“census”, “<city name> + census”, “census + immigrant”, or specific keywords or hashtags linked to problematic narratives you have observed.

- Use Hootsuite or similar social media management tools to follow the conversation around hashtags related to the 2020 Census and identify upticks in usage of problematic hashtags.

**Additional Resources**

- The Yalla Count Me In campaign at the Arab American Institute has developed a wealth of shareable educational resources on census disinformation.
- First Draft News has developed an informative series of training videos on topics ranging from information verification to identifying photo manipulation and using Google Reverse Image Search.
- The Leadership Conference’s Census Counts Campaign has released a GOTC toolkit containing helpful resources on how to manage disinformation threats.
- The Census Bureau maintains a “rumors” webpage that tracks false information circulating around the census and sets the record straight.
- Color of Change maintains a portal where people can report false census rumors they encounter.
- NALEO maintains a toll-free, bilingual census hotline (877-EL-CENSO or 877-352-3676) to provide free census information that is geared toward Latinx communities but is available to everyone.
- For an in-depth exploration of how to use social media metadata to identify media manipulators, read Dr. Amelia Acker’s report: *Data Craft: The Manipulation of Social Media Metadata*, published by Data & Society.

**III. Digital Divide & Access**

**What is the Digital Divide?**

In 2020, for the first time in the history of the U.S. census, respondents will be able to fill out their census forms online. While the digital option may be a convenience for many, it also makes it more likely that people with low internet proficiency or access may be excluded. Communities with low internet connectivity and low levels of digital literacy may be especially vulnerable to an undercount.1 According to the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), approximately 24 million Americans live without access to broadband internet. Only about 75% of rural Americans and 68% of those living on tribal lands have broadband access. Racial disparities in broadband access also persist — in 2018, approximately half of African American and Hispanic adults reported they had home broadband access, compared to 72% of white adults.2 While broadband coverage is lowest on average in rural, Western states, internet deserts also exist in cities, especially among poorer, older, less educated populations. The digital divide, therefore, refers to two separate but related problems: a lack of internet connectivity at home and a lack of digital literacy. Some people may be affected by both issues, while for others only one of the above

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challenges may be relevant. In the case of the census, some constituents may also face a “device divide,” as the online census form is optimized for mainstream operating systems and devices, but may not work well with inexpensive, off-brand devices that are often used by hard-to-count populations.

How Will Households Be Invited to Participate in the Census?
Unlike past years in which residents could only respond to the census by mail, respondents can fill out the 2020 census in one of three ways: online, by phone, or by mail. 95% of all U.S. households will receive an invitation in the mail asking them to participate in the census. In some remote areas, census invitations may be dropped off by a census taker or households may be invited to participate in-person by a census taker. Constituents can use the CUNY HTC Map to find out how census mailings will be conducted in their census tract. Households will be invited to respond to the census in several ways:

- **Internet First**: The Census Bureau will mail approximately 80% of all households instructions on how to fill out the census form online. These households will receive a paper questionnaire if they have not responded after four reminders sent by mail.
- **Internet Choice**: Based on demographic and internet coverage data, the remaining 20% of households will receive instructions both for filling out the online census form as well as a paper questionnaire that can be returned by mail.
- **Phone Option**: All households have the option to respond to the census over the phone. Respondents can also call the toll-free Census Questionnaire Assistance line with questions.

The paper census form is available in two languages, English and Spanish. The online census form and phone options are available in the 13 most commonly-spoken languages in the U.S., while language guides that inform respondents how to take the census will be available in 59 languages.

How Might the Digital Divide Impact Census Participation?
Despite Census Bureau efforts to address the digital divide through targeted outreach, the digital divide remains a barrier to accurate and representative census participation.

**Questionnaire Options May Cause Uncertainty**: Internet Choice households may find the decision to choose between the digital census form and the paper questionnaire confusing. Conversely, some Internet First households may prefer to fill out the paper questionnaire and not know how to obtain a copy. Emphasize that respondents have options and that the 2020 Census is not solely online — rather, respondents can choose to respond through whichever method is most convenient to them, including phone or mail. If respondents experience any technical difficulties with the digital questionnaire, there is a danger that they may discourage others from participating by sharing their frustrations. Respondents may be unaware of the option to provide their responses over the phone or may be reluctant to do so if they are charged per minute of talk time by their cellular providers.

