

ON THE ROAD TO 2010

UNITED STATES CENSUS BUREAU

# FINAL REPORT

## RURAL OUTREACH FOCUS GROUPS

FRESNO, CA

CHARLESTON, WV

JACKSON, MS





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# Executive Summary

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The U.S. Census Bureau values the partnerships they have developed over the years and decided to study the effectiveness of its Rural Partnership Program. As part of the 2010 Research and Development efforts, they conducted three Rural Outreach focus groups in the cities of Fresno, CA, Charleston, WV, and Jackson, MS. Fresno, CA, was selected in order to gain input from organizations in the area that serve migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Charleston, WV, was chosen to get input from organizations serving Appalachian population. The third site, Jackson, MS, was selected to gain input from organizations serving the rural south populations of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. All sessions were conducted during the months of March and April of 2003.

The purpose of these focus groups was to collect information from culturally, racially, ethnically, geographically, and socially diverse individuals as a basis for developing new and innovative census outreach strategies to rural populations. All of the participants in the three focus groups were partners from rural organizations during Census 2000.

The questions used in the focus groups were specific and focused on generating input on the following areas:

- ♦ Reaching and motivating rural residents.
- ♦ Identifying major influencers of rural residents.
- ♦ Effective methods for disseminating information/materials to rural residents.
- ♦ Effectiveness of promotional materials in rural communities.
- ♦ Reading and writing limitations in rural communities.
- ♦ Access to technology in rural communities.
- ♦ Outreach to migrant populations and tribal governments.
- ♦ Communicating the Census Bureau's commitment to confidentiality.

The groups offered specific recommendations which are found in the contents of this report. Listed below is a summary of the recommendations provided by the participants for each of these areas:

## **1. Reaching and motivating rural residents.**

The Census Bureau should:

- ♦ Begin outreach and communication efforts for 2010 early, no later than 2005.
- ♦ Become more aware of the variety of diverse communities within rural populations and ensure that Partnership Specialists going into communities truly represent the communities in which they serve.
- ♦ Make a special effort to reach chil-

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dren/youth, immigrants, migrant farmworkers, and the elderly through innovative programs and activities targeted at these unique populations.

- ◆ Build relationships with existing community and religious organizations and programs in rural areas such as Community Action Programs, Head Start, 4-H Clubs, Social Services, and Agricultural Extension Services.
- ◆ Involve national organizations earlier in the rural outreach process, such as League of United American Citizens (LULAC), California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), and United Farm Workers (UFW).
- ◆ Expand the use of local media, including in-language newspapers, radio, television, and local politicians who are respected in their communities.
- ◆ Use “freebies” or giveaways, especially more practical, functional items, such as highlighters, calendars, letter openers, fans, stress balls, and water bottles.
- ◆ Provide *Train-the-Trainer* sessions to rural leaders and partners who can then educate their network of volunteers about census goals, procedures, etc.

## **2. Identifying major influencers of rural residents.**

The Census Bureau should:

- ◆ Communicate immediately and directly with rural leaders and their communities about concerns and fears many illegal immigrants have regarding the Office of Homeland Security, the Internal Revenue Service, and other law enforcement agencies. These rural leaders include priests/ministers, teachers, social workers, and medical workers.
- ◆ Train key community influencers on methods and techniques for reaching out to people, and on the value and benefits of the census to make them more effective as census ambassadors.
- ◆ Continue to encourage the establishment of Complete Count Committees. They worked well as strong influencers in 2000.

## **3. Effective methods for disseminating information/materials to rural residents.**

The Census Bureau should:

- ◆ Expand utilization of radio, television, and print media in designing and disseminating positive messages to rural communities.
- ◆ Encourage local businesses to promote census participation in their advertise-

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ments.

- ◆ Request support from nationally- or culturally-recognized heroes to convey the census message.
- ◆ Utilize familiar images from culture, sports, and entertainment to create a connection to census goals, and economic value to rural communities.
- ◆ Utilize resources where people within the community go to receive services, such as family and social services organizations, Head Start, and Hospice Care.
- ◆ Encourage rural leaders to work with community committees to plan special events, including sporting events, festivals, and parades.

#### **4. Effectiveness of promotional materials in rural communities.**

The Census Bureau should:

- ◆ Design posters and other marketing material to be more culturally diverse and reader friendly. Instead of creating multiple posters with one specific picture on it, the Census Bureau should develop a collage of pictures to represent the wide variety of cultures in rural communities.
- ◆ Keep the language or message simple at a fifth- or sixth-grade reading level. Keep messages short in length and match the messages to the audience. Avoid gov-

ernment names and jargon.

- ◆ Emphasize images of families and community support groups, such as fire departments, doctors, and teachers. Use icons/images that people are familiar with in their local areas.
- ◆ Show images that connect the present to the future, such as children helping an elderly person fill out the census form.

#### **5. Reading and writing limitations in rural communities.**

The Census Bureau should:

- ◆ Keep in mind the literacy level of many rural populations. Pay attention to special language needs, especially for certain rural and migrant populations. Use pictures, videos, and very simple language to communicate the census message.
- ◆ Census information should be included in English as a Second Language (ESL), General Education Development (GED), adult education, college curriculums, as well as citizenship classes and state literacy programs.

#### **6. Access to technology in rural communities.**

The Census Bureau should:

- ◆ Recognize that there is currently little or

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no access to computers and the Internet in many rural homes. However, access to computers and the Internet are available in the community through libraries, housing and community centers, churches, community-based organizations, senior centers, and mobile computer labs in some areas.

- ◆ Plan to use computers and other technology for the 2010 Census in communicating with rural partners despite these limitations.

#### **7. Outreach to migrant populations and Tribal Governments.**

The Census Bureau should:

- ◆ Begin communication immediately and directly with rural leaders and their communities about concerns and fears among migrant populations regarding Homeland Security and the Internal Revenue Service.
- ◆ Utilize more bilingual enumerators and census outreach workers and volunteers. Include migrant farmworkers on Complete Count Committees.
- ◆ Develop materials in Spanish using simple words and a low reading level. Emphasize confidentiality of the census process in all contacts with migrant workers to alleviate fears of losing their jobs

or their children.

- ◆ Work with Tribal Chiefs, Elders, and Tribal council members to outreach to American Indian/Alaska Native populations.
- ◆ Prepare simple promotional materials for Tribal Governments with few words describing census benefits and the value to American Indian/Alaska Native populations.
- ◆ Create relevant, meaningful images on printed materials, as images are very important to American Indian/Alaska Native populations and have a strong, lasting effect on them.

#### **8. Communicating the Census Bureau's commitment to confidentiality.**

The Census Bureau should:

- ◆ Communicate its commitment to confidentiality in simple and clear language. Be specific in explaining the penalties and fines for breaking confidentiality with census data. Inform the public that all paid census workers go through thorough background checks and clearances prior to starting work.
- ◆ Provide census workers with business cards with a telephone number so people may call to verify that someone works for the Census Bureau.

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Lastly, the participants of the focus groups were impressed by the fact that the U.S. Government sought their opinions about how to strengthen outreach to rural populations. They hope that this type of forum will continue in the future.



# Introduction

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The U.S. Census Bureau's Partnership and Data Services Staff initiated the development of three Rural Outreach focus groups as a part of the 2010 research and development efforts. These meetings took place in Fresno, California, Charleston, West Virginia, and Jackson, Mississippi, in the months of March and April of 2003.

The focus group participants were very engaging, attentive, and expressive in their interaction on each of the discussion topics. They generated a high volume of creative ideas and suggestions during the relatively short time allocated for each research topic.

## **Goal, Objective and Approach**

The goal and objective of these focus groups were to collect information from racially, ethnically, and socially diverse individuals, representing geographically diverse rural areas of the country, as a basis for developing new and innovative census outreach strategies to rural populations. The purpose of the focus groups was to use the gathered information to increase awareness and promote greater participation by rural communities in the 2010 Census.

To obtain relevant information to accomplish this goal, the Census Bureau secured the services of an outside team of professionals

to coordinate and facilitate three four-hour focus groups at a variety of locations to gather information on how to better reach rural communities. Each group was comprised of approximately six to twelve participants selected from a targeted population of approximately 500 rural partners from Census 2000. The following outlines the general process and criteria applied for the selection of the final twenty-three focus group participants.

## **Selection Criteria for Participants for Rural Outreach Focus Groups**

The participants for the Rural Outreach focus groups were identified from the list of rural partners from Census 2000. It was very important to get a diversity of rural areas representing this country. In order to ensure a broad representation of input from rural populations, three geographically different sites were selected. Fresno, California, was selected in order to gain input from organizations in the area that serve migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Charleston, West Virginia, was chosen to get input from organizations serving the Appalachian population. The third site, Jackson, Mississippi, was selected to gain input from organizations serving the rural south populations of Mississippi, Louisiana, and Texas. In identifying participants, the following criteria were

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used:

- ◆ Partners from geographically diverse rural areas.
- ◆ Rural organizations serving a diversity of racial/ethnic groups.
- ◆ Partners from a variety of organizations including community-based organizations, agricultural extensions/granges, businesses, local governments, educational organizations (public schools, college/universities, adult education, educational associations, Head Start, etc.), and media.
- ◆ Partners specifically from the following special populations - Colonias, American Indians/Tribal Governments, and migrant/seasonal farmworkers.

Initially, about 500 partners were identified to ultimately obtain the final 24 participants for the focus groups.

### **Methodology**

Each Rural Outreach focus group was facilitated with the same facilitation method and with the same questions. With the overall objective to gather information as it related to the specific questions, a moderator's guide was developed to ensure consistency of facilitation at each meeting location. The questions used were specific, focusing on generat-

ing input on the following:

- ◆ Reaching and motivating rural residents.
- ◆ Identifying rural influencers.
- ◆ Rural information dissemination methods.
- ◆ Effectiveness of promotional materials.
- ◆ Reading and writing limitations in rural communities.
- ◆ Access to technology.
- ◆ Outreach to migrant populations and Tribal Governments.
- ◆ Confidentiality.

Responses from predetermined open-ended questions were collected and recorded on flip chart paper, electronically, and by CD recording. The data was then formatted, analyzed, and reported to the Partnership and Data Services management team for planning purposes for the 2010 Census.

In order to maintain the local flavor and accuracy of the comments provided, this report is written as close as possible to the terminology and phraseology of the participating groups.

