

THE NEW SCHOOL

# Census 2020 x Brooklyn Library

Prepared for Maya Wiley, Vice Chair of Social Justice  
Digital Equity Lab 2018 | December 11, 2018 at 6:00 PM  
Presented by Elizabeth Mosely, Hoai Nam Pham, and Courtney Williams





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# The Problem

Elizabeth Mosely - Hoai Nam Pham - Courtney Williams

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# The United States Census

*“Censuses are not conducted in a vacuum. They occur amidst internal and external crisis, shifts in cultural interests, and events that become “defining moments” for each generation. Census data reflect the growth of the population as well as the changing values and interests of the American people”-- Census.gov*

- The Census has been conducted on a decennial basis since 1790
- Data collected used to determine electoral voting power based on population
- Determines the amount of money states are repaid for payments made to the federal government for health care, housing, education and more
- Historically known to inaccurately account for communities of color and low income.
  - Overcounting of white communities

# LATINO COMMUNITIES ARE AT RISKS OF BEING UNDERCOUNTED

## Historically undercounted

Latinos have been undercounted for decades, disadvantaging their families, communities, and neighborhoods. Latino children in particular are among the most undercounted populations in the United States. **Today, there are 56.5 million Hispanics living in the United States, and roughly one in three live in hard-to-count census tracts.**

## What are hard-to-count characteristics of Latino community?

**Language Barriers:** Almost a third of Hispanics (31 percent) speak English less than “very well.” Historically, areas with low rates of English proficiency have been undercounted.

**Poverty:** Hispanics have an official poverty rate of 21 percent, significantly higher than the official U.S. poverty rate of 13 percent. It is widely believed that households in poverty are difficult to enumerate.

**Education:** More than 60 percent of Hispanic adults have only a high school degree or didn’t complete high school, compared to 40 percent of the total population. Areas with lower educational attainment are also hard to enumerate.

**Immigrant Status:** More than a third of Latinos (34 percent) are foreign-born. People immigrating to the United States from Latin America made up more than half of the undocumented population in 2016. A range of stakeholders, from state officials to immigrant advocates, fear the recent increase in negative political rhetoric and federal detention and deportation operations targeting the undocumented community could reduce participation among immigrant communities – placing immigrant households at greater risk of being undercounted. Because of these tensions, a growing segment of immigrant households may be reluctant to respond to the census questionnaire due to concerns about data confidentiality.

**Latino Children:** Latino children make up more than 24 percent of U.S. children under five.<sup>21</sup> Fifty-five percent live in a household with complex living arrangements, sometimes moving between various relatives’ or caregivers’ residences. <sup>22</sup> One-quarter of young Latino children also live in a linguistically isolated household where adults have difficulty speaking English.<sup>23</sup> Each of these characteristics is correlated with heightened risk of being hard-to-count. In 2010, Latino children made up more than 36 percent of the total net undercount for all children under five, more than double the undercount of non-Hispanic White children. <sup>24</sup>

# AFRICAN-AMERICAN HOUSEHOLDS ARE AT RISKS OF BEING UNDERCOUNTED

## Historically undercounted

The 2010 Census undercounted the African-American population by more than **800,000**.

Approximately **7 percent of young African-American children** were overlooked by the 2010 Census, roughly twice the rate for young non-Hispanic White children.

African-American men have been historically undercounted in greater numbers than men of other racial or ethnic groups.

Today, **more than one in three African Americans live in hard-to-count census tracts**.

