

# 2020 Census Integrated Partnerships and Communications Operation: Campaign Optimization and Lessons Learned



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# 2020 Census Integrated Partnership and Communications Operation

The Integrated Partnership and Communications operation communicated the importance of participating in the 2020 Census to the entire population of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the island areas to:

- We engage and encourage people to auto-respond, preferably via the Internet
- Raised and kept awareness high throughout the 2020 Census to encourage response



# 2020 Census Integrated Communications Contract (ICC)

## Scope

- The contractor planned, designed, integrated, produced, implemented, monitor, and assess an integrated communications program for the 2020 Census.

## Importance

- Supported the 2020 Census Program's mission to complete and accurate census in 2020

## Purpose

- The partnership and communications program is the public face of the census.
- This contract is a key foundation for a successful census - we have learned a great deal from the last two censuses and used that knowledge in planning for this contract.

# Languages Covered

**English**

**Spanish**

**Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese)**

**Vietnamese**

**Korean**

**Russian**

**Arabic**

**Tagalog**

**Polish**

**French**

**Haitian Creole**

**Portuguese**

**Japanese**

# National Partnerships Program

Use strategic national partnerships to increase public trust, awareness, and support of the Census Bureau's mission to accurately measure the nation's population and economy



Sponsorship and Promotions



Message and Brand Awareness



Activities and Events



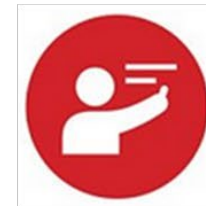
Social and Digital Engagement



Increase Response Rates



Data Use and Feedback



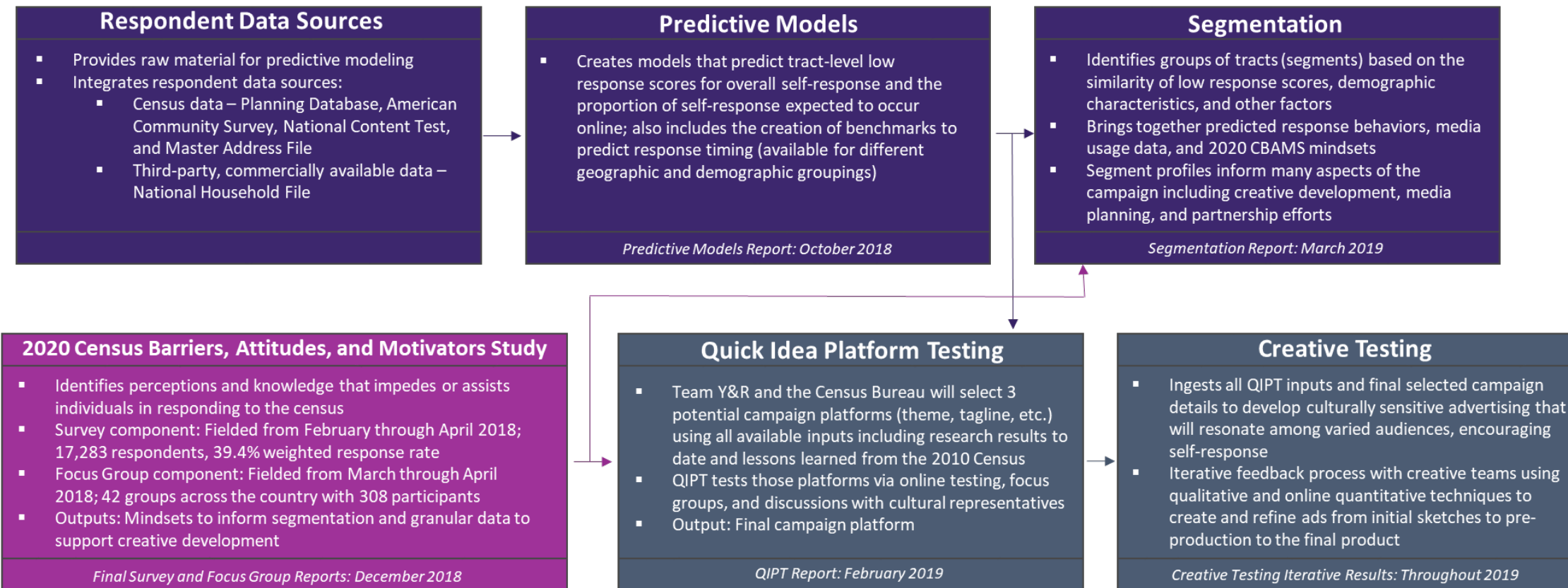
Policy/Advocacy

# Community Partnership and Engagement Program (CPEP)

Enrolled community partners to increase decennial participation of those who are less likely to respond or are often missed

