrect)
- Used to determine how much money communities get from government (true, 12% incorrect)
- Used to locate people living in the country without documentation (false, 10% incorrect)

Top attitudinal barriers

- Distrust in government (64%)
- Believe participating in the census will neither benefit nor harm them personally (45%)
- Concern about confidentiality of answers (28%)

Note: Audience insights are based on survey data only.
Motivators to respond

- Focus group participants wanted to feel that they counted and expressed that the inclusion of a MENA category would be an acknowledgement that they exist. The absence of a MENA category, on the other hand, can create feelings of exclusion as well as confusion about how to respond.

- Completing the census as a form of civic responsibility was a strong motivator among those who became naturalized citizens as adults, but was unconvincing among the native born and those who immigrated to the U.S. as young children.

Attitudinal barriers

- Participants feared the government would use their information against them in the future for a reason they did not yet know. Many doubted the government would safeguard their data, especially after the travel ban that included many of their countries of origin.

- Others reported experiencing discrimination, both by the government and society. They believed the inclusion of a “Middle Eastern or North African” option could facilitate this discrimination by preventing the distribution of funds and opportunities to their communities by private or public benefactors.

Note: Audience insights are based on focus group data only, due to low incidence in both the population and the sample.
Motivators to respond

- Participants took pride in seeing their separate nations of origin as options on government forms. The Native Hawaiians were proud when “Native Hawaiian” became its own group in the census.
- While NHPI participants of other nationalities supported the Native Hawaiians, they wanted their own nationality to be an option.
- NHPI participants had a strong desire to help their community.

Attitudinal barriers

- Multiple participants found the census questions (e.g., how many people live in your household) too intrusive and did not feel comfortable filling out the form.
- Focus group participants often expressed fear of their information being shared due to their living situations and perceived risk of eviction. Many lived in large, complex households with a number of people in their house—more than the property owner knew.
- Focus group participants didn’t know why the census collects their information, and connected their negative experiences with the government to potential repercussions (e.g., eviction, loss of food assistance eligibility) for completing the census.

Note: Audience insights are based on focus group data only, due to low incidence in both the population and the sample.
8 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

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 addresses apathy and lack of efficacy

✅ Informing the public on the census’ scope, purpose, and process addresses privacy and confidentiality concerns and fear of repercussions

✅ Engaging trusted voices addresses trust-based concerns, especially among the most skeptical and disaffected
People are divided on mode preference

Which comes closest to your view?

- **32%**  
  I prefer to fill out paper forms instead of online forms

- **28%**  
  I have no preference

- **40%**  
  I prefer to fill out online forms instead of paper forms

---

Give two options [to complete the census]. If you want to fill it out online, you can do or provide the document and say, ‘Look, you can do it in writing and send it by mail.’”
— Spanish (Puerto Rico)

“There needs to be both because you have people who aren’t used to computers.”
— Black or African American

“I would prefer [online] than having to speak to someone. I feel like if you go on a website, they’re more likely to give more information than if they just hire someone to go in front of you and ask you.”
— Young and Mobile
### Table A.1: Percentage of knowledge about the census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge Question</th>
<th>Answered Correctly</th>
<th>Answered Incorrectly (Includes “Don’t Know”)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The census is used to determine what changes have taken place in the size, location, and characteristics of the people in the United States. [True]</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Census Bureau is required by law to keep information confidential. [True]</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The census is used to help the police and FBI keep track of people who break the law. [False]</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The census is used to determine how many representatives each state will have in Congress. [True]</td>
<td>57%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The census counts both citizens and non-citizens. [True]</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The census is used to locate people living in the country without documentation. [False]</td>
<td>53%</td>
<td>47%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The census is used to determine property taxes. [False]</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The census is used to determine how much money communities will get from the government. [True]</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The U.S. Constitution requires the census be conducted. [True]</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The census is used to determine the rate of unemployment. [False]</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The law requires you to answer the census questions. [True]</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: (1) Based on the question format, “Is the census used to __________, or is it not used for this?”
Table A.2: Percentage of respondents who chose each motivator as the ONE most important reason to fill out the census

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Weighted Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It helps determine funding for public services in my community like schools and fire departments</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is my civic duty (along with voting, jury duty, paying taxes)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It contributes to a better future for my community</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It provides information for my local government to plan for changes in my community</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It determines how many elected representatives my state has in Congress</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is used to enforce civil rights laws</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It shows that I am proud of my cultural heritage</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes: (1) Based on the question, “Which ONE of the following is the most important reason, to you personally, that you should fill out the census form? Select only one answer.”*
### Table A.3: Percentage of respondents who identified each motivator as “extremely important” or “very important”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivator</th>
<th>Weighted Percentage of Respondents</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>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing to a better future for your community</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information for local government planning</td>
<td>76%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Determining number of congressional representatives</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job training programs</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public transportation</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displaying pride in cultural heritage</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daycare for children</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Based on the question “How important, if at all, is each of the following to you personally? (a) Extremely important (b) Very important (c) Somewhat important (d) Not too important (e) Not at all important.”
**Study Design: CBAMS Focus Groups**

Team Y&R conducted the CBAMS Focus Groups among the following audience groups.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUDIENCE CATEGORIES</th>
<th>RECRUITMENT CRITERIA</th>
<th>PARTICIPANTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian And Alaska Native</td>
<td>Identifies as AIAN; speaks English at home</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>Identifies as Black or African American; has a high school education or less, or has a household income under $30,000/year</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese – Cantonese and Mandarin</td>
<td>Speaks Chinese at home</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Internet Proficiency</td>
<td>Uses the internet a few times a month or less; speaks English at home</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Eastern And North African</td>
<td>Identifies as MENA; speaks English at home</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian And Pacific Islander (NHPI)</td>
<td>Identifies as NHPI; speaks English at home</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Identifies as White, Non-Hispanic; lives in a Zip Code Tabulation Area identified as rural in the 2010 Census</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish (Puerto Rico)</td>
<td>Resident of Puerto Rico; speaks Spanish at home</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish (U.S. Mainland)</td>
<td>Speaks Spanish at home; is a resident of mainland U.S.</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>Speaks Vietnamese at home</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young And Mobile</td>
<td>Is 18 to 24 years old and not married; rents home</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Seated</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>308</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>