

Key Messages from the webinar:

SAYS WHO?

ASKING & USING DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS



Originally recorded on January 31, 2024

To watch it again, visit <https://tobaccoeval.ucdavis.edu/webinar-archive>



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This resource

- Defines what demographic questions are
- Identifies variables you might collect information about
- Illustrates how to explain why you need the information
- Asks how your project might use the information

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What are demographic questions?

“The number and characteristics of people in a particular area or from a particular group”

“Statistics that describe populations and their characteristics”


“Measures of the characteristics of, or changes to, a population”

“Data about certain attributes among groups of people”

“Socio-economic information expressed statistically”

“Statistical traits and qualities of populations to contextualize data”

“Population-based factors”


 describes groups, not individuals
 something that is counted, measured
 not just about race/ethnicity, it's about any trait of a group of people...

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Only what gets measured gets changed



Invisible

NOT asking demographic questions can have serious funding, legal and other policy implications. Groups that are not counted are made invisible.



Missing

There are no questions on the US Census that count LGBTQ folks. Then how can the government ensure they are getting access to the rights, protections and services they need?

Asian/Pacific Islanders appear to have the lowest tobacco product use rates of all populations.

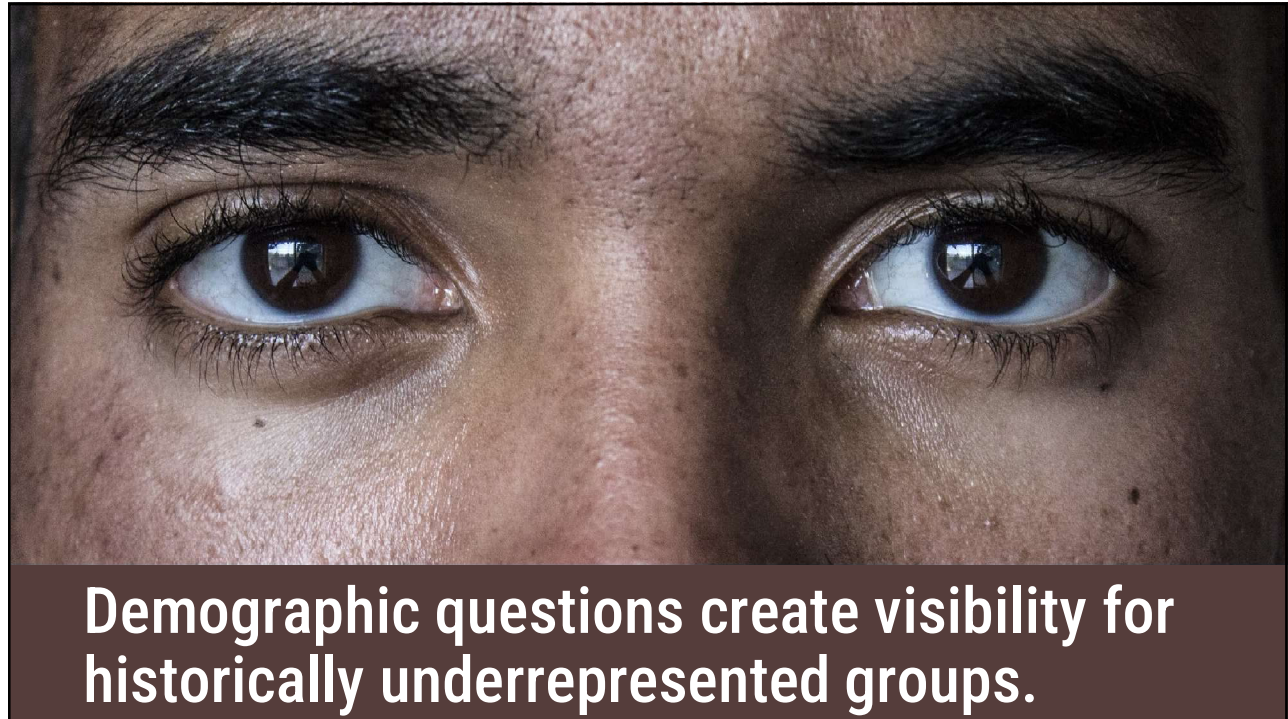


Hiding

But disaggregated data shows highest tobacco use rates are among NHOPI youths at 45% compared to 16% for Asians

When population-specific data is aggregated into a single category, the disparities between groups are hidden and their specific needs remain unaddressed.

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Demographic questions create visibility for historically underrepresented groups.