## Why are African Americans missed so often in the census?

### Why are African Americans missed so often in the census?

African-American households typically share certain characteristics that compound their risk of being undercounted, including:

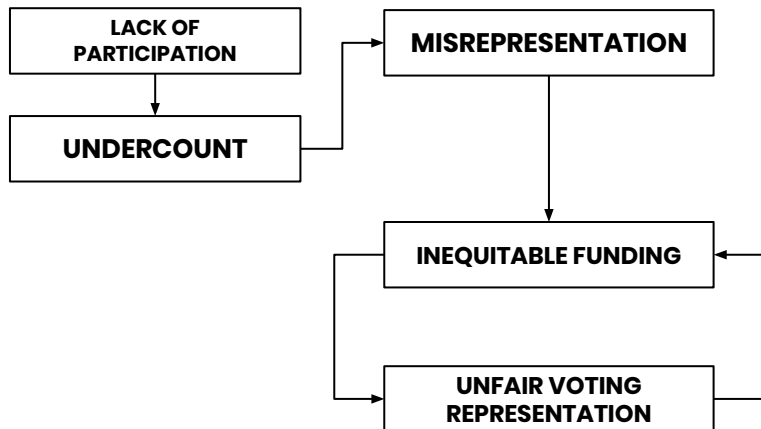
**Poverty:** Overall, using the official poverty measure, about one in four African Americans lives in poverty (24 percent), far exceeding the national poverty rate of 13 percent.

It is widely believed that households living in poverty are difficult to enumerate.

**Housing Insecurity:** Individuals and families who rent are undercounted at higher rates than homeowners. The majority (58 percent) of African-American households rent their homes.

Due to rising rental costs and stagnant wages, many renters experience housing instability, making them even more likely to be missed in the census. African Americans also are more likely to be “doubled up,” moving in with friends and family due to lack of affordable, available housing options. Furthermore, families are increasingly facing eviction, with women living in African-American neighborhoods at especially high risk.

# The Use of the Census



## Top federal assistance programs distributed using census data

Medicaid and other medical assistance	\$312 billion
Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)	\$71
Medicare Part B physician payments	\$70
Highway planning and construction	\$38
Pell grant program for students	\$30
Federal school lunch program	\$19
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	\$17
Section 8 housing vouchers	\$16
Title 1 grants to local school districts	\$14
Grants to states for services for students with special needs	\$11
Head Start early childhood program	\$9
Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)	\$6

A recent Census Bureau report found that 132 programs used decennial census or related data to distribute more than \$675 billion to states in 2015. **Most of the money was related to health care, education and assistance for the poor.**



# Digital Census 2020

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- Going digital with **limited paper forms**.
- For the first time ever there will be a citizenship question.
  - The current federal administration is being sued over the legality of this question, lawsuits pending.
- The hope is **55% of the entire US population will be able to fill the form via computers, mobile phones, or other devices**.
  - **Communities of color and mixed status are unlikely to have the broadband access needed to complete the form on the internet.**
- No infrastructure has been provided for this rollout on the federal or state level.
  - The federal government is bound by **Title 13 of the United States Codes** to protect all information collected from individuals and businesses.
  - New York has a census coalition that began talk in September 2018
  - Joseph Salvo, head of the Population Division at the NYC Department of City Planning, is responsible for the count for the City of New York





# Digital Equity

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- All internet access is not equal
- 17 % (533,000) of NYC households do not have a computer at home.
- In NYC 27% of Black , 26% of Hispanic, and 15 % of Asian households lack broadband access
- Mayor De Blasio is launching an initiative to deliver affordable , **high speed internet access to all NYC residents by 2025**

*" A condition in which **all individuals and communities have the information technology and capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy.** Digital Equity is necessary for community-level innovations and solutions, civic and cultural participation, employment, lifelong learning, and access to essential services. "* **Digital Equity Lab 2018**



# Digital Privacy

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- Privacy is a significant consideration since the Census going digital
- **Lack of resources for understanding digital privacy and learning how to protect personal data**
- New York City does not currently have a Chief Technology Officer
- New York City appointed its first Chief Privacy Officer, Laura Negrón, in April 2018
  - NYC joined a coalition called Cities for Digital Rights
    - NYC hosted its first Library Privacy Week in October 2018
- "Guideline for the Internet of Things"
  - Privacy + Transparency



# Brownsville

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A history of undercounting in minority communities, like Brownsville, where 37% of the population live below the federal poverty line exhibit **“hard to count”** characteristics such as:

LOWER  
INCOME  
RATES

LOWER %  
COLLEGE  
DEGREE

LOWER  
HOME  
OWNERSHIP



# Brownsville Stats

## Brooklyn, New York

### Highlights<sup>16</sup>

**33.7 yrs old**

is the median age of the residents, which is slightly lower than the Brooklyn average of 34.7.