### **Contract Support Services**

NATEK Incorporated is a small, woman-owned professional-services firm established in 1994. NATEK was tasked to provide the U.S. Census Bureau with conference management and facilitation support services that

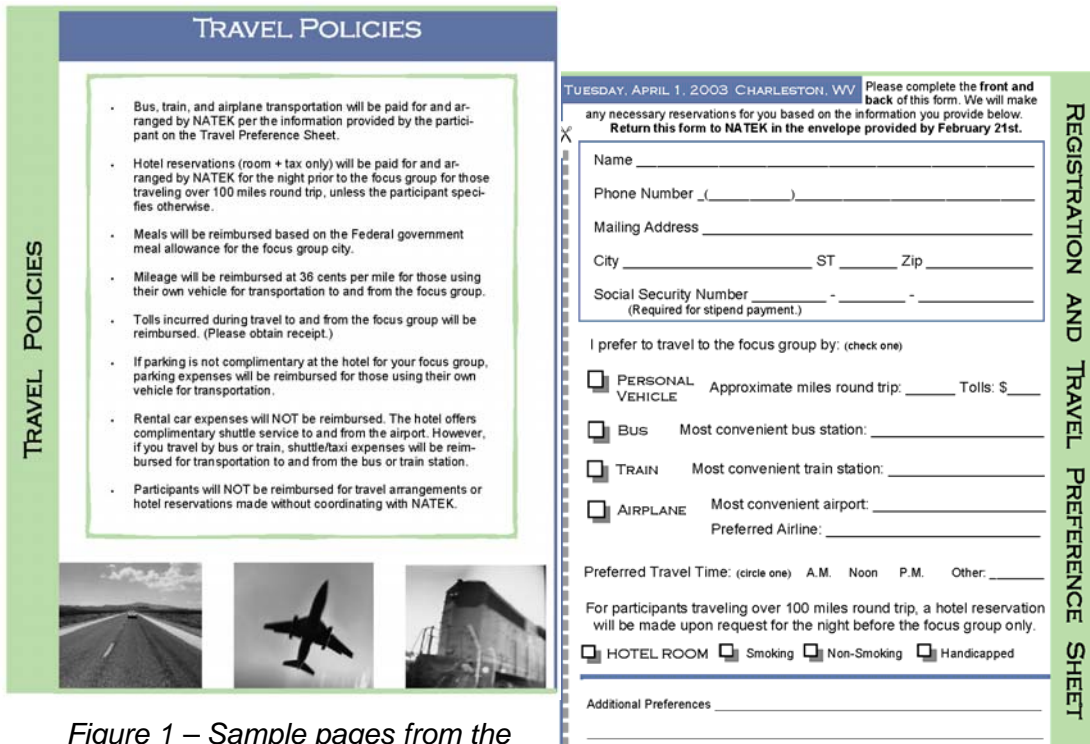


Figure 1 – Sample pages from the travel brochure

City	Number of Participants Using Mode of Transportation			
	Air	Train	Bus	Car
Fresno, CA	3	0	0	3
Charleston, WV	1	0	0	9
Jackson, MS	2	0	0	6

Figure 2 – Travel for participants

would enhance the overall goals and objectives of the Rural Outreach focus groups. NATEK used the facilitation services of the International Training Consortium (ITC) to assist with achieving these goals.

The ITC, established in 1993 in Rockville, Maryland, provides a variety of in-house training programs and consulting services.

### Logistical Coordination

NATEK coordinated the necessary travel arrangements, accommodations, and hotel meeting requirements.

The U.S. Census Bureau provided NATEK with the names and contact information for each of the participants. They were mailed a confirmation packet which included a letter of

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confirmation, and a detailed travel brochure outlining the background of the focus group, location, date and time, travel policies, next steps, a registration and travel preference form, and a participation agreement form. Please see Figure 1 for sample pages from this travel brochure.

For those who returned the travel preference form and met stated requirements, NATEK made the following arrangements:

- ◆ Travel (air, train, bus)
- ◆ Hotel Accommodations
- ◆ Stipend and Reimbursement Checks

Figure 2 details the mix of modes of transportation to each city. Electronic tickets were used when possible and confirmation numbers were communicated via mail, e-mail, and/or phone. A toll-free phone number was obtained and managed by NATEK for participants to ask questions about the focus group as well as any travel or logistical questions.

NATEK researched several hotels in each location to find the best proposed site based on accommodations, location convenience, service, and best value.

Once NATEK contracted with each of the preferred hotels, a block of rooms was set aside

for the participants. For the convenience of the participants, NATEK reserved the participant's room and provided confirmation numbers accordingly.

In addition to the sleeping room reservations, NATEK coordinated the conference room layout, catering, setup, and audio-visual needs.

At the conclusion of each focus group a stipend check for \$50.00 was provided to each participant. Each participant also submitted an expense report at the conclusion of the day. NATEK processed these forms within fifteen days after the meeting for expeditious payment to all participants.

NATEK and ITC generated this comprehensive Final Report of the results of the Rural Outreach focus group proceedings. NATEK coordinated the layout, design, and production of this report. A copy of the report will be distributed to each of the participants.

# Summary and Analysis of Individual Focus Groups

## Fresno, CA

### Agenda

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Registration & Continental Breakfast
8:30 a.m.	Introductions
8:45 a.m.	Ground Rules and Housekeeping Items
8:55 a.m.	Background Information
9:10 a.m.	Discussion Questions
10:10 a.m.	Fifteen-Minute Break
10:25 a.m.	Discussion Questions (cont.)
12:15 p.m.	Final Remarks

### Participants

See Appendix A for a complete list of participating organizations.

### Limitations

There were no noted limitations with this session.

### Date:

March 26, 2003

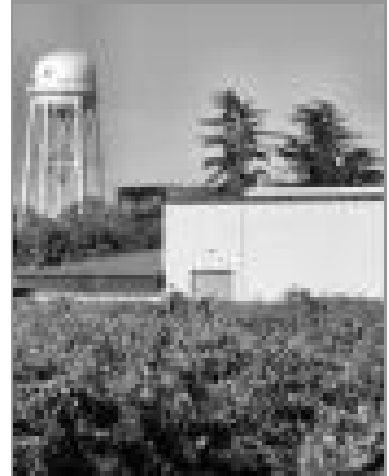
### Location:

Four Points Sheraton  
3737 Blackstone Ave  
Fresno, CA 93726

### Number of

### Participants:

Six



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## **Key Findings**

Throughout the proceeding, the focus group maintained an enthusiastic, positive attitude. Each participant was open and willing to share ideas and suggestions. The following are findings from this session:

- ◆ The best sources for motivating or encouraging rural residents to respond is through family, church, and community. It is also important to ensure the credibility of confidentiality.
- ◆ Solicit more visible support for the census by high-level politicians, such as consulates and mayors.
- ◆ Use more community workers who are key influencers and have one-on-one contact with families in the community.
- ◆ Provide practical giveaways that can be constant reminders of the census and their responsibility to participate.
- ◆ In promotional materials, use more images with families, migrant workers in agricultural settings, service providers, and trusted community leaders.
- ◆ Customize promotional materials to meet language needs and diversity of the local community.
- ◆ Utilize national and/or cultural heroes to help build a connection to the census with which people can identify.
- ◆ It was strongly suggested that efforts to build partnerships begin much earlier in the

census process.

- ◆ Little to no computer technology exists in most rural homes, and there is limited Internet access.
- ◆ The issue of fear and confidentiality play a big role in the reluctance of rural people, Hispanics in particular.
- ◆ The Census Bureau can best communicate its commitment to confidentiality by promoting the Bureau's confidentiality statement regarding Title 13.

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## ANALYSIS BY RESEARCH QUESTION

### Topic #1 Reaching and Motivating Residents

**A. What organizations or agencies are the best sources for motivating or encouraging rural residents to respond to the census?**

#### **Summary of Comments**

According to the Fresno focus group, the best sources for motivating or encouraging rural residents to respond is through the family, church, and community. Community-based organizations, Family Resource Centers and services, such as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs and Head Start, together with schools and churches of all denominations provide meaningful avenues for informing and inviting rural and migrant individuals into the census process. Municipalities and for-profit organizations were also identified as good ways to reach rural communities, as well as having a vested interest in a good census.

**B. What can organizations or agencies do to motivate residents to respond to the census?**

#### **Summary of Comments**

Here, the group emphasized educating, informing, and involving organizations earlier in the 2010 Census planning and partnering process. The participants suggested reaching out to schools, churches, and community-based organizations as a means of building trust for the census process through the advocacy of familiar people, places, and images. The following are additional suggestions discussed:

- ♦ Show results of the last census, to create incentive to participate, by using specific examples of how communities have seen the direct benefits of participation. More information on the impact of not being counted is needed.
- ♦ Focus on personalized approaches in searching out and connecting with rural and Hispanic constituents. Demonstrate greater genuine cultural sensitivity, knowledge, and respect for core family and cultural values.
- ♦ Conduct *Train-the-Trainer* sessions on census data and importance of census with community-based organization staff so they can better communicate the importance of the census to their constituents.

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- ♦ Work more with youth to get the message out to the adults they know. This will prepare the youth to participate in the census when they become adults. This could be incorporated with community service programs in the schools.

***C. What vehicles or sources have the greatest impact for delivering a census message to the rural community? (i.e., newspapers, radio, flyers, and posters.)***

***Summary of Comments***

The group recommended greater use of local media, newspapers (in-language), libraries, Spanish radio, television, and local politicians (elected and nonelected) who are respected by the locals. Spanish radio is a great avenue for communicating the census message and motivating rural residents, particularly farmworkers. Stations could use on-air personalities, guests (labor members, etc.) to support census activities and messages.

Heavy emphasis was placed on building relationships on the grassroots level with persons of influence, i.e., teachers, priests, social- and medical-service workers. With the support of these key people in rural areas, there is likely to be less resistance about the census. Use local election campaign strategies as a model

to get the word out about economic benefits of the census.

***D. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

Internet access is available at local libraries and schools. This is a good way to get messages to youth. Farm owners also use the Internet regularly for communication.

Involve national organizations earlier, such as League of United American Citizens (LULAC), California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), United Farm Workers (UFW), and Hispanic Chambers to stress what has been accomplished from past censuses, and what needs to be done in the next census.

**Topic #2  
Rural Influencers**

***A. Who are the major influencers of rural residents? (i.e., teachers, community leaders, and radio personalities.)***

***Summary of Comments***

It was very apparent from the group that much

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greater efforts should be made to involve people of the community in the census process. Visible support and encouragement is needed by high-level politicians, i.e., the Mexican Consulate, mayor. Community workers are key influencers as they have one-on-one communication with families. There should be greater census involvement in children's activities, as well as with grassroots and local organizations. Participants noted the importance of more census workers and volunteers who "look like us!" (i.e., Hispanic, farmers, rural). There was a clear sense that more image diversity is needed in promoting the census, in the form of Cesar Chavez, Martin Luther King and other heroes and leaders. Other strategies include selected television commercials after daily "novellas," working through local medical providers, and involving parents through contacts with the schools. Teachers and teacher aides have high credibility among the rural and farmworker population.



Church leaders are definitely a big influence to rural residents. The churches have a number of community outreach activities that reach youth and farmworkers.

