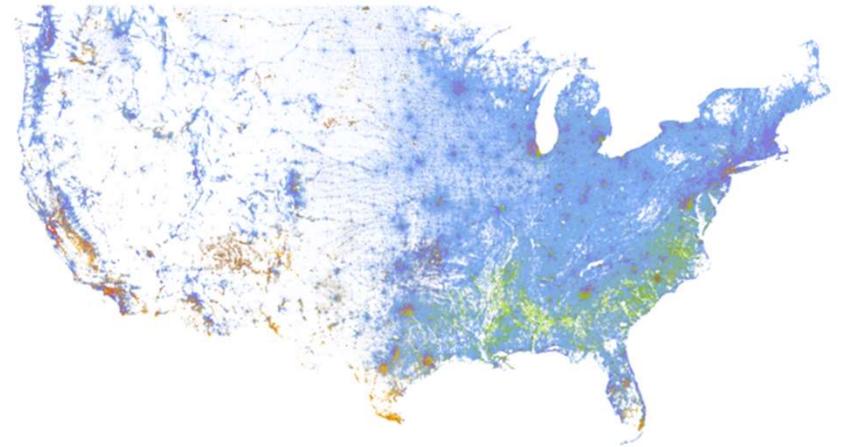


*Article 1*

# Census Messaging Strategy

November 2019



# Research Objectives & Timeline

## Objectives

- To understand perceptions of and reactions to the 2020 US Census among key audiences.
- Identify what message themes are resonating and why.
- Pinpoint which people and/or organizations are credible messengers to communicate these themes.

## Details

20-25 minute online quantitative poll.

1499 members of the General Population and an over sample of the following audiences (mix of first and second generation immigrants):

- 300 English-Speaking Latinos
- 300 Spanish-Speaking Latinos
- 200 Asian Americans
- 400 Muslim Americans
  - 135 Middle Eastern/Arab

# The Big Picture

**The Census Bureau's *Shape Your Future* campaign will address the main barrier to participation – the belief that the government disregards Census data.**

**However, the campaign will be met with a particularly high level of skepticism from the following audiences:**

- **Muslim Americans**
- **Asian Americans**
- **Black or African Americans**
- **Young Adults (18-34)**

**And though they are the least cynical among hard-to-count audiences, it's also worth keeping Latino communities as part of the mix because of the lingering effects of the citizenship question debate.**

**These groups don't trust the government to act in good faith toward Census data nor toward Census participants themselves.**

**The findings from our research outline a clear mission for any Census 2020 outreach campaign, composed of three key components:**

**1. Reach out to these vulnerable communities in particular.**

**2. Give the Census a credible stamp of approval by communicating through trusted community spokespeople.**

**3. Motivate these audiences through emotion: *The Census is about claiming power for your community by showing what America truly looks like.***

**In other words, Truth to Power.**

**This message is most effective if articulated and delivered a bit differently to each audience — some want to defy the powers that be, some want to feel uplifted.**

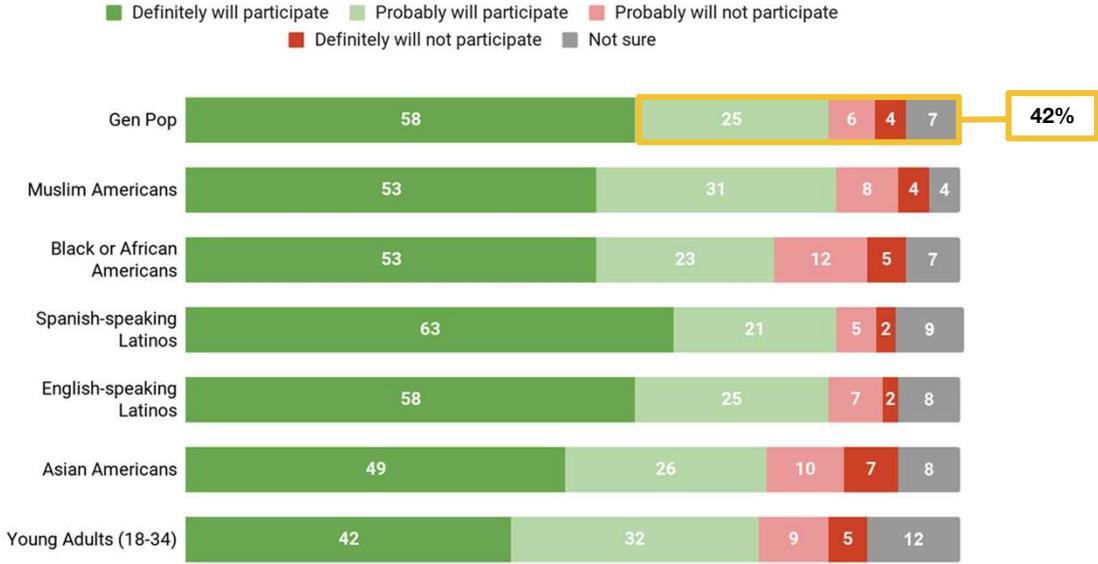
We outline those targeting nuances beginning on [slide 42](#).

