The Hard to Count Score

In order to maximize the impact of 2020 Get out the Count (GOTC) activities, The Movement Co-op (TMC), in partnership with Catalist, Civis Analytics, TargetSmart, and Analyst Institute, produced a new model targeting Hard to Count (HTC) populations. The purpose of this model is to determine the hardest to count census tracts in a state in order for an organization to target their program and to allocate their resources towards communicating with HTC populations.

How the HTC Score was Created

The HTC model incorporates three types of data commonly used in past GOTC efforts.

- The **U.S. Census low response score (LRS)**, which is already used in tools like the HTC Map. "The Low Response Score (LRS) is a metric developed by the Census Bureau to classify geographic areas according to their propensity to self-respond in surveys and censuses. Simply, the LRS is the predicted mail non-response rate. The score is updated yearly and included in the Planning Database. The higher the LRS value, the harder-to-count that area is."[1]
- The **U.S. Census ACS self-response rate**, which is used in tools like the Census ROAM tool. The self-response rate measures the proportion of responses to the census via the internet, mail, or Telephone Questionnaire Assistance (TQA) of all mailable addresses.[2]
- A **new metric that TMC developed** which is the difference between the ACS estimated population of a tract and the average number of persons found in the TargetSmart and Catalist voter files in each tract.

Utilizing current census tools and adjusting for gaps in current data sets, The Movement Co-Op's HTC score allows organizations to focus outreach resources on tracts that could deserve higher priority based on the additional information provided by the score.

How to use the HTC Score

This HTC score is a **geographic** model that targets census tracts. *It's important to note that it is for targeting census tracts and not individual people.* It's a "rank order" model that is calculated for each state. The census tract with a score of 100 in each state is the one the model thinks will be hardest to count and the census tract with a 0 in each state is the least hard to count. Because of this, the HTCS can only be compared within a state and **cannot** be compared across states.

What you'll need:
1. The **Census Hard to Count Explorer** OR **National Census Tracts Master Spreadsheet**
2. A State Voices VAN login

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[1] https://www2.census.gov/geo/pdfs/maps-data/maps/roam/ROAM_FAQ.pdf
[2] https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/topics/research/ACS_Self_Response_FAQ.pdf

National Census Tracts Master Spreadsheet: The National Census Tracts Master Spreadsheet provides a Hard-to-Count Score (HTCS) for every census tract in the country. We recommend you make a copy of the spreadsheet in order to filter for your specific state/geographic region. The census tracts are each scored with a number between 0-100. The census tract with a score of 100 in each state is the one the model thinks will be hardest to count and the census tract with a 0 in each state is the least hard to count. ***Zip codes have been provided for each census tract to assist with digital targeting.***

- **Census Hard to Count Explorer:** Utilizing the data from the National Census Tracts Master Spreadsheet, TMC has created a Hard to Count Score Explorer dashboard to easily identify hard to count census tracts plus other key factors for targeting your census GOTC effort. The Hard to Count Score Explorer (pictured below) allows someone to filter by the metrics they care most about and export the census tracts that meet the criteria they set.
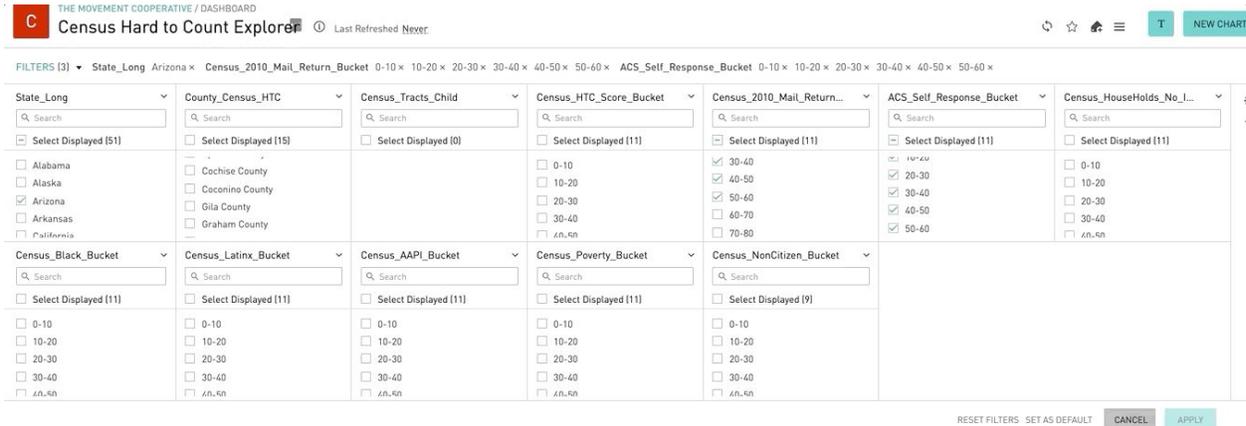
Pulling Lists for Digital
You can target your digital advertising programs off of two approaches with this HTC modeled data. First, you can pull the list of zip codes that have the highest HTC scores; the range of zip codes will be dependent on the budget. This zip code targeting can be combined with demographic targeting attributes such as race, income, language settings and others.