**74 yrs old**

is the average life expectancy of people in the neighborhood<sup>17</sup>.

**24.5%** of people speak other languages than English at home, with the largest percentage being Spanish speakers.

**90%** of the foreign-born population's place of birth is Latin America.

**16.4%** is the home-ownership rate of Brownsville, which more than 10% lower than the Brooklyn average of 28.7%.

**70%** of the employed residents use public transportation to get to work.

**\$870** is the median rent, which is lower than the Brooklyn average of \$1,300.

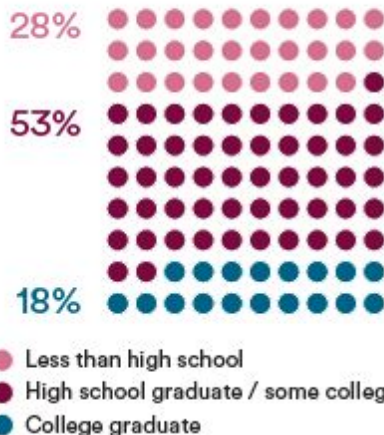
**20.2** is the crime rate per 1000 residents in the neighborhood, which is higher than the Brooklyn average 11.6.

### Economic stress

	Brownsville	Best-performing community district	Brooklyn	NYC
Poverty	37% (RANKS 7 <sup>th</sup> )	6% Tottenville and Great Kills (RANKS 59 <sup>th</sup> )	24%	21%
Unemployment	16% (RANKS 10 <sup>th</sup> )	5% Greenwich Village and Soho & Financial District (RANKS 58 <sup>th</sup> )	11%	11%
Rent burden	56% (RANKS 17 <sup>th</sup> )	37% Greenwich Village and Soho & Financial District (RANKS 58 <sup>th</sup> )	52%	51%

Poverty, unemployment and rent burden : U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2011-2013; Avertable deaths: NYC DOHMH, Bureau of Vital Statistics 2008-2012

### Educational Attainment<sup>14</sup>

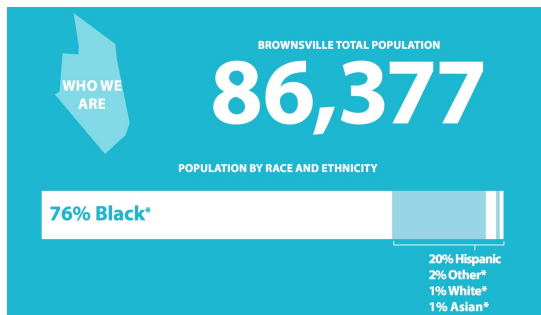


Households<sup>10</sup>

**46,351**

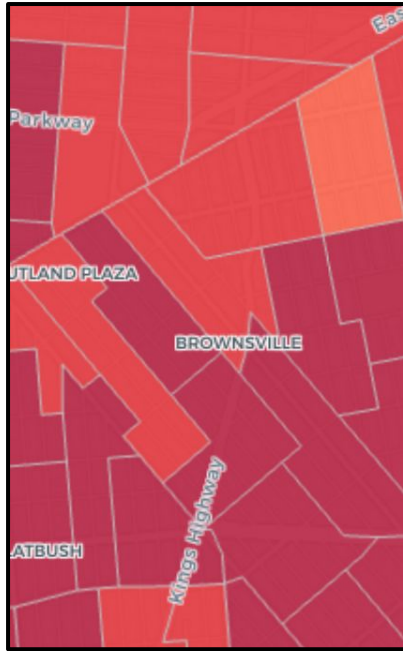
20% are NYCHA households

37% of **Brownsville** residents live below the Federal Poverty Level; it is the poorest neighborhood in Brooklyn and the seventh-poorest neighborhood in NYC.