***B. How would these influencers motivate rural residents to respond to the 2010 Census?***

***Summary of Comments***

The best way to motivate rural residents is to ensure the credibility of confidentiality. The Census Bureau needs to partner with city and national organizations to build trust and credibility at the local level. Invite public officials to communicate via letter writing, town hall meetings, and community forums to promote census value and benefit. Educate the influencers—when they buy into the census, they can influence the community to do the same. Make sure that census workers are of the same ethnic and/or cultural background as the people they serve. It provides a similarity that the person can relate to, which also enhances the trust factor.

***C. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

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### **Topic #3 Rural Information Dissemination Methods**

**A. What are the most effective methods for distributing 2010 Census printed materials and promotional items to rural communities? (i.e., fairs, post offices, and parades.)**

#### **Summary of Comments**

The Census Bureau can effectively use the following methods to distribute materials:

- ◆ Piggyback on meetings of Neighborhood Watch programs to get materials to the community.
- ◆ Develop “promotoras” to host neighborhood, in-home meetings, swap meets, and “man on street” interviews by local media.
- ◆ Simple, short messages on printed materials, picture posters in Laundromats.
- ◆ Practical giveaways, i.e., water bottles, bandanas, and the eagle insignias, were a real hit in past censuses because they were a constant reminder of the census and their need to fill out the questionnaire.
- ◆ Include census information in paycheck envelopes.
- ◆ Involve local restaurants and businesses in meetings, media events, and activities, with prizes as incentives.
- ◆ Participate in radio remotes at schools, gro-

cery stores, etc. Also, have exhibits at national organizations’ conferences.

**B. How can the Census Bureau best utilize events and activities to promote the 2010 Census?**

#### **Summary of Comments**

Set up booths and radio remotes at conferences staffed with people who can inform and educate rural residents on the census and its importance. Continue to provide practical “freebies” and giveaways (i.e., bandanas, sunscreens, water bottles, “kiddie stuff” – balloons and crowns.) Do not just handout printed materials. Spend money on simple items and giveaways with census messages that people consider functional and would use in their daily life, such as potholders, fans, key chains, and pens.

A popular activity in the Census 2000 was the “Prize Wheel.” After listening to a census message, etc., participants spin to see what prize they get.

**C. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?**

#### **Summary of Comments**

There were no additional comments.

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## Topic #4 Effectiveness of Promotional Materials

### ***A. What should the Census Bureau keep in mind as we design these printed promotional materials?***

#### ***Summary of Comments***

There are some very important points that the Census Bureau should keep in mind in designing printed materials. Some of them are:

- ♦ Keep the message simple and use fewer words.
- ♦ Avoid pictures of government officials.
- ♦ Emphasize more images involving families, migrant families in agricultural settings, community support organizations, i.e., fire departments, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), doctors, teachers, and Family Service Centers.
- ♦ Use icons/images with which people are familiar in their local areas, i.e., United Farm Workers (UFW), eagle, Caesar Chavez, and Virgin de Guadalupe.



### ***B. What elements (words, depictions, graphics, etc.) or characteristics of promotional materials will best motivate rural residents?***

#### ***Summary of Comments***

Fresno participants placed importance on impressing upon rural and migrant populations the urgency of getting involved with the census by showing the negative economic impact of under representation on family life, school benefits, utilities, etc. Another way to motivate the community is to show jazzy, upbeat, hip images which focus on community and reflect the general youthfulness of the population (35 and younger). It is key to connect the present to a vision of the future, and emphasize the confidentiality of the information. One of the most important motivators is confidentiality; stress its importance and what the Census Bureau does to maintain confidentiality.

### ***C. What “special-language” needs should we address in developing promotional materials?***

#### ***Summary of Comments***

The focus group participants placed strong emphasis here on using high impact words and phrases, i.e. confidentiality, civil rights, citizenship, urgency, important thing to do,

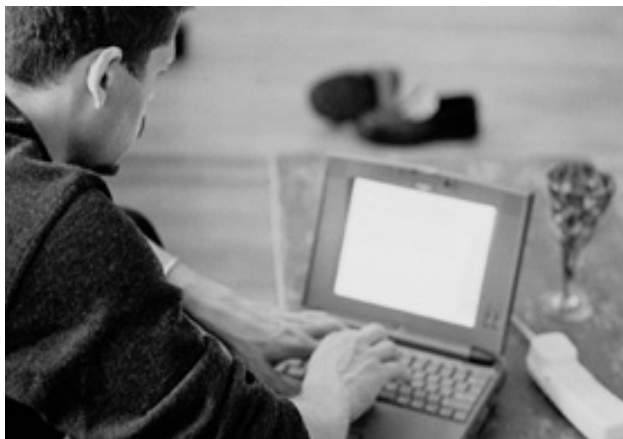
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who gets the money, having a piece of the American pie, and community. It is also important to recognize the wide variety of Hispanic dialects and languages unique to certain areas, i.e., SpanEnglish, Spanglish, Filipino, Tagalog, Oaxacamo/Mixteco, Monteco – Indian language from Mexico. Several Asian languages should also be considered, such as Hmong, Hindi and Vietnamese. One-size-fits-all language just won't work in many areas.

***D. What type of materials should the Census Bureau develop to meet these special-language needs?***

***Summary of Comments***

Special-language needs can be met through such devices as novellas, pictures with comic characters, entertainers, and sports figures. People can be reached through concerts, sporting events (i.e., boxing, soccer), popular ethnic entertainers, MTV, etc. The Census



Bureau can partner with major corporations like Coca Cola, Wal-Mart, etc. The Census Bureau might even develop its own musical jingle.

***E. Do geographical differences (i.e., Mississippi or Appalachia) influence the effectiveness of census outreach materials? If so, how do these differences influence the effectiveness of census materials?***

***Summary of Comments***

A major area of concern with Hispanics is migrant workers and the timing of their movement to other areas of the country. Most notable among these groups are the Mixteccos-Oaxano, and winter residents, called snowbirds. They might be best reached through their community leaders, schools, and community associations. The Colonias are another area that require special outreach efforts due to language and education barriers.

***F. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

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**Topic #5**  
**Reading or Writing Limitations**

**A. Which organizations serve rural populations that might have reading and/or writing limitations?**

**Summary of Comments**

This group suggested that the media is very underutilized and should be tied to every major event to promote the census message of civic duty and benefits resulting from participation in the census. In addition, census information should be included in English as a Second Language (ESL), General Education Development (GED), and college and university adult education curriculum, citizenship classes, and state literacy programs. Local community volunteers should be solicited and matched (peer-to-peer) to assist residents in completing the census form.

**B. What can the Census Bureau do to make printed materials easier to read and understand?**

**Summary of Comments**

Printed materials would be less intimidating if fewer words and large print (font) size were used. Another suggestion was to distribute small flip-chart presentation materials with relevant pictures and words for both in-home

and *Train-the-Trainer* presentations. Lastly, participants suggested that a short video, which can be shown or given away, would be a valuable supplement to printed materials.

**C. What type of printed materials and promotional items should the Census Bureau develop to adequately communicate to populations with limited reading and/or writing skills?**

**Summary of Comments**

Similar to Topic 5, Question B, participants suggested that current popular songs and/or music style that is appropriate for the region or local culture, be incorporated into census promotional campaigns. This could also include music-video combinations. The Census Bureau might develop a catchy tune as a theme for the 2010 Census. They also suggested having a music/song contest to develop local themes appealing to the area.

**D. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?**

**Summary of Comments**

There were no additional comments.

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**Topic #6**  
**Access to Technology**

**A. To what extent do residents in rural areas have computers in their homes?**

**Summary of Comments**

Because rural and migrant families are generally poor and minimally educated, there is little to no technology in most homes. Some do not even have homes or telephones, especially migrants. Typically, children and the younger rural population utilize Family Resource Centers for accessing computers and telecommunications technology.



**B. To what extent do rural residents have access to the Internet at home?**

**Summary of Comments**

Again, this is highly unlikely due to the factors identified in Topic 6, Question A above. Most access, if any, is accomplished through youth peers and resource centers.

**C. To what extent do residents in rural areas have access to computers outside the home, such as libraries, public schools, and work?**

**Summary of Comments**

Libraries, housing and community centers, community-based organizations, and health centers provide the greatest access to computer technology. In fact, some migrant areas have access to mobile computer labs sponsored by workforce centers, the Department of Economic Security, and foundations like the "Delores Huerta" Mobile Center.

**D. How computer-literate are adult residents of rural communities?**

**Summary of Comments**

Though the group agreed that the rural community is quickly moving into the technology and information age, the current literacy and usage level is nominal, at best. If any family

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members are computer literate, it is most likely the children. Even if one has a system, there is little access capability. Most just cannot afford computers and related hardware, software, and service contracts/agreements. In a broader technology sense, telephones are still the primary way to communicate in rural areas.

***E. To what extent have computers become a routine communication source in rural communities? (i.e., for sending personal messages or for business and other communications.)***

***Summary of Comments***

At this time, farmers and growers who make up an estimated 5% of the rural population are the principle users of computer technology as routine sources of communication. In the long run, cell phone text messaging may become the next step in rural technology communication.

***F. To what extent have computers become a routine source for accessing (researching) information in rural communities?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were very mixed opinions, ranging from nominal to huge, on the use of computers for

accessing (researching) information in rural areas. Research by computer is primarily done by businesses/organizations and students. It all depends on the users. Most residents, it is agreed, do little accessing on computers these days.

***G. In your view, can computers offer a reliable means for communicating with rural partners in 2010? (i.e., keeping them abreast of census events, procedures, jobs, and, of course, responding to the 2010 Census questionnaire.)***

***Summary of Comments***

Overall, the group felt that there is a clear value in utilizing computers for the 2010 Census. It was felt that technology should be viewed in the broadest sense of the word, not just including computers. The Census Bureau, using computers and other technology, can identify and communicate to locations where counts are low, and develop quick strategies to increase response. Partners can help get participation where response rates are low.

***H. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

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**Topic #7**  
**Migrant Population Partners ONLY**

**A. *How can we strengthen our outreach to migrant populations?***

***Summary of Comments***

Without hesitation, the group insisted that the Census Bureau should begin outreach efforts now. Begin by sending positive messages through existing networks which directly access migrant workers, i.e., Farm Workers Association, and medical service providers. They indicated that it is important to recognize that there is a homeless migrant population and the Census Bureau should develop strategies to ensure that they are counted.

**B. *What factors should the Census Bureau take into consideration when developing outreach strategies for migrant populations for the 2010 Census?***

***Summary of Comments***

The Census Bureau should begin more effective planning and targeting of funding to local media outlets and increased funding to community-based organizations where grassroots efforts can be initiated to begin marketing census benefits and processes before migrants leave home. By accessing farmworker associations, migrant camps, and growers,

census partners can build trust and acceptability within migrant families and communities. Migrant camps and United Farm Workers (UFW) know when and where they will be working and can help get information to them.

**Topic #8**  
**Tribal Government Partners ONLY**

**A. *Based on your experience, what new and innovative strategies can we develop and implement to enhance our outreach to the American Indian/Alaska Native populations through Tribal Governments?***

***Summary of Comments***

There was no Tribal Government representation.