If you want to target with a more granular approach, you can use the same method for pulling lists for doors/mailboxes and match these lists to digital platforms with platforms such as Factual, LiveRamp, or Adobe. This allows you to target individual households based on the HTC scores. This targeting can also be combined with demographic attributes such race, income, language setting, and others.

Pulling Lists for Doors/Mailboxes
In order to create lists for door-to-door canvassing or for mail, you'll need to identify the list of census tracts you'd like to target and then log in to State Voices' VAN in order to create the list.

Step 1: Outside of VAN, identify your HTC tracts from the NCTMS. Once ID'd, log in to VAN to create your list.

Step 2: In the create a list menu, click registered active, registered inactive, new address (melissa data), unregistered, and applicant statuses.
> *Don't use Dropped as it contains bad data.*

Step 3: Click "Add a Step" and remove Caucasian folks.
> *When creating Census lists using Melissa Data, keep in mind that the address data doesn't have model scores appended to it. Race and ethnicity in the VAN are modeled pieces of data, so if you narrow your list to a particular race or ethnicity, you would be eliminating the Melissa Address data from your list.*

Step 4: Choose Counties (under Home Districts). This will bring up a drop down to select the tracts.

Step 5: In order to select multiple tracts at once, click on the blue hyperlinked "Census Tracts". Otherwise, just select a single tract from the drop down menu.

Step 6: Run you search! You'll be taken to the next step in the process which is deciding what to do with your list; sending it to turf cutter for walk lists, exporting a mail lists, creating a virtual phone bank with the phone numbers you have (remember that the new address data doesn't have any person level information including but not limited to: names, phone numbers, emails, etc.)

How to find census tracts in VAN

Key Definitions for using the National Census Tracts Master Spreadsheet

Column Header	Description
fips_state	State FIPS code
fips_county	County FIPS code
fips_tract	Tract FIPS code
fips_state_county	Code that combines state and county FIPS codes
gidtr	Code that combines state, county, and tract FIPS codes

state_name	State name
county_name	County name
zip_code	Zip code associated with the census tract
htcs	Hard-to-count score within state (scale: 0 to 100)
htcs_staterank	HTCS rank within state
lrs_staterank	LRS rank within state
rankchange	Change in rank when based on LRS to HTCS
lrs	Low response score (LRS) from Census Planning Database
acs_self_response_rate	Self-response rate to American Community Survey
vf_pct_diff_adjusted	Percentage difference between voter file population count and American Community Survey estimate of adult population living in households
acs_pop_adjusted	Estimated adult population living in households from American Community Survey
vf_pop	Total population for tract from voter files (average of Catalist and TargetSmart total populations for tract)
cen_2010_pop_all	Total population for tract from Census 2010
acs_pop_all	Estimated total population for tract from American Community Survey
acs_hh_count	Household count for tract from American Community Survey
cen_2010_mail_return_rate	Census 2010 mail return rate
pct_hisp	Percent of tract identifying as Hispanic from American Community Survey
pct_asian	Percent of tract identifying as Asian from American Community Survey
pct_afam	Percent of tract identifying as African American from American Community Survey
pct_native	Percent of tract identifying as Native American from American

	Community Survey
pct_white	Percent of tract identifying as White from American Community Survey
pct_eng_vw_span	Percent of tract's housing units where Spanish is the household language and no adult speaks English "very well", from American Community Survey
pct_seniors	Percent of tract aged 65 or above from American Community Survey
pct_poverty	Percent of tract classified as being below the poverty line from American Community Survey
pct_pop_disabled	Percent of tract with at least one disability from American Community Survey
pct_non_us_cit	Percent of tract who are not US citizens from American Community Survey
pct_hhd_no_internet	Percent of tract's households without internet access from American Community Survey
pct_renter_occp_hu	Percent of tract's housing units occupied by non-owner (i.e. renter) from American Community Survey
pct_pop_18_24	Percent of tract aged 18-24 at time of interview from American Community Survey
pct_diff_hu_1yr_ago	Percent of tract that changed primary residence within the last year from American Community Survey

Thank you!

For more information about The Movement Co-Op's Hard to Count score, please contact Sonya Reynolds (sonya@movementcooperative.org) or Bianca Mounce (bianca@movementcooperative.org).

For more information about how to pull lists from the State Voices VAN, please contact Elena Langworth (elena@statevoices.org) or Angela Tombazzi (angela@statevoices.org).