**Reliance on Mobile Devices**: In many households, mobile devices serve as the primary or sole internet access point. Hispanic households are most likely to access the internet from a mobile device. Analysis of American Community Survey (ACS) results demonstrates that online questionnaires filled out using a mobile device are of lower quality than other online questionnaires. Higher likelihood of interruption, data limitations, poor reception, longer load times, small font sizes, and difficulties with selecting the correct dropdown menu option on a
touchscreen may all contribute to a greater chance of non-response or incomplete response among those who access the internet primarily through mobile devices.\(^3\)

**Concerns Around Data Privacy and Security:** In the light of recent, highly-publicized data security breaches and a polarized political climate, even internet-connected, digitally literate individuals may be reluctant to submit their information online. Distrust of government may raise concerns about how census data is used and stored. Research demonstrates that hard-to-count (HTC) populations are more likely to prefer responding via the paper questionnaire instead of online in connection to these concerns\(^4\).

**What Can My City Do?**

**Remove Barriers to Census Participation** | City governments need coordinated outreach to empower constituents to decide which census response method is most convenient. Reaching residents without home internet access or residents with low levels of digital literacy will require additional touchpoints to overcome barriers to participation. Consider the following questions as your city develops its 2020 Census outreach plan:

- Do you know where concentrations of people without broadband access are located in your city?
- Can your city partner with a public library network?
- Can your city partner with other institutions that offer free wifi (such as schools, universities, and coffee shops)?
- Does your city have access to trusted messengers in hard-to-count communities who can communicate how, why, and when to take the census?
- Does your city have educational resources and communication channels to inform constituents how to access and submit the census using the online and phone options?
- Does your city have educational resources and communication channels to inform constituents on avoidance of common security concerns (such as phishing)?
- Does your city have plans to set up Questionnaire Assistance Centers (designated locations where constituents can ask census questions and obtain help filling out the census form) or other tools to help constituents navigate the census form on paper, online, over the phone, or on mobile devices? How will your city publicize the availability of these tools and promote their use? Will these tools be available to non-English speakers?
- Are there touchpoints in your city that constituents see on a regular basis (such as bus shelters, taxi screens, or utility bills) that you can use to communicate how and when to fill out the 2020 Census?

**Coordination Between Cities** | Cities across the U.S. are currently preparing for the census. Many municipal governments have expressed interest in learning about the tactics other cities are using to promote a complete count. To combat the threat that the digital divide poses to the 2020 Census, cities have been hard at work designing outreach strategies to better communicate to constituents how to access the census and how it will benefit their communities. Some creative census engagement techniques reported by cities are listed below.

- **Baltimore:** Baltimore has developed a program to award Get Out The Count sub-grants to trusted organizations in hard-to-reach communities, such as barber shops, laundromats, and small community-based organizations, for use in census outreach efforts. **For more information, see the case study below.**

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- **Detroit**: Detroit has designated Neighborhood Census Champions to serve as grassroots census promoters and advisors to their communities. In addition, Detroit has set up 150 Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs) that residents can visit to access the internet and get help filling out their census forms.

- **Milwaukee**: Milwaukee is training institutions and organizations that serve predominantly hard-to-count populations on how to incorporate discussion of the census into their day-to-day work activities.

- **Atlanta**: In Atlanta, the mayor’s office has launched “block parties” to educate residents on the 2020 Census and reduce anxieties among immigrant communities.

- **Washington, D.C.**: Washington, D.C. has framed the census around issues of equity and social justice, which city officials believe will resonate with their constituents. In addition, the city has purchased tablets and laptops to set up mobile technology centers that residents can visit to fill out the digital census form.

- **Pittsburgh**: Pittsburgh has developed a series of data stories that show residents how the census will impact them and their communities. These stories are framed around concrete data points that are drawn from issue areas that residents care about deeply. For example, Pittsburgh’s data story on food security describes the number of meals and the number of children fed through school lunch programs as a direct result of an accurate census count.

- **Indianapolis**: Indianapolis has developed a Complete Count Ambassador program to maintain a multilingual presence at festivals and community events and educate residents about the 2020 Census through fun, approachable games and activities. For more information, see the case study below.