**B. *Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

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**Topic #9**  
**How Can the Census Bureau**  
**Best Communicate Its**  
**Commitment to Confidentiality.**

***A. How can the Census Bureau best communicate its commitment to confidentiality to respondents in a way that they can understand and believe?***

***Summary of Comments***

Incorporate stories and anecdotes in Public Service Announcements (PSAs.) Promote the confidentiality statement used in the focus group to build, and maintain trust, confidence, and support for the 2010 Census process. That statement read, "By law, the Census Bureau cannot share information obtained from the respondents with any individual or agency including Homeland Security, the IRS, FBI, law enforcement, or welfare agencies. No court of law, not even the President of the United States, can find out individual responses." Promote the security message now regarding census data. The group also suggested that a videotaped message be promoted as part of an overall census marketing strategy for the rural areas.

***B. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

Avoid using consequences of not participating as a fear tactic.



# Summary and Analysis of Individual Focus Groups

## Charleston, WV

### Agenda

<i>8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.</i>	Registration & Continental Breakfast
<i>8:30 a.m.</i>	Introductions
<i>8:45 a.m.</i>	Ground Rules and Housekeeping Items
<i>8:55 a.m.</i>	Background Information
<i>9:10 a.m.</i>	Discussion Questions
<i>10:10 a.m.</i>	Fifteen-Minute Break
<i>10:25 a.m.</i>	Discussion Questions (cont.)
<i>12:15 p.m.</i>	Final Remarks

### Participants

See Appendix A for a complete list of participating organizations.

### Limitations

There were no noted limitations with this session.

### Date:

April 1, 2003

### Location:

Marriott Town Center  
200 Lee Street  
Charleston, WV  
25301

### Number of

Participants:

Ten



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### **Key Findings**

The Charleston participants developed a variety of suggestions and recommendations for increasing participation of rural communities in the 2010 Census. This strategy included the following ideas:

- ◆ The best sources for motivating and encouraging rural residents are through churches, community-based organizations, resource and referral agencies, and other service agencies.
- ◆ Start building partnerships and promoting the census much earlier than was done for Census 2000.
- ◆ Create a more personalized and direct outreach process by using state and local politicians and government officials early and often through the process.



- ◆ Participate in important civic, Tribal, and community events that endorse census goals and objectives. Communicate the value and benefits gained from inclusion in the census count.
- ◆ Work through migrant family networks and their schools and employers. Use an education and relationship-building strategy to overcome and completely eliminate fear from the census-taking process.
- ◆ The major influencers of migrant rural residents include large farm owners, Farm Bureaus and local agricultural extension agents. Recognize the importance of unions as influencers, especially in mines and factories.
- ◆ The most effective methods for distributing 2010 Census printed materials and promotional items to these communities is through local county fairs and summer festivals, church events, schools, and youth activities. Also local hangouts, and livestock and farmers' markets.
- ◆ The Census Bureau can best utilize events and activities to promote the 2010 Census by having a booth with staff to greet people and hand out promotional items that are practical and that one would want to keep around, such as hats, T-shirts, and key chains.
- ◆ Workers in Departments of Health, Health and Human Resources, and Women, In-

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fants, and Children (WIC) programs are credible in the community and good for reaching low-income rural residents.

- ◆ Promotional materials that will best motivate rural residents should reflect the rural community—tell a story that will make them feel needed and valued—making them feel they can make a difference.
- ◆ Only a small percentage of residents in rural areas have computers and/or Internet service in their homes. However, they do have access to computers outside the home.
- ◆ Charleston participants agreed that computers will provide a reliable means of communication with partners, in 2010.
- ◆ Strengthening Census Bureau outreach to the migrant population should begin with including migrant workers on Complete Count Committees.
- ◆ The best way to access migrant workers are through their children, families, schools, churches, and through bilingual workers and outreach volunteers.

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## ANALYSIS BY RESEARCH QUESTION

### Topic #1 Reaching and Motivating Residents

**A. What organizations or agencies are the best sources for motivating or encouraging rural residents to respond to the census?**

#### **Summary of Comments**

According to the Charleston focus group, the best sources for motivating and encouraging rural residents is through churches, community organizations, resource and referral agencies, Agricultural Extension Services, and service programs such as Head Start, Department of Health and Human Resources, 4H Clubs, Girl/Boy Scouts, and other youth organizations.

Another major source identified by the group are senior centers and programs like “Meals on Wheels” which provide services and assistance to a segment of the community that is typically reluctant to participate in the census. Other outreach sources include local utility companies, banks, churches, schools, Farm Bureaus, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) and Grange, a local agricultural group.

**B. What can organizations or agencies do to motivate residents to respond to the census?**

#### **Summary of Comments**

Again, the group felt the role of seniors as not only participants but as motivators should not be overlooked. Seniors play a vital role in motivating the actions of their own family members. In the same way, 4H families would equally be important as motivators if they had complete and clear understanding of how the census affects funding for their organizations.

It is helpful for recognized community organizations, such as the Rotary Club and the Chamber of Commerce to also buy into the census process. Since these types of organizations are always looking for speakers, it would be beneficial for someone to make a presentation to the community to familiarize them and alleviate any issues and/or concerns. Emphasis was placed on the fact that all motivators must have a clear understanding of the census process and believe that it is confidential.

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**C. What vehicles or sources have the greatest impact for delivering a census message to the rural community? (i.e., newspapers, radio, flyers, and posters.)**

**Summary of Comments**

The group recommended utilizing radio, the local news channel and newspapers, direct mail with a “freebie,” and having a known community figure be a spokesperson for the census. Additionally, the church has many avenues for reaching its parishioners, including scheduled events, newsletters, and bulletins. County fairs are an excellent draw and opportunity for reaching individuals in rural communities, as well as church functions and sporting events.

**D. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?**

**Summary of Comments**

There were no additional comments.

**Topic #2  
Rural Influencers**

**A. Who are the major influencers of rural residents? (i.e., teachers, community leaders, and radio personalities.)**

**Summary of Comments**

Religious leaders, fire departments (including volunteer), county commissioners, local community bosses, and large farm owners are some of the most trusted and influential individuals of rural communities. The Farm Bureau and local extension agents, typically trusted agencies for migrant workers, can serve as major influencers of migrant workers in rural areas. These agencies can assist migrant workers in rural areas to successfully participate in the process by helping them complete forms, for example.

**B. How would these influencers motivate rural residents to respond to the 2010 Census?**

**Summary of Comments**

The group felt that if census staff would go door-to-door with an influencer who was a local town hero, pastor, or teacher, it would add credibility to the process. These are trusted and respected individuals within their community. It would take the government focus away from the process and provide more per-

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sonal contact.

***C. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

Additional suggestions for the Census Bureau included:

- ◆ Recognize the importance of unions, especially in the mines and factories. Union leaders can be important influencers.
- ◆ The group also felt that the impact of terrorism should not be overlooked. Realize that because of recent terrorist attacks, the public may be more suspicious of strangers and reluctant to divulge personal information. A fear of “what was in that bag” carried by the census worker was noted.
- ◆ The group further suggested that the Census Bureau gets out and be seen at sporting and other community events for increased exposure, i.e., the Oscar Mayer Mobile.
- ◆ More bilingual census workers in migrant areas was also a noted need.
- ◆ Emphasize that responding to the census is “the right thing to do,” or “the American thing to do.” Let them know that if they respond via mail, they probably will not have a census worker come to their home.

**Topic #3  
Rural Information  
Dissemination Methods**

***A. What are the most effective methods for distributing 2010 Census printed materials and promotional items to rural communities? (i.e., fairs, post offices, and parades.)***

***Summary of Comments***

The most effective way for the Census Bureau to distribute its materials to these communities is to get involved in what is going on in the communities. Attend local fairs and summer festivals, churches, and youth groups. Also, frequent local hangouts like the grocery stores, gas stations, and flea markets. The Chamber of Commerce is a trusted organization in the community and would be a good resource to let everyone know when the census is coming, what it is, and why it is important. The local health department, sheltered workshops, classes, sporting events and other area networks are great conduits for information dissemination. Also, schools, teachers, and livestock and farmers markets are all good resources for distributing materials.

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**B. How can the Census Bureau best utilize events and activities to promote the 2010 Census?**

**Summary of Comments**

Promotional items are important and they need to be something that is practical and that an individual would want to keep around for a long time, i.e., hats, T-shirts, and key chains. A comment was made that there was not enough diversity reflected in the “freebies” typically given by the census. They said, they looked “too waspy.” In selecting “freebies,” look at the rules for the event, i.e., not using items unsafe for children, like balloons. Also, be careful of items that are not “made in America.” For exhibits at festivals, conventions, and other events, have one person at a booth and one person moving among the crowd.

Nonprofits, and county and state governments, should play a role in communicating what the census means to them. “How America Knows What America Needs” was a good slogan.



**C. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?**

**Summary of Comments**

It is important to stress the historical value of the census and that it provides pertinent genealogical information on our ancestors. Heritage festivals would be a great event to participate in for this very reason. Workers in both Health Departments and Health and Human Resources, as well as Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) programs, are credible in the community and good for reaching low-income rural residents.

**Topic #4  
Effectiveness of  
Promotional Materials**

**A. What should the Census Bureau keep in mind as we design these printed promotional materials?**

**Summary of Comments**

The Census Bureau should keep in mind the following:

- ◆ Less is better. Get to the point, make posters colorful with big, easy words, and stay away from looking too “government,” i.e., too much small black and white print, no government seal.
- ◆ Don’t forget what ethnicities are in the

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community, make sure they are represented more globally — with different races/cultures in the same image.

- ◆ Include patriotic colors and words, i.e., “America,” or a patriotic message like “Do your part to help America.”
- ◆ Select the sites for poster placement carefully; don’t send Hispanic posters to a community with no Hispanics.

***B. What elements (words, depictions, graphics, etc.) or characteristics of promotional materials will best motivate rural residents?***

***Summary of Comments***

For a rural community, posters and printed materials should reflect a rural community. In other words, tell a story. Picture a prosperous main street, a nice farm scene, or a farmer counting his livestock. Make the rural community feel special, needed, and valued by making them feel like they can make a difference. Use images of houses and people and use money figures (dollar amounts) on the value of rural areas on the economy.

The Census Bureau must recognize that rural issues and city issues are different. There is a literacy problem in many rural communities, so the Census Bureau must be careful to not be too wordy or abbreviate. Specific words

and phrases that convey a message that the individuals can relate to are encouraged to be used.

***C. What “special-language” needs should we address in developing promotional materials?***

***Summary of Comments***

Again, remembering the specific needs and circumstances of the community, keep all promotional materials simple, no acronyms, large letters, and written at a fifth- or sixth-grade reading level.