- **Educate** people about the 2020 Census and foster cooperation with enumerators
- **Encourage** community partners to motivate people to self-respond
- **Engage** grass roots organizations to reach out to hard-to-count groups and those who are not motivated to respond to the national campaign

# 2020 Census Integrated Partnership and Communications: Research Flow

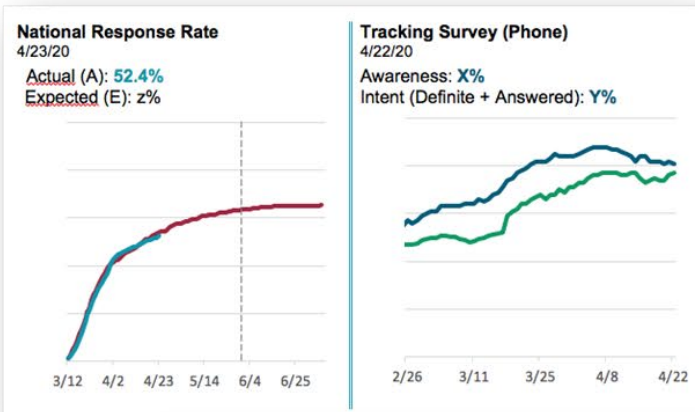


# What happened on March 2020?



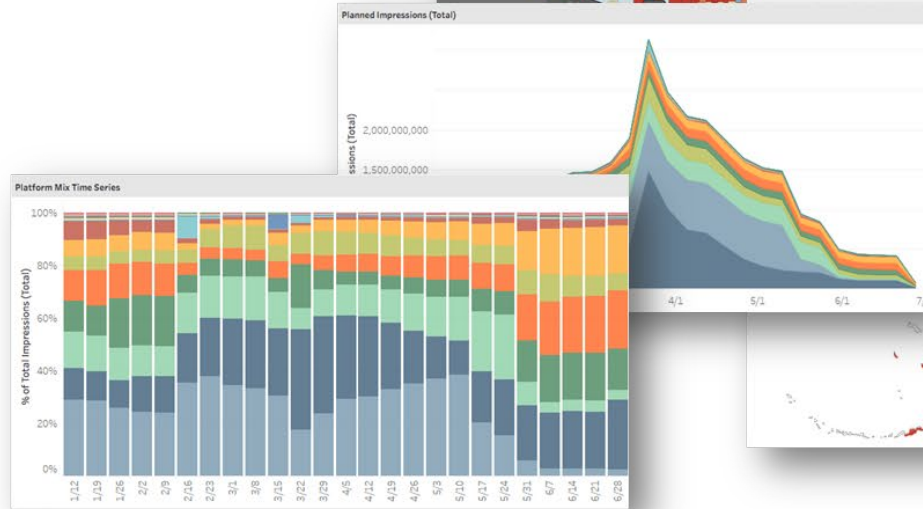
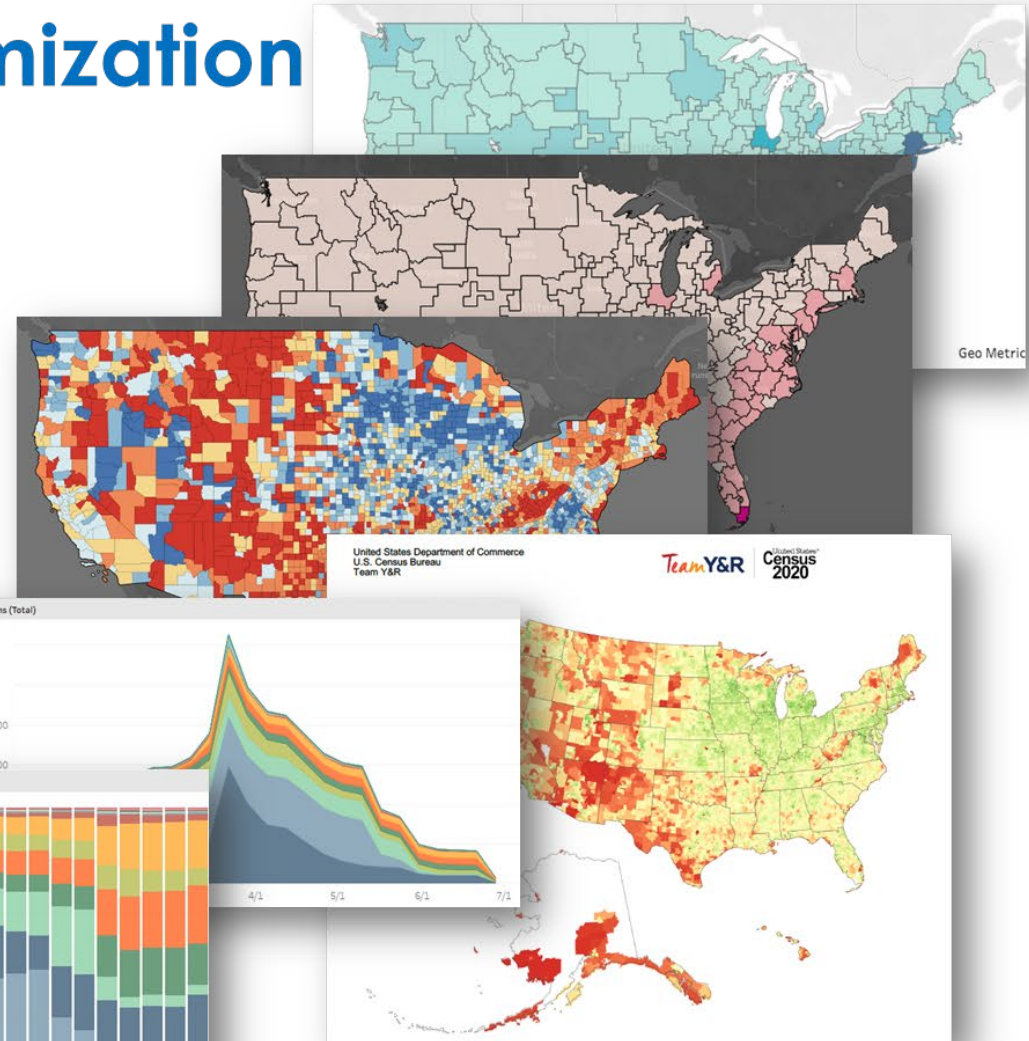
# Data-Driven Campaign Optimization