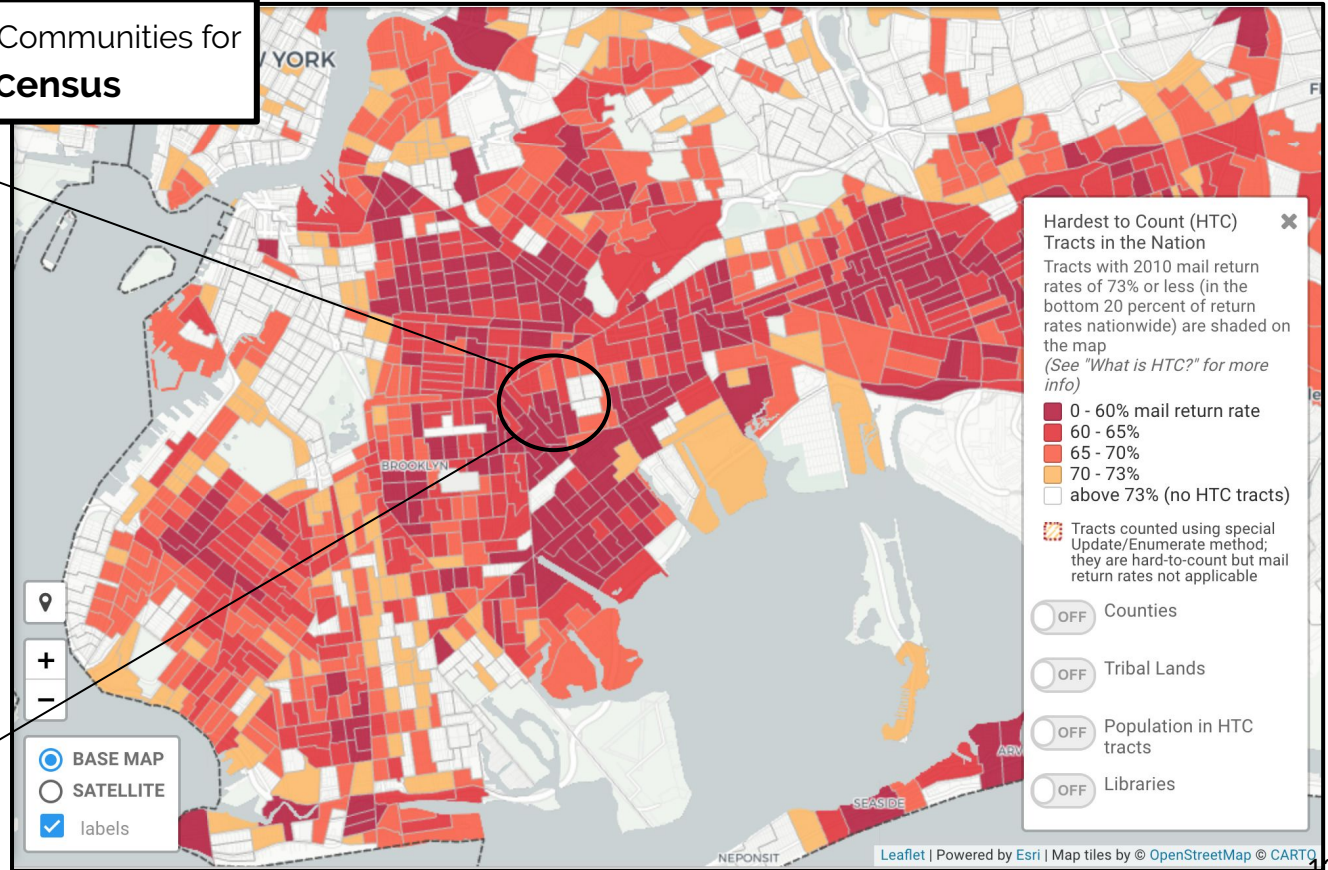


# Undercounting In Brownsville

Mapping **Hard to Count (HTC)** Communities for  
a Fair & Accurate **2020 Census**