***D. What type of materials should the Census Bureau develop to meet these special-language needs?***

***Summary of Comments***

The migrant population has been identified as one of the most undercounted populations because many of them are not here legally and they view the Census Bureau as just another government agency to run away from and distrust. There are also many dialects of Spanish in these areas. A trusted individual who can communicate/explain the purposes of the census must be identified and selected to meet this need. The rural community is very strong in its values of faith, family and work. As one of the participants stated, “a

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picture is worth a thousand words.” A poster that captures the strong values in an image is very important, i.e., family working, going to church together, a grand father sitting on a rocking chair on the front porch, or a church picnic. Rural residents need a hook—something that they will get out of the census process, such as assistance for children and schools, images of family, faith, and work.

***E. Do geographical differences (i.e., Mississippi or Appalachia) influence the effectiveness of census outreach materials? If so, how do these differences influence the effectiveness of census materials?***

***Summary of Comments***

Different areas and cultures have different interests. In some areas, bumper stickers can be a vandalism problem because vandals take the stickers and put them on places they do not belong. The materials must fit the area. It would be a waste of money to invest in giveaways and not have them match special areas of diversity. Make sure to remember that the West Virginia Spanish-speaking populations are going to be different from the southwest Spanish-speaking populations. There are also some workers who start out as migrant workers but get jobs in the poultry farms and tend to stay there and not migrate.

***F. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

**Topic #5  
Reading or Writing Limitations**

***A. Which organizations serve rural populations that might have reading and/or writing limitations?***

***Summary of Comments***

The group identified libraries, the welfare office, extension services, the Housing Authority, schools and adult education centers, Community Action Agencies, Head Start and Smart Start children’s learning centers, senior centers, churches, homeless shelters, and behavioral and mental health groups.

***B. What can the Census Bureau do to make printed materials easier to read and understand?***

***Summary of Comments***

Use color print but also remember some people have trouble reading some colors. Black print is a color people can read best. Use colorful background in printed materials but don’t

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make them too busy. Use large print, fewer words, and keep messages short and to the point. Do not use all capital letters, it is harder to read.

***C. What type of printed materials and promotional items should the Census Bureau develop to adequately communicate to populations with limited reading and/or writing skills?***

***Summary of Comments***

The participants offered the following suggestions:

- ♦ Keep the reading level at a fifth- to sixth-grade level.
- ♦ Infuse the campaign with a catchy slogan or mascot. Hold a contest for both the slogan and the name of the mascot.
- ♦ Design printed materials on colored paper that can be slipped into a pay check envelope or serve as stand alone materials.
- ♦ Design a calendar that promotes fun facts about census.
- ♦ Design camera-ready pictures for newsletters.
- ♦ Posters should not be too big—the samples are a good size.
- ♦ Employ full-time Partnership Specialists all the time, not just during decennial. Use staff to maintain contact with agencies between decennials.

***D. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments

**Topic #6  
Access to Technology**

***A. To what extent do residents in rural areas have computers in their homes?***

***Summary of Comments***

Responses to this question ranged from 5% to 50% usage. Most agreed that rural folks who have personal computers (PC) probably use them for pleasure and not for business and Internet communication purposes. Up to 25% of rural seniors use computers to communicate with their grandchildren. Children may be the key to PC usage. Computers can easily be accessed in libraries and schools, and/or purchased from secondary stores.

***B. To what extent do rural residents have access to the Internet at home?***

***Summary of Comments***

While there was agreement that most people will probably have computers by the time of the 2010 Census, currently not all rural people

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even have telephones. Therefore, one might conclude that not everyone is going to have Internet capability or be able to pay for Internet services even if they have a PC. Some concern was expressed that Internet access may still not be in place in some areas.

***C. To what extent do residents in rural areas have access to computers outside the home, such as libraries, public schools, and work?***

***Summary of Comments***

While the situation appears bleak at the present time, the most hopeful information generated by the focus group reports that there are already “one-stop-shops” in Kentucky, sign-up sheets in local libraries, and grants being awarded in senior centers to promote self-paced learning and Internet usage, i.e., e-mailing family members. Things may change quickly. It was mentioned that close to 100% of the rural population probably have access to the Internet outside the home via libraries or schools, but only about 5% of them actually use these places to access the Internet.

***D. How computer-literate are adult residents of rural communities?***

***Summary of Comments***

Because of the rapidly changing nature of technology, hardware, and especially software upgrades, many rural adults and seniors will tend to avoid getting involved with computers for more than fun purposes. Although some rural adults are computer-literate, they find the rapidly changing technology rather intimidating, as well as the costs associated with keeping up with new technology and software.

***E. To what extent have computers become a routine communication source in rural communities? (i.e., for sending personal messages or for business and other communications.)***

***Summary of Comments***

Right now there is little use of computers as a routine source of communication. People primarily rely on phones for daily contact. People may use them at work on a regular basis, including farm owners and businesses.

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***F. To what extent have computers become a routine source for accessing (researching) information in rural communities?***

***Summary of Comments***

Not all rural people are farmers. Students, government workers, and businesses are the primary users of computers. For the rest of the rural population, there is limited use of cell phones, and it is suggested that cell phones may be the only phones around in 2010. Those who do not have phones, let alone computers, may have cell phones. Some who live in hollows use computers more than cellular or home phones, because of problems getting signals. This presents a unique challenge and opportunity for outreach.

***G. In your view, can computers offer a reliable means for communicating with rural partners in 2010? (i.e., keeping them abreast of census events, procedures, jobs, and, of course, responding to the 2010 Census questionnaire.)***

***Summary of Comments***

Computers will provide a very reliable means for communication, provided the Census Bureau “dummies down” its technology to make it more accessible to less powerful computers. It was felt that the Census Bureau technology

is far too sophisticated for what is available in rural areas in terms of function and software. Right now, online census information is not compatible- or user-friendly for the average data user. Computer support and access should continue to be made available to census partners and organizations. It is time to get in sync with the rest of the world, especially in rural and remote regions.

***H. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

**Topic #7  
Migrant Population Partners ONLY**

***A. How can we strengthen our outreach to migrant populations?***

***Summary of Comments***

Why not include migrant workers on Complete Count Committees? The bottom line is that all migrant workers, legal and illegal, need to be counted for economic and funding purposes. Migrants can be more quickly and reliably reached through their children and families – through schools and churches. They share strong core family and spiritual values.

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The Census Bureau needs to use more bilingual enumerators and census outreach volunteers. Participants also recommended that the Census Bureau do better outreach through businesses by targeting and educating key employers and first-line supervisors about census facts, economic benefits, and other benefits, as well.

Take advantage of celebrations like “Cinco de Mayo!” and other ethnically-oriented community events.

***B. What factors should the Census Bureau take into consideration when developing outreach strategies for migrant populations for the 2010 Census?***

***Summary of Comments***

Start accessing minority newspapers and radio stations, and attend local cultural events where migrant workers may likely attend. Educate employers of migrant workers on confidentiality laws related to federal and law-enforcement inter-agency communication regulations. Locating, educating, and partnering with bilingual supervisors will help to build trust and gain greater access to migrant employees and their friends. It is important to network through people at the grassroots level, and emphasize confidentiality more in promotional materials. Participants also

noted the value of stressing that census information is not shared with other federal agencies and organizations.

***C. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

**Topic #8  
Tribal Government Partners ONLY**

***A. Based on your experience, what new and innovative strategies can we develop and implement to enhance our outreach to the American Indian/Alaska Native populations through Tribal Governments?***

***Summary of Comments***

Contact Tribal leaders through networking resources, and arrange to get invited to ceremonies and activities (powwows) on the reservation at the Chief’s request. Prepare simple promotional materials, posters, and short blurbs describing census benefits, value, etc. Use these materials to educate tribal members about their free educational, health, and other benefits available to the tribe and individuals as a result of their inclusion in the 2010 Census. Most tribes have Web sites

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and newsletters that can include census promotional information and explain why tribes should participate.

***B. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

It is not what we do, but the way we do what we do. It is important to approach the American Indian and, for that matter, all Americans, with respect and dignity. Treating the American Indian as a fellow human being, and treating them respectfully, will demonstrate how a partnership works. This will go a long way toward allaying their fears about the government, putting them in a more open, receptive position to participating in 2010 Census activities.

**Topic #9  
How Can the Census Bureau  
Best Communicate Its  
Commitment to Confidentiality**

***A. How can the Census Bureau best communicate its commitment to confidentiality to respondents in a way that they can understand and believe?***

***Summary of Comments***

All agreed that the strong, biting language of

the legal penalties for breach of confidentiality need to be communicated to all census participants – workers and community. If necessary, cite stories of the consequences of past violations as proof of the seriousness of this mandate. An effective strategy might be to partner with powerful local leaders to make public announcements, presentations, and even accompany census workers on house-to-house contacts. Inform people of the fact that paid census workers go through thorough background checks and clearances before going out in the field. Hire credible local workers, i.e., don't hire the town gossip. Use a list of census do's and don'ts to reinforce confidentiality. Get the President of the United States to endorse the census and reinforce confidentiality with the fact that even he cannot get the data.

***B. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

The Census Bureau should partner with state offices and senior business leaders. Emphasize the personal touch, not the government's heavy hand, when dealing with the community on 2010 Census matters. Keep these partnerships ongoing, not just during the census. Have full-time Partnership Specialists working all the time, not just during the census. Tie this to the new, stronger Health Insurance Premium

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Payments System (HIPPS) health information confidentiality regulations. Continue to provide practical, meaningful giveaways (like calendars) that provide factual information, as well as personal benefits to recipients. Encourage the Census Bureau to provide financial support to organizations for census outreach activities.



# Summary and Analysis of Individual Focus Groups

## Jackson, MS

### Agenda

8:00 a.m. – 8:30 a.m.	Registration & Continental Breakfast
8:30 a.m.	Introductions
8:45 a.m.	Ground Rules and Housekeeping Items
8:55 a.m.	Background Information
9:10 a.m.	Discussion Questions
10:10 a.m.	Fifteen-Minute Break
10:25 a.m.	Discussion Questions (cont.)
12:15 p.m.	Final Remarks

### Participants

See Appendix A for a complete list of participating organizations.

### Limitations

There were no noted limitations with this session.

### Date:

April 2, 2003

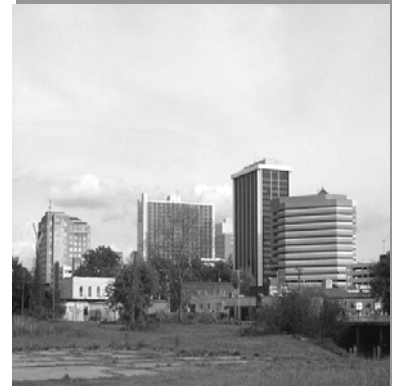
### Location:

Crowne Plaza  
200 East Amite Street  
Jackson, MS 39201

### Number of

Participants:

Eight



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## **Key Findings**

Discussion among the Jackson participants resulted in the following key findings:

- ◆ The participants stressed the need for the Census Bureau to build stronger relationships *early* in the process, specifically with grassroots organizations. These and other existing networks are excellent avenues to conduct outreach efforts to rural and migrant populations.
- ◆ When developing outreach efforts and materials, consider featuring a national or cultural figure to help the rural population identify with the census message. Posters and materials need to be written in simplistic language using relevant pictures to get the point across. Incorporate ideas about the core values of the people such as religion, family, and tribal values.
- ◆ It is extremely important to involve religious leaders, school systems, and high-level



government officials in highly visible ways to promote trust, credibility, and believability in the 2010 Census process.