- Campaign optimization team evaluates daily tract-level response rates, tracking survey results, and other data sources to evaluate campaign performance.
- Data scientists use interactive dashboards and custom analyses to uncover issues and inform decisions.



| Segment <sup>4</sup>        | RR | Projected | % of OHU |
|-----------------------------|----|-----------|----------|
| Main Street Middle          |    |           |          |
| Responsive Suburbia         |    |           |          |
| Country Roads               |    |           |          |
| Downtown Dynamic            |    |           |          |
| Multicultural Mosaic        |    |           |          |
| Rural Delta & Urb. Enclaves |    |           |          |
| Sparse Spaces               |    |           |          |
| Student & Mil. Communities  |    |           |          |
| No ACS Mail Out             |    |           |          |

Actual vs. Projected Response By Audience Segment



# COVID-19 fallout surged as we approached and entered the Motivation phase, with far-reaching implications

- Occupied a substantial “share of mind” among the U.S. public, making it harder for Census messaging to breakthrough
- Limited ground support for 2020 Census campaign –significantly reducing the regional and localized outreach supporting the overall 2020 campaign
- Reduced earned media opportunities – media focus on COVID-19 and related changes in news/talk program format made it difficult to secure earned media coverage
- Shifted programming and media consumption patterns necessitated rapid adjustment in media planning and tactics
- Campaign messaging adjustments needed to reflect COVID-19 related realities across all audiences
- Longer motivation phase required additional investment and planning to achieve target reach and frequency levels
- Loss of operational synchronization with the communications campaign, including capacity reductions for CQA, delays in national questionnaire mailout (mailing #4), and suspension of update/leave and update/enumerate operations