Brownsville, NYC



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# The Why

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# Lack of Digital Access in Brownsville

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There are several barriers to internet access in Brownsville

- There are **limited providers of broadband** in the neighborhood, limiting options for the residents
- Lack of computer ownership and digital literacy has also been raised a barrier
- The chief barrier, however, is **cost**
- **Internet broadband and data plans are costly making usage inconsistent, unsustainable or inaccessible**
- Just providing a method of connection is not enough - **reliable, affordable access is the issue**



# Lack of Digital Access in Brownsville

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**57.2%**

**Household with broadband access**  
13% lower than the Brooklyn Average

**Data Plans people are paying for:**

17 % Pay as you go

20 % No data plans

23 % Always run out of data on their phone





# Public Wifi + Brownsville

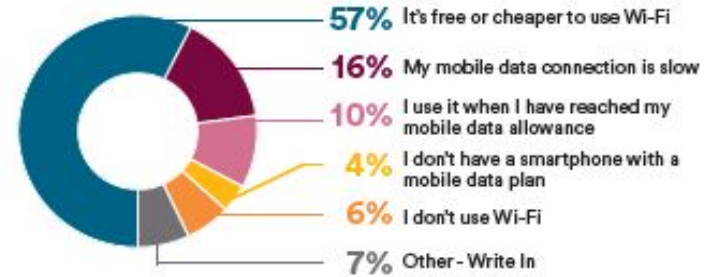
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- Due to the high cost and lack of digital access, Brownsville residents often rely on secondary connections to the internet through Public Wifi
- The main reason being it is a **cheaper or free way** to connect to the internet
- Since residents are using public wifi to access the internet, **security** is the main concern when using these public access points

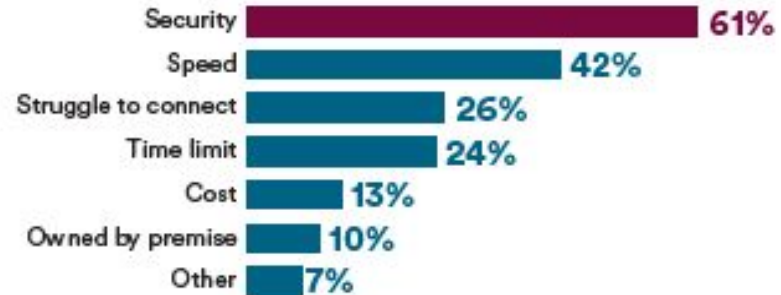


# Public Wifi + Brownsville

Why do you use Public Wi-Fi?