- **Los Angeles**: Los Angeles has set up a network of Census Action Kiosks, which are physical locations with regular office hours in the community that are equipped with computers so that residents can securely access census information or fill out the census form. For more information, see the case study below or view a fact sheet here.
Case Study | Indianapolis Complete Count Ambassadors Program

**What is the Complete Count Ambassadors program?** Since April 2019, the city of Indianapolis’ Count Me INdy campaign has been working to build a presence at events and festivals in Indianapolis, especially those that reach the city’s historically underrepresented communities. While targeted outreach at events was initially spearheaded by municipal government staffers, the Complete Count Ambassadors program was born from a desire for Get Out the Count outreach to be led by trained ambassadors who reflect the community and who can communicate effectively with constituents about the value of participating in the census. As a result, the city of Indianapolis has hired eight part-time ambassadors, contractors who are paid to staff booths and lead census education activities out in the community. The city plans to hire more ambassadors in the coming months, with the goal of expanding ambassador outreach to community gathering places like libraries and community centers and having more languages represented among the ambassador cohort.

**What do Complete Count Ambassadors do at events?** The Complete Count Ambassadors lead educational activities that frame the 2020 Census in a fun, engaging light. While a tight budget limits the program’s ability to distribute census-branded giveaways to the public, the Count Me INdy campaign takes pride in the many creative community engagement tactics they have developed. “We don’t want to remind people that they’re interacting with the government,” asserts Callie Kennington, the Census 2020 Complete Count Committee Program Manager for the city of Indianapolis. “Our goal is to take a topic like the census that may seem complex, daunting, or even boring and make it as relevant, approachable, and fun as possible.”

The Complete Count Ambassadors have led a variety of innovative 2020 Census awareness and educational activities aimed at promoting and demystifying the census, including:

- **Pledge to Count:** Event attendees sign a pledge to take the census and then have the option to take photos of themselves with their signed pledges in front of a backdrop of diverse portraits created by local Indianapolis artist Tasha Beckwith. When taking the pledge, attendees can opt in to receive text and email reminders to participate in the census during the response period in 2020.
- **Coloring Books:** The campaign had local artist Aaron Scamihorn design custom coloring books for children focused on the positive impacts of the 2020 Census on Indianapolis. The coloring books are distributed at events by Complete Count Ambassadors and through community partners.
- **Woof Count:** Complete Count Ambassadors help event attendees to fill out a dog census of sorts called #WoofCount about their dogs, which provide space for an attendee to draw a picture of his or her dog and to answer questions about the dog that parallel the real questions asked on the 2020 Census. This tactic is a fun way to open a discussion about the types of questions that the census asks.
- **Census Jeopardy:** Complete Count Ambassadors engage event attendees in a Jeopardy-like game in which they answer trivia questions about the census and receive candy or small prizes for participation, creating space for discussion around census fact and fiction.
- **Tulip Planting:** The Count Me INdy campaign has distributed thousands of tulip bulbs to community partners and members of the public. Just like the benefits of public census education, these tulip bulbs were planted last fall and will bloom in the spring, serving as a reminder to the entire city to fill out the 2020 Census.

**What advice does Indianapolis have for other cities?** Start as early as possible! Developing promotional strategies and materials takes time. Messaging is also very important — the Complete Count Ambassadors are instructed to keep the information they share about the census very basic and to-the-point. They might start the conversation by asking “do you know what the census is?” and if the respondent does know, the ambassador asks him or her to explain what the census is as an opportunity to gently correct any misunderstandings. Storytelling is also key! People need to know how the census will affect their lives for the next 10 years and beyond. In Indianapolis, the key message shared by ambassadors is that the census is easy and safe and that it is important for everyone to participate. The core value of the Count Me INdy! campaign is ensuring that ambassadors and materials reflect the
community, so that everyone regardless of background can see themselves represented in campaign marketing and hear messaging that resonates with their needs and priorities.

Special thanks to Collie Kennington, Count Me INdy! Campaign Program Manager, city of Indianapolis, for her insights informing this case study.
**What is the Census Community Grants Program?** In April 2019, the city of Baltimore received a $250,000 grant from the State of Maryland to conduct census outreach. The city was aware of the persistent gap between the government and local communities and recognized that if they used the funds themselves to conduct outreach or sub-granted to a large nonprofit, any resulting Get Out the Count strategies might not fully reflect the needs and priorities of local hard-to-count communities. The city also noted that traditional methods of conducting census outreach to hard-to-count residents via their other points of contact with the government (for example, at the DMV or a government benefits office) often fit poorly within residents’ busy schedules.

