

Census Digital Readiness Assessment

Census Counts Digital Organizing Training Series

Overview

This document serves to help you and your organization assess your digital readiness for Get Out the Count (GOTC). Following the completion of this assessment, you will have explicitly outlined:

1. Who your digital audience is;
2. An organizational assessment of your skills, capacity and budget;
3. An assessment of your existing digital organizing tools;
4. New digital tools to invest in for maximum effectiveness; and,
5. Where you may or may not need a consultant's help.

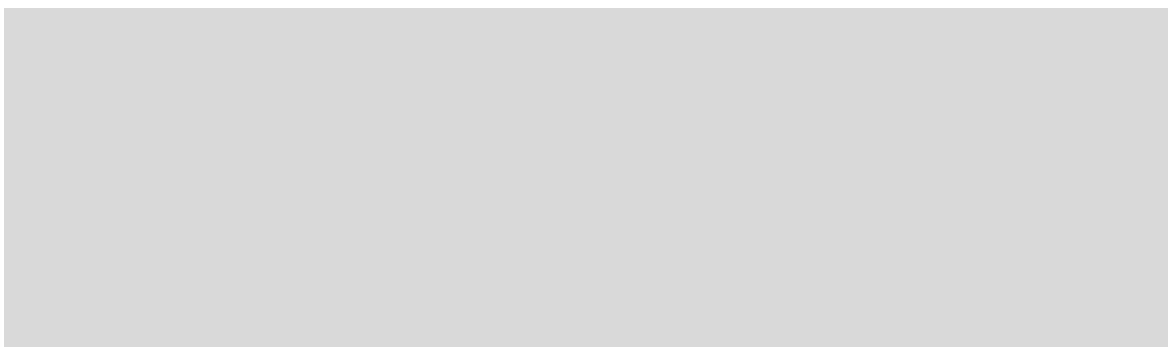
Note: This document is best utilized after completing the Census Counts online training: [Assessing Your Digital Readiness for GOTC](#). Go to CensusCounts.Org/digital-organizing-tools to watch our full training on digital readiness and the concepts referred to in this document.

Basics

Before you dive into the weeds, let's get aligned on who you're trying to reach online, and how you'll be trying to reach them through digital organizing. Reminder: everything should be tied to your overall census GOTC goals.

Audience

First, who are you mobilizing to complete the census? Who is your hard to count community?



Your Community Online

To effectively engage and reach your community, you must meet people where they are – and that includes where they are online. It’s critical to understand where your community is online, so that your digital organizing is as effective and customized as possible.

First, use your own **knowledge**, experience and understanding of your community to determine what online use looks like for your targeted constituencies.

Second, begin to do **research** to build on your experience and assumptions. We know that our lives are increasingly online. Many, many people use the internet, particularly among our hard to count communities – and this usage has grown substantially since the 2010 census. For example, take a look at the following internet usage numbers on Latinx and Black communities in 2010 and 2019.

	Latinx Communities	Black Communities
Internet Use <i>(% of US adults who use the internet)</i>	2019: 86% 2010: 68%	2019: 85% 2010: 68%
Social Media <i>(% of US adults who use at least one social media site)</i>	2019: 70% 2010: 41%	2019: 69% 2010: 40%
Broadband <i>(% of US adults who have broadband in the home)</i>	2019: 61% 2010: 49%	2019: 66% 2010: 51%

Source: [Pew Research Center US Adults Online Fact Sheets](#)

Build on this general information to learn more about your specific hard to count constituencies. Where can you do this research? There are many research institutions that study internet accessibility and usage in the United States, such as:

U.S. Census Bureau

Pew Research Center

Gallup

Federal Communications Commission (FCC)

Additional news outlets and organizations (NPR, New York Times, etc.)

We also highly recommend talking to people in your community to learn directly from them.

Which social media platforms are most frequently used by your target audience? Are there groups that your audience is particularly active in?

Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, etc.

Your Knowledge



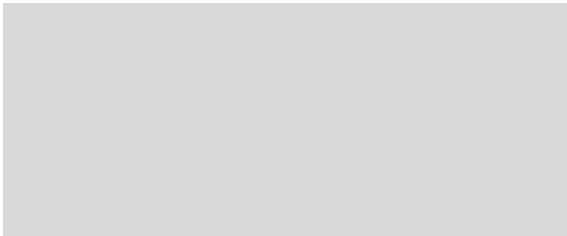
Additional Research



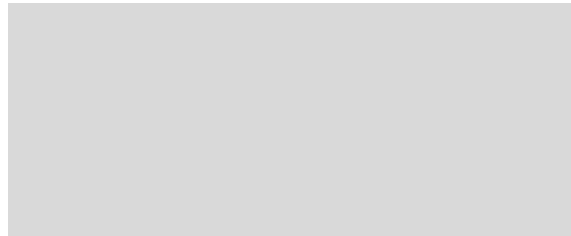
Where does your community get their news and information? Which websites are widely used and referenced?