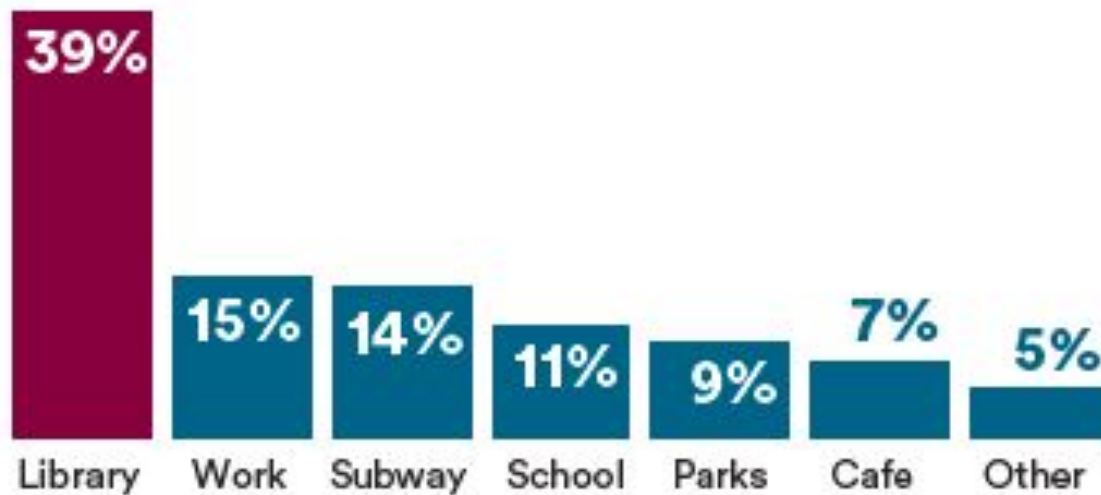


What concerns do residents have when using public Wi-Fi?



# Connecting in Brownsville

**In the last two months, where did you connect to the internet in your neighborhood?**





# Brooklyn Public Library (Brownsville)

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- The public Library is the main internet access point for residents in Brownsville
- Residents use the library wifi and computers for a wide range of reasons including
  - Completing government forms (like NYCHA applications, taxes, census)
  - Resumes, Job applications
  - Email, Social Media, Personal internet usage
  - Games
- Library is "one-stop" resource for the community
- Tremendous amount of trust between patrons and the library staff



## Issues Facing Brooklyn Public Library (Brownsville)

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- The library is under-staffed and lacks resources
- Staff is expected to fill various roles and provide a plethora of information with little support
- The library is expected to fulfill various needs (such as providing digital privacy information or instructions on completing the Census) yet isn't adequately equipped with tools ahead of time to succeed in fulfilling those needs

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# The Solution

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# Solution

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Provide Brooklyn Public Library (with Brownsville as a prototype) with a series of materials that will equip librarians with the skills and knowledge to educate the community around digital privacy and the 2020 Census more efficiently and equitably.



# Solution

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## Materials

- Privacy Kits - For patrons; received directly from Librarians when attempting to use library computers
  - General Online Identity (Persona: 1st time library computer user)
  - Census (Persona: someone using computer library for the Census)
- Conversation Guides - For librarians when interacting with patrons; guide to help answer immediate questions on the Census + Digital Privacy
- Question Board - physical board placed in the library for patrons to pose questions about Census

## Who are we designing for?

- Primary: librarians, technical staff and clerical staff
- By proxy: patrons (residents, school kids, older patrons, shelter patrons)



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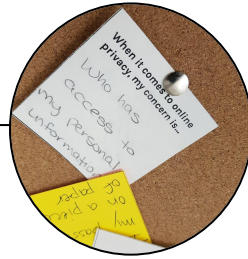
# Solution

**Community  
Patrons**



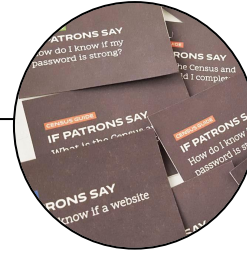
## ONLINE PRIVACY TOOLKIT

When staff are overloaded with questions, especially basic knowledge and services



## COMMUNITY BOARD

When there are questions from the community that are not being heard or discussed



## CONVERSATION GUIDES

When staff have to constantly update their knowledges about new changes and have to remember it

**Librarians  
Library staff**

# Online Privacy Toolkit

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**When librarians and staffs are being overloaded with questions from patrons that sometimes they don't either have time or knowledge to cater to, especially basic knowledge or services at the libraries such as how to access the internet, how to get an email address, how to get a library card.**

For this touchpoint, we propose an online privacy kit that will be given to the patrons upon receiving their library card.