# 2020 Paid Media Planning Evolution and Adaptation

| Campaign Expansion  | Motivation Launch Heavy Up (3/23)  | Census Day/Week Heavy Up   | April/May Surge   |
|---|--|--|---|
| <p><b>Expand breadth</b> of paid campaign to engage more audiences and local media markets and expand number of languages supported.</p> <p>In market April-May 2020</p>  | <p>Pre-Motivation tracking survey <b>awareness and intent metrics informed</b> broad media heavy up to address difficult media landscape due to outsized spending on early 2020 primaries during Awareness and emergence of COVID-19 entering Motivation.</p>  | <p><b>Maintain momentum</b> from Motivation heavy up (3/23) into Census Week to support Census Day activities and drive self-response nationwide. Begin adapting messaging to reflect COVID environment.</p>   | <p><b>Incremental investment</b> to support longer, more media intensive Motivation Phase due to suspension of 2020 field operations and COVID-related market dynamics.</p>   |
| <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 2px 10px; display: inline-block;">Investment Includes</div>   |  |  |   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addition of 137 new DMAs in local media plans, including Hispanic (62), B/AA (4), Asian (24), and Diverse Mass (47)</li> <li>• Increase of 7 billion impressions – 33% increase over original plan</li> <li>• Paid search or print advertising in ~32 new languages</li> <li>• Incremental paid search</li> <li>• Hyper-local media support (~30 markets)</li> </ul> | <p>Broad media investment in English and Spanish to complement previously planned media, drive awareness and self response and boost beginning of Motivation phase during week of 3/23, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National TV</li> <li>• Digital Out of Home (new channel)</li> <li>• Digital</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased weight in national and local paid media across all markets</li> <li>• Integrations across key morning shows such as Good Morning America, Steve Harvey Show, Un Nuevo Dia, and Despierta America</li> <li>• Census Day radio activation across 850+ Diverse Mass, B/AA, and Hispanic iHeartMedia radio stations</li> <li>• Full-page newspaper ads and online takeovers with NY Times, Washington Post, USA Today, and Tribune Network</li> </ul> | <p>Increase media weight and extend Motivation Phase thru May, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased local TV, radio, print, and digital support to targeted audiences and DMAs</li> <li>• Innovative media placements to reflect changing behavior like pizza boxes, digital OOH, and integration with at home concerts and virtual graduations</li> <li>• Hyper-local media support (~60 additional markets)</li> </ul> |

# Media channel and strategy has also adapted to the COVID-19 media environment

- **Shifting media weights** in traditional dayparts as people have been viewing more news, early morning, late night, and entertainment programming
- **Adjusting digital media** mix as people have been consuming more digital news, streaming audio, interacting on social networks, and using more apps on their mobile devices
- **Increased weight in Free Episode Player** (FEP) platforms such as Hulu and major TV networks
- **Launching digital out-of-home** placements specifically at grocery and convenience stores, gas stations, and other locations still open while stay at home orders are in place
- **Implementing innovative media placements**, such as flyers on pizza boxes and other carry out dining food, to leverage the changing consumer behavior due to COVID-19
- **Executing media placements during virtual events**, such as at-home concerts and iHeartMedia Commencement, which have taken the place of live events
- **Leveraging influencers and trusted voices** to carry Census messaging to those audiences who are historically hard to count





# Creative Developed Post-COVID-19



# The paid media campaign has expanded to support at least 45 of the 59 languages included in the 2020 Census expanded language program

**Core ICC Languages:**  
Paid + ISR + CQA

**2020 Census Expanded Language Program**  
Supported with language guides and videos at [2020census.gov/languages](https://2020census.gov/languages)

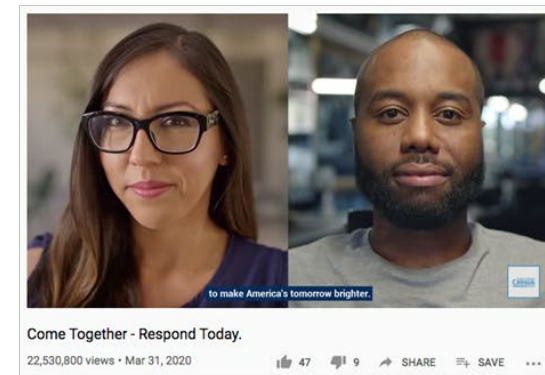
|                |           |          |            |                        |
|----------------|-----------|----------|------------|------------------------|
| Spanish        | Italian   | Khmer    | Tamil      | Croatian               |
| Chinese        | Farsi     | Nepali   | Navajo     | Bulgarian              |
| Vietnamese     | German    | Urdu     | Hungarian  | Twi                    |
| Korean         | Armenian  | Romanian | Hebrew     | Lithuanian             |
| Russian        | Hindi     | Telugu   | Malayalam  | Yoruba                 |
| Arabic         | Ukrainian | Burmese  | Swahili    | Czech                  |
| Tagalog        | Bengali   | Punjabi  | Yiddish    | Igbo                   |
| Polish         | Greek     | Lao      | Indonesian | Marathi                |
| French         | Amharic   | Hmong    | Serbian    | Sinhala                |
| Haitian Creole | Somali    | Albanian | Tigrinya   | Slovak                 |
| Portuguese     | Thai      | Turkish  | Ilocano    | American Sign Language |
| Japanese       | Gujarati  | Bosnian  | Dutch      |                        |