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Required by law

Whenever collecting **ANY demographic data**, CA law requires public health-funded agencies to also ask about sexual orientation, gender identity, and the specific ethnicities of Asian and Pacific Islanders.

More information at:
<https://tobaccoeval.ucdavis.edu/california-laws-about-demographic-questions>

A photograph of the California State Capitol building in Sacramento, California. The building is a large, white, neoclassical structure with a prominent dome and a portico supported by columns. The sky is clear and blue.

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The main reason to collect demographic data is to

inform your campaign efforts

Based on your objective, asking demographic questions can help you understand who is in your sample and how respondents with different characteristics may have responded differently from each other.



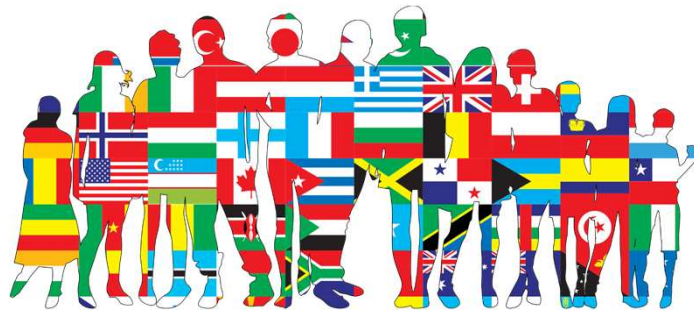
<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/>

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Asking demographic and reporting disaggregated results really matters!

The data allows programs and decision-makers to develop strategies and policies that address a community's most pressing needs.

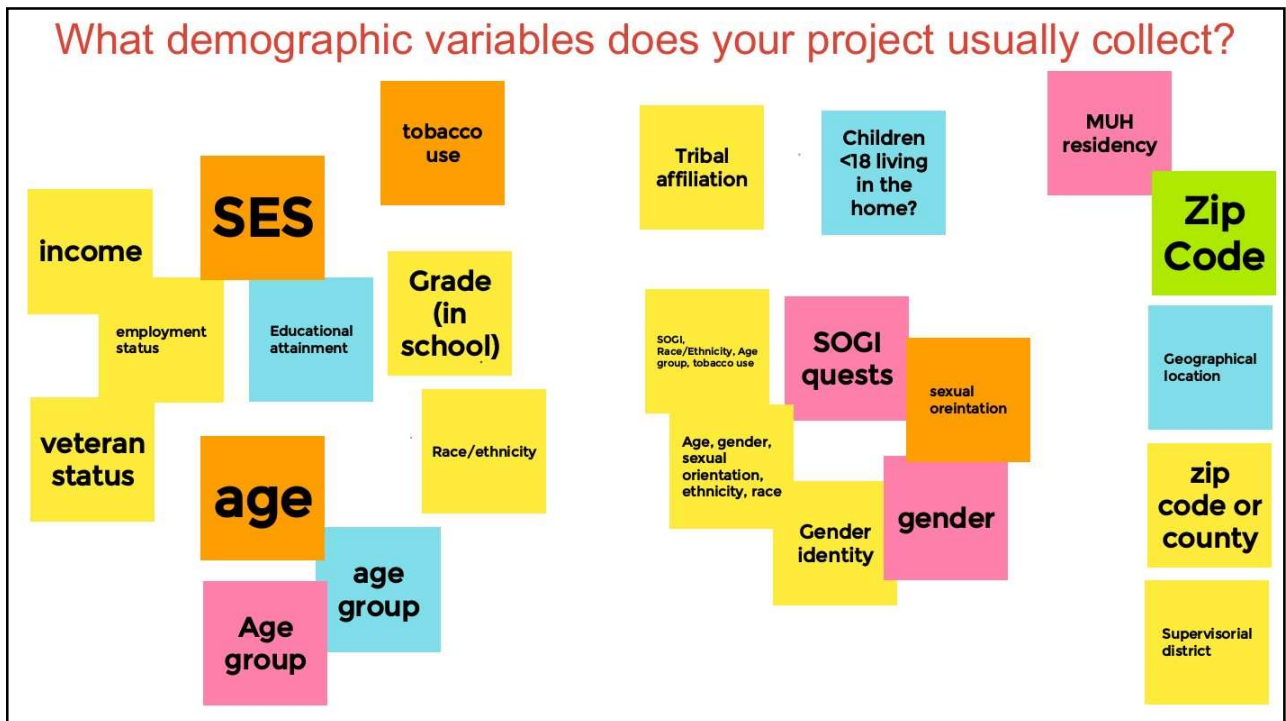
Because of this, it's crucial for projects to do all they can to obtain representative samples of meaningful size.