**Here's how we came to these conclusions...**

# Key Data

# While most people are certain they will participate in the 2020 Census, there is lots of work ahead.

**LIKELIHOOD TO PARTICIPATE IN CENSUS**  
*How likely are you to participate in each of the following?*  
*Showing % across audiences*



**Almost half are not certain they will participate in the 2020 Census**

**And our task of convincing the rest to participate in 2020 is made particularly hard by extreme distrust in the federal government.**

**FIRST WORD ASSOCIATIONS – FEDERAL GOVERNMENT**

*What's the first word or phrase that comes to mind when you think of each of the following institutions, programs, and services?  
Showing responses for Gen Pop*

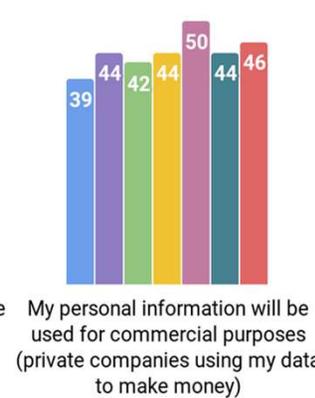
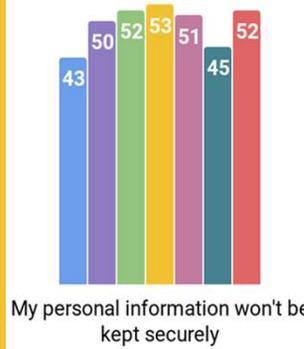
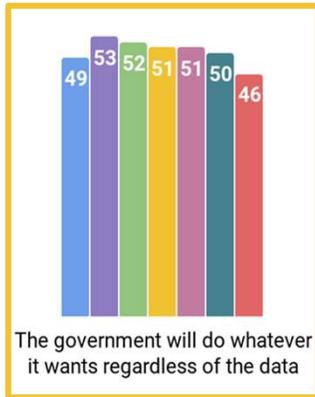


# The main concern is that the government will do whatever it wants, regardless of the data.

## TOP BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING IN CENSUS - AUDIENCES

Please read through each concern and select the option that best applies to you  
Showing % "major concern" across audiences

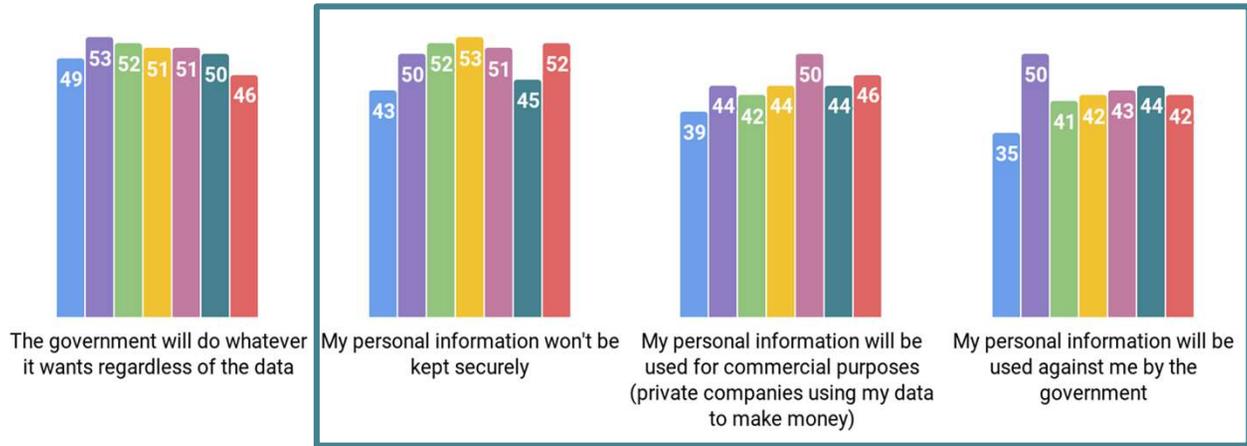
■ Gen Pop 
 ■ Muslim Americans 
 ■ English-Speaking Latinos 
 ■ Spanish-Speaking Latinos 
 ■ Black or African Americans  
■ Young Adults (18-34) 
 ■ Asian Americans



