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California Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative Final Evaluation Report



Social Policy Research Associates

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Introduction

Having a complete and accurate count in the U.S. Census is vital for a well-functioning democracy, as it serves to ensure fair and equal political representation and informs the allocation of trillions of federal dollars to support critical public investments. Given its massive size and the fact that it is the most populous and diverse state in the nation,¹ the challenge of achieving a complete and accurate count in California is enormous. Moreover, the stakes for the 2020 Census were especially high, not only because a congressional seat was on the line, but because California has a long history of undercounts—in the last three decennial censuses, California experienced greater undercounts than the rest of the country, especially in communities labeled by the Census Bureau as hard-to-count (HTC).² These historically undercounted communities are also those who experience the greatest inequities in a host of arenas (e.g. income, education, health) that pose barriers to their overall wellbeing.

Recognizing the negative impacts that could result from an undercount (for all Californians, but particularly for populations labeled as HTC by the Bureau), and the history of undercounting challenges faced by the state for several decades, a group of philanthropic funders mobilized to create the **California Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative**, an effort coordinated by Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees (GCIR). Over 45 foundations and funder partners (referred throughout this report as the “Funder Table”), ultimately participated in this initiative, providing **financial support of approximately \$26 million to roughly 490 organizations throughout the state.**

When the Statewide Funders' Initiative was launched in 2017, funders and grantee partners could not have possibly anticipated the chaotic context that ultimately marked 2020 and the sheer volume of challenges grantee partners would experience in their efforts to ensure a complete and accurate count. At the national level, the Trump Administration continued generating exclusionary and harmful policies designed to exclude, expel, and reduce safety net support for targeted communities based on race, religion, and immigration status. This, combined with overtly racist comments by former President Trump and his supporters, as well as an attempt by his administration to include an untested citizenship question on the census form, increased fears within immigrant communities and heightened mistrust of the government. The COVID-19 global pandemic and subsequent stay-at-home orders combined with the extreme wildfires of 2020 further exacerbated the challenges of reaching historically undercounted communities, making it not only difficult but dangerous to attempt to reach people through approaches that had traditionally been successful with these populations (e.g., door knocking and in-person events). Adding to the logistical challenge was the fact that, for the first time in its history, the Census Bureau sought to collect census data through an online questionnaire, with limited testing before being

¹ Clarke, S. U.S. News & World Report. *The Most Diverse States in the U.S.* September 2020.

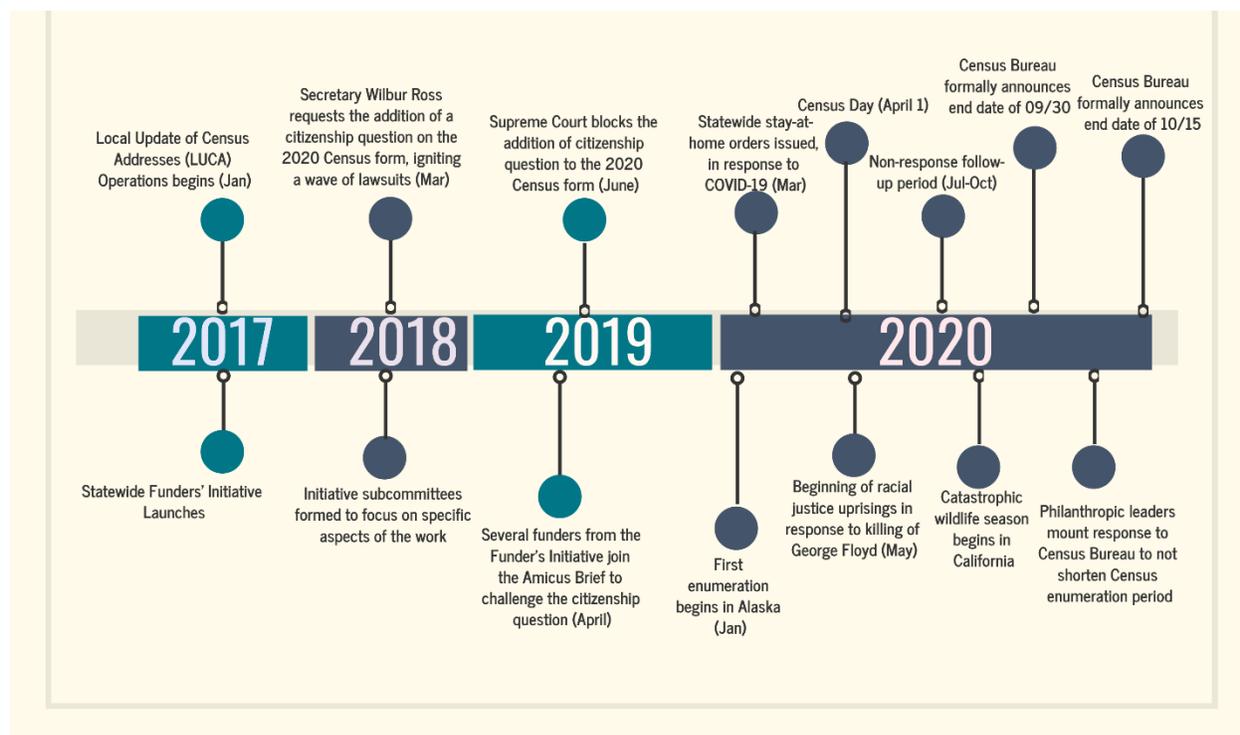
<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2020-09-10/california-is-the-most-diverse-state-in-the-us>