Now supported by paid search, digital, or print advertising

# Census moved quickly and effectively to adapt to market dynamics

- **Increased total paid media budget from \$240M to \$323.5M**, with incremental investment across all audiences and markets and strategic campaign enhancements, including:
  - Additional paid media to support launch of Motivation Phase and Census Week and longer enumeration period
  - Expansion of languages supported with paid media from original 13 core languages to at least 45 languages<sup>1,2</sup>
  - Addition of English-language Hispanic-targeted media campaign across TV, radio, print, and digital channels<sup>1</sup>
  - Increased number of local paid media markets, advertising channels, and tactics
- **Expanded hyper-local earned media outreach** to ~90 markets nationwide
- **Quickly launched updated creative and messaging** with three new TV, radio and digital spots in less than 10 days to reflect new COVID-19 related realities
- **Ongoing data-driven campaign decisions** based upon tract-level response analysis. Data insights inform media investment and channel mix, paid search keywords and tactics, hyper-local earned media market prioritization, and much more



<sup>1</sup> Note: Creative development and media vendor selection/negotiation still in process. Creative will air in May 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Language expansion was focused on the 59 non-English languages with translated web pages and response guides at [2020census.gov/en/languages.html](https://2020census.gov/en/languages.html)

# 2020 Census National Partnership Program

- Secured **1,064 national participating organizations** as of Sept. 25, 2020. More than 446,000 national and community partnership events were held as of August 2020.
- Created hundreds of downloadable and printable materials for partners to use in various languages on the 2020 Census website—including fact sheets, posters, social media toolkits and more.
- Shared information, resources and operational updates with partners via an email list with nearly 80,000 subscribers.

## Examples of Partner Engagement:

- Sesame Workshop created a PSA with characters The Count, Elmo and Rosita to remind households to count kids in the census. They also created a 2020 Census toolkit and sent characters to a Census Bureau event focused on counting young children.
- United Way Worldwide gave census promotional items to food bank clients.
- Uber sent an email reminder in both English and Spanish to 46.7 million riders and drivers as well as Uber Eats customers and employees encouraging them to complete the census online.
- NASCAR sent an email to its subscribers encouraging fans to respond to the census.
- Walmart ran the Census Bureau's "Recovery" ad on its TV display walls in stores.
- The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance hosted a virtual dance party promoting census response.
- Ring coordinated 2020 Census push notifications through its app, Neighbors.

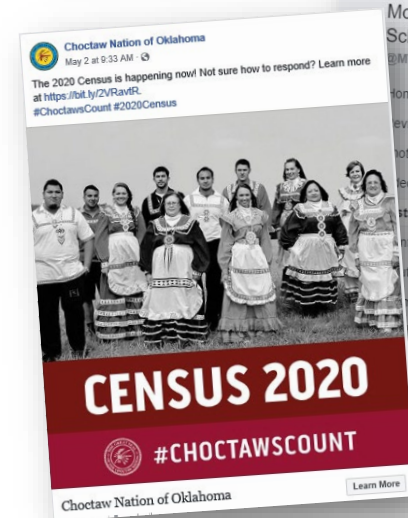
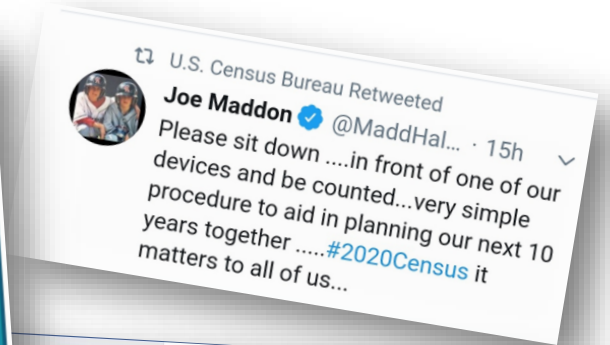
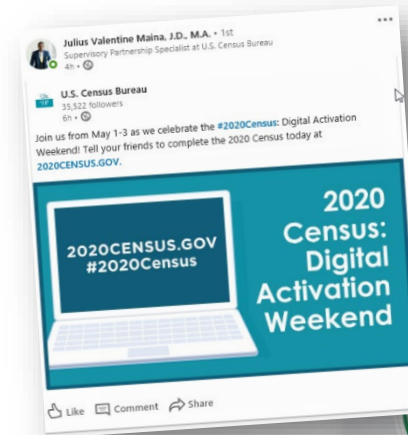


