

**Census Test 2015 Focus Group Protocol**  
**Maricopa County, AZ**

I. **Background (5 minutes)**

- A. Hello everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_ . Thank you for coming out tonight!
  
- B. We are going to talk about your experience with the 2015 Census Test. I will be the moderator for the focus group today. We will spend this time participating in a group discussion. There are no right or wrong answers, because only you know what you are thinking.
  
- C. This session is being both video and audio recorded. We will not use your name in any of our reports.
  
- D. **GUIDELINES:** In order for this group to work well, here are some guidelines.
  - Please speak one at a time.
  - Speak in a voice as loud as mine so all can hear.
  
  - Avoid side conversations with your neighbors, but you can piggy back on other people's comments in the group.
  
  - I want to hear from everyone; however, you do not have to answer every question. Aim for "equal air time" so no one talks too much or too little. Occasionally I may need to cut someone off to ensure that everyone is heard or to ensure we cover all topics.
  
  - If you disagree with someone else's comment, that's ok. But please be respectful. Similarly, say what you believe whether or not anyone agrees with you.
  
  - The restroom is located \_\_\_\_\_ and snacks are located \_\_\_\_\_. At any time, you can excuse yourself to go to the restroom or to get snacks. However, I ask that only one person be up or out at a time so the conversation can continue.
  
  - I cannot answer questions until the end of the group.
  - Please set your phones on silent or turn them off.

A. **Topic: 2015 Census Test**

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 Maricopa County, AZ. One of the goals was to test the way we follow-up with people who do not respond to the census. The Census Bureau is also testing things like contacting people by phone or email instead of by mail, encouraging people to respond to the census over the Internet, 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.

You may or may not remember this census test, but 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 (10 minutes)

Please introduce yourselves using your first name and tell us 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. Tell me about surveys you've seen.
  - a. *If needed:* What was the last survey you saw?
- B. Do you usually respond to surveys? What makes you decide to respond or not to respond?
  - a. *For Hispanic groups:* What language do you usually respond in?
- C. What types of surveys do you usually respond to? Where do you see them?
  - a. *If they do respond to surveys:* How do you typically respond to surveys?
    - i. *If online:* Are you on a cell phone or on a computer or both?
  - b. How would you prefer to respond to a survey?
    - i. Would you respond using your phone?
    - ii. A computer or laptop?
    - iii. On paper?
    - iv. In person?
  - 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. Contact Strategies and 2015 Census Test Experiences (20 min)

*Note to moderator: Keep discussion focused on Census Test contacts and not on contacts for the focus group.*

- A. Tell me about your experiences with the 2015 Census Test.
- B. Were you contacted more than once by the Census Bureau?
  - a. Did more than one person contact you about the test?
  - b. *If needed:* Tell me more about how these contacts made you feel?
    - i. What about phone calls?
    - ii. Letters?
- C. How would you feel about receiving an email from the Census Bureau?
- D. How would you feel about receiving a text message from the Census Bureau?
- E. Would you click on a link in an email or text message from the Census?

- F. How do you think the Census Bureau would get/did get your email address or phone number?
- G. What emails or texts do you receive from other government agencies? How do you determine if an email or text is really from the government?
- H. How would you prefer to be contacted by the Census Bureau?
- I. 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. **Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) (15 minutes)**

- A. For those of you who responded in-person, what kind of device do you remember the Census worker using to enter your responses? What did you think when you saw them entering this data on a smartphone?
- B. Did you think it was the interviewer's own cell phone or one they had received on the job?
- C. One way the Census Bureau could save money is by asking Census workers to use their own devices instead of federal government devices when they go to people's homes. How might you tell the difference between a government device and a personal device?
- D. What makes you feel comfortable or uncomfortable about Census workers entering your data on their own devices?
- E. What kinds of precautions would make you feel more comfortable?

VI. **General trends about government data collection (10 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?

VII. **How people feel about administrative records**

DATA FROM OTHER AGENCIES (15 minutes)

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

*Note: Respondents may mention ICE and there are confidentiality concerns associated with this agency.*

- 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. 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, ICE, or anyone else. Your information is used for statistical purposes only.

- G. 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:**

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. We can now answer any questions you may have. We will also be coming around with your incentives for participating.