

January 16, 2018

EveryoneOn respectfully submits these comments in response to the United States Census Bureau's request for public comments and feedback on the American Community Survey

Methods

About EveryoneOn

EveryoneOn is a national nonprofit creating socioeconomic opportunity by connecting people to the Internet. Since 2012, we have connected more than 500,000 low-income people in 48 states to free and affordable home Internet, devices, and digital literacy training. We have scaled nationally while engaging on a community level due to our three-part approach: 1) working with Internet Service Providers to craft and deploy low-cost offers; 2) creating a best-in-class digital platform that families use to access affordable internet service, devices, and digital literacy training; 3) and maintaining a nationwide nexus of partners across sectors who work locally in communities. No other organization brings together such a collection of assets to bridge the digital divide (learn more: everyoneon.org).

Serving as a facilitator between low-income communities and Internet service providers, device partners, and digital literacy trainers; we also work with enrollment partners (nonprofits, schools, and other community-based organizations) across the country to reach eligible families with affordable internet offers and resources.

Recommendations

EveryoneOn recommends the following regarding the American Community Survey's Computer and Internet Use Survey Methods:

Assess the digital literacy component of adoption and non-adoption

Gaining data on the digital literacy of adopters will complete the three legs of the digital inclusion stool alongside devices and connectivity.

Delve deeper into the respondent's ease with digital tasks. Obtaining this data on digital literacy among non-adopters can inform digital inclusion advocates' work in digital literacy to drive connectivity adoptions.

Identify the Internet Use Case that is an Adoption Tipping Point:

Gauge what online activities are the strongest motivators behind unconnected folks' desire to connect to the Internet.

Additionally, we would be interested in learning more about the tipping point - where does desire to access something online intersect with and supersede the number one barrier to adoption: cost. This would enable us to establish an equitable price point. We would take into strong consideration the nexus between speed and data sufficiency.

The current understanding is that for low-income people in the United States, around \$10 a month is an affordable cost. It would be extremely helpful if the Supplement could either provide another proofpoint or a correction to this understanding. Additionally, the field of digital inclusion doesn't have as strong a grasp on what price points prevent other socioeconomic brackets from purchasing Internet, and the Supplement can provide an invaluable service to the field in determining these price barriers across the board.

Determine data sufficiency of existing subscriptions. This can help set a baseline – how much data adopters need and use should inform the baseline for broadband assistance: the data non-adopters receive through assistance should match what adopters need.

Inquire further about the use of Internet for educational purposes and resources:

The Survey should ask about using the Internet for educational purposes and resources beyond the existing question about online classes or job training.

Add a question about using the internet to access or use government benefit programs:

The Survey should seek to learn if people are accessing federal or state-level social benefits online

Conclusion

EveryoneOn recommends the following as part of the November 2017 CPS Computer and Internet Use Supplement:

Assess the digital literacy component of adoption and non-adoption

Identify the internet use case that is an adoption tipping point

Obtain greater detail on the lower price at which non-adopters would adopt

Ask adopters about 1) affordability and 2) data sufficiency of internet plans

Inquire further about the use of internet for educational purposes and resources

Add a question about using the internet to access or use government benefit programs

We at EveryoneOn advocate for a Computer and Internet Use section of the American Community Survey that aims to obtain detailed and specific data on reasons behind non-adoption, to measure digital literacy, and to identify price points that would catalyze the closure of the digital divide. The American Community Survey should also better assess educational internet use and assess the internet as a tool for connecting people to government benefits. This presents an incredible opportunity to record proofpoints for the digital divide and to provide data that leads to actionable solutions to close the digital divide, and we hope to use these course-altering data in future digital inclusion work.

Respectfully submitted,

Chike Aguh

Chief Executive Officer

EveryoneOn