

Educate Texas - Census 2020 Phone Canvassing Review

Introduction

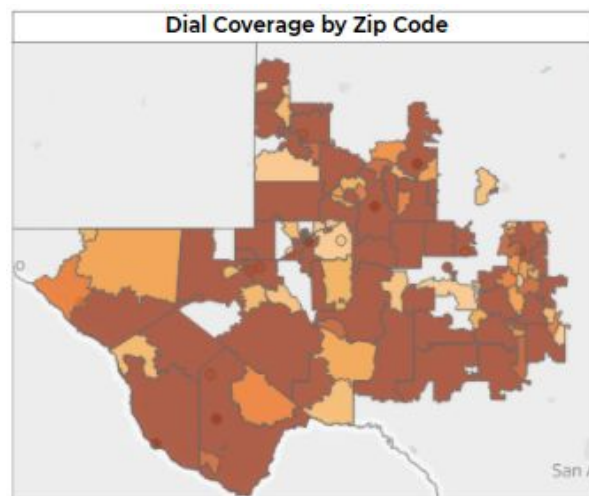
Over the course of September, Educate Texas & the Shiftsmart Flex Contact Center co-designed & executed a rapid Census 2020 canvassing effort across Texas, including a targeted effort with the Abilene Library Consortium. This effort served as an alternative to traditional in-person canvassing methods due to COVID-19. The Shiftsmart team leveraged an experienced team of ~350 distributed calling agents, predominantly using Texas-based workers. Over the course of September, the size and scope of the overall program expanded by ~8x as a result of additional support from donors from across the state. This resulted in rapid scaling from ~10k calls per day up to a max of ~80k calls per day in the final week of the effort.

Overall, the objectives of the canvassing efforts were to:

1. Call households across Texas, with specific attention to Abilene and surrounding areas
2. Make contact with as many households as possible
3. Educate & inform households of the importance of completing the census
4. Understand relative engagement with the Census across Texas regions
5. Drive intent to complete the census and direct federal funding to state of Texas

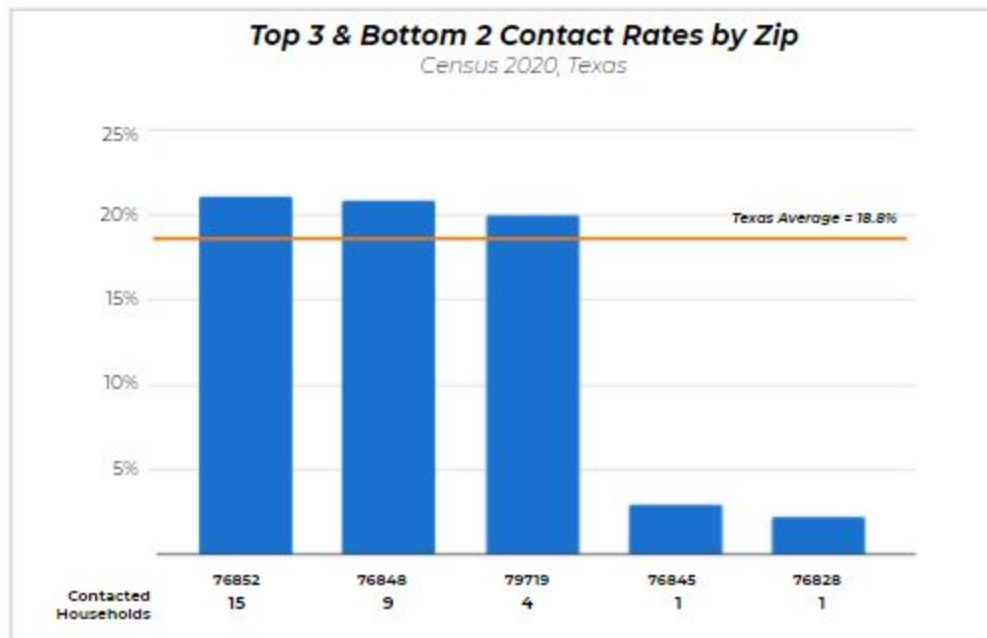
Key Results - Abilene Library Consortium

1) Scale of Campaign: across the full campaign, 40k outbound calls to 20k unique leads in 130 zip codes were made in the West and Northwest Texas regions. A portion of these were focused on zip codes provided by ALC.