² The Census Bureau (the Bureau) defines hard-to-count (HTC) populations as those for whom self-response rates have historically been relatively low. There are a host of reasons that serve as contributing factors for low self-response rates, including (but not limited to) difficulty filling out and sending the form, inadequate language translation support, lack of access to accurate information, migration or lack of a permanent address, and mistrust of government. The Bureau has identified the following populations as hard-to-count: African-American/Black, Latinx/Hispanic, and Asian Pacific Islander populations; as well as urban and rural low-income households, renters, young children, people experiencing homelessness, immigrants, English learners, LGBTQ people, and single-parent households. It is important to note that multiple stakeholders have expressed discomfort with the HTC label, noting that it insinuates that the communities themselves are at fault for being missed in census counts, as opposed to focusing on developing better systems to ensure they are counted. Out of respect for this expressed concern, wherever possible and unless citing or directly referring to the Bureau's data, we will refer to HTC populations as “historically undercounted.”

deployed. While the goal of this was to reduce costs and *increase* participation, the lack of broadband access in low-income and rural communities was a cause for concern. It is still unclear, as of the writing of this report, how these factors ultimately affected responses.

While the story of the 2020 census will forever be marked with an asterisk, given the formidable and unprecedented challenges experienced in 2020, it also created a unique role for philanthropy to support partners on the ground in their efforts to creatively adapt and pivot. The story of this effort is one that offers learning not only for the 2030 census, but for a broader movement of actors focused on ensuring the well-being of California’s historically undercounted communities.

Census 2020: Timeline of Key Events



About this Evaluation

In 2019, GCIR, on behalf of the Statewide Funders’ Initiative (Funders’ Initiative), commissioned Social Policy Research Associates (SPR) to serve as the evaluation partner for the initiative. The California Census 2020 Statewide Funder’s Initiative evaluation centers on three distinct yet overlapping areas of inquiry. The **California 2020 Census Campaign** (referred to as **Census 2020**)—both its implementation and outcomes—is the primary focus of the evaluation. With this focus, the evaluation endeavored to document the story of the campaign within the context of significant upheaval that marked 2020, while also capturing collective outcomes from this enormously complex undertaking. At the same time, building from learnings yielded from funder collaborative efforts to support the 2010 Census,³ the evaluation was designed to capture the extent to which Census 2020 served as a “movement moment” and an opportunity to leverage the networks, infrastructure and momentum of Census 2020 for sustained

³ Ito, J., Masters, B., Ortiz, R., and Pastor, M. USC Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) *Beyond the Count: Leveraging the 2010 Census to Build New Capacities for Civic Engagement and Social Change in California*. December 2011. https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/242/docs/BeyondTheCount_web.pdf

engagement and change. As such, our approach purposefully embedded our analysis of Census 2020 within a broader **equity-focused movement frame**. Finally, the evaluation also explored the role that the **CA Census 2020 Statewide Funders’ Initiative** played in supporting a successful campaign as well as its contributions to aligned movement building and civic engagement efforts.

Evaluation and Learning Questions

Each inquiry area was guided by evaluation questions designed to help the evaluation team document key strategies and outcomes while also lifting up learning to support aligned and/or future efforts. [See Appendix A for the Evaluation Framework.] Our core evaluation and learning questions were as follows:

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	LEARNING QUESTIONS
Census Campaign Outreach Efforts for HTC Populations	
What capacities were leveraged, strengthened, or gained through census outreach and education efforts?	How did the capacities required for effective outreach and education evolve as a result of the 2020 context?
How effective was grantee outreach to HTC populations? What strategies proved most effective? Were there effective practices that were unique to specific communities?	Were there points of innovation that emerged around effective outreach to HTC populations? Are there learnings from California’s campaign efforts that can be shared with the rest of the nation?
How did the initiative support coordination and responsiveness to help facilitate increased efficiencies across regions and the state?	How does a coordinated investment support overall statewide capacity to ensure that all Californians get counted?
Movement Building	
To what extent were groups able to develop lasting organizational and infrastructure capacity for civic engagement and aligned movement building?	How did the initiative (and philanthropic support generally) support the building of these capacities?
To what extent were networks, relationships, and partnerships built and strengthened through the census and beyond? What influence did the 2020 context have on the development of these relationships?	What does it take to move organizations from issue-specific coordination to strong partnerships rooted in shared commitment to full inclusion of voices in democratic processes?
CA Census 2020 Statewide Funders’ Initiative	
To what extent did support through this initiative amplify or enhance outreach efforts and support long term capacity and infrastructure for civic engagement and movement building?	What are the lessons that can be shared from this initiative to support a stronger 2030 Census and those in other states who may be interested in replicating this model?