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Choose strategically


Beyond the more commonly used variables, think strategically:


- What information will be persuasive to those undecided votes on the city council or board of supervisors?
- What issues or segments of the population do they care about most?
- How could you use demographic information about your community to link to issues the policymaker pays attention to?


For a list of potential variables see:
https://tobaccoeval.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk5301/files/inline-files/0000_DemographicQuestions_InstESSENTIALS_TCEC_2023.pdf


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Discuss with your team

 How will you know if your sample is representative of the various voices and experiences in the community? What variables and categories need to be included?

 How can you capture and document the views of historically underrepresented groups? What characteristics or traits can identify them?

 Which variables can inform and tailor messaging and implementation strategies?

 Is your audience interested or influenced by any groups with specific demographic characteristics?

 Think about your analysis plan. What question formats and response categories will allow you to make meaningful comparisons that can inform your implementation strategies?

RESOURCES

TCEC's End Use Strategizing tool https://tobaccoeval.ucdavis.edu/sites/g/files/dgvnsk5301/files/inline-files/End%20Use%20Strategizing%20Packet_rev_4-3-23%20%281%29_0.docx

General guidelines on asking for demographic information
https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjx2ofW6PaDAXUJUUIHUIKCikQFnoECB4QAQ&url=https%3A%2F%2Fisotl.sites.olt.ubc.ca%2Ffiles%2F2019%2F03%2F2Feio-general_guidelines.pdf&usq=AOvVaw2BVoXB26vaS0VBq3rTPxQB&opi=89978449

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SCENARIOS

To choose the best strategies for reaching and educating the community...

Which demographic variables could be useful?

AGE could tie in assumptions about their communication preferences or use of social media platforms

PREFERRED LANGUAGE so that materials are in the language your audience understands

EDUCATION OR LITERACY LEVELS so that materials will be written at the appropriate level for their reading level and comprehension

OCCUPATION could provide insight into their data literacy and access to data

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SCENARIOS

Using a registration form to select participants for focus groups...

When forming focus groups, it's often a good idea to select participants that share some similar characteristics. The literature indicates that people tend to talk more when they feel like they have things in common with others in the group. Even in instances when you want a mix of people, you'll need to know what traits to include or exclude.

Which demographic variables could be useful?

It all depends on the topic, purpose and traits you want to select for in each focus group. Almost any variable could be important to ask about if it factors in to your participant selection mix.

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SCENARIOS

Conduct a survey that paints a portrait for policymakers of conditions faced by Hispanic tenants living in multi-unit housing...

Which demographic variables could be useful?

ETHNICITY/RACE – Need to oversample people that are Hispanic

TYPE OF HOUSING – Need to survey MUH residents. Could use as a screening question

LOCATION/ZIP/CITY – Need to show that the respondents are in the decision maker's voting constituency

HOUSEHOLD INCOME, HOUSEHOLD SIZE (number of adults vs. minors) cross-tabbed with exposure to secondhand smoke – need all 3 to give an idea of exposure and other socio-economic factors

TOBACCO USE – Need to know if they use tobacco products to compare users' answers to that of non-users

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Acknowledge sensitivities

Some people may feel that demographic questions are intrusive, personal and private. Do what you can to minimize this.

The way you introduce the section and word the questions can help. Also, pilot test and **PRACTICE** the data collection instrument.

But don't assume people will object to the questions.

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Frame the need

You can minimize sensitivities some people may feel by explaining **WHY** you're asking questions about their lives.

Explain that you will not ask for identifiable information like name or address and that their answers will be compiled and summarized with the rest of the sample. This should allay a lot of concerns.

If people are sensitive about immigrant status, explain that you will NOT ask about their residency and you won't share datasets with authorities. Whenever more assurance is needed, explain how data security will be maintained and that only de-identified datasets will be shared beyond the evaluator (or project staff).

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Introduce the section

It's good survey practice to alert people when you're changing topics. Depending on your subjects, there are any number of ways to introduce demographic questions. Here are a few different ways you might use as a transition into a set of demographic questions.

"The following questions are for classification purposes only."

– *It's very short and generic (Often the less info you give, the less resistance you'll encounter).*

"Before we finish, I have some questions about you that will help make sure we have heard from a wide range of people. Your answers are voluntary and anonymous."

– *A brief explanation of what and why as well as saying that participation is voluntary and anonymous.*

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Introduce the section

Here are a few more examples...

