

Census 2020 Community Convenings: Southwest Brooklyn + Staten Island

May 20, 2020

The Robin Hood Foundation, United Way of New York City and Hester Street hosted the Southwest Brooklyn + Staten Island Community Convening to support organizations with their Census outreach efforts. Organizations shared their outreach experiences - both challenges and opportunities- and brainstormed ways to foster group collaboration, engage historically undercounted communities ,and ensure a complete count.

PARTICIPANT REPRESENTATION

22 attendees gathered to represent diverse populations, geographies and organizations:



CHALLENGES

During discussion, attendees surfaced issues they are experiencing in their outreach:

COVID-19 Hurdles

- Houses of worship, which had been identified as key outreach partners, are now closed.
- It's difficult to discuss Census with residents struggling with pressing financial needs.
- Organizations have limited staff capacity to complete outreach.
- Some communities have had severe postal service delays.

Hard-to-Engage Populations

- Households with limited English proficiency and literacy.
- Households with limited internet access.
- Seniors that cannot access technology and are also having issues with the postal service.
- Immigrants, due to fear and mistrust of government.

— OPPORTUNITIES

Organizations shared what is working - the innovative strategies they are piloting during COVID-19:

Analog Outreach

- Include Census flyers with food distribution at food pantries and deliveries at local restaurants.
- Provide swag or incentives (like gift cards to support local businesses) to complete the Census.
- Couple Census outreach with personal protective equipment distribution.
- Organize drive-through events for Census completion from inside cars.

Digital Outreach

- Use phonebanking and text banking in multiple languages.
- Incorporate Census into online messaging for houses of worship.
- Leverage WhatsApp groups for Census messages and images.
- Partner with DOE to include Census messaging at parent teacher conferences and assignments.

Messaging

- Generate visually attractive materials and videos for Census outreach.

Trusted Messengers

- Personal networks of friends and neighbors
- Faith leaders
- Traditional medicinal practitioners

— NEXT STEPS

Attendees defined their next steps to collaborate with grantees, the City and funders:

COLLABORATION

- Collaborate with local houses of worship and libraries on online and local events.
- Partner with DOE and Parent Teacher Associations.
- When possible, share staff across organizations (especially from larger to smaller organizations) for collective Census efforts and events.
- Promote collaboration and support among grantees to translate Census materials.

RESOURCES + OUTREACH

- Create messaging and an advocacy campaign for internet service providers to open up WIFI for Census completion.
- Create messaging and resources around Census and elections for use in late summer and fall, jointly with City and funders.
- Define funders' guidelines for using Census grant funds towards incentives for participation.

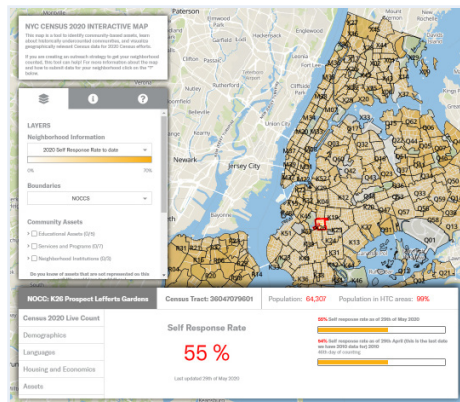
— RESOURCES

INTERACTIVE CENSUS 2020 MAP

This mapping tool visualizes relevant data and community assets to inform organizational outreach and track the self-response rate.

To use the map, click [here](#).

If you want a one-on-one training session on the map, schedule it [here](#).



ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Census Resource Hub](#) by NY Counts 2020
- [Census Resource Hub](#) by Hester Street
- [Talking About Cens-US](#) by Generation Citizen and United Way of New York City
- ["I Count" Video](#) by Witness to Mass Incarceration
- [Faith Leader Census Toolkit](#) by FPWA
- Brooklyn Public Library Census team (census@bklynlibrary.org)