# And hard-to-count communities are worried that the government will use their personal info for nefarious purposes.

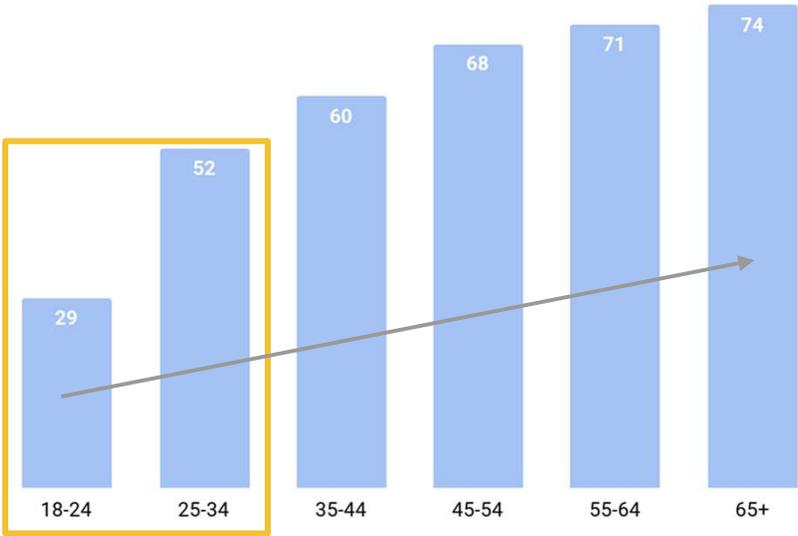
**TOP BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATING IN CENSUS - AUDIENCES**  
 Please read through each concern and select the option that best applies to you  
 Showing % "major concern" across audiences

■ Gen Pop 
 ■ Muslim Americans 
 ■ English-Speaking Latinos 
 ■ Spanish-Speaking Latinos 
 ■ Black or African Americans  
■ Young Adults (18-34) 
 ■ Asian Americans



# The youngest adults are least likely to participate.

**PARTICIPATION 2020 CENSUS - AGE BRACKETS**  
*How likely are you to participate in the 2020 Census?  
Showing % "definitely will participate" across Gen Pop audience*



**Participation by age is a sliding scale**

**The Bureau's campaign can make a big impact by highlighting community benefits that come from smart funding.**

# But there are doubts about the personal and issue-specific benefits of the Census.

## ATTRIBUTES - PRE

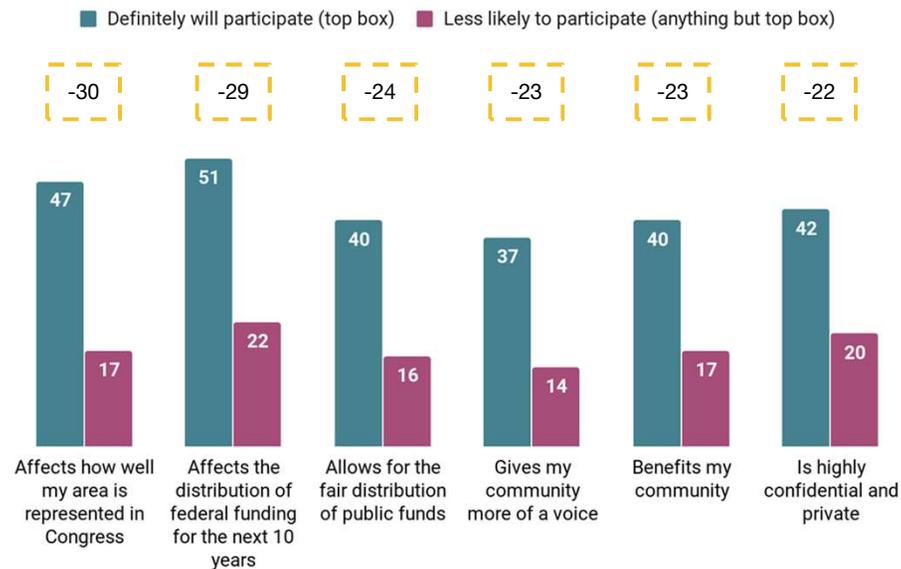
Based on what you know, how much do you associate each of the following with the Census?  
Showing % among Gen Pop



# There is a major knowledge gap about community-level benefits between those who will definitely participate and those who aren't sure.

## ATTRIBUTES BY LIKELIHOOD TO PARTICIPATE

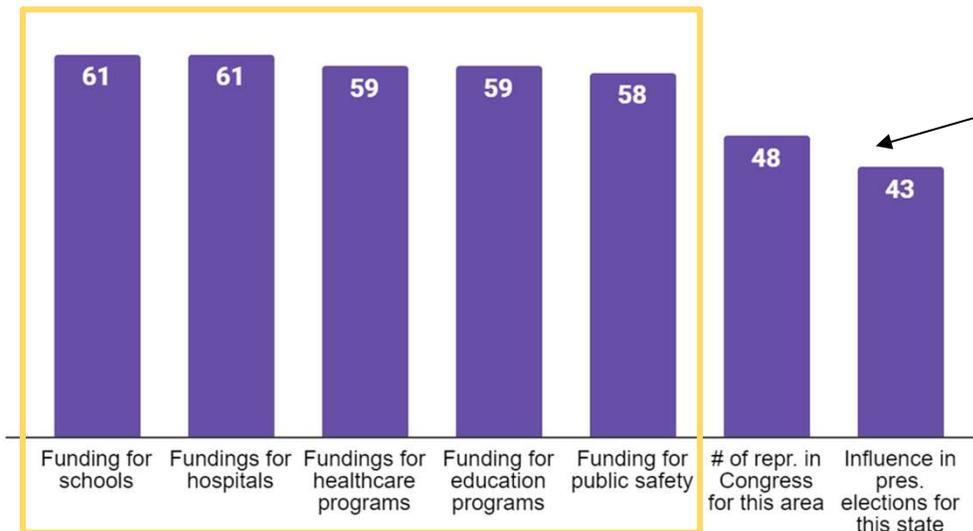
Based on what you know, how much do you associate each of the following with the Census?  
Showing % "very much" among Gen Pop