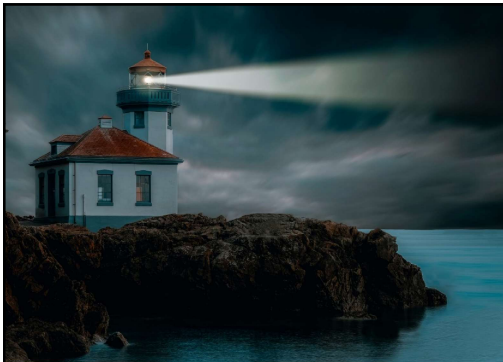
“The next set of questions helps us know if we have heard from each segment of the community. It helps us develop more effective messaging and outreach strategies.”

– A quick intro that covers the why.

“Now I would like to ask some questions about you. Your answers will remain anonymous and will be grouped with other people’s responses. You can skip any question that you don’t want to answer. This helps us make sure we hear from a wide range of people.”

– A bit longer intro that starts by trying to allay any concerns, puts participation in the hands of the respondent, and ends with the why.

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Key Takeaways for Creating Visibility with Demographic Questions

- Some parts of every community have been historically undercounted and underrepresented.
- Collecting and reporting demographic data can create visibility for these groups.
- Using the data can help address social inequities.

So we encourage **your project** to consider taking the following actionable steps:

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1 Ask demographic questions

By asking demographic questions, it communicate to people that they are included in our work.

You may want to change your sampling strategy to stratified sample to make sure you capture the views from people you want the data to represent. You'll also need to tap into places where specific groups tend to gather so that you oversample and get more people from that group.

As you go, it is important to monitor data collection in real time to make sure you're including enough people from the group.

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2 Describe the sample

Don't just collect data.

In presentations and reports, describe the sample and explain how the data was collected.

This shows your readers whose views are represented by the data you are sharing. It also can inspire confidence in your results if your methods were sound.



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Report disaggregated results

Even if there is reason to combine categories, report BOTH the disaggregated data and in combined categories.

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3 Analyze it further

Beyond descriptive statistics of who is in your sample, analyze it further to compare responses from people with certain characteristics. Look for any patterns highlighting issues that need addressing.

For example, run cross tabs comparing the # tobacco retailers on your block BY household income level to illustrate density inequities

Or a cross tab that compares any wrong answers or 'don't know' responses to knowledge questions BY location or zip code to identify which parts of the jurisdiction to target with additional educational outreach and messaging

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4 Tailor program strategies

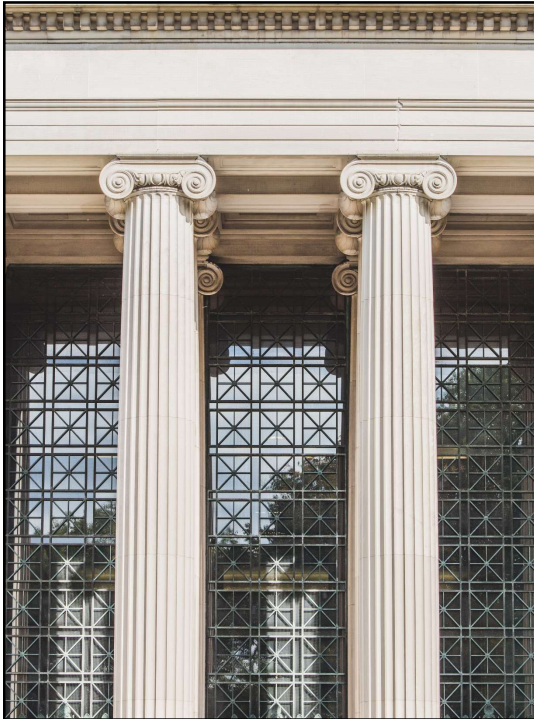


Armed with demographic insights, you can tailor campaign strategies to maximize your effectiveness with specific portions of the community –

- I. make different versions of educational messaging that is culturally relevant to particular groups unaware of the harms of tobacco exposure,
- II. employ different strategies to engage and mobilize various populations,
- III. and find new ways to partner with influential community leaders and organizations.

Your project can have more impact by using demographic information to **tailor your approaches** to different segments of the population.

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Demographic Questions Part II

We plan to have a follow up webinar on how to ask, report and use demographic questions in a few months, so **keep a look out for Partners announcements** on that.

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<https://surveyanalytics.com/t/AlzjLZOxt>

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TCEC is here to help!



<https://tobaccoeval.ucdavis.edu>

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