Evaluation Data Sources

The evaluation’s data collection efforts focused on gathering a mix of quantitative and qualitative data that would reveal insights and experiences from funders, grantees, and partners. Recognizing the many pivots and adaptations made by grantees and funders in light of the stressful, unpredictable, and dangerous nature of the 2020 context, the evaluation team adapted evaluation efforts to follow the constant shifts of the census process while also reducing burden for grantee partners. Exhibit 1 describes the evaluation data sources utilized to inform this report.

Exhibit 1: Evaluation Data Sources

- **Grantee survey.** A comprehensive survey was deployed to 490 grantees in two waves (February-April 2020 and October 2020). This survey elicited information about grantee organizations (e.g., size, budget, issue area foci) as well as information about their census outreach efforts. This included the geographic regions and target populations covered, languages spoken, outreach and education strategies, as well as key capacities leveraged and needed to do this work. The survey also inquired about aligned civic engagement and movement-building activities as well as recommendations for philanthropy. SPR received 234 responses to the grantee survey, reflecting a response rate of 48%. Findings using the grantee survey should be interpreted with this response rate in mind. In particular, the response rate suggests that not all regions were proportionally represented, and the findings reflected in this report may not reflect the perspectives and data from all grantees.
- **Funder & stakeholder survey.** Deployed to 45 funders and other partners that were part of the Funders' Initiative, this survey elicited information about funder and key partner organizations (e.g., foundation or organization type, size, focal issues, geographic scope). It also included questions focused on census support (e.g., geographic and population foci, languages supported, levels of funding provided, types of activities funded) as well as questions focused on movement building and the role of the Funders' Initiative's (and philanthropy generally) in supporting a complete count. A total of 32 funders and partners completed the survey, reflecting a response rate of 71%.
- **Social media analysis (SMA).** SPR's analysis of active Twitter users in the initiative's network of funder, grantee, and partner organizations enabled us to study patterns of connections across regions and actors in the network before and after the census period. We also examined content to illuminate resonant messaging around the Census 2020 campaign as well as aligned movement building and civic engagement efforts. To conduct this analysis, SPR curated a list of 345 Twitter handles reflecting census partners, statewide funders, and grantees. SPR pulled the last 200 tweets from every handle in this universe of 345 on the following dates: (1) March 24, 2020; (2) June 3, 2020; (3) August 17, 2020; (4) October 6, 2020, and (5) April 20, 2021. These data were used to analyze the Twitter network and retweets at just before the census enumeration and approximately one year after. Furthermore, the three dates during the enumeration period were selected to ensure that all census-related messaging was included in our Twitter download.
- **Grantee interviews.** SPR conducted 36 interviews with diverse grantees from across California between January-April 2021. These interviews complemented grantee survey data by providing more in-depth information on census outreach strategies, critical capacities for engaging in this work, and aligned civic engagement and movement building activities. They also captured recommendations to support efforts to prepare for the 2030 census, as well as reflections on the role of philanthropy in supporting census outreach efforts.
- **Funder and partner interviews.** SPR conducted 15 interviews in April and May 2021 with funders and key partners (e.g., census consultants, funder collaborative representatives, other census evaluators, and state officials) that supported census efforts across California. Designed to complement the funder and partner survey, these interviews served as a mechanism for gathering reflections on the story of the 2020 census, key successes and challenges, the ways in which the census served as a platform for aligned movement building and civic engagement efforts, and the role of the Funders' Initiative (and philanthropy in general) in supporting these efforts.
- **Document review.** From November 2020 to May 2021, SPR requested grantee reports from organizations receiving funding for census efforts to include as part of our analysis. We analyzed 114 reports submitted by a range of organizations, including statewide-focused organizations, regional community foundations, and other community-based organizations.

Overview of this Report

The remainder of this report consists of four additional chapters. **Chapter 2** provides an overview of the CA Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative and describes the funder participants and the grantee partners engaged in Census 2020. **Chapter 3** continues with an analysis of grantee activities and **Chapter 4** steps back to provide an analysis of outcomes arising from this initiative, with a particular focus on civic engagement and movement building outcomes resulting from Census 2020 activities and the impact of the Statewide Funders' Initiative. The report culminates with **Chapter 5**, which looks at the road ahead, focusing specifically on preparing for Census 2030, continuing support for civic engagement and movement building, and ways to continue and improve the Funders' Initiative.

