

**Census Test 2016 Focus Group Responders Protocol
Harris County**

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
- D. Want to hear from everyone; one speaker at a time.
- E. If you disagree with someone else's comment, that's ok. But please be respectful.
- F. 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.

G. Topic: 2016 Census Test

The Census, which is a survey that everyone in the US is asked to respond to, is conducted every ten years. Throughout the decade leading up to the Census, the Census Bureau conducts research tests to improve the quality and decrease the costs of the upcoming census. We do this by actually running mini-censuses in different parts of the nation, experimenting with different ways to contact people and different ways to complete the census. We ran one of these mini-censuses this spring in Harris County, TX. We called this mini-census the "2016 Census Test". Some of the things we are testing included offering the census in languages other than English, encouraging people to respond to the census over the Internet, the best way to communicate the importance of the Census to the public, and exploring the use of other types of data for the census besides survey data. We will be talking about some of these things today as well as your experiences with the 2016 Census Test.

You might remember receiving an invitation to participate in the 2016 Census Test, but it is okay if you don't know if you received an invitation or if you can't remember. There are no right or wrong answers during our conversation today. 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 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)

The first topic I'd like to discuss with you is about surveys, including those that you respond to by mail, on the internet, or on the phone. In particular, I'm interested in whether or not you typically respond to surveys, and how you decide whether or not you will respond.

- A. Have you ever responded 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. How do you prefer to respond to a survey? Do you prefer to respond using your phone, a computer or laptop, or on paper?
 - b. *If they respond to surveys online:* For those of you who respond to surveys on the internet, do you typically fill out the survey using your computer, or on your phone, or both?
 - 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?
 - i. What kinds of information do you think is collected in the census every 10 years? I'd like to hear what you even if you don't remember anything from the 2010 Census.
 - ii. And who do you think the Census Bureau is collecting information about? Is there anyone whose information shouldn't be included?

IV. Response to the 2016 Census Test (20 min): Responders

We got this particular group together because we believe that you responded to a survey recently sent to you by the Census Bureau in the mail, which was the 2016 Census Test, although it is okay if you don't remember completing the survey.

- A. How did you hear about the 2016 Census Test?
- B. If you remember completing the survey, how did you respond? (If needed: Mail, telephone, internet...)
 - a. INTERNET: What kind of device did you use to respond online? A computer, a mobile phone, something else? How easy or how difficult was it for you to respond online?
 - b. TELEPHONE: Did the Census worker who you spoke with on the phone seem like someone you could trust with your personal information? Did this worker seem like someone who could have been from your community?
- C. If you remember completing the survey, did anyone in your household help you complete it or did you fill it all in yourself?
 - a. IF HELPED: Who helped you and what did they help with? (If needed: Providing information, help with using the computer...)

- D. We talked earlier about how you prefer to respond to surveys. What did you think about the options for how to respond to the 2016 Census Test?

V. Census Test Contact Strategies (15 minutes)

- A. Thinking about both the 2010 Census and the more recent Census Test in 2016, what are some of the ways the Census Bureau has contacted you or other members of your household?
 - a. Please describe what you remember receiving in the mail from the Census Bureau. What did you do with that information?
- B. How would you prefer to be contacted?
- C. What are your opinions on receiving survey requests via text? How about survey reminders? What information should the text contain?
- D. If you were picked to participate in a survey, how often would you expect to be contacted with requests and reminders? At what point you would get annoyed?
- E. If you were taking a survey and it asked you to provide an email address, what type of email address would you provide?
 - a. Would you provide an address you check regularly or a junk mail account?
- F. The Census Bureau plans to encourage as many people as possible to respond to the 2020 Census over the internet. How do you feel about that? What concerns do you have, if any?

VI. 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?

VII. Attitudes towards using administrative records and 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. SHOW ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD POSTCARD TO RESPONDENTS. Pretend you received this postcard in the mail at your house. What do you think the postcard is telling you?
- B. How do you feel about the Census Bureau getting your information from other federal agencies?
- C. What kind of data do you think the Census Bureau would need to use?
- D. What federal agencies do you think the Census Bureau might get data from?

- E. The agencies the Census Bureau is 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?
- F. For people who do not fill out the Census form completely or don't fill it out 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?
- G. When would it be okay for the Census Bureau to get data from other sources?
- H. Do you think the Census Bureau would share data it collected from respondents with these other sources?
- I. Now that we have talked about concerns with how the Census handles 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.

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?

VIII. Conclusion (5 minutes):

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.