The kit will provide general online privacy and the Census and basic service instructions in the libraries.

Critical and important scenarios are also given to help personalised the kit to different target audiences within the communities.

We also imagine the kit as a library card holder, as many patrons forgot to bring their cards with them when accessing the internet at the library (of which they are required).



# Conversation Guides

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**When librarians and staffs constantly have to update their knowledges about new changes and have to remember it**

For this touchpoint, we propose a conversation guides that assist the the librarians with answering immediate questions of patrons relating to digital privacy and the Census. These content are actually taken from Q&A sections in various BPL-related websites and by putting it in an easy format, it helps to reduce the cognitive load that librarians and staffs have to endure throughout.

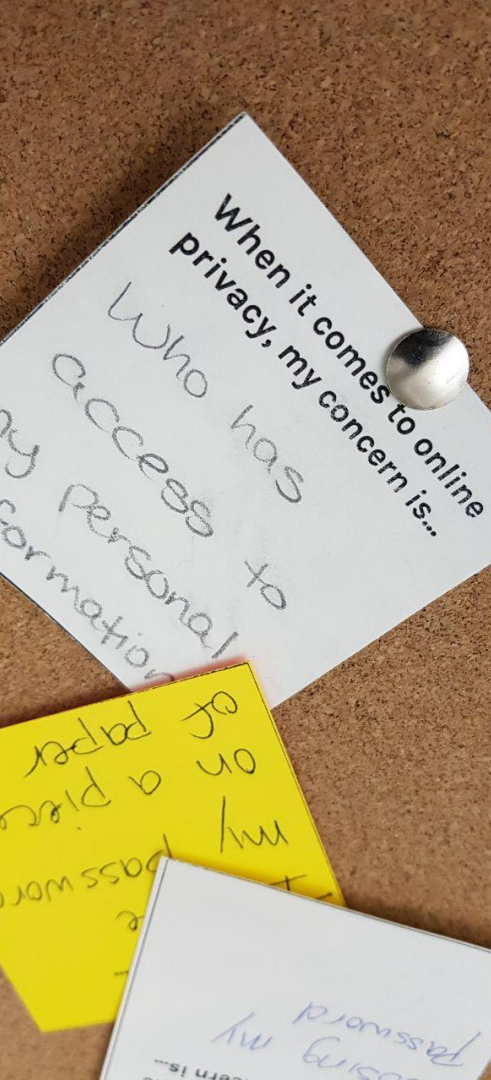


# Community board

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**When there are questions that are not being heard or discussed in the open on the community level**

For this touchpoint, we design a question board that serves as the bridge between the patrons and the librarians. This space is for patrons to voice their concerns, questions and opinions and for librarians to understand the needs of the community. This question board will help to update the content for the conversation guides and the privacy kit.



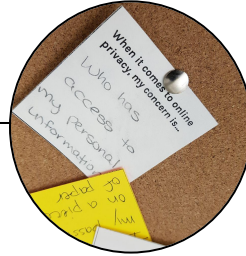
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# Scalability of solutions

**Community  
Patrons**



**ONLINE PRIVACY  
TOOLKIT**



**COMMUNITY  
BOARD**



**CONVERSATION  
GUIDES**

**Librarians  
Library staff**

Although the prototype is based off Brownsville as, all materials are designed with scalability in mind:

- Content is adapted from existing resources captured from BPL sites
- Design is flexible so as to allow easy adaptation in terms of both identity and content

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# Next Steps

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## Project Rollout:

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- **Part of the The Metro Library Council's "Digital Privacy Project" at the Brooklyn Library**
  - **Expansion to other undercounted communities in New York City**
  - **Translation to Top 10 citywide languages**
  - **Incorporated into workshops & trainings of the Digital Privacy Project** - more in depth interaction with the materials and engagement with the Census for the librarians
  - **Ensure project is aligned with Census 2020 developments**
  - **Suggested Budget**
    - **\$1.75 per print**
    - **\$81, 114.25 = Brownsville** *(2018 operating subsidy for the Brooklyn Public Library = \$100.7 million)*
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# Class Deliverables

