

Census Test 2015 Focus Group Protocol
Group 1

I. **Background (5 minutes)**

- A. Hello everyone, my name is ____ . Thank you for coming out tonight
- B. Introduce idea of a moderator led discussion
- C. Taping
 - 1. Want to hear from everyone; one speaker at a time.
- D. If you disagree with someone else's comment, that's ok. But please be respectful.
- E. Occasionally I may need to cut someone off to ensure that everyone is heard or to ensure we cover all topics
 - 1. Length: 120 minutes Logistics...bathroom location, beverages, snacks.
 - 2. Please set your phones on silent or turn them off.
 - 3. Cannot answer questions until the end of the group.
- F. Topic: 2015 Census Test

The 2015 Census Test was conducted this spring in Savannah, GA. We will be talking about your experiences with the 2015 test more in depth today.

There are no right or wrong answers. It's okay to say that you don't know or can't remember. The goal of this group is to learn about your opinions and experiences so the Census Bureau can improve its methods.

II. **Warm-up (15 minutes)**

Please introduce yourselves using your first name and tell us about where you live and about one activity that you enjoy doing.

Today we will be talking about email, Internet, and cell phones and how these devices and forms of communication are going to affect the way the Census Bureau collects information.

III. **Survey Preferences (15 minutes)**

- A. Do you usually respond to surveys? What makes you decide to respond or not to respond?
- B. What types of surveys do you usually respond to? What types of surveys do you see? Where do you see them?
 - a. *If they do respond to surveys:* How do you typically respond to online surveys? Are you on a cell phone or on a computer or both?
 - b. How would you prefer to respond to a survey? Would you respond using your phone, a computer or laptop, or on paper?
 - c. Do you remember any experiences from the 2010 Census? Who in your household filled it out? How did they respond? How did the Census Bureau contact your household?

IV. **Response to the 2015 Census Test (15 min)**

We got this particular group together because we believe that you did not respond to a survey recently sent to you by the Census Bureau. However, it is possible that you responded and we just did not receive your response yet.

- A. For those of you that received [CONTACT METHOD] from the Census Bureau, how did you feel about that? How would you feel about it?
 - a. EMAIL: Did you notice it right away? What did the subject line say? Did you open it immediately? Did you think it was really from the Census Bureau?
 - b. TEXT: Did you click on the link?
- B. How do you think the Census Bureau would get/did get your email address or phone number?
- C. What emails or texts, if any, do you receive from other government agencies? How do you determine if an email or text is really from the government?
- D. How would you prefer to be contacted?
- E. Do you ever click on online advertisements? Can you tell me about the last online advertisements you clicked on? What are the types of ads that are mostly likely to make you take action?

V. Census Test Communications Strategies **(20 minutes)**

- A. Did you notice any advertisements from the Census Bureau about the 2015 Census Test?
If needed:
 - a. What about television ads? Radio?
 - b. Billboards?
 - c. Local event?
 - d. Online?
 - e. News?
- B. Did you talk with anyone about the 2015 Census Test?
- C. How about advertisements on the Internet?
- D. What website did you see it on? What were they asking you to do? How do you think this ad came to be on that particular website?
 - a. If needed, prompt responses on:
 - i. Social media ads (FB and Twitter)
 - ii. Video ads – did they see anything on YouTube? Before other videos they wanted to watch on the Web?
 - iii. Banner ads – did you ever see ads in any other place?
 - iv. Did you ever get curious about the test census (if you heard about it elsewhere) and Google it? What did you find?
- E. If you saw an ad, what were your impressions about what it was asking you to do? Did you do it? Why or why not?
 - a. If needed, prompt responses on:
 - i. Trustworthiness of place I saw the ad (website, TV channel)

- ii. Trustworthiness of Census Bureau
 - iii. Confusion about what I was supposed to do
 - iv. Didn't think important to do the desired action
 - b. *If all participants say no:* What would you think if you saw a digital ad from the Census Bureau?
- F. If you saw an ad about completing the Census test, what would make you do it?
 - a. Prompt on:
 - i. Would you click on an ad saying your participation is "required by law"
 - ii. Would you click on something that references jobs in your community?
 - iii. Schools?
- G. Even if you didn't click on an ad, could an ad online remind you to complete the mailed form or to call the Census Bureau?

V. General trends about government data collection **(15 minutes)**

- A. Once the government gets data about individuals, what do you think happens to this data?
- B. Do you have any concerns about the government collecting data?
- C. Do you have any specific privacy or confidentiality concerns related to online and computer data security?
- D. Tell me about any concerns you have about answering the census over the Internet. What types of information do you think the Census Bureau collects?

VI. How people feel about administrative records

DATA FROM OTHER AGENCIES (25 minutes)

During the next census, the Census Bureau may use information people have previously given to other federal agencies.

- A. How do you feel about the Census Bureau getting your information from other federal agencies?
- B. What kind of data do you think the Census Bureau would need to use?
- C. What federal agencies do you think the Census Bureau might get data from?
- D. The agencies the Census Bureau are considering using information from are the Social Security Administration (the SSA) and the Internal Revenue Service (the IRS). How do you feel about the Census Bureau using information from these two federal agencies?
- E. For people who don't fill out the forms completely or not at all, the Census Bureau might use information from these two agencies to fill in things that are missing like birth date, race, or household size. Does that change how you feel about using this information?
- F. When would it be okay for the Census Bureau to get data from other sources?
- G. Do you think the Census Bureau would share data it collected from respondents with these other sources?

Now that we have talked about concerns with the confidentiality of your personal information, I am going to tell you about a law that protects it. Some of you may have heard of a law called Title 13. Under this federal law, the Census Bureau is required to keep all information about all respondents strictly confidential. The Census Bureau cannot share

your information with government agencies like the IRS or anyone else. Your information is used for statistical purposes only.

- H. Now that you know that the Census Bureau cannot share your information, could the Census Bureau say anything (in particular) to help the public understand that the Census Bureau does not give data collected from respondents to any other source or agency? What could the Census Bureau say to the public to help make that clear?

Conclusion:

Throughout the decade leading up to the Census every ten years, the Bureau conducts tests to improve the quality and decrease the costs of the upcoming census. The 2015 Census Test was conducted this spring in Savannah, GA. Some of the things we are testing include contacting people by phone or email instead of by mail, encouraging people to respond to the census over the Internet, communications strategies, and exploring the use of other types of data. We will be talking about some of these new methods and your experiences with the 2015 test more in depth today

Before we end the group, I want to remind you that the Census Bureau is committed to keeping your personal information confidential. Census Bureau employees are sworn for life to protect your confidentiality. Any Census Bureau employee who violates Title 13 is subject to a fine up to \$250,000, a prison sentence up to five years, or both. Does anyone have any questions?

Thank you very much for your participation. You can pick up your incentive from the area where you first signed in.