

**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

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.

You might remember receiving an invitation to participate in the 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 (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. **Contact strategies (30 minutes)**

We got this particular group together because we believe that you did not respond to the 2015 Census Test; however, it is possible that you responded and we just did not receive your response yet.

- 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?
- D. 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?
- E. How do you think the Census Bureau would get/did get your email address or phone number?
- F. 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?
- G. How would you prefer to be contacted?

IV. 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?
- B. Did you talk with anyone about the 2015 Census Test?
- C. Sometimes websites use information about things you have recently searched for or websites you have recently visited to advertise to you. Did you see any of these types of ads from the Census Bureau?
- D. What website did you see it on? What did it say? How do you think this ad came to be on that particular website?
  - a. *If all participants say no:* What would you think if you saw a message from the Census Bureau in one of these types of ads?
- E. Would you click on an advertisement like this from the Census Bureau? What would make you click?

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:

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.