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Census and Data Equity at The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

Engaging with External Advocates:
The Power of Coalition & Community Organizing

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Who We Are:

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights

The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights is a coalition charged by its diverse membership of more than **240 national organizations** to promote and protect the rights of all persons in the United States. The Leadership Conference works to build an America as good as its ideals.

The Leadership Conference Education Fund

The Leadership Conference Education Fund **builds public will** for state and federal policies that **promote and protect the civil and human rights** of all persons in the United States.

CENSUS COUNTS

STATES COUNT ACTION NETWORK

Census Roadmap.org

Census Seminar Series

DDAN
DATA DISAGGREGATION ACTION NETWORK

Current Landscape

- EO 13985: Enhancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government

- A recent example of the necessity of data to advance equity is the lack of data on COVID-19 infections and deaths by race and ethnicity.
    - Information on race and ethnicity is available for only 65% of COVID-19 cases.

Data are necessary,
even though not sufficient,
to advance equity and justice.

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The Importance of Community Engagement

To Achieve Relevant, Timely, Meaningful Data Equity

How can we improve questionnaires?

To become “visible” in federal data, people first need to “see” themselves in forms.

First step to creating inclusive forms is meaningful consultation with stakeholders.

- Updated federal race and ethnicity standards
    - *With partners from our Census Counts coalition, we are leading efforts to achieve more accurate and inclusive federal data on race and ethnicity. See our resource page for more.*
- Addition of SOGI data to the American Community Survey
    - *We support our coalition members Whitman Walker Institute and Movement Advancement Project’s leadership of this work.*
- Organizing advocates around proposed changes to disability questions on ACE
    - *With the U.S. Census Bureau, OMG NCHS, NCD and CCD we co-hosted a Stakeholder Convening on Disability Data Needs with over 100 attendees to discuss proposed changes to the ACS disability question.*

How can we improve questionnaires?

We need to be intentional about reflecting intersectional identities.

People exist as whole individuals, not a series of categories.

- When considering which stakeholders need to be at the table on data collection issues, **prioritize inclusion of organizations serving multiply marginalized communities.**
- In our coalition organizing, we are working to bridge our data advocacy efforts across communities and ensure that we are supporting and learning from one another.
  - Inclusion of SOGI-focused groups in our race and ethnicity data coalition work.
  - Inclusion of disability advocacy groups serving specific race and ethnicity affinity groups in our disability stakeholder convening with the Census Bureau.

How can we improve outreach strategies?

We need to meet communities where they are and earn their trust.

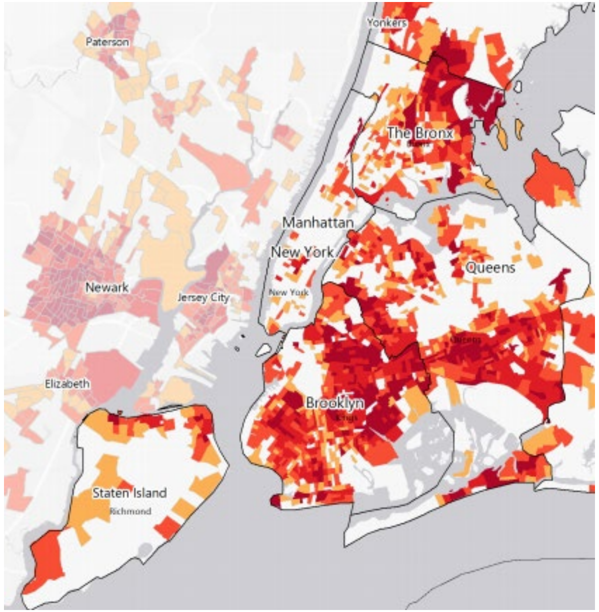
- **Build awareness and trust in end-use of data by recruiting trusted messengers.**
  - *Examples are our ACS Awareness Month and ACS Ambassadors Initiative.*
- **Re-evaluate how we count certain populations.**
  - *Examples include ending prison gerrymandering by counting incarcerated people at their home residence.*
- **Interact directly with communities and design data collection with them in mind.**
  - *This was called for in the Biden EO on building trust in government.*
- **Partner with community stakeholders in all stages of data lifecycle (planning, collection, analysis, publishing).**
  - *Community organizations can use our Roadmap to 2030 to inform their efforts.*

What does it mean to be “undercounted?”

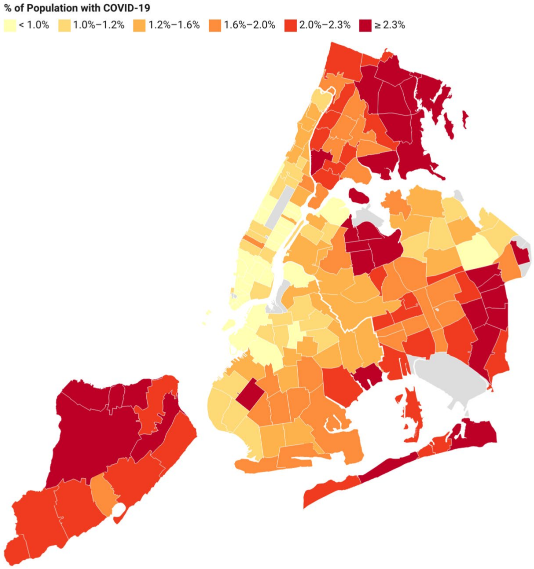
We need to examine and address the root causes of undercounts.