2 | California Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative

While the **California Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative (Funders' Initiative)**⁴ officially launched in 2017, it was rooted in the work of a previous funder collaborative that came together in support of 2010 census efforts. This initiative built off learnings from that previous effort, was significantly bigger, and included more funders and more funding dollars to support the work. This chapter describes the initiative itself, beginning with an overview of the initiative, followed by a description of its model for statewide funding and coordination. This is then followed by sections that provide descriptive information on the funders that supported this initiative and the grantee organizations that carried out the work.

Overview of the California Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative

The California Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative's origin story reaches back to the 2010 Census. In 2010, the federal government had allocated more funds for the decennial Census than ever before. In California, however, the state was experiencing a severe budget crisis and therefore had only allocated \$3 million for census outreach—one-eighth of the \$24.7 million the state allocated for the 2000 Census. Recognizing the need to make up for the shortfall and better ensure an accurate 2010 count, GCIR reached out to the philanthropic community for support. This was no easy task. At the time, there was not a single foundation that named the census as a funding priority. In fact, many funders did not see alignment between census efforts and their funding priorities, found the challenges associated with the census to be extremely daunting, and did not believe their contributions would make enough of a difference to be worth the effort.⁵ Yet as a funder affinity group with a focus on “hard-to-count” immigrant and refugee populations, GCIR could clearly see the likelihood of a significant undercount of these populations, especially with such limited state resources for outreach, and the grave ramifications that could ensue. GCIR consulted with key foundations in California and ultimately convened a group of 18 foundations to support what became known as the *California Counts!* 2010 Census Campaign.

Building upon the success of that effort, ten years later, more funders—particularly those with a focus on advocacy, civic engagement, and power building, as well as those who recognize the connection between an accurate census count and community well-being—had begun investing in census efforts. Indeed, GCIR and many of the funders that participated in *California Counts!* came together again to support an even stronger Census 2020 outreach effort. In 2017, with GCIR continuing in its critical role as coordinator, the funders took their experience and learning from their 2010 efforts and used it to inform the development of the California Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative.

The Funder Table developed two overarching goals for this initiative, which incorporated a key recommendation from the 2010 campaign

CA Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative Goals

- To ensure that hard-to-count populations in California are accurately counted
- To build a stronger movement infrastructure across the state that can improve opportunities and conditions for Californians who have been politically, economically, and socially marginalized

⁴ Throughout the report, we will refer to this initiative as the “Funders' Initiative,” the “Funder Table” refers to the funders that participated in the initiative.

⁵ Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees. *GCIR's California Counts! 2010 Census Campaign: A Network Approach to Funder Collaboration*. July 2012. <https://www.gcir.org/sites/default/files/resources/GCIR-California-Counts-2012.pdf>

focused on optimizing and leveraging the power and potential of census outreach efforts to support civic engagement and aligned movement building. Ultimately, they were able to pull in a larger pool of funder participants, with 45 funders and other partners joining the Funders’ Initiative and amassing over two-and-a-half times more in philanthropic dollars to support census outreach—approximately \$26 million for 2020, compared to almost \$10 million in 2010. This amount complemented the state of California’s \$187.2 million investment for the California Complete Count-- Census 2020 campaign.⁶

The Model for Statewide Funding and Coordination

Coordinating census efforts across a state like California is extremely complicated. The state’s complexity is rooted in its sheer size and the intricacy of its geography, ranging from dense urban centers, sprawling suburbs, and expansive rural areas with limited infrastructure. It also encompasses the rich diversity of California residents who include people from different cultures, who speak a range of different languages, and who hold different citizenship statuses.

In response, the Funders’ Initiative employed a decentralized model wherein grantmaking to support census outreach was designed and deployed at the regional level, with the Funders’ Initiative creating the space and mechanisms to share information, resources, and strategies across regions. As displayed in Exhibit 2, foundations led funder regional tables in eight of the 10 census regions⁷ to coordinate efforts and pool funds to ensure that resources and strategies were deployed in ways that best fit each region’s unique context.

Moreover, for the first time ever, six community foundations served as administrative community-based organizations (ACBOs)⁸ for their region and one community foundation served as a contracted community-based organization (CBO) to focus specifically on outreach to the Latinx/Hispanic population across the state while it simultaneously participated in the Funders’ Initiative. Having these foundations as both ACBOs and leaders in the Funders’ Initiative provided an avenue for strategic collaboration with the state’s Complete Count—Census 2020 Office and offered useful, “insider perspectives” to help the Funder Table understand how the state was supporting Get out the Count efforts. Having philanthropy “on the inside” provided a means for sharing useful information about what was and was not working well in state-funded efforts to reach HTC populations so that they could consider how to best leverage philanthropic dollars in ways that minimized redundancy, addressed unmet needs, and complemented the efforts being funded through the state. Funders in this initiative also played a key role at the national level, with several Steering Committee members being part of the national Funders Census Initiative

