



**California Census 2020 Statewide Funders Initiative
Q1 MEETING NOTES**

Monday, March 23, 2020 | 1pm – 2:30pm
RingCentral Video Conference

Census 2020: How Coronavirus is Affecting Outreach & Responses from the State and ACBOs Across California

Emilio Vaca, Deputy Director of Outreach, California Complete Count
emilio.vaca@census.ca.gov, 916-200-5842

Self-response Rates

- Census Bureau self-response rates from 3/22: 19.2% U.S. and 19% CA.
- Highest self-response rate counties: Santa Clara, San Mateo, Orange County, Santa Cruz, and Sacramento.
- Lowest self-response rate counties: Trinity, Sierra, Mono, Alpine, and Plumas.
- This is the first time the census can be completed online, so the comparison is not apples to apples. The response rate reflects all the work that was done to date.

Update on the State's Efforts

- The State Census Office is prioritizing safety and flexibility in light of COVID-19. Under the statewide shelter-in-place rule, the state is looking to where it can be open and flexible and be a resource to its partners.
- Like the U.S. Census Bureau, and the state has paused its field operations, including Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs) and Questionnaire Assistance Kiosks (QAKs), until further notice. It is recommending that partners switch to digital outreach, phone banking, text banking, virtual townhalls, and trainings for subcontractors. Some partners do not have the technology platforms, so the state is working with local businesses that are still open (e.g., *panaderia*) to provide information.
- State understands that partners have invested 1.5 to 2 years in planning and now have to pivot quickly.
 - Working with statewide and ACBOs on adjusting timeframe and strategies.
 - Asking counties, which have been focused on in-person outreach, about changes and timeline.
 - Understanding that census is one of many things that county partners are working on and that census is housed in non-essential departments and offering support.
 - Working with state media vendors to support counties.

Questions for the State

- Tessa Rouverol Callejo: How to reach unhoused, undocumented and mixed status households?
 - The end of March deadline for enumerating those experiencing homelessness has been extended to end of April. The state is reliant on the Bureau for the update leave.

- 300,000 households were scheduled to receive forms directly from Census Bureau staff will be impacted by the decision to stop in-field operations.
- To make sure each population has a way to get outreach:
 - Work with media vendors and small business vendors to reach these populations, e.g., work with media vendors like Univision or partner with small grocery stores in the Central Valley to reach undocumented immigrants
 - NALEO is developing a e-version of its outreach toolkit
 - State is creating a packet on what partners can do at this time, including phone script, etc.
- Kristoff Stremikis: Are there instances where the state couldn't be flexible with grant requirements? Has the state received funding requests that it couldn't cover?
 - State has not declined any requests, recognizing the importance of openness and flexibility in this moment. For example, counties don't have the bandwidth and need technical assistance to maximize digital platforms.
 - State had set aside \$11M of additional allocation for ACBOs and counties prior to COVID-19 pandemic and is now waiting for counties to either authorize use of funds or defer (approval processes delayed because of pandemic). Counties are trying to reconfigure approach, as some had planned to emphasize QACs and QAKs.
 - State has a contingency fund.
- Ed Kissam: Is the state is able to adjust tracking of self-response to account for the Census Bureau having suspended mail-in forms at its processing center?
 - The state does not have its own tracking of the response rates but will follow-up with the Bureau.
- Sarah Grady: Will the Census Bureau continue to adjust its deadlines as more information becomes available, e.g., if "shelter in place" extends past the end of April?
 - August 14 is the new deadline instead of July 31.
 - The Bureau has the authority to extend operations and will look at what's facing their employees and the public. But the 12/31 deadline requires an act of Congress.
 - As we move farther away from Census Day, the accuracy of the count becomes compromised.

Discussion of Rapid Response Strategies

- Christian Arana of identified three key areas for rapid response funding: flexible grant requirements, have discussions with grantees about what is possible, have a plan to shift.
- Tara Westman shared The California Endowment's approach, including 1) funding for communications rapid response to combat myths and disinformation; and 2) support for priority regions including the Central Valley and Southern California, coordinated through regional entities and flexible based on local conditions. Partners will receive funds by end of April. See PPT slides for more details.
- Sheila Chung Hagen shared the findings from the funder survey (see PPT slides for details).
- Summary of challenges and ideas shared:
 - Latino Community Foundation (LCF): There is a digital divide for Latino households that have limited broadband access. Need to communicate to them that they can complete the census by phone. LCF will augment grants to local ethnic radio stations to do so.
 - WiFi access:
 - Library parking lots will provide WiFi access in their parking lots.

- Comcast offering free Internet to low-income families for two months at www.internetessentials.com.
 - Spectrum and Lakeoff Foundation are also providing free WiFi access.
 - Some funders like Irvine have already spent their census funding and cannot allocate additional funding. Irvine is sharing key tools and resources with grantees.
 - A Silicon Valley Community Foundation grantee is moving to a virtual QAC via Google Hangouts, in response to the 30-minute wait on the Census Bureau's Vietnamese phone line.
 - United Way of California: is producing a short video to share on how to participate in the census, online or over the phone. This includes ad buys to get it in front of social media channels targeted towards mobile users.
 - Ventura Community Foundation is considering including census materials in the meals that are being picked up from schools.
 - Latino Community Foundation grantees are sending out postcards as a reminder that census is live.
 - East Bay Community Foundation: Grantees' staff are working remotely and available to do outreach calls, but they don't have phone numbers. Do we have access to call lists outside of PDI platform?
 - The state is in conversation with PDI about this. Non-PDI information is not clean as it's drawn from various consumer data. PDI data, made up of frequent voter information, is clean.
 - State will get back to us about possibility once talk with PDI.
- Other ideas:
 - Holding the reality of rapid response vs. building voice and civic engagement as a long-term goal this census table and shared that they are looking at COVID-19 rapid response more broadly than Census.
 - Equity issues for undocumented seniors afraid of seeking medical health due to concerns about deportation, public charge, etc.
 - Phone banking is more costly because you need to reach more people to achieve the same impact as door-to-door strategy.
 - Most groups managing a lot of other issues—census is not the only thing.
 - Coordinating with other community foundations to uplift census issues to donors and be creative about addressing gaps.

Follow-up

Follow-up by the State:

- Send January legislative report detailing allocations of resources
- Send information on where the additional \$11M will be allocated
- Follow-up on their conversation with PDI re: access to phone number and address lists

Funder Follow-up:

- Send ideas to state on ways to reach Hard-to-Count populations (e.g., unhoused, undocumented)
 - Emilio Vargas - emilio.vaca@census.ca.gov
 - Dorothy Johnson - Dorothy.Johnson@Census.ca.gov
- Send information on funding needs and gaps to GCIR to track
 - Sheila Chung Hagen - Sheila@chunghagen.com

GCIR Follow-up:

- Send out a regular email digest of the latest resources
- Compile and share resources for grantees
- Gather and share information from funders on gaps in funding across the state
- Connect with state about early response rates and share gaps/areas of concerns with statewide table
- Organize videoconference meetings
- Continue to serve as liaison with the state

Links to Resources

- [PPT slides from the videoconference](#)
- [CUNY census map](#)