

Qualitative Research on Undercount of Young Children

Interview Protocol for Local Organization Staff

Participant ID: _____

Date: ____/____/____ Start time: ____ AM / PM End time: ____ AM / PM

Location: _____ Interviewer: _____

Mode: In Person ____ Virtual ____ Recording: Video ____ Audio ____

NOTE FOR RESEARCHERS: All bold text is to be read aloud by the moderator. All bracketed text are notes or instructions for the moderator.

Participants will receive a copy of the consent form by email after agreeing to participate in the focus group. This form provides privacy information and contact information for the study.

A. INTERVIEW CONSENT AND INTRODUCTION (5 MINUTES)

Hello, I'm [NAME OF INTERVIEWER]. I work for the Census Bureau. Thanks for agreeing to help me today.

As you are aware, the city of [CITY NAME] will conduct a census in 2030 Census. The purpose of the interview is to help us gain insight into the issues that the communities you work with have with participating in the past census and the upcoming census, particularly as it related to counting children under five years old, and to get your help in identifying ways to address those concerns.

Before we start, I would like to discuss the consent form we sent you. This document explains a little bit about this interview and provides information about your rights as a participant. It also asks for your permission to have this session audio recorded. The document also lets you know that your identity will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone outside of this project. This interview is voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you may stop the interview at any time. Please ask me any questions you have about this document. When you finish reading the document, please let me know.

We emailed you this consent form and we've already asked you to sign it before this interview. Did you sign the consent form already?

[IF PARTICIPANT SIGNED THE CONSENT FORM] I am now going to turn on my audio recording device. [TURN ON DEVICE AND SKIP TO PARAGRAPH BELOW THAT BEGINS WITH “THANK YOU.”]

[IF PARTICIPANT DID NOT SIGN THE CONSENT FORM] We can capture your consent orally. I am now going to turn on my audio recording device.

[TURN ON AUDIO RECORDER] Please state, “I give consent to be audio recorded.”

Thank you. Please remember that I am really interested in your honest thoughts and opinions, so there are no right or wrong answers. We want to work with you and hopefully learn some things that can be applied to the next national census in 2030. We will also keep what you say entirely confidential, and only those working on the project will know of your answers.

I'd like to start by getting a feel for the community you serve and specifically how you interact with households that have young children. People often leave young children off of their census or other survey forms and I'd like to spend the majority of the time getting your thoughts on why children might not be included and ways to correct that.

Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

PART B: GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT SERVING HOUSEHOLDS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN
(15 MINUTES)

1. Can you describe the demographic makeup of the households you typically serve, particularly those with young children? [IF NECESSARY, REMIND PARTICIPANTS THAT YOUNG CHILDREN ARE DEFINED AS AGED 0-4, INCLUDING NEWBORNS AND PRESCHOOLERS, AND NOT THOSE ALREADY IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM.]
 - a. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] What about their race/ethnicity? Income? Whether they tend to rent or own their homes?
 - b. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] How many generations tend to be in the household? Do relatives such as aunt, uncles, cousins tend to live in the same home? What about non-relatives? Do you know if it is common for anyone to visit for short periods of time like a few weeks or months?
2. What insights can you share about the living situations and day-to-day life of households with young children in your community?

3. What are some common challenges faced by households with young children in your area?
 - a. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] In your experience, what are some of the most pressing needs of households with young children in your area that are not currently being addressed?

PART C: LOCAL ORGANIZATION ENGAGEMENT WITH HOUSEHOLDS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN
(10 MINUTES)

4. How do you typically engage with households with young children in terms of providing support and services?
 - a. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] What are some challenges local organizations face in reaching and engaging with households with young children?
 - b. Can you describe any past initiatives or outreach efforts aimed at encouraging households with young children to participate in the census? Can you share any success stories or best practices from your organization's efforts?
5. In what ways do you think census outreach efforts could be improved to better reach households with young children to get them to answer the upcoming census?

PART D: HOUSEHOLDS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CENSUS
(25 MINUTES)

6. How aware do you think households with young children in your area are about the census in general?
 - a. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] How aware do you think these households are with the importance of participating in the census and other civic activities?
7. Have you observed any specific barriers or obstacles that prevent households with young children from participating in civic duties or government activities, such as the census?
 - b. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] Have you encountered any misconceptions or myths among households regarding the census and its impact on their lives?
 - c. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] Have you noticed any differences in past census participation among households with young children based on factors such as income, race/ethnicity, or location?
 - d. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] How do you think language barriers may affect the ability of households with young children to understand and participate in the census?

8. In your experience, what are some factors that may contribute to households not reporting their young children in the census?
 - e. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] Are there any cultural or societal factors that may influence households with young children to not participate in the upcoming census or other government-related activities?
 - i. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] Do you think householders might be concealing young children for immigration, age-related housing, or rental restriction reasons?
 - ii. [IF NOT DISCUSSED] Might householders be confused about whether to include some types of children, such as foster children, a grandchild living there because the parent is away, or an unrelated child?
9. Are there any specific services or resources that households with young children in your area lack, which may affect their willingness to participate in the upcoming census or other civic activities?
10. What are some potential solutions to address the undercounting of young children in the census? How can the Census Bureau help you reach your area?

PART E: CONCLUSION

(5 MINUTES)

Based on what we've talked about today, what are the most important things for your city and the Census Bureau to do from this discussion?

Does you have any final comments?

Thank you very much for your participation!