News sites, Twitter, YouTube, etc.

Your Knowledge



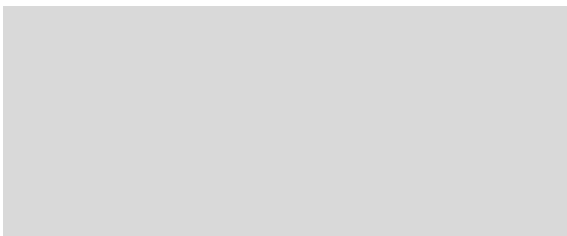
Additional Research



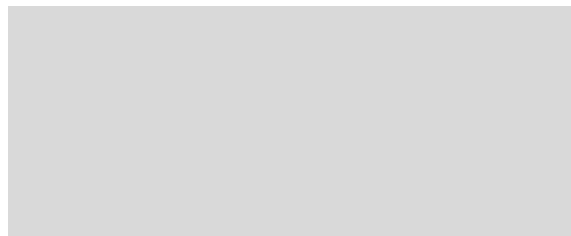
What communication tools do people regularly use?

WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook Messenger, etc.

Your Knowledge



Additional Research















Organizational Assessment

Next, let's get into your organization's skills, capacity, and budget for digital organizing.

Skills

Begin with skills – the knowledge your staff will need to do digital organizing work. **Check the skills needed that a staffer or volunteer at your organization has and can use, and identify that staffer or volunteer on the right.***







Don't recognize a skill? Check out our **Assessing Your Readiness for GOTC training at [CensusCounts.org](https://www.censuscounts.org) to learn more about digital organizing skills.*

			Staffer(s) or Volunteer(s) with Skill
		Writing <i>(to reach your audience)</i>	
		Design/Creative	
		Checklisting	
		Technical skills <i>(For each platform)</i>	
		Targeting	
		Data Management	

If your organization doesn't have some of these skills (or if basic skills need to be enhanced), there are many ways for your team to build them. Here are few categories and examples of where you can build skills for digital organizing:

Category	Example
On-the-job training and skill sharing	➔ Your colleagues and connections
In-person trainings	➔ National hub networks (i.e. State Voices, Leadership Conference) meetings
Webinars	➔ Census Counts webinars and videos
MOOCs (massive open online courses)	➔ Lynda.com, EdX.com

Below are a few specific examples of where you can build digital organizing skills. Circle any of the skills that your organization needs to build and select one of the options, or write down your own ideas on where you organization can build skills.

	Skills	Example 1	Example 2	Your Ideas
	Writing	LinkedIn Learning Lab	Communicaid: Writing with Impact	
	Design/Creative	HackDesign	Canva Design School	
	Checklisting	How to Build a Checklist	Example from Campaign Monitor	
	Technical Skills	Udemy: Digital Advertising & Marketing 101	Census Counts foundational videos	
	Targeting	Facebook Blueprint	Developing Your Hard to Count List training	
	Data Management	VANual: the VAN training manual	Lynda.com: Learning Excel Online	

Capacity

In order to understand your staff and/or volunteers' current capacity to do census digital organizing work effectively, start tracking your staff's time. To begin, how many people work on your team?

Total Number of Staff

**Number of Staff Working on
Census**

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Now, brainstorm ways you can expand and/or identify your capacity for digital organizing for GOTC.

Does your organization have staff that are solely focused on digital? Can you hire additional staff?

If not, what is the digital experience of your organizing, communications, or data staff? Could they fill that digital organizing gap? Could you delegate these responsibilities to a reliable volunteer?

Do your existing staff members or volunteers have the time and resources to do this digital organizing work?

Lastly, assess how much time your staff can devote to digital organizing census work. *Note: this is only an exercise to help you understand your organization's capacity and whether or not you may need to make major adjustments – guesstimates are welcome!*

Name of Staffer or Volunteer	Hours per Week on Census	X	Percent of Time on Digital Organizing	=	Total Weekly Hours
		X		=	
		X		=	
		X		=	
		X		=	
		X		=	
		X		=	
Total staff hours per week on digital organizing for GOTC:					

Budget

Assess your budget to better understand the extent of census work you can realistically achieve. First, let's get straight on the basics.*

Total Budget	Census Budget	Digital Organizing Budget
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

**These can be estimates, but it's good to get a sense of what you can spend before assessing and selecting new costs.*

Now, brainstorm ways you can creatively and efficiently use your resources to execute digital organizing tactics.