- ◆ Enlist service providers to take census information with them as they make community and/or home visits.
- ◆ The best sources of influence are local leaders who people trust.
- ◆ Complete Count Committees work well as influencers by providing a good cross-section of participants.
- ◆ Effective methods for communicating 2010 Census printed materials and promotional items to rural communities include fairs, flea markets, sporting events and programs, schools, and other events where people gather.
- ◆ While designing printed promotional materials, the Census Bureau should remember to keep wording at a fifth- or sixth-grade level, use few words, avoid government jargon, and match message/images to each audience.
- ◆ Special language needs should be addressed in developing promotional materials by using phrases or images relevant to southern culture, more visual images, fewer words, and more video and audio mediums.
- ◆ In terms of access to technology, a very limited number of rural residents have computers or Internet service in their homes.

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- ♦ The Census Bureau must develop creative ways to overcome fear associated with the false beliefs of intrusion from law enforcement and other government agencies, especially in the Colonias.
  - ♦ Language, trust, and credibility are major issues and/or barriers between the Census Bureau and the migrant population.
  - ♦ The Census Bureau should communicate its commitment to confidentiality in simple, clear language, much like the confidentiality statement read during the focus group.
  - ♦ The census questionnaire should be shorter which would make people more receptive to responding.

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## ANALYSIS BY RESEARCH QUESTION

### Topic #1 Reaching and Motivating Residents

#### ***A. What organizations or agencies are the best sources for motivating or encouraging rural residents to respond to the census?***

##### ***Summary of Comments***

Strong emphasis was placed on building positive grassroots relationships with churches, schools, colleges, and universities. Focus was on networking with fraternities and sororities, along with city and county government agencies, and Agricultural Extension Services. Also listed were family health services, medical and mental health services, NAACP, Southern Christian League, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), Housing Authorities, Community Action Agencies, Head Start centers, and human services.

#### ***B. What can organizations or agencies do to motivate residents to respond to the census?***

##### ***Summary of Comments***

Jackson participants discussed the following ideas in response to this question:

- ♦ Get ministers involved early-on, with advocacy, from their pulpits to promote trust and reduce apprehension and anxiety toward the census process. Participants suggested that religious organizations schedule and promote “Census Sunday.”
- ♦ Encourage public meetings, forums, and Neighborhood Improvement Associations. Take the media and census message out to the community.
- ♦ Build early connections with high-level congressional and statewide leaders, as well as school districts through their trustees in forming public policy regarding participation in the census. Congressional leaders can have a census kick-off press conference.
- ♦ Circulate informational packets throughout the schools for public awareness purposes and to reduce fear and misunderstanding about the census process.
- ♦ Utilize the radio, using recognized individuals to add credibility in promoting the 2010 Census. Government officials could do on-air PSAs.
- ♦ Use community volunteers to knock on doors and educate people about census, as well as build trust.

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***C. What vehicles or sources have the greatest impact for delivering a census message to the rural community? (i.e., newspapers, radio, flyers, and posters.)***

***Summary of Comments***

The group's strongest recommendation was the use of the census calendar giveaway. This could include key census facts and significant dates. Participants also suggested more practical, functional giveaways like highlighters, letter openers, fans, and stress balls. The group advocated giveaways to homemakers and businesses alike.

They felt that having government officials participating in door-to-door neighborhood campaigns was important. Another suggestion was to enlist service providers to take census information with them as they make home/community visits. Conduct grassroots networking through faith-based and neighborhood groups, co-op classes, shopping centers, and Chambers of Commerce. Use culturally appropriate television news spots with local people where possible.

***D. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

Success of the census depends on public

awareness and understanding. The group strongly emphasized the need and importance for improving trust in historically-undercounted areas. There appears to be a significant distrust of the government and the U.S. Census Bureau. This can be overcome through culturally appropriate and targeted promotion. The first line of approach is through the religious organizations.

Significant discussion centered around the assertion that the Local Development Districts were a primary source and reason why past census efforts failed in the rural areas of Mississippi. Apparently many enumerators had inadequate maps, did not know where to go, and, in enough cases, failed to make agreed appointments. As a result, many people formed negative opinions about the Census Bureau. Small towns need help updating maps so the census will have more accurate addresses. The group expressed it is important to enhance local planning and development districts. Planning committees need to be more tuned-in to community needs, culturally sensitive, equipped with the right information and maps, better trained, and connected to people. They need to build trust – it is the most critical issue and need.

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## Topic #2 Rural Influencers

**A. Who are the major influencers of rural residents? (i.e., teachers, community leaders, and radio personalities.)**

### **Summary of Comments**

Local leaders who people trust are the best source of influence. Key rural influencers are teachers, doctors, priests and ministers, homemakers, 4-H Clubs, extension services, social service workers, senior citizen organizations, Community Action Agencies and Head Start centers, nutritional centers (Meals on Wheels, Stew Pot, etc.) and health-care providers, Area Administration on Aging, and local transportation programs. It was strongly encouraged that information should not be just dropped off but that this activity should be conducted by people familiar and/or known to those individuals being served. This will go a long way toward promoting positive, trusting, credible relationships.

**B. How would these influencers motivate rural residents to respond to the 2010 Census?**

### **Summary of Comments**

It is important to provide training early for key people on effective methods and techniques

of outreach. Trainers should have good people skills and represent a good cross-section of the community's diversity. Emphasis was given to working as one team. Complete Count Committees worked well as influencers and provided a good cross-section of community leaders and a good comfort zone for the community. Be sure to include new people in the community such as Hispanics. Use the trust in local leaders to educate and build trust in community, making participation a personal issue.

**C. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?**

### **Summary of Comments**

There were no additional comments.



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### **Topic #3 Rural Information Dissemination Methods**

***A. What are the most effective methods for distributing 2010 Census printed materials and promotional items to rural communities? (i.e., fairs, post offices, and parades.)***

#### ***Summary of Comments***

The group reemphasized the need to start promotion early. Tie into important gathering places related to tourism, i.e. fairs, flea markets, sporting events and programs. Use schools and events where people gather. Use Memoranda of Understanding with organizations, i.e., Mississippi Action for Community Education, Jubilee Jam, and Choctaw Fair. Also use 4-H Clubs, and local Agricultural Extension Services.

***B. How can the Census Bureau best utilize events and activities to promote the 2010 Census?***

#### ***Summary of Comments***

Jackson participants suggested participating in church programs, promoting the census in various newsletters, and attending local activities where visibility can promote trust and a more personal touch with the community.

Plug into local activities and organizations and get key leaders within those organizations on the team.

Involve the Elders in the Choctaw Nation and invite them to staff the booth at the Choctaw Fair. This, and other activities like it, will positively influence people to participate in the census. Events are a good place for calendars and giveaways, too.

***C. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

#### ***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

### **Topic #4 Effectiveness of Promotional Materials**

***A. What should the Census Bureau keep in mind as we design these printed promotional materials?***

#### ***Summary of Comments***

Keep literature simple, shorter in length, reader friendly, and matched to each audience. Avoid frightening or intimidating people with government jargon and names. Strive for more diversity on printed materials. Target

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the materials to the culture. Keep the language at a fifth- or sixth-grade reading level.

***B. What elements (words, depictions, graphics, etc.) or characteristics of promotional materials will best motivate rural residents?***

***Summary of Comments***

Focus on undercounted areas, using targeted pieces with images and scenarios which explain or depict how you can benefit from the census. Use more effective words, like “more funds for education” . . . “y’all fill it out!” . . . “you can win!” . . . “generations are counting on you” . . . “Thank you!” Portray images and scenes depicting southern language and hospitality. For example, use a picture of someone being helped filling out the census form, i.e. a teen helping an elderly person. Send a thank-you card to every household and partner after the decennial.



***C. What “special-language” needs should we address in developing promotional materials?***

***Summary of Comments***

Participants suggested using the phrase or image of “People helping people.” Use more southern phrases or terms such as “y’all.” Tie in cultural diversity of the South — Spanish, Asian, and American Indian. Use more personal contact or verbal means for literacy challenges. In the Colonias, because of the limited use of English, informal sign language and gestures are useful in communicating with locals.

***D. What type of materials should the Census Bureau develop to meet these special-language needs?***

***Summary of Comments***

Match language and word usage to specific target audiences or groups. Promote the census in movie theater previews, radio spots, highway bulletin boards. Use more visual images on fact sheets which are rarely read. Play video or audio tapes in malls, medical offices, etc.

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***E. Do geographical differences (i.e., Mississippi or Appalachia) influence the effectiveness of census outreach materials? If so, how do these differences influence the effectiveness of census materials?***

***Summary of Comments***

The group felt that geographical differences are important. There is high poverty, illiteracy, and a large minority population on the Mississippi Delta. There is also high distrust in the government. It is important to promote early involvement with churches, community centers, workforce commissions, schools, businesses, companies, and local universities.

The key is education and timing. Form partnerships with congressmen, civic and church leaders, local employers, businesses, and schools. Some other suggestions included conducting door-to-door outreach, printing flyers in Spanish, and including census information with paychecks.

For Colonias, focus outreach through the Texas Workforce Commission. Community centers are also credible and good avenues for outreach and building trust. Schools, churches, and Community Action Programs are other good resources. Door-to-door outreach through social workers and neighborhood associations is ineffective in the Colo-

nias. Flyers and other printed materials should be in simple, clear Spanish.

***F. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

**Topic #5  
Reading or Writing Limitations**

***A. Which organizations serve rural populations that might have reading and/or writing limitations?***

***Summary of Comments***

Jackson participants mentioned the following ideas in response to this question: Governor's statewide literacy program, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), General Education Development (GED) programs, adult education programs in school districts, Community Action and Social Service Agencies, and Head Start programs. All serve rural populations with limited reading and writing capabilities.

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**B. What can the Census Bureau do to make printed materials easier to read and understand?**

**Summary of Comments**

The group suggested that census printed material be simple and relevant to community needs and cultural settings.

**C. What type of printed materials and promotional items should the Census Bureau develop to adequately communicate to populations with limited reading and/or writing skills?**

**Summary of Comments**

Develop interesting and relevant audio-visual informational pieces and presentations – reflect diversity in these materials.

**D. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?**

**Summary of Comments**

There were no additional comments.



**Topic #6  
Access to Technology**

**A. To what extent do residents in rural areas have computers in their homes?**

**Summary of Comments**

Participants felt that a very limited number of rural residents have computers in their homes. There is growth in the numbers of PCs in the home, but still limited access to the Internet. There will probably be little progress in technology in homes of rural residents by 2010.