⁶ California Complete Count—Census 2020 Office. *California Census 2020 Outreach and Communication Campaign Final Report*. April 2021. <https://census.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/04/California-Census-2020-Outreach-and-Communication-Campaign-Final-Report-Condensed.pdf>

⁷ The California Complete Count – Census 2020 Office grouped California’s 58 counties into 10 regions, based on capacity and capabilities of contracted outreach partners. <https://census.ca.gov/regions/>

⁸ ACBOs and CBOs are large, community-based organizations with the administrative capacity and experience to coordinate an HTC outreach campaign for an entire region or demographic group. Through contracts with the state Census Office, ACBOs and CBOs oversaw coordination and disbursement of funds to local community-based organizations in support of HTC outreach in each of the state census regions.

(FCI)⁹ and several foundation partners signing onto an amicus brief in 2019 urging the U.S. Supreme Court to halt the inclusion of a citizenship question on the Census 2020 questionnaire.¹⁰

Exhibit 2. Represented Regions and Lead Funders by Region



Funder Tables & Pooled Funds

- Sacramento Region: Sacramento Region Community Foundation
- San Francisco Bay Area: Northern California Grantmakers (with pooled funds at East Bay Community Foundation and Silicon Valley Community Foundation)
- San Joaquin Valley: Sierra Health Foundation
- Ventura County: Ventura Community Foundation
- Inland Empire: The Community Foundation
- Los Angeles: California Community Foundation
- Orange County: Orange County Grantmakers (with pooled funds at Charitable Ventures of Orange County)
- San Diego: San Diego Grantmakers (now Catalyst of San Diego and Imperial Counties)



Community Foundations that Served as ACBOs/CBOs

- Region 1: Sacramento Region Community Foundation
- Region 5: Ventura Community Foundation
- Region 6: Sierra Health Foundation, Center for Health Project Management
- Region 7: The Community Foundation
- Region 8: California Community Foundation
- Region 9: Charitable Ventures of Orange County
- Hard-to-Count, Latinos: Latino Community Foundation

With more resources, partners, and planning time compared to 2010, the Funders' Initiative developed a model for statewide coordination and collaboration focused on providing strategic support to ensure an accurate count for Census 2020. In addition to having an experienced organization (GCIR) and its consultant to oversee coordination, the initiative's model included other elements designed to leverage strengths, effectively share information and resources, and facilitate coordination and strategic collaboration. These elements included:

⁹ The Funders' Census Initiative is a working group of the Funders' Committee for Civic Participation (FCCP) which mobilized philanthropic partners at a national level around Census 2020.

¹⁰ Philanthropy CA. *Thirty Philanthropic Institutions File Amicus Brief with US Supreme Court to Halt Citizenship Question*. April 2019. <https://www.philanthropyca.org/news/thirty-philanthropic-institutions-file-amicus-brief-us-supreme-court-halt-census-citizenship>

Focused Subcommittees

The initiative included a steering committee to drive the work forward that was made up of leaders from four foundations that support a diverse range of populations and equity-focused issues, and one consultant with specific expertise in the early childhood arena. The statewide initiative also included four statewide subgroups focused on: (1) addressing the undercount of young children (0-8), (2) power and movement building, (3) communications, and (4) evaluation. While the steering committee continued to meet regularly throughout the life of the initiative, the four subgroups were most active in the early stages of the initiative, since they were primarily focused on creating mechanisms within the initiative for ensuring adequate attention to these issues.

Information-Sharing Mechanisms

Funders that participated in the initiative came together on a quarterly basis to get census updates, share information, and discuss critical and emerging issues. These meetings took place in person until the pandemic hit and shelter-in-place orders were in place. At that point, the meetings continued via Zoom. These meetings were designed not only to create a space for sharing information, but also to engage in deeper dialogue about important issues and to build relationships across funders and regions. Participants also received regular updates and information about census-related issues and events through a shared listserv administered by GCIR.

Ecosystem Coordination

In addition to facilitating partnerships and collaboration, the initiative focused on developing strategic connections and partnerships with the larger ecosystem of actors focused on ensuring an effective census count. These partners included the State Census Office, county and local government, county Complete Count Committees, and national funders tables. Members of these organizations were invited to deliver presentations at quarterly meetings and their information was circulated via email. These partners also extended webinar invitations to Funder's Initiative members to share learnings from their efforts. It is particularly notable that, for the first time ever, the state created a staff position focused on ensuring an effective partnership with philanthropy, so the statewide table had a direct liaison with whom to collaborate on census efforts.

