



NEWS RELEASE

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***** NEW CENSUS 2020 REPORT RELEASED*****

New Analysis of End-to-End Test in Providence County Shows Census 2020 Citizenship Question Likely to Depress Response Rates

New report offers an independent assessment of the End-to-End Test, including a survey of more than 900 resident, and interviews with local civic leaders and elected officials

78 percent of Latinos surveyed believed that the inclusion of a citizenship question would make people afraid to participate in Census 2020

Washington, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Educational Fund today released "[The Last Chance to Get It Right: Implications of the 2018 Test of the Census for Latinos and the General Public](#)," a new report that provides an independent assessment of the U.S. Census Bureau's End-to-End (E-T-E) Test, in Providence County, Rhode Island.

This is what happens when Congress fails to adequately fund Census 2020.

"Our independent assessment of the E-T-E test raises serious concerns about the Census Bureau's ability to accurately count Latinos and other hard-to-reach communities," stated Arturo Vargas, NALEO Educational Fund chief executive officer. "Given Congress' lack of adequate funding for planning and testing for Census 2020, this is certainly no surprise to those of us who have been preparing for the nation's decennial count the past few years. This financial shortfall is occurring at a time when our research shows that there is already unprecedented apprehension and fear within the Latino and immigrant communities regarding Census 2020. These issues will only continue to grow in the coming months, further threatening a full count of the nation's second largest population if additional funds are not made available by Congress and the citizenship question is not removed from the 2020 Census questionnaire."

The decennial Census is a once-in-a-decade undertaking and therefore over the past few cycles the Census Bureau has tested it extensively in advance to make sure it will work smoothly. From March to July 2018, it conducted major components of its "dry run," the E-T-E Test, in Providence County, Rhode Island. This [report](#) focuses on the implications of the final field test of the Census 2020 design* with particular attention to members of "difficult to reach communities," including racial/ethnic minorities, non-English speakers, and immigrant community members.

The [report](#) features three components: a survey of 918 residents, interviews with local civic leaders, and interviews with elected officials. Key themes ran through all three groups of

survey and interview participants. Among them were concerns about the government's intentions in asking for and using information, challenges with online questionnaire response, and concern about effective communication about the importance and purpose of the enumeration. Major [findings](#) include:

Residents

- Overwhelmingly, residents agreed that a Census citizenship question will decrease participation in the 2020 Census.
 - About four-fifths of Non-Latino Whites (82 percent) and Latinos (78 percent) agreed that the inclusion of a citizenship question would make people afraid to participate in Census 2020.
- Spanish-language outreach and accessibility is imperative.
 - Nearly half (42 percent) of Latino households that participated in the E-T-E did so in Spanish.
 - For some segments of the Latino population the rate was even higher: 60 percent of foreign-born Latinos, 54 percent of those age 40 and above, and 50 percent of those who had lived in Providence County less than ten years.
- Personal networks and community-based organizations are the best means to spread information.
 - 47 percent of Latinos heard about the E-T-E Test from friends, family, and others through personal conversations, and 41 percent heard about it from friends and family on social media. Yet only 30 percent of Latinos heard or saw ads or other information about the test from government sources.
- Most Latinos preferred to take part in the E-T-E by mail and in-person, rather than online.
 - Most Latinos age 50 and above used mail, but rather surprisingly, so did most of the youngest Latinos, those from 18 to 29. Among Latinos age 30 to 39 and Latinos age 40 to 49, most completed the E-T-E in person.
 - Our analysis found that only 20 percent of Latinos participated online, compared to 43 percent of Blacks, and 36 percent of Whites.
 - Our analysis also found that 36 percent of Latinos were enumerated in-person during Non-Response Follow Up (NRFU), compared with 16 percent of Blacks and only 8 percent of Whites.

Civic Leaders

- The public is uncertain about the importance of the Census, especially for members of hard to reach communities.
- Many fear and mistrust the federal government's plans for the data.
- Civic leaders face challenges in conveying Census information to residents.

Elected Officials

- Residents overall mistrust and fear the federal government and Census workers.
- A great many residents tell elected officials that they fear abuse of the citizenship question and the targeting of undocumented households.
- A variety of challenges exists to community outreach and engagement.
- Support for completing the E-T-E test online was often absent.
- Local residents face barriers in working for the U.S. Census Bureau.

The 2020 U.S. Census is already the most controversial in decades. Many policymakers, community and civic leaders, advocates and Census experts believe that the accuracy of the 2020 Census is at serious risk, and that there are significant obstacles that will thwart a precise count. A recent [report](#) from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) raised serious concerns about the Census Bureau's inadequate in-person NRFU procedures in the E-T-E test, an alarming finding for NALEO Educational Fund given the large percentage of Latinos who participated through this response mode.

Vargas went on to say, "Both NALEO Educational Fund and GAO analysis confirm what we have known for some time—that the Bureau is inadequately prepared to count the nation's second largest population group in Census 2020. With less than 16 months to go, the nation needs a sound plan and strategy for following-up with Latinos and other communities who are more likely to participate in the decennial count by mail or in-person. If this problem is not addressed by the Bureau, and fast, we risk a failed Census 2020."

This [report](#) offers several policy recommendations that must be implemented now to help ensure Latinos and members of other "difficult to reach" communities are accurately counted in Census 2020. These [recommendations](#) include:

Recommendations

- The Administration or Congress must eliminate the citizenship question.
- The Census Bureau's outreach and enumeration strategies must take into account Latinos' preferences for responding to the questionnaire.
- The Bureau must have effective strategies to reach Spanish-dominant residents and support them in completing the questionnaire.
- The Bureau must provide clear, consistent communication early on with civic and community partners and elected officials about its plans for an accurate count.
- The Bureau's outreach and partnership strategies should include community education and training for the staff members and volunteers at local community-based organizations that have regular and trusted contact with residents, especially in hard to reach communities. Outreach by the Bureau, community organizations, and other partners should involve the "trusted messengers" and personal networks that will most effectively reach Latinos and other hard-to-count populations.
- Congress must appropriate enough funding to ensure an accurate Census. State and local governments, philanthropic institutions and businesses should also provide resources for community education and assistance efforts.

The report, "[The Last Chance to Get It Right: Implications of the 2018 Test of the Census for Latinos and the General Public](#)", was authored by Kevin A. Escudero (Ph.D., Assistant Professor of American Studies, Brown University) and Marisol Becerra (Ph.D. Candidate, School of Environment and Natural Resources, Ohio State University) in collaboration with Gabriela Domenzain (Founder and President, Somos Humanos).

The NALEO Educational Fund full report and executive summary is available for download at https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/naleo/pages/190/attachments/original/1544560063/ET_E_Census_Report-FINAL.pdf?1544560063.

**On December 6, the Census Bureau announced it would add one final test in June 2019 to determine the logistical needs created by the addition of the citizenship question.*

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About NALEO Educational Fund

NALEO Educational Fund is the nation's leading non-partisan, non-profit organization that facilitates the full participation of Latinos in the American political process, from citizenship to public service.