

Census 2020 Community Convenings: Manhattan

May 13, 2020

The Robin Hood Foundation, United Way of New York City and Hester Street hosted the Manhattan 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 to engage historically undercounted communities and ensure a complete count.

PARTICIPANT REPRESENTATION

32 attendees gathered to represent diverse populations, geographies and organizations across Manhattan:



CHALLENGES

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

COVID-19 Hurdles

- “Feels inappropriate to push Census to people who are struggling” with COVID and basic needs.
- “Trusted messengers [are] over capacity” as they respond to the pandemic.
- It is hard to “integrate Census messaging when everyone is being bombarded by content.”

Digital + Language Divides

- During social distancing, it is harder to engage populations that “do not have internet access and other folks [who] are not on social media.”
- “Differing languages [in one neighborhood] is a major barrier” - it is hard to tailor outreach and find translators.

Hard-to-Engage Populations

- Formerly incarcerated, since they are not concentrated geographically.
- Seniors that cannot access technology and are concerned about COVID.
- Immigrants (especially Latinx communities), 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 within mutual aid networks.
- Provide swag or incentives (like gift cards to support local businesses) to complete the Census.
- Couple Census outreach with mask distribution.
- Distribute materials at essential local businesses.

Digital Outreach

- Use phonebanking, with a focus on landlines.
- Incorporate Census messaging into wellness check-ups.
- Utilize geographically targeted Facebook ads.
- Integrate a Census curriculum into homeschooling and teach-ins for parents.

Messaging

- Connect Census funding to healthcare, food stamps and educational programming.
- Provide people with the Census hotline, encouraging them to call.
- Share that self-responding is better than enumeration.

Trusted Messengers

- Youth from immigrant families
- Churches and Temples

— NEXT STEPS

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

COLLABORATION + RESOURCES

- Ensure Mayor DeBlasio and Governor Cuomo include Census messaging in their briefs.
- Expand phonebanking and predictive dialing capabilities for organizations.
- Translate resources to more languages, especially for the African diaspora.
- Create a repository for organizations to share experiences, materials and collaboration opportunities.

OUTREACH

- Collaborate on a City-wide Day of Action.
- Integrate Census outreach more deeply into COVID-19 service provision, like food distribution and wellness checks.
- Transition to messaging and resources that highlight Census as a tool for a just recovery from COVID-19.

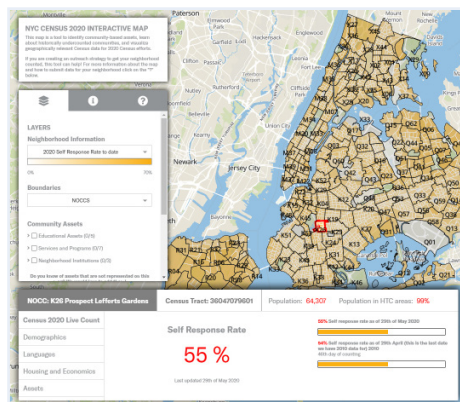
— RESOURCES

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
- [Engagement in Times of COVID Presentation and Handout](#) by Hester Street
- [Talking About Cens-US](#) by Generation Citizen and United Way of New York City
- [Messaging Guide](#) by Association for a Better New York (ABNY)
- [Resources and Toolkits](#) by ABNY
- [Posters and Flyers Translated to Several Asian Languages](#) by Asian Pacific American Complete Count Committee