NNIPCamp Indianapolis, October 12, 2017

Census 2020

Led by Kathy Petit

Notes by Mychal Cohen

Present: Noah Urban, Katie Pritchard, Sonja Marziano, Jessie Partridge, Becky Zwicki, Deb Holton, Mychal Cohen, Kathy Pettit

**Kathy**: I am on the census scientific advisory committee.

There are less than 1000 days until the census. This will be the hardest census ever, probably. The Census has few resources, which has led to a delay in communications. From NNIP partner reports, the Census partnership program was not that strong in 2010, and now there will be fewer resources.

Another issue is the political environment. Immigration organizations are telling their folks to not have any contact with the government. They are very mistrustful of how that data will be used.

Because the 2020 Census will occur during an election year, it will be even more politicized. And they are expecting 60-70 percent of the count to come in through the internet. Hacking, phishing, internet access, and user design of the form are all concerns.

They originally had three test sites, two got cut. Only doing one end to end test, in Providence.

Two big roles NNIP partners can play:

1. Advocacy around funding. We have not done any advocacy as the NNIP network as of yet. Instead, we have sent out the website for an advocacy group ([the Census Project](https://thecensusproject.org/)) that partners can engage with directly.

2. Outreach and getting out the count. Partners could play a role in making this work better.

We are trying to decide what NNIP as a network should do. We could just share what partners do on an ad hoc basis. This is what we did in 2010, we shared partners’ activities when we knew about them.

There are two census funders’ groups

* [Funders Census Initiative 2020](https://funderscommittee.org/working-group/4/) (part of Funders Committee for Civic Participation)
* Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement: PACE

Funding Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights and some other racial/ethnic advocacy organizations. We could also do more sessions at meetings. Another possibility is for us to do a cross-site project. We are trying to figure out how we could pitch to the funders collective.

Localities are going to be basically on their own, cannot expect a lot of support from the Census Bureau.

**Becky**: We have been sending out information on questions that were struck from census. We haven’t heard a lot about organizing around advocacy or outreach.

**Kathy**: The questions will be finalized in May or so of next year. Apparently, some Republicans are trying to add an immigration question. The Census is also re-arranging the race categories, introducing a middle eastern category, combining race and ethnicity again. The Office of Management and Budget as well as Congress has to approve these changes.

**Jessie**: We are not a state data center, but we are aligned. They invited us to a discussion on jurisdictional boundaries. What role do the data centers play in advocacy?

**Kathy**: They are federally funded so I’d think that they are not playing a formal role in advocacy, I don’t know about their role in outreach.

Folks think the undercount is due in no small part to the lack of updated addresses. The census is running the Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA) for areas to comment on addresses. Localities have until December 15 to sign up. The process has jurisdictions go through every address. Partners would need to reach out to their jurisdiction to find out if they signed up. Some areas are partnering with civic volunteer groups.

**Kathy**: A lot of confusion and crossover potential with get out the vote. If it is uncoordinated, people might end up with a lot folks knocking at their doors.

**Katie:** Politico did a really [nice article](https://www.politico.com/agenda/story/2017/10/11/federal-data-collection-in-crisis-000537) on the census underfunding.

Data 1 from Madison, is a state data center so they may know more about the role state data centers are playing.

Thinking about it in the context of building capacity and literacy with data. We are considering building out some sort of fact sheet that shows the equity and undercounting issues.

**Kathy:** We proposed a number of materials. We thought about what our value add would be. We had a template, where you could add local data. Also, had some social media templates for local organizations.

Census is doing a survey this spring that will probably show that there is a lack of trust in government. Census Funders Collaborative may fund researcher looking at smaller racial/ethnic subgroups.

Also, a lot of funder education going on. Given cycles, if funders wanted to put money aside, for later years, a lot of the work would be happening in 2019, 2020.

**Katie:** Thinking about what the long-term consequences of the data being bad.

**Kathy**: The numbers about the dollars at risk is available (see [Andrew Reamer’s work](http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/census/CountingForDollars-Intro.pdf)). The [Hard to Count Map](http://www.censushardtocountmaps2020.us/) shows percentages of populations that are hard to count for states and congressional districts.

There is differential outreach depending on whether you are identified as hard to count. Most folks will get a postcard with logon, but for example the elderly and LEP populations will receive additional outreach.

**Noah:** Some meetings are happening in Detroit, but it is not clear yet what the end goal is. Have only convened a couple of meetings, just stakeholder meetings. We had a couple of policy interns, who wrote a few blog posts about how the census might affect people. They also compiled a menu of policy options.

* <https://datadrivendetroit.org/census/introduction-to-the-us-census-budget/>
* <https://datadrivendetroit.org/census/whatisthecensus/>

**Kathy**: You should share those out when they go live. Your options are probably mostly like everyone else’s’.

What would it mean to have an NNIP member at the table, informing where resources are spent, figuring out target organizations, and who to partner with? NNIP partners could motivate folks to get involved.

**Katie:** Getting folks employed with the census might be another angle.

**Kathy**: Partners could also be involved in getting the job announcements to the right people.

**Sonja:** I think it would be really useful to have a timeline of all these things. So you can identify upcoming calls, and folks can know what is happening.

**Kathy**: Different kinds of community coordination. MAPC did a [Massachusetts fact sheet](https://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/sites/default/files/course-materials/MAPC%20Census%202010%20FactSheet.pdf) and [training that is posted on the NNIP website](https://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/data-tech/course-catalog/complete-count-committee-2010-training). Sharing examples could be useful.

We did a [2009 survey on what partners were doing for 2010 Census](https://www.neighborhoodindicators.org/library/catalog/nnip-2010-census-activity-survey-results-summer-2009).

**Jessie:** We could have a standing camp session leading up to 2020 on the census. People could come in with updates.

**Kathy**: Might be useful to have local organizers come in

**Becky**: Do we think that we should be engaged in telling people to take the census?

**Noah:** Talked with our state demographer, who said he thinks that folks he knows would refuse an order to give up identifying data

**Kathy**: After 9/11 they did a specialized run of census data to identify block groups with a high percentage of Muslims.

**Noah:** Are the funders in the collaborative national or regional?

**Kathy**: There are some regional ones, Massachusetts, Florida, some community foundations (long island). Two big ones are Ford and Casey.

Encouraging your funders to get involved in these groups might be helpful.

**Becky**: In 2000, were they using the slogans, get out the count and get out the vote at the same time?

**Kathy**: Don’t know, could be just the media landscape is different know.

**Katie:** Are the philanthropic groups associated with the Fed involved?

**Kathy**: I don’t think it has touched the Fed yet. Need to reach out to them discussing what is coming, their role, etc. They do good convenings, they could pay for printing and videos. A lot of ways they could contribute. Thinking of other groups like your LISCs or United Ways.

**Becky**: United Way seems like a good way to connect with hard to count populations.

**Kathy**: I can share the concept paper developed for the NNIP cross-site project on request. Full disclosure, they want to focus on areas with the greatest number of hard to count children. We argued for a competitive grant, but we don’t have control over that. All of NNIP counties are in the hard to count category. If they are thinking about reaching the most people, the gut reaction is to lean towards the bigger places. We will keep everyone posted. Casey board votes this week.

**Katie:** Aren’t Latino children the largest group of hard to count people (yes). Would this then mean that maybe here there are less benefits to investing here due to these fears of government action.