Overview of Statewide Funders' Initiative Philanthropic Partners

This section provides an overview of the foundations that participated in the initiative. It includes themes focused on their rationales for funding census efforts and participating in the funder collaborative. It then provides more information about this Funder Table as well as levels of census investment, followed by a full-page textbox that provides a visual snapshot of this data.

Reasons for Funding Census Efforts

Philanthropic partners shared a variety of reasons for funding Census 2020 efforts. Through interviews and survey responses, all noted the key connection between the census and the potential negative implications an undercount would yield for the state and historically undercounted communities. Many funders named that the census intersects with a variety of social issues they were seeking to address through their grantmaking, in areas such as immigration/immigrant rights, housing, education, economic justice, transportation, and early childhood. Other funders saw their investments toward a fair and accurate count as supporting an equitable allocation of resources to local and regional communities. Moreover, many funders focused their funding on specific populations that were identified as HTC communities by the Bureau—with a key focus on immigrants and refugees, young children ages 0-5, limited English-speaking households, and families and individuals with low-incomes. Finally, some funders also viewed Census 2020 as a way to invest in movement and power building—with some tying census to civic engagement and redistricting efforts and others seeing alignment with long-term issue areas, such as immigrant rights, racial justice, education policy, and economic justice.

Motivation to Join the Funders' Initiative

Funders recognized that a collaborative approach would be critical for Census 2020. When asked about their motivation to join the Funders' Initiative, many noted that the table afforded them the opportunity to collaborate with other funders striving to achieve a fair and accurate census count. As one funder summarized, the Funders' Initiative provided "a space to learn, communicate, coordinate, and increase support for communities." Many others shared they joined the table to remain informed around the ongoing changes of the census administration and shifting timeline. Others noted that the table offered a potential opportunity for connecting regionally focused efforts with statewide strategy, with some funders looking to triangulate information from the California Complete Count—Census 2020 Office and their community partners to help inform regional outreach and engagement strategies. Lastly, funders that represented regions with little foundation presence looked to join the Funders' Initiative to learn about additional funding from other philanthropic partners to support their local census outreach efforts and information on best practices for reaching their historically undercounted communities.

Key Characteristics of Funder Partners

An analysis of the philanthropic partners that participated in the Funders' Initiative reveals a wide diversity of organizations that represent a variety of foundation types, geographic scopes, priority funding areas, and experience with census funding and activities. (See Appendix B for a full list of funder participants.) The survey revealed that about one-third of funders identified as regional or community foundations, while 25% of funders identified as private foundations. Funders also had a range of annual grantmaking budgets, with just over half (56%) with budgets of over \$5 million and one-third (34%) with budgets between \$100,000 and \$5 million. Additionally, close to 40% of funders reported a grantmaking focus in multiple counties and regions, one-fifth reported a statewide funding focus, and a small subset (12.5%) reported funding at a national scale. Philanthropic partners in the Funders' Initiative generally reported focusing their grantmaking in areas that relate to census outreach efforts, including immigration/immigrant rights (66%), civic engagement (63%), and racial justice (59%).

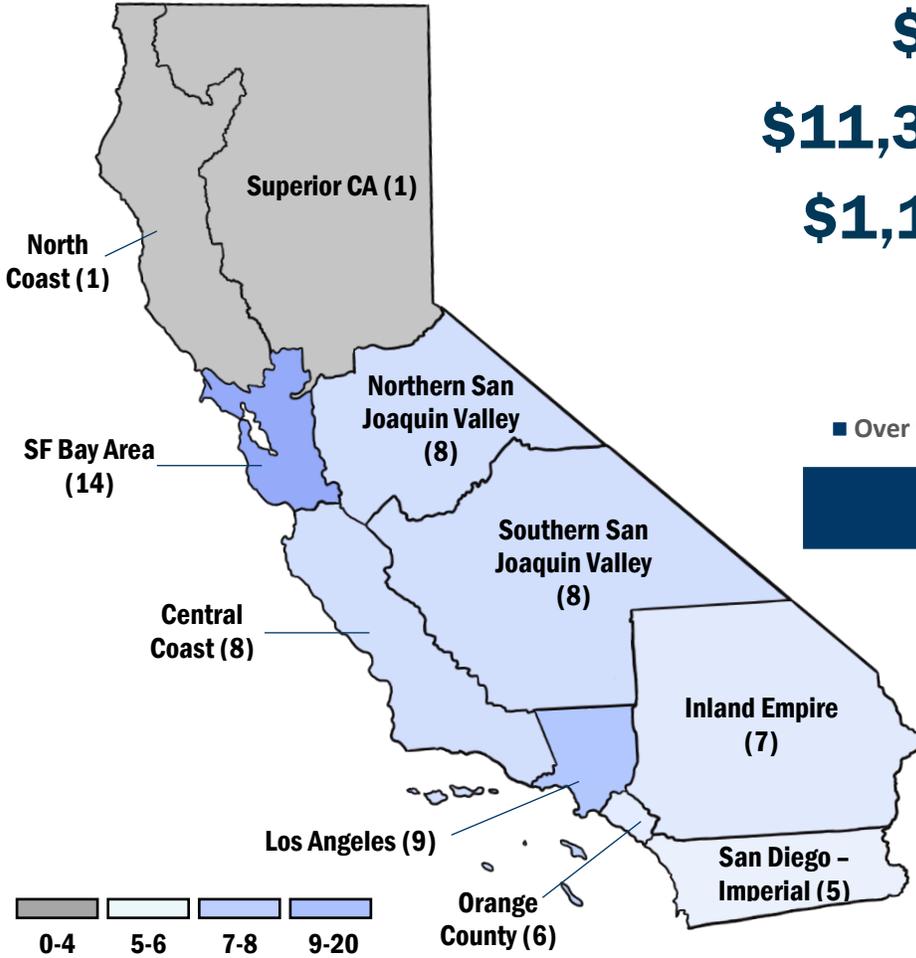
Experience and Investments in Census 2020