# The Bureau's *Shape Your Future* message is on point: funding for specific community program areas is more important to people than political representation.

## PROOF POINTS CENSUS DATA – GEN POP

Census data helps determine everything listed below. How important is each of the following to you personally?  
Showing % “very important” among Gen Pop



When thinking about representation, people care more about Congressional representation than clout in presidential elections

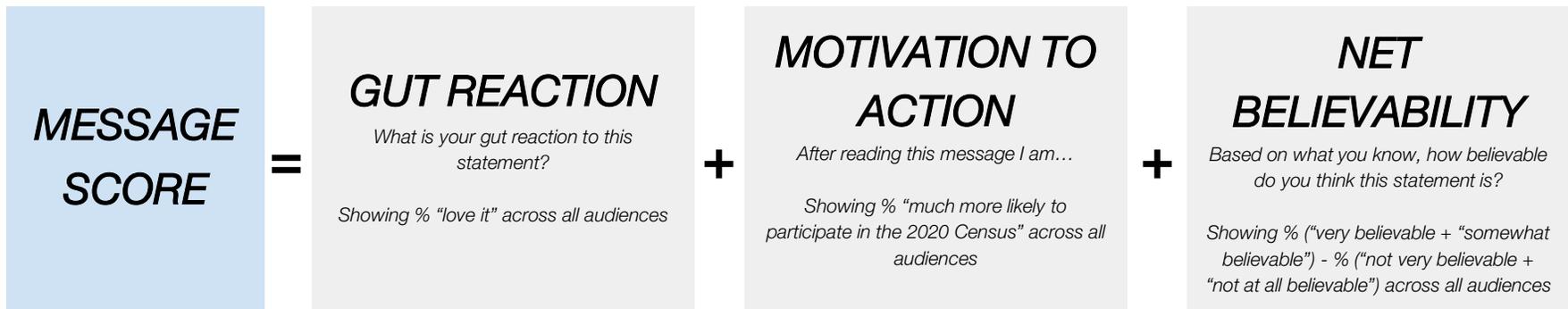
**To get buy-in from the most skeptical populations, our goal should be to reassure and inspire.**

**To understand what's motivating our audiences, we need to look at messaging that resonates.**

## How to read the message scores:

To better analyze our messages and get a more accurate read of how they would perform in the real world, we aggregated the metrics tested.

Because the scores are aggregated, they add up to more than one hundred.



<i>Full message text can be found in the <a href="#">appendix</a></i>	<b>Swing</b> N = 350	<b>Muslim Americans</b> N = 481	<b>Black or African Americans</b> N = 273	<b>Asian Americans</b> N = 224	<b>Latinos (English)</b> N = 350	<b>Latinos (Spanish)</b> N = 327	<b>Young Adults</b> N = 540	<b>Gen Pop</b> N = 1499
<b>Participation Is Power</b>	219	185	163	140	160	205	133	150
<b>True Picture</b>	213	189	157	151	183	203	132	149
<b>Easy And Fast</b>	211	187	164	141	151	194	136	153
<b>Now More Than Ever</b>	211	187	163	138	145	199	133	145
<b>2020 Year Of Civic Participation</b>	209	183	156	144	150	188	141	152
<b>Part Of Change</b>	206	182	165	138	148	200	132	146
<b>Community Needs</b>	204	182	162	140	154	194	132	149
<b>Our Census</b>	203	181	161	120	149	181	129	148
<b>They Don't Want Us To Participate</b>	198	186	174	139	155	176	148	150
<b>Data Protection And Security</b>	185	166	142	106	112	179	113	126

**Swing audience:** people who were not sure they would participate in the Census at the start of the survey, but were convinced after the messages.

**Looking at this audience shows us what messages are moving the needle.**

<span style="color: green;">■</span>	= Most effective message
<span style="color: lightgreen;">■</span>	= Top 3 messages
<span style="color: red;">■</span>	= Least effective message

# The messaging that strongly resonates focuses on themes of empowerment and truth.

## Empowerment

*Participation is power.* Encourages people to take a stand and make their voices heard via the Census.