2) Contact Rate: the overall contact rate was 10.4%, which translated into making contact with 4.1k households. To reach this population of households required ~525 total hours of dialing. This translates into 8 contacts made per hour of dialing. When compared to traditional door-to-door canvassing, which accomplishes ~4 contacts made per hour¹, the dialing effort was able to reach 2x more contacts.

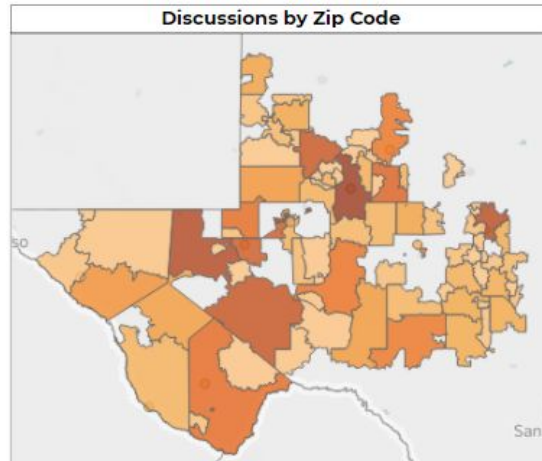
Of zip codes with more than 10 leads dialed, 76852 (21%), 76848 (21%), and 79719 (20%) had the highest contact rates while 76828 (2.2%) and 76845 (2.9%) had the lowest.



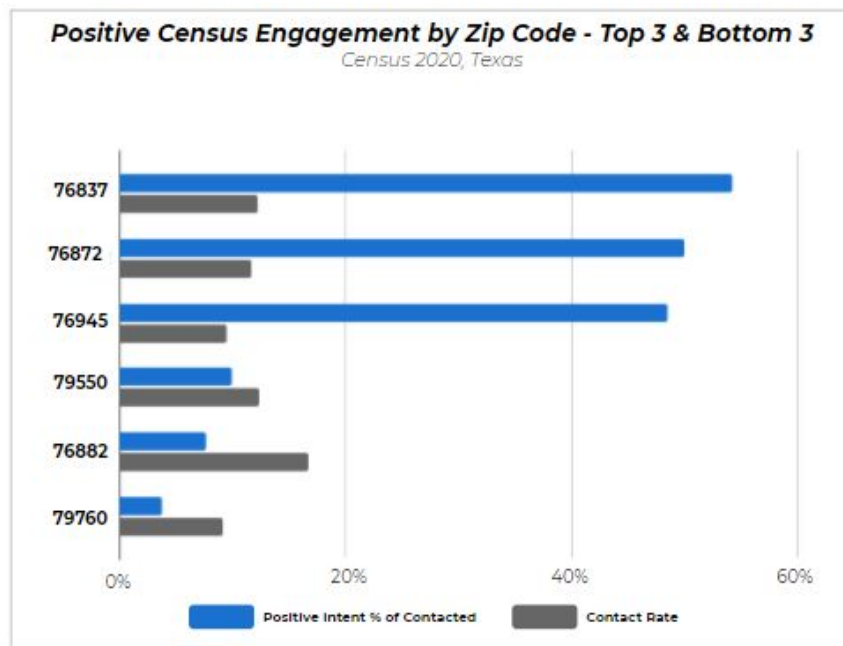
Note: Contact is defined as any call that resulted in an answer or leaving a personal & informative voicemail.

3) Informative and Positive Discussions: The dialing effort was able to communicate information on the benefits of completing the Census and capture information on willingness to participate. Of the 4.1k total contacted households, 2.3k of them (56%) were informative or positive discussions regarding the Census. Informative discussions were those that provided basic FAQ information on why completing the census is important (1.3k total or 56% of all discussions). Positive discussions were those that indicated a positive commitment around participation of the census (1.0k total or 44% of all discussions).

¹ [Re:power / Wellstone Volunteer Voter Contact Formula](#)



4) Census Engagement Across Regions: Despite having an average contact rate (10.4%) lower than the overall Texas average of 18.8%, the ALC calls showed a high engagement on the Census with 24% of contacted calls resulting in a positive indication of census completion.