To understand the collective contributions to this effort, funder respondents were asked to describe their experience with census efforts as well as their investments in Census 2020. For many funders, investing in the census was new for their organization, with close to 65% reporting not having had any funding experience in census efforts prior to 2020. On average, funders in this initiative contributed about \$1,145,176 to Census 2020, with the median contribution being about \$390,000.¹¹ Four funders contributed more than \$1 million. Most funders focused their investments in the Bay Area and Los Angeles County, followed by San Joaquin Valley and the Central Coast. A little over 20% of funder investments were dedicated toward statewide efforts. Approximately 75% of funders provided grants to local, community foundations and community-based organizations, and over half contributed to pooled funds to support regional efforts. In addition to these three funding categories, funders also shared that they provided grants to support: (1) activities with Complete Count Committees; (2) research and policy efforts; (3) message testing, communications, and media; and (4) rapid response funds to manage COVID-19 related adaptations. Lastly, while over half of funders' census-related efforts targeted all populations labeled as hard-to-count, some also had particular communities of focus with the top six communities being immigrant populations; Hispanic/Latinx, Asian American/Pacific Islander, African-American/Black communities; and those with limited access to internet and limited English proficiency.

¹¹ Note: Any amount less than \$10,000 was considered missing per error on respondent entry.

Statewide Funders' Initiative Overview

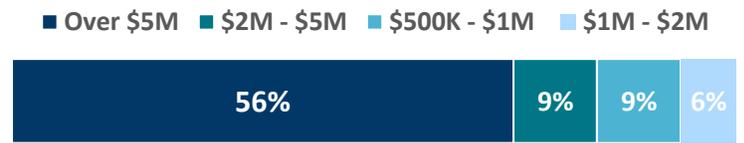
Number of Funders per Census Region (n=32)



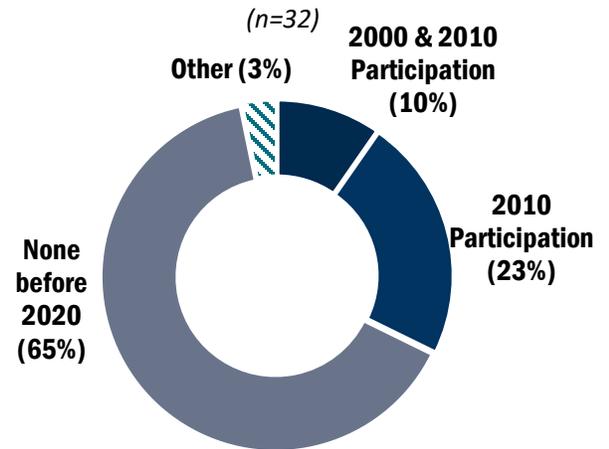
Overview of Census Support Disseminated (n=32)

\$10,000 Min amount of funding support
\$11,355,000 Max amount of funding support
\$1,145,176 Mean amount of funding support

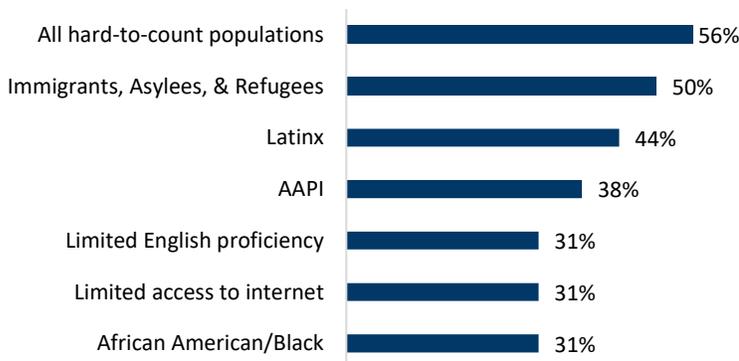
Annual Grantmaking Budgets (N=32)