What do you need to spend money on? How many people are you trying to reach?

If there are no additional funds to allocate, what are you currently doing that can be repurposed for or inclusive of census digital organizing?

Where can you engage volunteers in your work online? Where can you use free tools?

Tools

Digital tools are mechanisms to efficiently execute your digital organizing tactics, which are a part of your broader organizing strategy. Your tools should always directly service your tactics. Below is a comprehensive list of types of tools you can use for digital organizing – but know that **no organization should plan on using tools from each type.**

Run through our checklist of types of tools for digital organizing, and select the tools that you need for your digital organizing tactics. Then, match your selected types of tools to how you plan on using the tool to the right.*

Don't recognize a type of tool? Check out our **Assessing Your Readiness for GOTC training at [CensusCounts.org](https://www.censuscounts.org) for our review of tools available for digital organizing.*

Type of Tools	How You'll Use the Tool
Media + Messaging tools	
<input type="checkbox"/> Digital ad targeting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Digital ad buying	
<input type="checkbox"/> Email mailers	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social listening	
<input type="checkbox"/> Social networks	
Data Analytics + Modeling tools	
<input type="checkbox"/> Content testing & optimization	
<input type="checkbox"/> CRM & data management	
<input type="checkbox"/> Data aggregation & mapping	
<input type="checkbox"/> Modeling & targeting	
Community Engagement tools	
<input type="checkbox"/> Mass texting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Peer-to-peer texting	
<input type="checkbox"/> Relational organizing tool	
<input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer management	

Assessing Your Current Tools

Now that you've outlined the types of digital tools that you will need to reach your audience and mobilize your community to complete the census, let's review your existing tools. Complete the following brainstorming questions below – note that each question matches a category from your organizational assessment, and you should refer to that section to write your answers.

What tools do you have? Do they match how you plan to reach your audience online?

Your digital organizing tactics

How does your staff use your tools now, and how do they plan to use the tools for GOTC?

Skills

How do your tools impact your staff's time and resources?

Capacity

What specific value do your tools bring? Are your tools proven to generate concrete results to justify the cost?

Budget



Selecting New Tools

Finally, let's assess how you should be selecting new tools for census digital organizing. You might need to replace your existing tools or select new tools. Complete the following brainstorming questions below – note that each question matches a category from your organizational assessment, and you should refer to that section to write your answers.

Which tools match up with the skill set of your team?

Skills

How will this tool save you time and resources?

Capacity

How much are you able to spend on this tool?

Budget

Choosing Your Tools

You now should have a concrete understanding of what types of tools your organization needs for your census digital organizing program. **Now – it's time to select your tools!**

Your next step is to reach out to potential tools that match the above assessment.

If you're looking for specific tools recommendations...

For examples of successful tool integration in digital organizing for the 2020 census, check out our partners' work at CensusCounts.org/digital-organizing-tools.

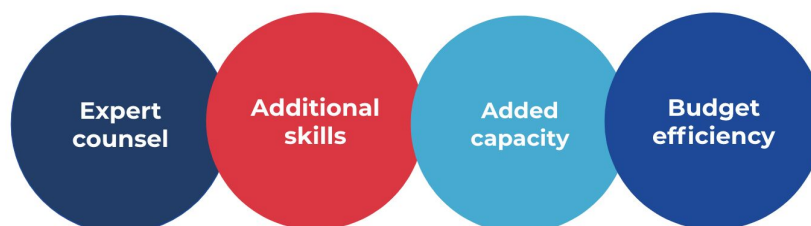
Other organizations have conducted comprehensive assessments of available tools for digital organizing. For a list of options of specific tools, Acronym's digital tools assessment is available at digital-tools.anotheracronym.org.

Add any notes you have on choosing specific tools here:

Consultants and Vendors

You've almost completed the full digital readiness assessment! After running through your audience, organizational abilities, and tools, you may have discovered gaps in your future digital organizing census work. Consultants and vendors are one option to fill that gap.

Working with outside consultants and vendors isn't for every organization or every situation. While most organizations will operate without them, consultants and vendors can help in the following areas:



Note: It's crucial that your consultants and vendors understand the cultural sensitivities and realities of your organization's audience, especially with so much fear and distrust associated with the census. When selecting a consultant or vendor, cultural competence should be something you evaluate for and prioritize in your selection of a consultant or vendor.

Does your organization need an outside consultant or vendor? Write down your thoughts below on where your organization's gap is and how a consultant or vendor could fill in.

Congratulations on completing the Census Digital Readiness Assessment!

Summarize your next steps below:

Audience	
Skills	
Capacity	
Budget	
Tools	
Consultants	

For more on digital organizing for the 2020 census: go to
CensusCounts.org/digital-organizing-tools.