- Replace idea of “ undercounted ” or “hard to count” with “ underserved .”
- Remember that when we discuss how undercounts and poor data lead to lack of resources, the reverse is also true:
    - *When a community’s daily needs are not met, they lack trust in civic participation and are therefore less likely to be counted.*
- Maps of undercounts often align closely with areas that lack essential services (broadband, protection from COVID pandemic, etc.).

Service gaps and undercounts in NYC



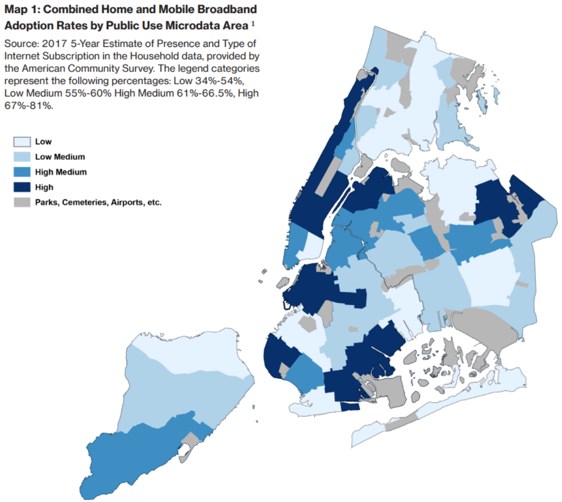
Red = census undercount



This map was originally created on the Carto platform and was rebuilt in July 2023 using Datawrapper when the Carto platform was deprecated. Layers will display differently. Contact comms@anhd.org with questions.

Map: Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD) • Created with Datawrapper

Red = most impacted by COVID



Map 1: Combined Home and Mobile Broadband Adoption Rates by Public Use Microdata Area [1]

Source: 2017 5-Year Estimate of Presence and Type of Internet Subscription in the Household data, provided by the American Community Survey. The legend categories represent the following percentages: Low 34%-54%, Low Medium 55%-60% High Medium 61%-66.5%, High 67%-81%.

Light blue = limited broadband access

What does meaningful engagement *mean*?

Engagement is not transactional but a continuous dialogue.

- **Federal agencies must consult community stakeholders at all stages** of policy development and adoption:
    - Initial research
    - Proposal development
    - Policy adoption
    - Implementation
    - Follow up research, monitoring, and revision of policy
- **Leverage coalition-based organizations** like The Leadership Conference to connect with smaller organizations and ensure that stakeholders serving diverse communities have a seat at the table. *It is particularly important to call in voices of disagreement as that is how we learn.*
- **Communication is key**: stakeholders don't expect agencies to have answers to everything immediately. What they do expect are meaningful opportunities to discuss the issues at hand and provide input.
- **Think of us as your partners!** We all share the common goal of ensuring our communities are visible in the data.

What does meaningful engagement *mean*?

Engagement is not transactional but a continuous dialogue.

Recommendations to strengthen stakeholder engagement:

- Develop and disseminate formal guidance on best practices for stakeholder consultation across various Bureau offices and subject areas, leveraging relationships with national stakeholders;
- Ensure strong representation of diverse stakeholder groups, particularly groups facing persistent undercounts or marginalization, including each community of color, on the Bureau's advisory committees;
- Consult impacted populations prior to proposing changes in the Federal Register, and ensure that materials and outreach on the proposed changes are accessible to impacted groups;
- When considering any significant changes to data policies, establish a dedicated working group (similar to the Federal Interagency Technical Working Group on Race and Ethnicity Standards) to consult with stakeholders throughout the process of studying the proposed changes;
- Establish additional standing cross-directorate teams (similar to the cross-directorate team on improving the count of young children) to collaborate with stakeholders on studying methods to improve data collection in for underrepresented communities.

What does meaningful engagement *mean*?

Prioritizing accessibility and meeting people where they are.

Agencies must not only give communities opportunities to engage, but design engagement processes with them in mind. This includes:

- Ensuring that materials, outreach, and events focused on data policy issues are accessible to all, and particularly to impacted groups.
    - This requires consultation with impacted groups to understand accessibility needs.
- Translation of resources and outreach materials into the languages used by impacted communities.
    - Stakeholder partners can help to identify translation needs and provide feedback.
- Being thoughtful about designing materials and opportunities for input by lay audiences
    - Using plain language and keeping in mind the needs of individuals with lower literacy levels

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Thank You.

For further questions and information, please contact:

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