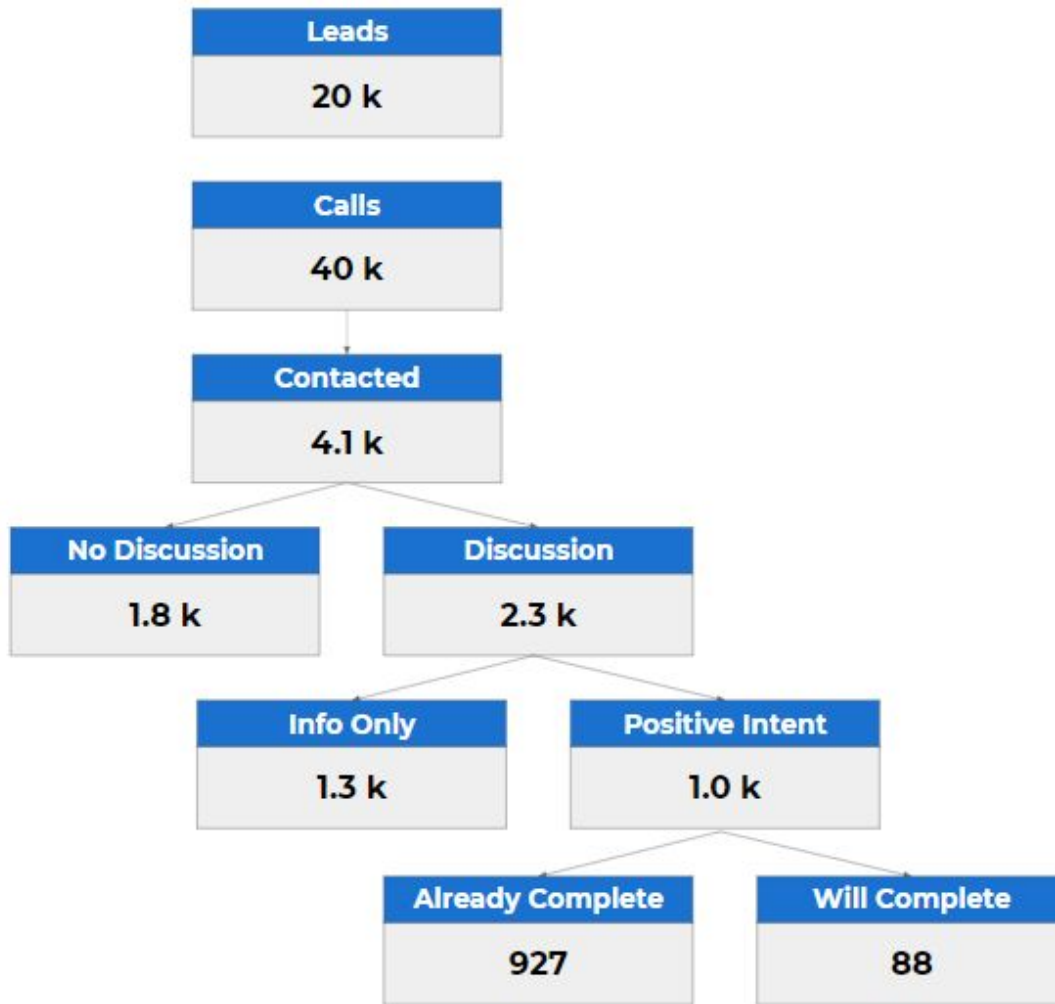
5) Commitments to Complete Census: Of the 2.3k positive discussions, 1.0k (44%) provided positive intentions towards Census completion. When broken down further, 927 of these discussions yielded an indication that they had already completed the Census. There were an additional 88 discussions leading to a commitment of completing the Census before the deadline. Based on a conservative estimate of census-driven federal funding in Texas of \$11.6k per capita² over 10 years, the phone canvassing has the potential to yield ~\$1m of incremental federal funding to support Texas if these 88 discussions result in a newly completed Census.

² [Counting for Dollars 2020: The Role of the Decennial Census in the Geographic Distribution of Federal Funds](#)

Conclusion & Recommendations

Despite the challenging circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, phone canvassing proved to be a safe and effective method to reach all areas of the state of Texas, including Abilene and West Texas zip codes. Thanks to funding support from Educate Texas donors, the canvassing effort was able to make 929k calls across 394k leads across the entire state of Texas, resulting in an opportunity to yield \$40m of additional funding to benefit households. The Abilene Library Consortium's effort alone resulted in \$1m of estimated incremental funding.

Appendix A: Breakdown of Calling Campaign in ALC Areas





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