# Community Partnership and Engagement Program (CPEP)

## Digital Engagement Weekend – May 1st-3rd

### Activating Locally, Engaging Virtually

- COVID-19 led to the cancellation of in-person events, requiring CPEP to develop and implement their **Partnership Virtual Strategy Engagement Plan**
- The plan provided strategies for partners to promote the 2020 Census and self response through virtual events and other online activities. For example: Digital Weekend of Action; Virtual Create-a-thons; participation in online events, calls, and other media.
- **Digital Weekend of Action Metrics**
  - 32,727 posts
  - 800,000 responses during that weekend
  - 13.4% increase in traffic to census.gov






# Lessons Learned

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# 2020 IPC LL Data Collection Approach

Three different types of data collection tools were used during the 2020 IPC Lessons Learned Research Phase. Data collection tools included surveys, interviews, and workshops. These three data sources served different purposes and provided different types of data (quantitative and qualitative).

| Tool             |  Surveys   |  Interviews  |  Workshops   |
|------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>Objective</b> | Traditional Likert scale questionnaires enabled collection of preliminary anonymous feedback and, in turn, inform discussions in interviews and workshops.  | Dynamic interview guides were used to facilitate individual and/or group interviews to capture feedback on key research questions.  | Workshops were conducted to encourage open discussion and mutual learning among participants.   |
| <b>Audiences</b> | Two online survey questionnaires were administered to different groups of Lessons Learned participants: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The first online survey (<b>IPC-ICC Survey</b>) was distributed to Census staff and contractor and subcontractor staff involved in the IPC operation via the Integrated Communications Contract (ICC)</li> <li>(2) The second online survey (<b>National Partner and Stakeholder Survey</b>) was distributed to all 2020 Census national partners and stakeholder organizations.</li> </ol>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The primary intended target group for <b>individual interviews</b> was Census Executives, IPC Management and key external stakeholders.</li> <li>• <b>Group interviews</b> were planned for smaller IPC sub-teams, or to gather up to 4 individuals when seeking collective input (e.g., external stakeholders having cooperated on outreach activities).</li> </ul>   | <b>Workshops were organized for each IPC sub-team and ICC campaign elements as well as a selection of cross-team topics</b> (e.g., program management, languages and translation/audiences, integration). IPC workshops included only Census participants, while ICC workshops included Census participants, contractors and sub-contractors. While workshops all followed the same structure and high-level agenda to ensure consistency in data collection, facilitation guides were tailored for each workshop based on key topics identified. |
| <b>Scale</b>     | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The <b>IPC-ICC survey</b> was distributed to <b>275 potential respondents</b> and open for a 6-week period (Sept. – Oct. 2020). The 41 questions were structured around the Lessons Learned Research Topics. By the survey close date, the <b>response rate was just over 80%</b>.</li> <li>(2) The <b>National Partner &amp; Stakeholder survey</b> was distributed to <b>1,000+ potential respondents</b>; the <b>response rate was just over 18%</b> by the survey close date (open for a 3-week period, between mid-February and the mid-March 2021).</li> </ol> | <p><b>52 interviews</b> were conducted during the research phase spanning from September 17, 2020 – March 31, 2021. Of these 50+ interviews:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>26 interviews</b> (60 min/each) were conducted with <b>Census leadership</b> mid-October 2020 to mid-January 2021.</li> <li>(2) <b>26 interviews</b> were conducted with <b>individuals representing 36 different national organizations</b>, covering each of the 22 National Partnership Program portfolios and other stakeholder groups.</li> </ol> | <b>31 virtual workshops</b> were conducted between IPC and ICC, each gathering 5-40+ participants.  |

# Overview of Key Successes

In assessing both the quantitative and qualitative data, certain themes consistently emerged across operational areas and campaign elements. Key overarching successes are listed below; successes specific to sub-teams are covered in [section 4](#) of this document.