*They don't want us to participate.*  
Claiming power through defiance of those who are entrenched in power.

## Real Picture

*True picture.* Getting real about what America actually looks like; more fact, less fiction.

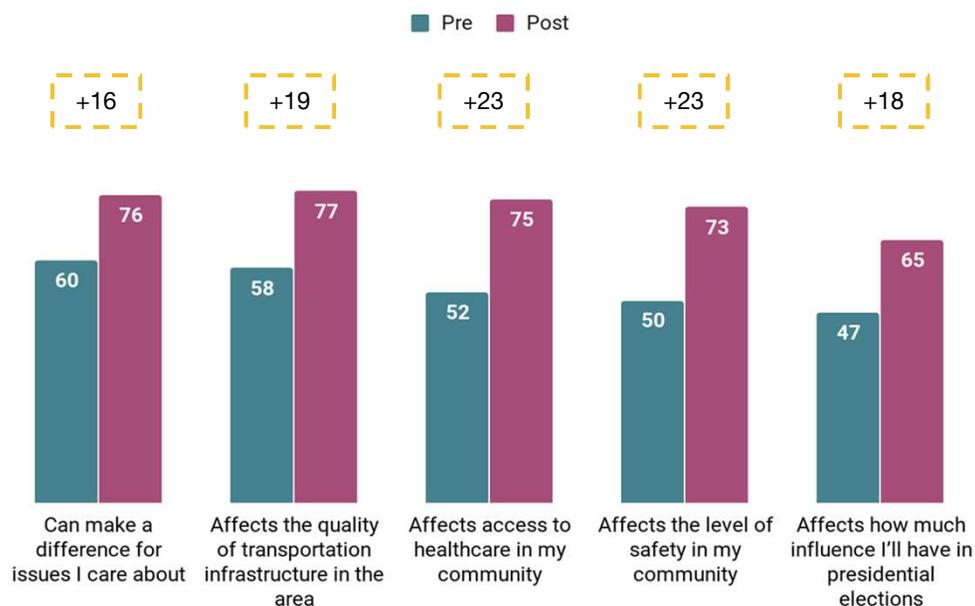
**Thus, we can envision a campaign centered around the idea of “truth to power”.**

**This primary message should be backed up with a reminder that the Census is easy, quick, and 100% confidential.**

# Messaging educates people about the Census and reaffirms that the Census can have a positive impact on the community.

## ATTRIBUTES - PRE VS. POST

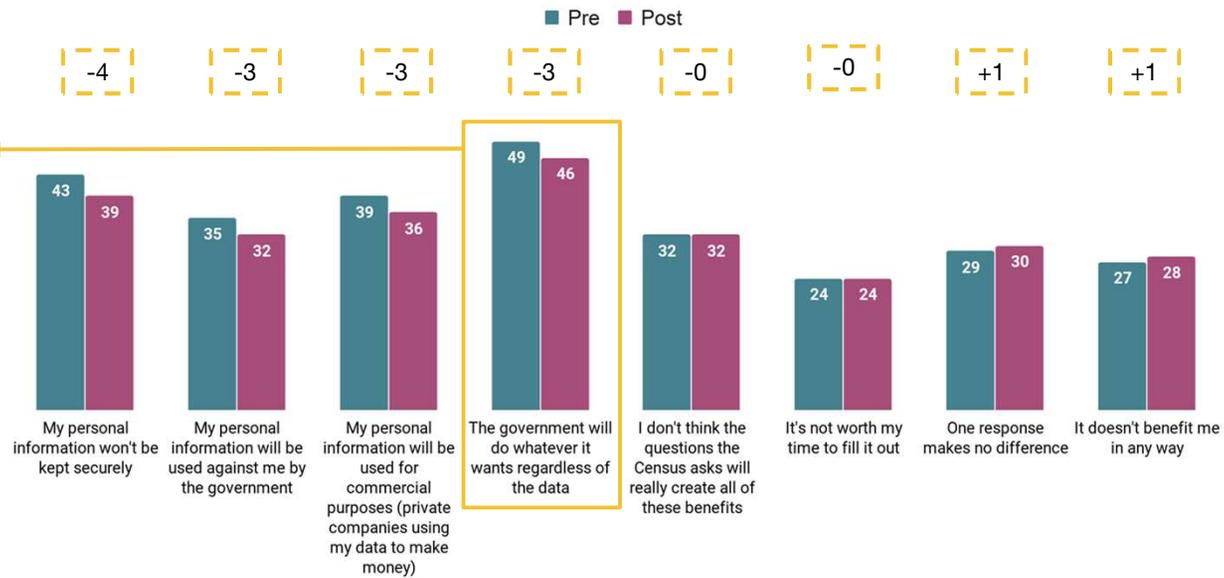
Based on what you know, how much do you associate each of the following with the Census?  
Showing % "very much" or "somewhat" among Gen Pop



# But messaging alone does not significantly alleviate the main barriers preventing people from participating in the Census.

