COLOR OF CHANGE

MOTIVATING BLACK COMMUNITIES
TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2020 CENSUS

Key findings from qualitative and quantitative research among Black adults

Conducted February – April 2018,
by Hart Research and Brossard Research

HART RESEARCH ASSOCIATES

AGENDA

- INTRODUCTION
- METHODOLOGY
- KEY FINDINGS
- FUTURE RESEARCH
- PREVIEW: GET OUT THE COUNT
- Q & A

METHODOLOGY

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

6 focus groups among Black adults, conducted February 2018

- Atlanta, GA
- Houston, TX
- Montgomery, AL
- Miami, FL

30 telephone IDIs

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Online survey among 802 Black adults nationwide, April 2-8, 2018

KEY FINDINGS:
ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE CENSUS

Black adults, especially those age 35 and older, have a generally positive impression of the US Census and recognize the importance of participating in it.

Black Millennials are an important target audience for any campaign to encourage participation in the 2020 Census. They are the least likely to recognize its importance and to say they will participate.

Among the small proportion of Black adults who are not inclined to participate in the 2020 Census, the primary reasons include:

1. thinking that it will not make a difference to their community
2. thinking that the government has other ways to obtain the information
3. feeling that the questions are intrusive

KEY FINDINGS:
REACTIONS TO PLANNED CHANGES

ONLINE COMPLETION:

The focus on online completion of the 2020 Census is seen as a positive-to-neutral development. A majority say they are likely to complete the 2020 Census questionnaire online, and few think a transition to online completion is a bad idea.

The IDIs reveal that the move to online completion could present major challenges for those who do not regularly use the Internet. While some would get help from friends and family, most would like to continue completing it on paper.

KEY FINDINGS:
REACTIONS TO PLANNED CHANGES CONT.

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN:

Reactions to adding a country of origin question are mixed, though a plurality do not think it will have an effect on participation.

In the IDIs, most non-citizen immigrants do not think that the addition of a country of origin question would discourage their participation. They do expect, however, that it would deter undocumented immigrants from participating.

CITIZENSHIP:

While Black adults are more likely to think that the addition of the citizenship question is a good idea than a bad idea, a plurality think that fewer people will participate in the 2020 Census if this question is included.

Non-citizen immigrants report that they are divided over whether it is a bad idea to include a citizenship question in the 2020 Census. However, they roundly believe that it would discourage undocumented immigrants from participating in the Census.

KEY FINDINGS:
MESSAGING

STAND UP TO TRUMP: President Trump has actively worked to put down the Black vote and reduce outreach to Black communities for healthcare enrollment, and he will do the same when it comes to Black people taking part in the Census. One powerful way to fight his racism and oppression is to participate in the Census and make sure your family, friends, and neighbors do too.

POLITICAL POWER: It is important to complete the Census to bring political power to Black communities by making sure that the makeup of Congress and state legislatures reflects the increased number of residents who are people of color.

UNDERCOUNT: Studies indicate that 2% of the country's Black population was not counted in the 2010 Census. Without Census recounts in cities with high Black populations--including New York, Chicago, Detroit, Houston, Baltimore, Washington, DC, Atlanta, and Miami--these communities could have lost millions of dollars in funding for important programs and services.

TRANSACTIONAL BENEFIT/FAIR SHARE: When you respond to the Census, you help your community get its fair share of the more than $675 billion per year in federal funds for programs including Medicaid, SNAP, Head Start, school lunch programs, Section 8 housing vouchers, programs for seniors and disabled veterans, and unemployment benefits.

KEY FINDINGS:
MESSAGING CONT.

Messages that demonstrate the impact that the Census can have on communities are most convincing, with some potential for a "stand up to Trump" message among some audiences.

Focus groups indicate that funding of specific government programs is an important element of messaging, and the survey reveals the importance of mentioning funding of Medicaid and food stamps.

"Ensuring funding for programs in my community" is the most persuasive message across generations.

KEY FINDINGS:

INCREASING THE INCLINATION TO PARTICIPATE

The greatest potential for transforming the inclination to participate into motivation to do so is by clearly demonstrating the impact that the Census has on communities.

- Most Black adults are generally aware of the Census and that it is used to count the population, but this awareness is quite shallow. Many are not aware of the various ways that Census data are used and how those applications impact their communities.

- Messages that focus on the impact that the Census has on communities through funding of important government programs are particularly compelling.

Being specific about the impact that the Census has on ensuring that communities get their fair share, both in federal dollars and for specific programs, serves as a very compelling reason to participate in the Census.

KEY FINDINGS:
TRUSTED MESSENGERS

Black elected leaders in their community and Black organizations are seen as being able to do the most to encourage Black people to participate in the 2020 Census.

Michelle Obama and Oprah eclipse other individual messengers tested.

Cable TV and local TV are the top news sources that Black people use to stay informed, but social media is the top source for millennials.

FUTURE RESEARCH

We would like to conduct research in these key geographies:

- New York, NY
- Chicago, IL
- Detroit, MI
- Houston, TX
- Baltimore, MD
- Washington, D.C.

FUTURE RESEARCH CONT.

This research will allow us to better:

- Assess attitudes of and discover potential motivations for participation among Black communities in the 2020 Census
- Identify challenges or barriers associated with the addition of a proposed citizenship question
- Identify at least three key behavioral opportunities among the target audience to overcome barriers to participation in the 2020 Census
- Expose Black audiences to conceptual media messaging to discover what will motivate the population to participate in the 2020 Census
- Understand the opportunities to use various messengers and media to disseminate Census information

PREVIEW: GET OUT THE COUNT PLAN

PHASE 1:
Research

PHASE 2:
Testing

PHASE 3:
Implementation

COLOR OF CHANGE

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU

CONTACT:
JENNIFER.EDWARDS@COLOROFCHANGE.ORG