



i COUNT NM

i count because i care

NEW MEXICO CENSUS MESSAGE TESTING

THE KEY TAKEAWAYS

New Mexico has unique challenges and barriers to achieving an accurate census count. We are the hardest state to count and have the most to lose if those barriers are not overcome. That is why NM Counts 2020, a group of national and local philanthropic organizations, decided to fund New Mexico-specific message testing to provide everyone participating in census outreach messaging support for effective outreach efforts.

About the Survey

Message testing gives us information about how to best reach a particular audience and what messages work best with them. Use the information provided here to help you craft messages about the census during your outreach efforts.

Every survey is different. This survey:

- Was a random sample of 732 respondents statewide
- Was offered in English and Spanish, online and over the phone
- Has a margin of error of +/- 3.7%
- Took place Jan 10 – Jan 20 (after SCOTUS decision on citizenship question)

Special Thanks

This message testing was made possible by NM Counts 2020, a group of local and national funders who are working to support a complete count in New Mexico. The survey was conducted by Latino Decisions, a recognized leader in political opinion research.



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Latino Decisions



For more help with your outreach efforts, visit: iCountNM.gov/resources
Or call the NM Census Outreach Hotline: (505)331-8836

Background on Participation

What is the main reason you are not sure, or might not participate?

- 29% of respondents said they might not participate because they're not interested in the census or don't think it's important.

The census happens once every 10 years. Many people don't plan on participating simply because they don't know that they should participate. By providing education about the census we can increase census responses dramatically.

Do you plan to participate in the census?

- Pre-Survey: 75% of respondents said they would "definitely" participate.
- Post-Survey: 95% of respondents said they would "definitely" participate.

From the message testing, we've learned that with just a little basic education about the census there is an increase in someone's likelihood to participate by 20%. That is remarkable. By focusing on educating people about the census, we can significantly increase our likelihood of an accurate count.

Messages: What Performed Well?

Specific and Local Messages

The more specific you're able to get, the better. Show people that the census impacts their community and their life directly. Use specific school, road and hospital names from your community. This helps personalize the census so that people can relate it to something tangible.

For example, say:

- "Our community" rather than "New Mexico"
- "Head Start" rather than "community programs"
- "Lincoln Middle School" rather than "our school"

Benefits of an Accurate Census

Showing people what the benefits are is one of the easiest ways to explain why the census is important. People generally don't know what the census is and why it's important, so we need to help them understand what they stand to gain (or lose) by filling out the census.

For example, say:

- "Our *Little Steps Head Start* program receives funding because of the census. Make sure you fill out your census so we can continue to receive support."
- "Our community could lose up to \$____ in public education funds"



Ease and Convenience (Especially with Caregivers)

Everyone is busy, and this is just another thing they have to do. Let people know that the census takes about 10 minutes and that they can take it online, over the phone, or by mail at their convenience.

For example, say:

- “The census only takes 10 minutes to fill out. In those 10 minutes, you’ll help your community receive funding for the next 10 years”
- This year you have multiple options to complete the census from the privacy of your own home - from your phone, online or on paper.

*Messages about convenience are particularly effective with caregivers of children and singles.

Messengers: Who is Trustworthy?

Messengers are the individuals and organizations that people are likely to listen to and trust. Below are general messengers listed in order of trustworthiness.

1. Census Bureau — 84%
The Bureau is seen as a credible source for information. If people have questions about the census, send them to 2020census.gov for information.
2. Teachers/Educators — 80%
We trust that teachers and educators have the best interest of our children and family in mind. Partnering with schools to help share awareness about the census is a great strategy.
3. Advertising — 79%
This is advertising like billboards, TV ads, and radio commercials. People are used to receiving information this way.
4. Healthcare Providers — 76%
Healthcare providers, including first responders, are also seen as having our best interest in mind. Nurses are especially trusted.
5. Local News Outlets — 74%
This includes local news on tv and local newspapers. They are from our community and share information that is helpful to our daily lives.
6. Least trustworthy: Friends, family or organizations on social media — 46%
People are wary of the information they receive on social media. Even if it’s coming from a family member or friend.

Channel: How to Reach Individuals

Channels are the different ways that we can reach individuals with information about the census. Below are general channels listed in order of preference.

1. Mail information to me — 85%
Consider sending mailers, postcards, and letters. Also consider adding information about the census in utility bills.
2. Email information to me — 62%
Consider asking organizations and nonprofits in your area that regularly send out eNewsletters to add information about the census in their eNews.
3. Show me advertising — 51%
Traditional advertising, like billboards, posters, and radio ads may be effective in your community depending on what’s available.



4. Visit me in person — 43%

We don't recommend going door to door. Instead, try to meet people where they're already gathering to share information about the census. School sporting events, churches, town halls, volunteer groups, or any other community gathering work great.

5. Show it to me on social media — 41%

While we know that social media is not the most trusted source of information, some people still prefer to receive their information there.

**If you have any questions about the information above, would like more details on the survey results, or need help crafting messages or creating materials, contact us!
We're here to help.**

**Email: census@mediadesknm.com
NM Census Outreach Hotline: (505) 331-8836**