In response, Baltimore decided to sub-grant the $250,000 award as a series of mini-grants to local community institutions in an effort to bring census knowledge and resources to the people. By providing financial sponsorship to events that would happen in these communities regardless, the Census Community Grants program seeks to facilitate census education in places where people already gather, such as barber shops, laundromats, churches, and other local institutions and service providers. Any organizations or businesses working within traditionally undercounted Baltimore census tracts are eligible to apply for funding. Baltimore hopes that hearing about the census from trusted, known community members and institutions will increase residents’ willingness to participate. The city also built in incentives for local businesses to participate. For example, businesses may receive tablets with grant funds that residents can use to fill out the digital census form, which can then be used or repurposed by the business after the census is over.

**How does Baltimore conduct grant outreach?** One of the main challenges of sub-granting to community-based organizations and small businesses in hard-to-count communities was spreading the word that grants were available. The city of Baltimore kick-started outreach with a series of grant program open houses held in eight hard-to-count census tracts across the city. Next, targeted in-person outreach commenced with city staff and Complete Count Committee subcommittee chairs setting up meetings and information sessions in locations that subcommittee members flagged as important to each community. Engaging the Complete Count Committee was vital in spreading the word about the grant and identifying the right places to hold information sessions. Contact information was collected after each community information session and these constituents received first notice when the grant application went live. The grant application was designed to be quick and streamlined, with clear phone and email points of contact that applicants can reach out to with questions.

**What has worked well?**

- Partnership with a philanthropic organization helps to facilitate grant disbursement, if funds are being subgranted to local businesses without 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. In Baltimore, the Maryland Philanthropic Network serves as a pass-through organization between the city and grantee organizations. Working with a passthrough organization also helped to ensure that grantees received the full grant amount by eliminating the need for grantee organizations to engage their own fiscal sponsors, which may skimp off a portion of the grant.
- Providing potential applicants with examples of projects they could undertake with the funds so that they aren’t starting with a blank slate, while still allowing for flexibility and freedom in proposals.
- Setting a rolling grant application deadline allowed the city to prioritize applications with different criteria, so that all grants don’t end up going to the organizations that have the highest institutional capacity to meet hard deadlines.
- Baltimore is using the grant application as a broad needs assessment to ascertain what people in specific communities need, so that the city can provide more targeted services once the census is over.

**What advice does Baltimore have for other cities?** Conducting outreach among local businesses and organizations can be challenging, especially those which are disconnected from philanthropic and local government networks. While Baltimore did not implement a nomination strategy, allowing Complete Count Committee members to nominate local organizations or businesses for funding may be an interesting strategy to explore. Planning division...
of labor is key, especially if the grant rollout timeline is tight, as launching a grants program is a lot of work. However, there is no need to reinvent the wheel and cities can build upon community grant RFPs that other cities have produced. Finally, striking a casual, matter-of-fact tone and reflecting local cultural norms during community meetings has proven critical in building trust – one staffer remarked that while conducting outreach, it was bad form to attend a community meeting in a suit. This practical approach helped the city of Baltimore gain the trust and respect of individuals and institutions in hard-to-count communities and cultivate potential grant applicants.

Special thanks to Austin Davis, Census 2020 Project Manager, Department of Planning, City of Baltimore, for his insights informing this case study.
Case Study | Los Angeles Census Action Kiosks

What are Census Action Kiosks? Census Action Kiosks, or CAKs, are physical locations with internet access via a desktop computer, laptop, or tablet where members of the public can securely access census information online, fill out the online census form, and receive assistance or ask questions if needed. CAKs may or may not be humanly staffed, but all must have regular office hours during which they are open to the public. Most CAKs are stationary and located within public buildings such as government offices, community centers, schools, and libraries, where they are easily recognizable due to unified 2020 Census branding. In addition, there are several mobile CAKs that can be taken to events or public gatherings.

How have CAKs been implemented? The Census Action Kiosk program was designed in collaboration between Los Angeles City and Los Angeles County. The Countywide Outreach Complete Count Committee established a designated subcommittee to operationalize CAKs for the 2020 Census in January 2019. Los Angeles plans to open CAK locations to the public in time for the start of the self-response period in mid-March 2020 so that constituents can seek out census information and understand the purpose of the CAKs once the response period begins.

Organizations in the community can sign up to host a CAK through a webform on the city of Los Angeles and the county of Los Angeles websites. The city works with volunteer organizations to ensure that they can meet key requirements, such as being ADA compliant, committing to maintaining regular office hours and owning approved internet-capable devices. To ensure CAK locations are well-publicized, Los Angeles is recruiting, training and deploying volunteers, also known as Census Goodwill Ambassadors, to organize events at CAK locations. Los Angeles County is also training county employees to staff CAK locations. All CAKs will have resources and collateral materials available in multiple languages to help answer constituent’s questions and address concerns. Libraries constitute the largest category of CAK hosts, with community organizations, K-12 schools, municipal offices, and colleges/universities also representing substantial shares of CAK locations. All CAK hosts must fill out a liability waiver and a checklist confirming that they meet all facility requirements to host a CAK. Training is provided to all CAK hosts so that they can knowledgeably answer questions from the public or direct them to an appropriate resource.

