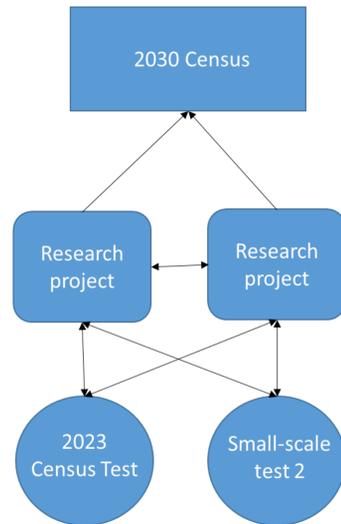


Small-Scale Testing and Public-Focused Notifications about Using Administrative Data in the 2030 Census

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How does the small-scale testing program work?

- The Decennial directorate established a small-scale testing program in 2015 to prepare for the 2020 Census. The plan for the 2030 Census is to initiate and maintain an ongoing and iterative small-scale response testing program by using nationally representative samples or small, thoughtfully selected sites starting with the 2023 Census Test.



Why use administrative data?

- While the Census Bureau has historically preferred that households self-respond to the decennial census, other methods such as in-person interviews with enumerators and administrative data were used when a household did not self-respond in the 2020 Census.
- As increases in the use of administrative data in enumeration are being considered, the 2023 Census Test is the first of the small-scale tests that explores the relationship between response behaviors and mailed invitations that include statements about administrative data.

Research Questions

- Does the self-response rate change when mail materials mention that nonresponses may be completed using administrative data?
- Do we notify housing units in one mailing or all mailings that we may use administrative data?
- What is the effect of having the administrative data language in only the first mailing versus all mailings on self-response rates?
- If a housing unit chooses not to self-respond, do we have good administrative data for the housing unit?



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Panels by Administrative Language Treatment for the 2023 Census Test

Panel Description	Administrative Records Language Included?
2020 Census Address Screen	No
New Address Screen	No
Control for Mailing Dates, Priority Mail, and Administrative Records Language	No
Mailing Dates on Materials	No
Priority Mail	No
Light Administrative Records Language	Yes (first mailing)
Heavy Administrative Records Language	Yes (all mailings)

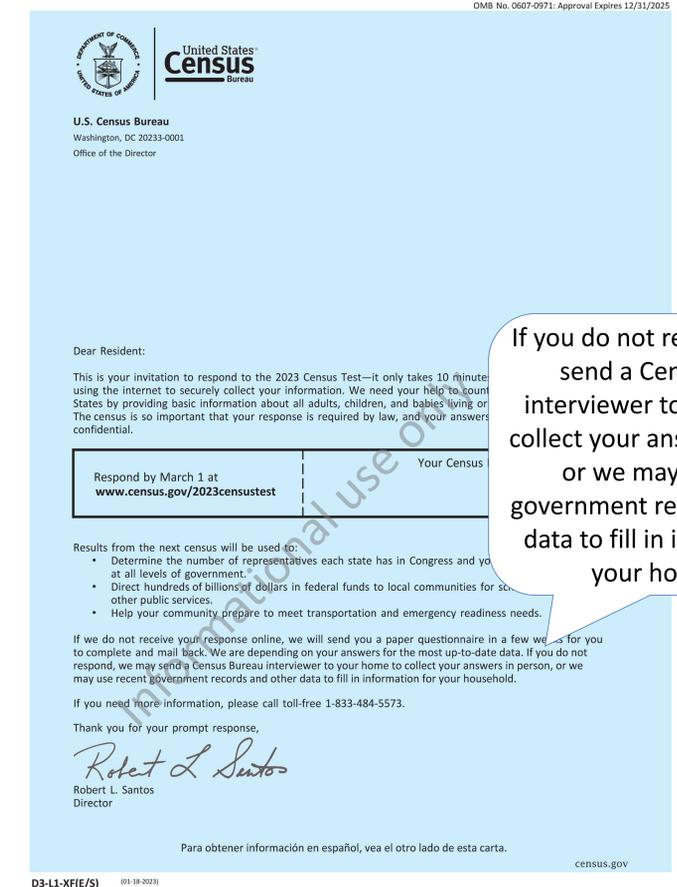
This test supports other research topics as well. These topics include enhancing the user experience on the internet instrument (New Address Screen panel), testing the inclusion of a mail date on materials (Mailing Dates panel), and using a USPS Priority Mail envelope for those who receive a questionnaire in the last mailing (Priority Mail panel).

Methodology

- Cognitive interviews were done before mailout and materials were changed based on findings.
- The cognitive interviews showed that
 - most participants did not notice administrative language until attention was drawn to it by the interviewer.
 - participants were unclear about what "government records" were.
- Selected a national sample of 15,500 housing units.
- Housing units received up to four mailings.
- All materials sent were bilingual: English and Spanish.
- This was a self-response only test where responses were collected using either the internet instrument or paper questionnaire.
- Data collection for the 2023 Census Test occurred from February 17 to April 4, 2023.

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Language Used for Administrative Records Language Panels



If you do not respond, we may send a Census Bureau interviewer to your home to collect your answers in person, or we may use recent government records and other data to fill in information for your household.

Both panels used the same administrative records language but the frequency differed by panel.

- Light – first mailing
- Heavy – ALL mailings

Next Steps

- Currently analyzing data from the 2023 Census Test.
- Results from this test will be used to inform the mail strategy of future self-response tests, possibly including some households who will receive fewer mailings.
- Planning is underway for the next small-scale test with to-be-determined content.

Any views expressed are those of the author and not those of the U.S. Census Bureau.

The Census Bureau has reviewed this data product to ensure appropriate access, use, and disclosure avoidance protection of the confidential source data used to produce this product (Project No's: P-7528546 and P-7529919, Disclosure Review Board (DRB) approval numbers: DRB-FY23-DSSD007-0001 and DRB-FY23-DSSD007-0002).