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# Rubric:

VALUES & GOALS

No.	Value	Goal
1	Create opportunities for education and empowerment around technology and the census	Encourage self-sufficiency as the horizontal (within your neighborhood) and vertical (within yourself and your family) foundation of equity in the long-term for the community,
2	Enrich services in Brownsville with expertise and support around digital safety, data privacy, and Census	Provide access to knowledge
3	Create solid foundational framework around the education and execution of the Census that is equitable	Deep understanding of awareness, behaviors, barriers, and benefits to ensure full civic participation; ensuring the community is being counted in order for its priorities to be met
4	Respect and protect privacy and ensure anonymity of census takers, especially vulnerable communities	Tools and knowledge to protect oneself in terms of policy (citizen status) and technology (online privacy)

THEMES

**Self-responsibility of data**

1. **CONTEXTUALIZE INFORMATION AND MATERIALS FOR BETTER RELEVANCY AND UNDERSTANDING:** Improve current source material being used to promote Digital privacy and 2020 Census through the Libraries for library patrons
2. **NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED FOCUS:** focus on Brownsville as a hotspot of digital inequity among neighborhoods in NYC
3. **MINIMIZE PRIVACY AND SAFETY RISKS:** ensure the vulnerable population is counted while minimizing risks of privacy, safety or misuse of data.
4. **ENRICH CURRENT LIBRARY SERVICES AT BROWNSVILLE:** create more opportunities for library patrons to interact more and learn more with the library about digital safety, data privacy, and Census
5. **EMPOWER LEARNING TO MAKE THEIR OWN CHOICES:** give them the opportunities to learn more about Census and digital equity and make their right decision on Census
6. **CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT FOR DISCUSSION AND DEBATE**
7. **SHAREABLE AND TRANSFERABLE**

# DESIGN PRINCIPLES

No.	Value	Principles
1	Create opportunities for education and empowerment around technology and the census with libraries as the key touchpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeal via creative intervention</li> <li>• Enrich current youth's moments of interaction with the library with opportunities to learn</li> <li>• Create new moments/opportunities to learn at the library or via online service</li> <li>• Materialize, visualize, simplify for ease of learning</li> <li>• Promote the transfer of knowledge through effective training</li> </ul>
2	Enrich library services in Brownsville with expertise and support around digital safety, data privacy and Census	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Survey community to establish general understanding of Census perceptions and where to fill gaps</li> <li>• Identify reliable resources that can be brought in to enrich Library's existing programming around technology and census information</li> </ul>
3	Create solid foundational framework around the education and execution of the Census that is equitable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align library education tools with outside resources to create a reproducible model or curriculum</li> <li>• Suggest sustainable partnerships between the library and Census experts and practitioners</li> </ul>
4	Respect and protect privacy and ensure anonymity of census takers, especially among vulnerable communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine existing tactics and legal enforcement: to get people to really understand their laws and rights (know your options - to fill or not to fill)</li> <li>• General best practices for identifying and ensuring all level of digital literacy (privacy, safety)</li> <li>• Privacy check &amp; balance for the Individual &amp; for the 'Community Tech Web' stakeholders</li> </ul>

## **STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS**

- Samantha Graslee (Mayor's Office)
- Meghan Mcdermott (Mozilla Foundation, Metro Library Council)
- Hanna Sun (Digital Privacy Project)
- Paul Levy (Brownsville Library)
- Cypurr (Digital privacy trainings)
- Melissa Morrone (Brooklyn Public Library)
- Nicole Anand (The Engine Room)
- Quardean Lewis Allen (Made In Brownsville)
- Greta Byrum (Digital Equity Lab, Metro Library Council)
- Maya Wiley (Digital Equity Lab)