## **MISSION**

- The IPC operations' sub-teams and contracts supported the mission to motivate self response according to 91% of survey respondents (see [Appendix](#))
- More effort was devoted to reaching specific populations than in past decennials, although LL participants noted opportunities for improvement
- Collaboration with partners and stakeholders helped reach Hard to Count (HTC) audiences with tailored messaging from a trusted voice



## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

- The structure of the IPC operation with smaller sub-teams and task orders was effective for an operation of this scale



## **COMMUNICATION & INTEGRATION**

- The weekly meeting for IPC team leads to share information across the IPC operation enabled coordination and broke down silos when well attended



## **CONTENT**

- Diverse channels and media platforms were used to reach a wide audience
- The Creative Review Team (CRT) was successful in adhering to a process to review, approve, and obtain buy-in for creative assets
- The website contained information in several languages and was consistent with the look and feel of the campaign



## **CONTRACT**

- The services provided via the ICC were appropriate for meeting IPC's needs
- Resources allocated to ICC task orders were sufficient for program success according to 73% of ICC survey respondents (see [Appendix](#))
- Having a PMO dedicated to tracking risks and scheduling enabled informed decision making and agile operations
- The structure of having an SME paired with an Order Manager for task orders was effective for managing ICC activities
- Multicultural subcontractors provided valuable expertise for targeting HTC and non-English-speaking audiences



## **RESEARCH, EVALUATION & METRICS**

- The Census Bureau Attitudes and Motivators Survey (CBAMS) was an indispensable tool that informed decision making resulting in a research-driven campaign (see [Appendix](#))



## **PROJECT LIFECYCLE**

- Continuity of staff meant IPC personnel were equipped with the knowledge, skills, and understanding needed to fulfill IPC's mission



## **RESOURCES**

- Dedicated personnel and teams delivered in a constantly changing and under-staffed environment



## **RISK & AGILITY**

- IPC was able to adapt the campaign and outreach to the COVID-19 pandemic

# Overview of Key Opportunities for Improvement

Key overarching opportunities for improvement are listed below; challenges and opportunities specific to sub-teams are covered in [section 4](#) of this document.



## **MISSION**

- Outreach to HTC/HTR audiences could be improved by devoting greater attention to key aspects of these populations; intersectionality, English speakers in an immigrant population, the digital divide, and sub-segments within each population



## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

- Occasional leadership misalignment on objectives for IPC and, at times, inconsistent leadership involvement created scheduling and decision-making challenges
- IPC's placement within DCCO, instead of DCMD, impacted IPC in terms of visibility and access to resources
- Having the ICC PMO office hosted outside of the core IPC structure resulted in misalignment in schedule and communication gaps



## **COMMUNICATION & INTEGRATION**

- Siloed teams were, at times, unaware of each others' activities with reported communication gaps across directorates, ICC work orders, and partnership programs (National and Community-Based)



## **CONTENT**

- The implementation of different review and approval processes resulted in inefficiencies
- Messaging and materials in English and non-English languages were not sufficiently tailored to HTC audiences
- The process for developing non-English materials caused delays and inconsistencies and did not take regional dialects and cultural differences into account



## **CONTRACT**

- The contract structure perpetuated silos; the contract had limited ability to accommodate the evolving needs of the campaign
- Having digital content activities under multiple task orders created integration challenges



## **RESEARCH, EVALUATION & METRICS**

- Tracking the success of campaign ads in terms of traffic to internet self-response (ISR) and self-response completion proved challenging



## **PROJECT LIFECYCLE**

- Timelines, and what has been referred to as a 'late start', were identified as major challenges during the 2020 IPC operation, especially for program elements that began earlier (e.g., recruitment, CRM, website, early media buys)
- Funding was not made available until too late in the cycle and the contract was not funded early enough despite awarding it early



## **RESOURCES**

- Budget and staffing were deemed insufficient for an operation of this size with the contract over resourced in relation to government staff funding (see [Appendix](#))
- A lack of funding early on meant there were roadblocks in the hiring process when all projects were bringing on staff at the same time



## **RISK & AGILITY**

- Census staff experienced difficulties quickly releasing information in a rapidly changing environment to partners, stakeholders, and the public

# Overview of Key Recommendations

Participants suggested IPC-wide recommendations to repeat successes and address areas for improvement; recommendations specific to sub-teams are covered in [section 4](#) of this document.