**B. To what extent do rural residents have access to the Internet at home?**

**Summary of Comments**

Again, there is very limited use. Those who can afford computers may not have Internet access. In some places, Internet service is not available at this time. There are no great incentives to use the Internet at this time. More people may have access by 2010, but access may also add to distrust (confidentiality).

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**C. To what extent do residents in rural areas have access to computers outside the home, such as libraries, public schools, and work?**

**Summary of Comments**

Participants held somewhat of a more optimistic view with regard to computer access outside the home. There is the perception that one might utilize computer technology outside “my” home, “if I get help,” “if I see the value,” and “if I have the time.” Currently, computers are available in most local government offices, libraries, community-based organizations, university computer labs, parent centers, churches, and Mississippi Action for Community Education (MACE).

**D. How computer-literate are adult residents of rural communities?**

**Summary of Comments**

Most adult residents of rural communities are computer-illiterate, but parents do gather at schools where there is encouragement to use PCs, like in Head Start centers. Adults in rural areas are beginning to show interest in using a computer when they are shown how to use it by a person they trust at a place they can trust. Technology is still in its infancy stage in most rural areas.

**E. To what extent have computers become a routine communication source in rural communities? (i.e., for sending personal messages or for business and other communications.)**

**Summary of Comments**

Community Action Agencies and Head Start centers are beginning to mandate use of computer technology. (Some American Indian tribes have PCs in their homes.) Computer access remains very limited for personal use. Even businesses have limited computer access and use.

**F. To what extent have computers become a routine source for accessing (researching) information in rural communities?**

**Summary of Comments**

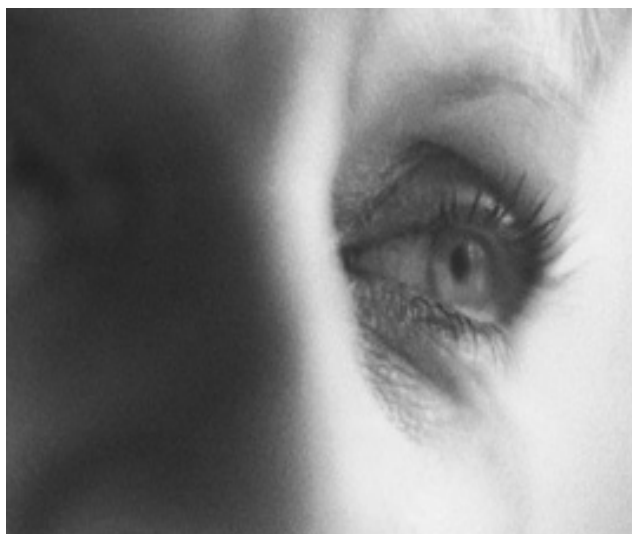
There is a growing presence of computers being used for access and research in such areas and places as school districts, parenting centers, video-conferencing centers, technology prep labs in magnet schools, and MACE affiliates. Religious organizations are becoming a safe, convenient source for rural people to gain access to computer technology.

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**G. In your view, can computers offer a reliable means for communicating with rural partners in 2010? (i.e., keeping them abreast of census events, procedures, jobs, and, of course, responding to the 2010 Census questionnaire.)**

**Summary of Comments**

Participants indicated that yes, computers can offer a reliable means for communicating with rural partners in 2010. Some rural partners, such as Workforce Incentive Network (WIN), have PC Internet access and networking capability which are statewide. In the Colonias, there are computers in the high schools, and a few longtime residents have them. On the Choctaw reservation, PCs are available in agencies and most families have a PC at home.



**H. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?**

**Summary of Comments**

There were no additional comments.

**Topic #7  
Migrant Population Partners ONLY**

**A. How can we strengthen our outreach to migrant populations?**

**Summary of Comments**

In the Colonias, especially, we must develop creative ways to overcome fears associated with the false beliefs of Homeland Security intrusion and other law-enforcement concerns. There is a fear of losing children and jobs. The Census Bureau needs to partner with churches (all denominations), Community Action Programs, Hispanic outreach organizations, and benevolent foundations to reach undocumented Hispanics, among others, as well as to help alleviate fears. Participants suggested partnering with United Way to help reach migrants. There are very few migrant workers in Mississippi, and most are in construction. It would also help if the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) would promote that it has no relationship with the Census Bureau.

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***B. What factors should the Census Bureau take into consideration when developing outreach strategies for migrant populations for the 2010 Census?***

***Summary of Comments***

Language is a major issue and barrier between the Census Bureau and the migrant population. By using English and Spanish interpreters, bilingual census workers and volunteers, better communication, understanding, and trust can be generated between the Census Bureau and the migrant community. One might also consider reaching migrants and those in the Colonias through such important and/or influential heroes as: priests, social workers, Caesar Chavez, Oscar de la Hoya and Pudge Rodriguez (sports), and Julio Iglesias (entertainment). Trust and credibility are major factors. Promotional materials in Spanish are important in the Colonias.

***C. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

**Topic #8  
Tribal Government Partners ONLY**

***A. Based on your experience, what new and innovative strategies can we develop and implement to enhance our outreach to the American Indian/Alaska Native populations through Tribal Governments?***

***Summary of Comments***

Many good ideas for reaching American Indians were generated from the focus group discussion in Jackson. The primary focus was getting the Tribal Chief, Elders, and Tribal council members directly involved in writing letters and advocating census support and participation. Greater emphasis needs to be placed on images relevant and specific to American Indian populations. Poster images have a strong, lasting effect on viewers and listeners. Care should be taken in constructing relevant, meaningful images on printed materials. This might include sports figures with emphasis placed on promoting school and pride. Images of high school sports teams, such as basketball and football would be well-received. Suggestions were made to partner with gaming industry facilities to promote and provide census-related activities, i.e., posters, billboards, and training sites. Another suggestion was for the Chief to write a letter to all Tribal members regarding

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“Census Awareness Day” or something like it. Printed materials do not have to be tribe- or reservation-specific. They do need to be relevant to Tribal issues and concerns.

***B. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

to call local authorities (mayor’s office, courthouse, etc.) for verification of census workers.

***B. Is there anything else you want to say about this topic?***

***Summary of Comments***

There were no additional comments.

**Topic #9  
How Can the Census Bureau  
Best Communicate Its  
Commitment to Confidentiality**

***A. How can the Census Bureau best communicate its commitment to confidentiality to respondents in a way that they can understand and believe?***

***Summary of Comments***

Explain the regulations in simple, clear language, just like the paragraph about confidentiality introduced in this focus group proceeding. Consider placing confidentiality information and statements in local government offices. It would be helpful for workers to have cards (like business cards) with phone numbers so people may call if they want to verify them as census workers. Encourage people

# Conclusions and Recommendations

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The three focus group sessions on rural outreach produced many ideas on how to enhance previous outreach strategies, and create new methods of increasing awareness and promotion of the 2010 Census in rural communities across the country. The focus groups, held in three different parts of the country and with a wide cross section of groups/organizations, frequently offered the same or similar ideas and recommendations to the Census Bureau for more effective outreach to rural populations.

## Topic #1

### **How to Reach and Motivate Rural Residents to Respond to the Census**

- ◆ Become more aware of the variety of diverse communities within rural populations. Ensure that Partnership Specialists truly represent the communities in which they serve.
- ◆ Enlist a nationally- or culturally-respected hero to explain the strict confidentiality of the census. This message may be more powerful coming from a nongovernment figure that people already trust and admire.
- ◆ There should be more focus on personalized approaches in searching out and connecting with rural and Hispanic constituents. Demonstrate greater genuine cultural sensitivity, knowledge, and respect for core family and cultural values.
- ◆ Make a special effort to reach children/youth, immigrants, migrant farmworkers, and the aged through innovative programs and activities targeted at these unique populations. The role of seniors as not only participants, but as motivators, should not be overlooked.
- ◆ Develop educational curriculum for schools, so children grow up learning about and understanding the census. When they reach adulthood, they will trust the census because they learned about it at a young age. Young people are also good at educating adults about the census and encouraging their participation in it.
- ◆ Include census curriculum in adult education, General Education Development (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes.
- ◆ Begin outreach and communication efforts no later than 2005. Contact partners annually, starting now, to remind them of upcoming activities, so they can build their network of volunteers early-on. Strive to develop more partnerships in grassroots organizations, like churches and schools. A large network of partners will yield greater participation in 2010. Current partners are your best recruiters. Help them set goals for signing up other rural leaders

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in their region to become partners with the Census Bureau.

- ◆ Build relationships with existing community organizations and programs in rural areas, such as Community Action Programs, Councils on Aging, Head Start, 4-H Club, Social Services, and Agricultural Extension Services. Other sources that are recognized in the rural community and good for outreach include municipalities, for-profit organizations, civic organizations like the Rotary Club, fraternities and sororities, Chambers of Commerce, and service providers. Service providers are especially important because they can take census information with them, as they make home/community visits.
- ◆ Involve national organizations earlier, such as League of United American Citizens (LULAC), California Rural Legal Assistance (CRLA), Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF), United Farm Workers (UFW), and Hispanic Chambers of Commerce, to stress what has been accomplished from past censuses, and what needs to be done in the next census.
- ◆ Success of the census depends on public awareness and understanding. The participants strongly emphasized the need and importance of improving trust in historically

undercounted areas. The first line of approach is through the faith community. Distrust can be overcome through culturally-appropriate and targeted promotion.

- ◆ Expand use of local media, in-language newspapers and radio, television, and local politicians who are respected by the community, for having the greatest impact in delivering census messages.
- ◆ Build early connections with high-level congressional and statewide leaders, as well as school districts through their trustees in forming public policies regarding participation in the census. Encourage congressional leaders to have a kick-off press conference.
- ◆ Use local election campaign strategies as a model for communicating the economic benefits of the census.
- ◆ Use “freebies” or giveaways, especially more practical, functional items like highlighters, calendars, letter openers, fans, stress balls, and water bottles, with census printed messages.
- ◆ Conduct *Train-the-Trainer* sessions. Start with rural leaders, who can then educate their network of volunteers about census goals, procedures, talking points, etc.
- ◆ Provide *Train-the-Trainer* services for partners, so they can effectively communicate the importance of participating in the cen-

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sus, and share, through actual examples, the real benefits received as a direct result of participation. More information on the impact of not being counted is also needed.

- ♦ The best way to motivate rural residents is to ensure the credibility of confidentiality and census data.

## **Topic #2**

### **Identifying Major Influencers of Rural Residents**

- ♦ Communicate immediately and directly with rural leaders and their communities about concerns and fears many illegal immigrants have regarding the Office of Homeland Security, the IRS, and other law enforcement agencies. These rural leaders include, for example, priests/ministers, teachers, social workers, and medical workers.
- ♦ These influencers can best motivate rural residents by building credibility at the local level via letter writing campaigns by public officials, town hall meetings, and community forums to promote the value and benefits of the census.
- ♦ Training key community influencers on methods and techniques for reaching out to people, and on the value and benefits of the census, will make them more effective as census ambassadors.