Los Angeles has developed parallel programming around the CAKs to connect constituents with their local kiosk. Some examples of parallel programming around Census Action Kiosks is listed below:

- Census Goodwill Ambassadors: Los Angeles has developed the Census Goodwill Ambassadors (CGA) program to recruit, train, and deploy volunteers from hard-to-count communities to assist with informing, educating, and motivating hard-to-count populations to respond to the 2020 Census questionnaire. CGA volunteers will be trained to organize events that are open to the public at CAK locations during the response period. The goal of these events is to engage the local community and show how the CAKs are relevant to them. The city also offers small cash incentives to volunteers and community-based organizations in hard-to-count populations who are willing to host events.

- CAK Interactive Map: Los Angeles County has launched an interactive map of proposed CAK locations. The goal of the map is to generate a better understanding within government of where gaps exist so that Los Angeles can recruit hosts for additional CAK locations in the lead-up to the census.

- CAK Finder Tool: There are plans to launch a web-based tool that allows constituents to locate the CAKs near their location and search for details such as address, contact information, and hours of operation.

What advice does Los Angeles have for other cities?

- Be flexible: The CAK subcommittee of the Countywide Outreach Complete Count Committee established benchmarks and stated explicit objectives for the CAK program but maintained flexibility and nimbleness wherever possible. This flexibility has been useful as new state and Census Bureau guidelines have been released, allowing the subcommittee to quickly pivot when needed.
Establish benchmarks and set expectations: Communication of requirements and estimated time and resource commitment to potential CAKs is key. Many organizations have expressed interest in hosting a CAK location but find it challenging to actually commit. In Los Angeles, registrants must provide their own computers, antivirus software, and other supplies, so it is vital that they understand what they are committing to upfront.

Focus on communication and branding consistency: Consistency and continuity in branding is important so that constituents can easily recognize CAK locations.

Plan far in advance: Setting up CAKs can be a significant lift. Be sure to leave your city enough time to mobilize and train volunteers and to build community awareness of the kiosks.

Special thanks to Maria de la Luz Garcia, Director, Census 2020 Initiative, Office of Mayor Eric Garcetti, City of Los Angeles for her insights informing this case study.

IV. Data Privacy & Security

How Does the Census Bureau Keep Data Private?
Many cities have reported data privacy as a key concern among their constituents in the lead-up to the 2020 Census. To maximize census participation, constituents must feel comfortable providing information about themselves and their households and confident that the Census Bureau will protect the privacy of their personal data. However, given an atmosphere of heightened distrust that disproportionately affects hard-to-count communities composed of immigrants and minorities, it is vital that cities find effective channels to reassure constituents that their personal data is secure.

What Information Does the Census Collect?
The 2020 Census contains only 10 questions. Some of these questions are asked only once and some are repeated for each individual living in a household. The census asks for respondents to enter basic information such as sex, date of birth, and racial identification. The census does not ask respondents to enter personal data such as a Social Security Number or immigration/citizenship status. Many constituents believe that taking the census requires submitting extensive, personally sensitive data. Cities can counter this belief by informing constituents that the census requires less disclosure of personally identifiable information than many other routine transactions, such as applying for a loan or an apartment rental. To review the questions that the 2020 Census will ask, review this sample questionnaire provided by the U.S. Census Bureau. For more information on why these questions are asked and how the data is used, see the appendix, “Why Does the Census Ask That?”.

What Data Privacy Measures Does the Census Bureau Employ to Protect Your Constituents?

U.S. Code Title 13 - Legal Protection of Confidential Information: Data confidentiality is of utmost importance to the U.S. Census Bureau. Title 13 of the United States Code of Laws legally prohibits anyone at the Census Bureau from divulging any identifying census information. This legal mandate exists to protect against use or access of census data for purposes other than statistical analysis by the Census Bureau. It is prohibited for census workers to share any census data for any purpose. As a result, census data cannot be shared with private companies or organizations, media entities, or other government agencies (including Immigration and Customs Enforcement). In addition, census data cannot be obtained even if a court order is issued. Census enumerators must swear a strict