**BARRIERS - PRE VS. POST**  
 Please read through each concern and select the option that best applies to you.  
 Showing % "major concern" across audiences

They still distrust the government, and words alone won't change that



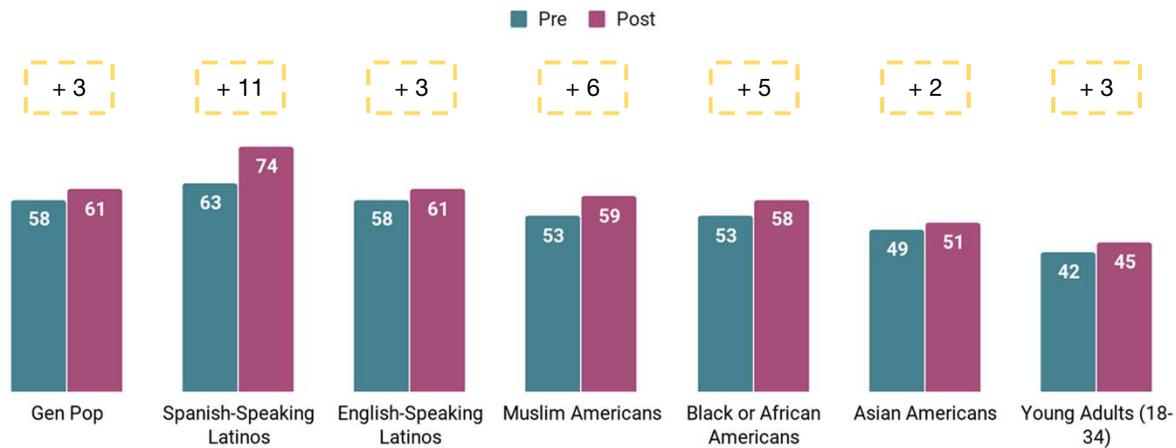
# As a result, these messages - though appealing - won't drive participation by themselves.

## PARTICIPATION - PRE VS. POST

**Pre:** How likely are you to participate in each of the following? "Participation in the 2020 Census"

**Post:** Based on what you know now, how likely are you to participate in the 2020 Census?

Showing % "definitely will participate" across audiences



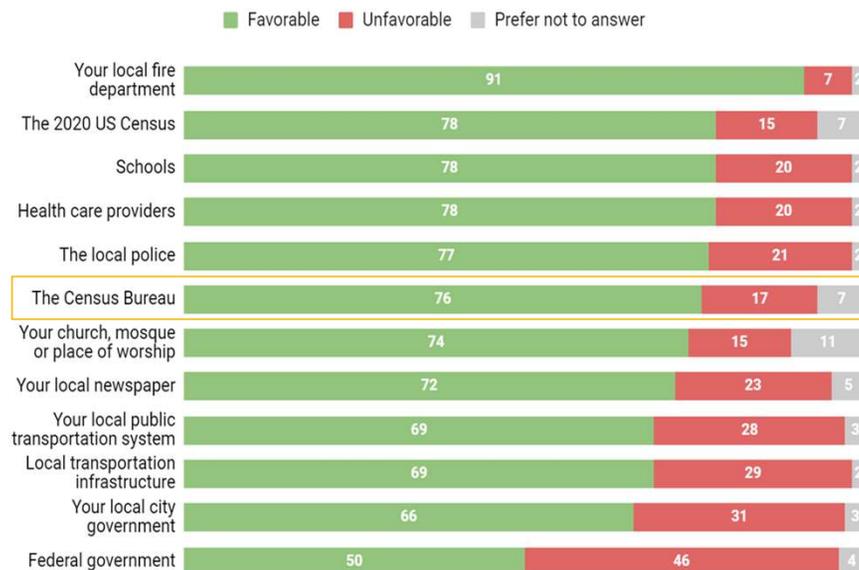
**That's why the messenger is key to building trust.**

# The Census Bureau itself is held in high regard; it will be critical to leverage Census Bureau branding in all communications.

## INSTITUTION REPUTATION

How favorable or unfavorable are you toward each of the following institutions, programs, and services?  
Showing % among Gen Pop

Note: Estimates reported in this chart were rounded to whole numbers so the sum of estimates equals 100%



**But, the association with the federal government can limit the effectiveness of the Bureau as a messenger.**

*FIRST WORD ASSOCIATIONS – CENSUS BUREAU*

*What's the first word or phrase that comes to mind when you think of each of the following institutions, programs, and services?*