- ♦ Greater efforts should be made to involve people of the community in the census process. Visible support and encouragement is needed by high-level politicians, i.e., the Mexican Consulate or mayor. Other rural influencers include community workers (have one-on-one communication with families), teachers and teacher aides, church leaders, firemen, local community bosses, large farm owners, Farm Bureau and local extension agents, and health care workers (doctors, nurses, home health, etc.).
- ♦ Complete Count Committees worked well as influencers, providing a good cross-section of community diversity. They should be renewed for 2010, ensuring the inclusion of new community residents, and using trusted local leaders to educate and build trust.

## **Topic #3**

### **Effective Methods for Disseminating Information/Materials to Rural Residents**

- ♦ Expand utilization of radio, television, and print media in designing and disseminating positive messages to rural communities.
- ♦ Encourage local businesses to promote census participation in their commercials

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and advertisements.

- ◆ Request support from nationally- or culturally-recognized heroes to convey the census message. People will trust the census more if there is a spokesperson they already trust giving the message.
- ◆ Utilize familiar images from culture, sports, and entertainment, to create a connection to census goals and economic value to rural communities.
- ◆ Utilize resources where people within the community go to receive services: family and social services organizations, Head Start, Hospice care, etc.
- ◆ Encourage rural leaders to work with community committees on special event planning. These events might include sporting events, festivals, and parades. Census Bureau Partnership Specialists should participate in these events by staffing booths, sponsoring a float in a parade, passing out promotional items and flyers. Even residents living in remote rural areas attend some of these special community events.
- ◆ Piggyback on existing meetings, like Neighborhood Watch, identify “promotoras” to host neighborhood in-home meetings, and include census information in pay-check envelopes. Promote the census at flea markets, farmers’ markets, religious organizations, local extension services, and schools.

- ◆ Giveaways should be practical. Gear materials to reach the heart of the culture, tradition, and needs of the rural population.
- ◆ Create educational tools as part of marketing efforts. Teaching people about the census and how it can benefit (or hurt) their community is key in building trust and increasing participation in 2010.

#### **Topic #4**

### **Effectiveness of Promotional Materials**

#### **How to Design Effective Printed Promotional Materials for Rural Populations**

- ◆ The 2010 Census posters and marketing materials should be more culturally diverse and reader-friendly. Instead of creating multiple posters with one specific picture on it, develop a collage of pictures to represent the wide variety of cultures in the United States. Diverse communities will identify with the poster because they will not only see “themselves” represented, but many other cultures. This concept also gives the public one image (the collage) that they associate with the 2010 Census, as they do with the logo.
- ◆ Keep the language or message simple and at a fifth- or sixth-grade reading level. Keep it short in length, match the message

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to the audience, and avoid government names and jargon.

- ◆ Emphasize images of families, community support groups (i.e., fire departments, and Women, Infants, and Children), doctors, teachers, etc.
- ◆ Use icons/images which people are familiar with in their local areas (i.e., United Farm Worker, eagle, and Caesar Chavez).
- ◆ Show images that connect the present to the future, such as children and youth – a teen helping an elderly person fill out the census form.
- ◆ Always emphasize confidentiality, stress its importance and what the Census Bureau does to maintain confidentiality.
- ◆ Make posters colorful with large letters. Stay away from looking too “government.”
- ◆ Match the message and images to the audience. For example, picture a prosperous main street, a nice farm scene, or a farmer counting livestock. Make the rural community feel special, needed and valued, by making them feel they can make a difference.
- ◆ Wording on promotional materials is also important. Use phrases that rural residents can relate to. Emphasize the urgency of participating in the census by showing the negative economic impact of under-representation on family life, school benefits, utilities, etc. Use images of houses

and people and include dollar amounts on the value of rural areas on the economy.

## **Topic #5**

### **How to Create Printed Materials That are Easier to Read and Understand**

- ◆ Tap more fully and deeply into the rich diversity of rural populations, recognizing the various local and regional languages and cultures. Be mindful of various dialects of languages, as well.
- ◆ Keep in mind the literacy level of many rural populations. Pay special attention to the special-language needs, especially for certain rural and migrant populations. Use pictures and very simple language to communicate the census message.
- ◆ Census information should be included in English as a Second Language (ESL), General Education Development (GED), adult education, and the college curriculum, as well as citizenship classes and state literacy programs. Other organizations that serve people with reading or writing limitations include: libraries, welfare offices, extension services, Housing Authority, Community Action Centers, schools, Head Start, senior centers, churches, homeless shelters, and mental health groups.

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**Topic #6**  
**Extent of Access to Computers and Internet for Rural Residents**

There is currently little or no access to computers and the Internet in many rural homes. Where there are computers and Internet access, it is more likely used by children or youth in the home. However, access to computers and the Internet is available in the community through libraries, housing and community centers, churches, community-based organizations, senior centers, and mobile computer labs in some areas. Considering these limitations, there is still value in using computers and other technology for the 2010 Census, especially in communicating with rural partners.

**Topic #7**  
**Outreach Strategies for Migrant Populations**

- ♦ Utilize more effective planning, and targeting of local media outlets, and increased funding to grassroots organizations that can begin marketing census benefits and procedures before migrants leave home.
  - ♦ Utilize Farmworkers Associations, migrant camps, growers, and other census partners, to build trust and acceptability within migrant families and communities.
  - ♦ Include migrant workers on Complete Count Committees. Migrants share very strong core family and spiritual values and can best be reached through their children, families, schools, and churches.
  - ♦ Utilize more bilingual enumerators and census outreach workers and volunteers. Also develop more partnerships with businesses, targeting and educating key employers and first-line supervisors about census facts, economic benefits, and other benefits.
  - ♦ Utilize minority newspapers and radio stations, and attend local cultural events that are attended by migrant workers.
  - ♦ Emphasize confidentiality of the census process in all contacts with migrant workers, to alleviate fears of losing their jobs or their children.
  - ♦ Language is a major barrier between the census process and the migrant population. Materials should be developed in Spanish, using easy words, and a low reading level.
- ♦ Begin communication immediately and directly with rural leaders and their communities about concerns and fears many immigrants and migrant populations have regarding the IRS and Homeland Security. Send positive messages through existing networks that directly reach migrant workers, including the migrant homeless.

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Images should incorporate important and/or influential people or heroes, such as priests, social workers, Caesar Chavez, and Oscar de la Hoya.

### **Topic #8**

#### **Outreach Strategies for American Indian/Alaska Native Populations**

- ◆ Prepare simple promotional materials, with a few words describing census benefits and importance, such as free educational benefits for American Indians, and health benefits.
- ◆ Tap into Tribal Web sites and newsletters that can include census information and explain why tribes should participate.
- ◆ Work with Tribal Chiefs, Elders, and Tribal council members to write letters advocating census support and participation. Participate in ceremonies and activities such as powwows, to distribute census materials and information.
- ◆ Images are very important to American Indians/Alaska Natives, and have a strong, lasting effect on them. Create relevant, meaningful images on printed materials, such as local school sports teams and figures. Also use images that are relevant to Tribal issues and concerns.

### **Topic #9**

#### **How to Communicate the Census Bureau's Commitment to Confidentiality**

- ◆ The Census Bureau should communicate its commitment to confidentiality in simple, clear language, much like the strong Title 13 statement, which reads:

*“By law, the Census Bureau cannot share information obtained from respondents with any individual or agency including Homeland Security, IRS, FBI, law enforcement, or welfare agencies. No court of law, not even the President of the United States, can find out individual responses. Census Bureau workers are sworn to secrecy. They face up to a \$250,000 fine and a five-year prison term if they give out any information they see on a census form.”*
- ◆ When promoting the census, be specific in explaining the penalties and fines for breaking confidentiality.
- ◆ Partner with local leaders to make public announcements about confidentiality.
- ◆ Inform the public that all paid census workers go through thorough background checks and clearances before going in the field.

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- ◆ Place confidentiality information and statements in local government offices.
  - ◆ Provide census workers with business-like cards with phone numbers, so people may call to verify workers, or call local authorities for verification.

### **General Comments**

- ◆ One reason why past census efforts failed in rural areas is inadequate maps. The Census Bureau needs to provide more direction to smaller localities in order to have maps updated accurately. The Bureau should encourage small municipalities to work with regional planning offices to ensure that maps are updated and clear. This will help improve service and timeliness of material distribution.
- ◆ Keep partnerships active during non-decennial years through the work of full-time Partnership Specialists.
- ◆ Continue to provide not just paper, but practical, meaningful giveaways, such as bandanas, sunscreen, car shades, and calendars, that offer recipients factual information, as well as personal benefits.
- ◆ Recognize the importance of unions, especially in the mines and factories. Union leaders can be important influencers.
- ◆ Do not overlook the impact of terrorism.

Due to recent terrorist attacks, the public may be more suspicious of strangers and reluctant to divulge personal information.

- ◆ Emphasize patriotism and civic duty – that responding to the census is “the right thing to do,” or “the American thing to do.”
- ◆ Stress the historical importance of the census and that it provides pertinent genealogical information on ancestors.
- ◆ Improve trust in historically-undercounted areas. The success of the census depends on public awareness, understanding, and trust.

# Appendix A

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## List of Participating Organizations

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## ***Fresno, CA***

## ***March 26, 2003***

### *Organization*

### *City, State*

Campeños Sin Fronteras

Somerton, AZ

Clinica Sierra Vista

Bakersfield, CA

Migrant Education, Harvest of Hope

Oxnard, CA

Radio Campesina Network

Salinas, CA

San Benito Health Foundation

Hollister, CA

United Farm Workers

Sacramento, CA

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## ***Charleston, WV      April 1, 2003***

### *Organization*

### *City, State*

Automated Health Systems	Dunbar, WV
Belpre Area Chamber of Commerce	Belpre, OH
Eastern Greenbrier Jr. High School	Lewisburg, WV
Gallia Metro Housing Authority	Bidwell, OH
Kentucky Farmworkers Program	Lebanon, KY
Region VIII Planning and Development Council	Petersburg, WV
SW Resources	Parkersburg, WV
Town of Wendell	Wendell, NC
West Virginia University / Mason County Extension Office	Point Pleasant, WV
WV Community Action Director's Association	Parkersburg, WV

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## ***Jackson, MS***

## ***April 2, 2003***

### *Organization*

### *City, State*

City of Yazoo

Yazoo, MS

Jackson State University

Jackson, MS

Madison County Community Action

Canton, MS

MS Band of Choctaw Indians

Choctaw, MS

MS Cooperative Extension Service

Mississippi State, MS

MS Legal Services

Jackson, MS

Project Bravo

El Paso, TX

Yazoo Community Action Agency

Yazoo, MS