## **MISSION**

- Conduct additional research on HTC/HTR populations focusing on intersectionality of different audiences and populations
- Rethink approaches for HTC/HTR populations including messaging, mix of non-English languages, channels, and intersectionality



## **ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE**

- Establish a clear governance structure so the operation is executed as designed with roles and responsibilities clearly defined
- Sub-teams focused on media (social media, digital media, ESO) could be structured to be more collaborative and integrated



## **COMMUNICATION & INTEGRATION**

- Encourage open lines of communication for information sharing across sub-teams and directorates throughout the entire lifecycle of IPC & ICC



## **CONTENT**

- Have a consistent content review process and a single review team for all content to ensure consistency across programs
- Expand the structure for the Creative Review Team with full-time staff to cover all creative content for the campaign
- Transcreate (develop materials and messaging in parallel with English ones) non-English content to avoid delays and inconsistent messaging



## **CONTRACT**

- Explore contract arrangements that allows flexibility to accommodate the campaign's evolving needs
- Involve individuals with previous hands-on experience in the campaign in the requirements gathering process
- Continue collaboration with multicultural advertising agencies



## **RESEARCH, EVALUATION & METRICS**

- Conduct earlier, upfront analysis of media channels and media use for creative assets
- Grow communications research expertise at Census so that research can begin earlier and in-house



## **PROJECT LIFECYCLE**

- Plan a structure for the program earlier that is ready to implement based on needs assessed for the upcoming decennial (instead of replicating 2020)
- Begin more projects in Evergreen, but deliberately sequence timing of projects to prevent bottlenecks



## **RESOURCES**

- Retain IPC personnel throughout the decade to retain knowledge – otherwise hire earlier (year 7) to train staff



## **RISK & AGILITY**

- Consolidate crisis planning and communication and reputational threat within one team at Census
- Set up a structure for rapid response communications to stakeholders



# Conclusions and Next Steps

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# 2030 Census CBAMS

- **Leveraging on the success and lessons learned from the 2020 Integrated Partnership and Communications Campaign research to inform early planning for the 2030 Census.**
- **Establishing a CBAMS that it is conducted every two years instead of every ten years as Census was doing it in the past. Our objective is to have four CBAMS in total before 2030.**
- **Identify and set priorities to advance research on our understanding of historically undercounted populations.**



# Office of Strategic Alliances Goals

Engage with internal stakeholders who manage relationships with Census Bureau partners, external stakeholders, and customers to leverage those relationships to meet the objectives of the Census Bureau's Strategic Plan and the needs of the Program Areas.

Engage with external entities to help promote education and respondent participation in the decennial census, economic census, census of governments, and other demographic and economic surveys.

Engage with external entities to leverage knowledge and data assets in the modernization of Census Bureau data products, collection, acquisition, and dissemination.

Engage with external entities to seek feedback on their data needs and to identify data gaps to solve challenges related to their businesses, organizations, or communities.

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# Focus FY22/FY23

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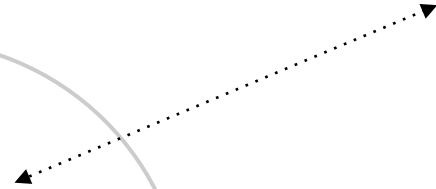
## **Continue relationships to expand data dissemination activities at the national level**

Assist in the dissemination of 2020 Census data products with partners and contribute on the expansion of data equity initiatives.



**Focus 2: 2020 Census Data Dissemination**

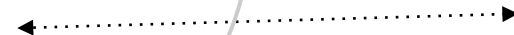
**Focus 1: Promote Respondent Participation in the 2022 Economic Census**



## **Leverage current partnerships in preparation for the 2022 Economic Census**

Continue the implementation of the strategies tested during FY21 pilot program with ECON to increase awareness and provide alternative reporting methods to facilitate response.

**Focus 3: National Partnerships Expansion**



## **Utilize new and current partners in benefit of other programs**

Maintain relationships with key 2020 Census partners, as well as establish new partnerships as needed to further Census Bureau goals and objectives in preparation to expand office services to other program areas on FY23, in particular to benefit the American Community Survey

# Q&A

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