*Showing responses for Gen Pop*



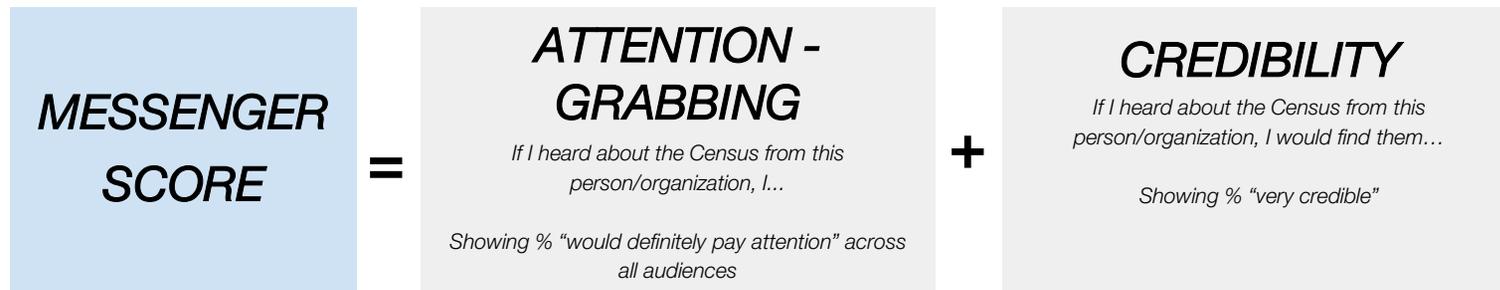
**Because of its position within the government, the Census Bureau can't communicate the harder-edged messages.**

**To deliver the more emotional messages, campaigns should partner with effective and credible messengers who can put a stamp of approval on the Census.**

## How to read the messenger scores:

To get a more accurate read of how effective the messengers would be in the real world, we aggregated the metrics tested.

Because the scores are aggregated, they add up to more than one hundred.



	Swing N = 350	Muslim Americans N = 481	Black or African Americans N = 273	Asian Americans N = 224	Latinos (English) N = 323	Latinos (Spanish) N = 327	Young Adults N = 540	Gen Pop N = 1499
The Census Bureau	125	98	103	84	90	116	88	98
A local first responder	95	84	79	55	74	87	70	75
Non-profit organization working with the Census Bureau	103	96	88	67	82	100	70	74
Community or local organization	96	88	85	52	72	99	71	71
Member of Congress from your state	85	84	84	62	68	89	66	69
Your clergy/cleric/minister	88	89	75	41	66	91	58	66
Your local mayor or elected official	88	89	82	62	69	90	65	65
The President	85	77	62	55	60	82	66	64
Your school board rep.	82	83	80	48	60	92	56	62
Your employer	75	82	70	46	62	84	64	60
Your child's school teacher	83	84	69	52	68	98	59	58
A local TV news personality	72	75	74	45	51	78	53	53
Your favorite entertainment celebrity	58	75	53	26	41	73	54	43
Your favorite professional athlete	54	72	59	23	37	70	48	40

**Community role models and non-profit organizations working with the Census Bureau are the most effective messengers.**

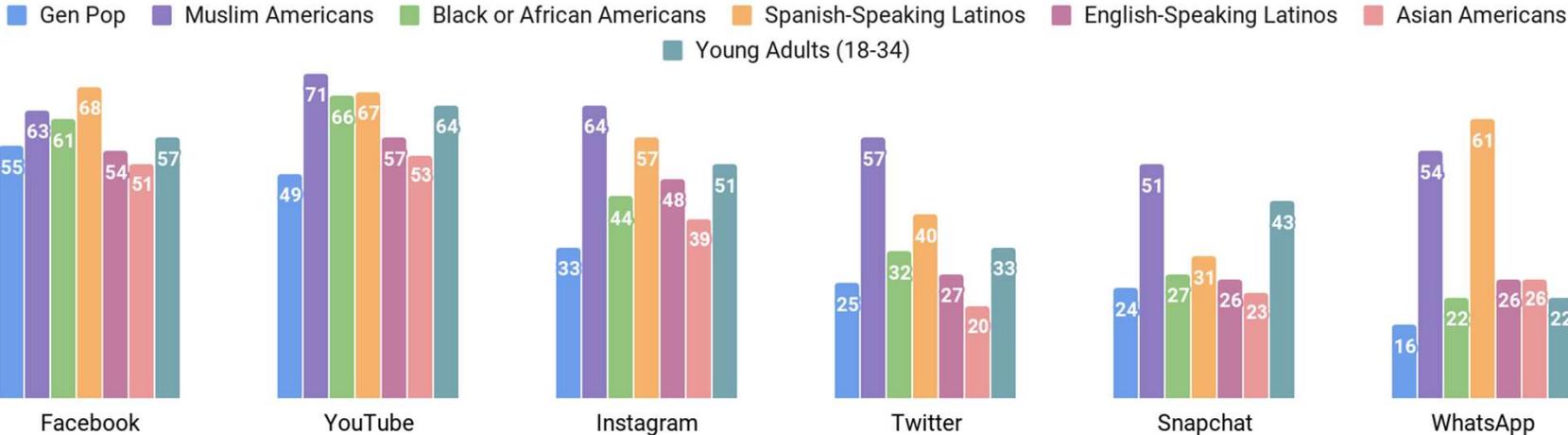
Muslims are also likely to listen to their clerics

