

Misconceptions and Lack of Awareness Threaten Census Bureau Surveys

Key Takeaways

1. About 67 percent of households were “extremely likely” or “very likely” to fill out the 2020 Census form, but younger or less educated groups were least likely to report their intention to participate.
2. Five barriers were likely to prevent people from completing their 2020 Census: concerns about privacy and confidentiality, fear of repercussions, distrust in all levels of government, lack of efficacy, and a belief that completing the Census would not result in personal benefits.
3. Less than half of respondents knew that community funding depends upon the Census count, but many of the respondents claimed funding for public services would help motivate them to complete their Census.
4. Since 1997, the average telephone survey response rate fell from 36 percent to 9 percent. This means that follow-up operations to remedy low response rates may face difficulties as they try to contact residents who did not respond to the Census.
5. While barriers to ACS completion likely overlap with barriers of Census completion, fewer people are aware of its legitimacy, creating an additional obstacle to survey collections.

Want to Learn More?

Learn more about the **challenges of increasing participation**, read the executive summary of [“2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study Survey Report”](#) (2 minutes) or the full report (1 hour 30 minutes).

To learn about the **legitimacy of the ACS**, read [“Is the American Community Survey Legit?”](#) (1 minutes)