Spanish-Speaking Latinos are also very likely to listen to school teachers

= Most effective messenger  
 = Top 3 messengers  
 = Least effective messenger

# The most popular digital platforms are Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram – they’re used daily by our hard to reach audiences

**SOCIAL MEDIA USE**  
*How often do you use each of the following applications?  
Showing % “almost constantly” and “several times a day” across audiences*



# Targeted Recommendations

# All Audiences

## Messages

### *Primary Message*

Truth to power: The Census is about gaining power by demonstrating what the real America looks like

### *Secondary Message*

It's easy, quick, and 100% confidential

## Messenger

- The Census Bureau (kept distinct from the overall federal government)
- Non-profit organizations working with the Census Bureau

## Digital Channels

- YouTube
- Facebook
- Instagram

*These findings are applicable for all audiences.  
The following slides outline audience-specific nuances we can leverage in targeting.*

## Muslim Americans (Total)

### Messages

A real picture of the country

### Messenger

- Religious leaders

### Digital Channels

- Twitter

## Muslim Americans (Middle Eastern / Arab descent)

### Messages

Defiance against people in power

### Messenger

- Religious leaders
- Community or local organizations

### Digital Channels

- Twitter
- WhatsApp

# Asian Americans

## Messages

A real picture of the country

## Messenger

- Local Member of Congress

## Digital Channels

*Same as all audiences (slide 43)*

# Black or African Americans

## Messages

Defiance against people in power

## Messenger

- Community or local organization

## Digital Channels

*Same as all audiences (slide 43)*

## English-Speaking Latinos

### Messages

A real picture of the country and empowerment through participation

### Messenger

- Local first responder

### Digital Channels

*Same as all audiences (slide 43)*

## Spanish-Speaking Latinos

### Messages

A real picture of the country and empowerment through participation

### Messenger

- Community or local organization
- Child's school teacher

### Digital Channels

- WhatsApp

## Young Adults (18-34)

### Messages

Defiance against people in power

### Messenger

- Community or local organization
- Local first responder

### Digital Channels

*Same as all audiences (slide 43)*

# Appendix

# Messages Tested in the Questionnaire

**DATA PROTECTION AND SAFETY:** Participating in the Census is safe, secure, and confidential. Just answer a few questions, and the responses are combined with all others, kept securely within the Census Bureau, and never shared with other parts of the government or private companies.

**EASY AND FAST:** Take five minutes to fill out the Census, make a lasting impact on the community. These few short questions provide the data used to determine funding for programs that will help our community for a generation.

**THEY DON'T WANT US TO PARTICIPATE:** Make no mistake: there are people in power who don't want us to be counted. When our community is marginalized, they stay in power. Don't let it happen. Take a stand and take control.

**PARTICIPATION IS POWER:** Participation is power. If our entire community is counted in the Census, our voices are heard, and our interests get attention. This is the time to stand up and take part - together.

**NOW MORE THAN EVER:** We are living in a critical moment, and the stakes for the Census have never been higher. Whether or not we've participated before, the 2020 Census will help shape our future – our participation matters now, more than ever.

**OUR CENSUS:** The Census is in the Constitution because it belongs to us, the people – not to whoever is in power at any given moment, and not to special interests. This is the time to stake a claim: this is *our* Census, which represents *our* country as it is.

**COMMUNITY NEEDS YOU:** Our community needs us. Participating in the Census means that people throughout the community get the resources and representation they need and deserve.

**PART OF CHANGE:** When we take part in the Census, we take part in changing our community - and the country - for the better. Our community gets more attention, our voice gets louder, and our needs get addressed.

**TRUE PICTURE:** For the country to advance and prosper, we need to be honest with ourselves about what America looks like today. When we all participate in the Census, we get a true picture of the country. Then we can make decisions based on fact, not fiction.

**2020 YEAR OF CIVIC PARTICIPATION:** In many ways, 2020 is going to determine where this country is headed. Each and every person has the power to make an impact. Between voting in the election and participating in the Census, 2020 will be an important year for civic participation.

# Comfort Messages Tested in the Questionnaire

**COMFORT - CONFIDENTIAL:** The Census is completely confidential. Individual responses are all combined together, the data isn't shared outside of the Census Bureau, and it is used only for statistical purposes.

**COMFORT - COMMUNITY LEADERS:** Community leaders, advocacy organizations, non-profits, and religious leaders are encouraging everyone in the community to participate. They recognize the community is stronger when everyone is counted and that the process is completely safe.

**COMFORT - CONSISTENT SURVEY:** This questionnaire has only changed minimally over the years - these are basically the exact same questions that were asked 10 years ago during the Obama administration, and 10 years before that.