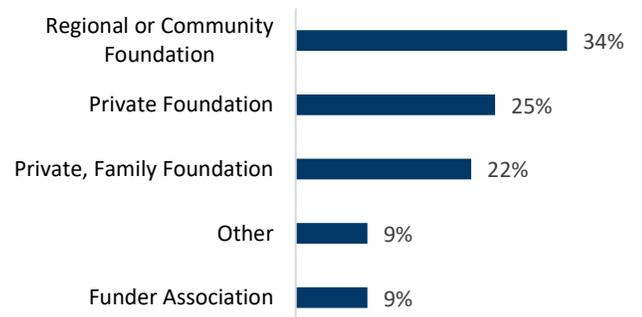
Census Experience (n=32)



Hard-to-Count Population Focus (n=32)



Foundation Type (n=32)



Data drawn from Funder Survey

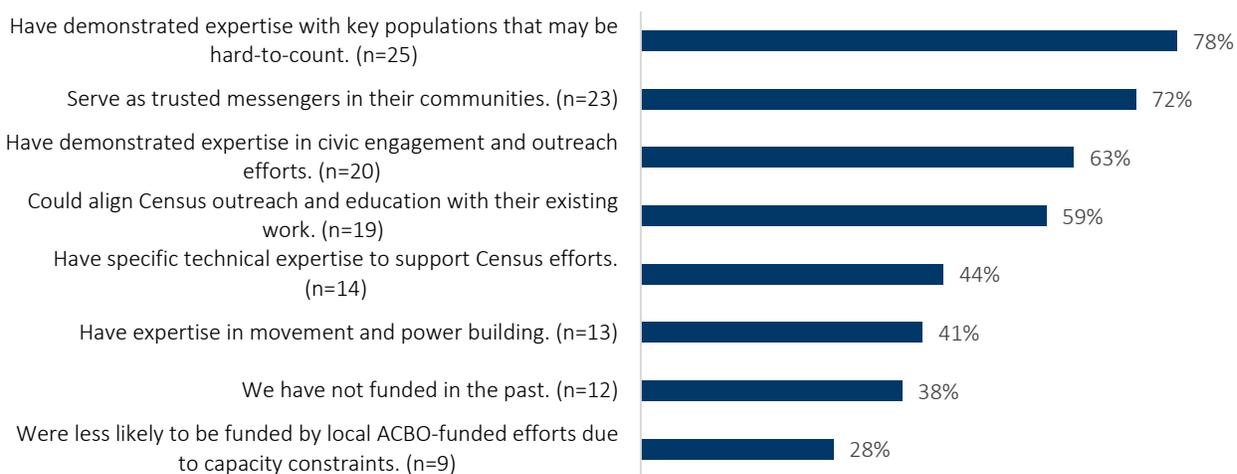
Overview of Grantee Partners Funded

This next section provides an overview of the grantees funded through this initiative. It includes themes focused on the funder criteria that informed grantee selection, key characteristics of the grantee pool, and the level of census experience held by grantees.

Grantee Selection Criteria

Philanthropic partners that were part of the Funders' Initiative collectively funded at least 490 grantees across the state, the majority of whom were community-based organizations. Funders utilized a variety of parameters for selecting grantee partners for census outreach and education. As noted in Exhibit 3 below, most funders sought to fund organizations that had demonstrated expertise in serving as trusted messengers to historically undercounted populations. One funder even modified its typical application process to allow organizations to submit applications in their home language in order to bring in "a greater pool of trusted messengers." Other funders sought to engage organizations that had dedicated experience in civic engagement and outreach efforts and who could easily align census efforts with their ongoing, existing work. Lastly, others focused their funding on reaching new organizations that they might not have previously funded in the past or organizations that were less likely to have been funded by local ACBO-funded efforts due to organizational capacity constraints.

Exhibit 3: Grantmaking Parameters for Selecting and Funding Grantee Partners, sorted by highest to lowest frequency



Grantee Characteristics

The analysis of community-based organizations funded by philanthropic partners reflected a variety of organizational sizes, geographic scopes, and focus areas. Data from the grantee survey¹² revealed that most were long-standing organizations, with about 60% established before 2000. Furthermore, over half of grantee organizations had organizational budgets of one million or higher, and approximately 70% had staffing sizes of six or more full-time employees (FTE). The majority of organizations were also focused at the county or multi-county level, while only 17 were focused statewide. Most grantee organizations were

¹² SPR received 234 responses to the grantee survey, reflecting a response rate of 48%. Findings using the grantee survey should be interpreted with this response rate in mind.

population-focused, having a specific focus on Latinx/Hispanic, immigrant, low-income, and African-American/Black communities, as well as children and youth. One-third or more of grantees focused on the following issues: civic engagement, health equity, community development and/or immigration/immigration rights.

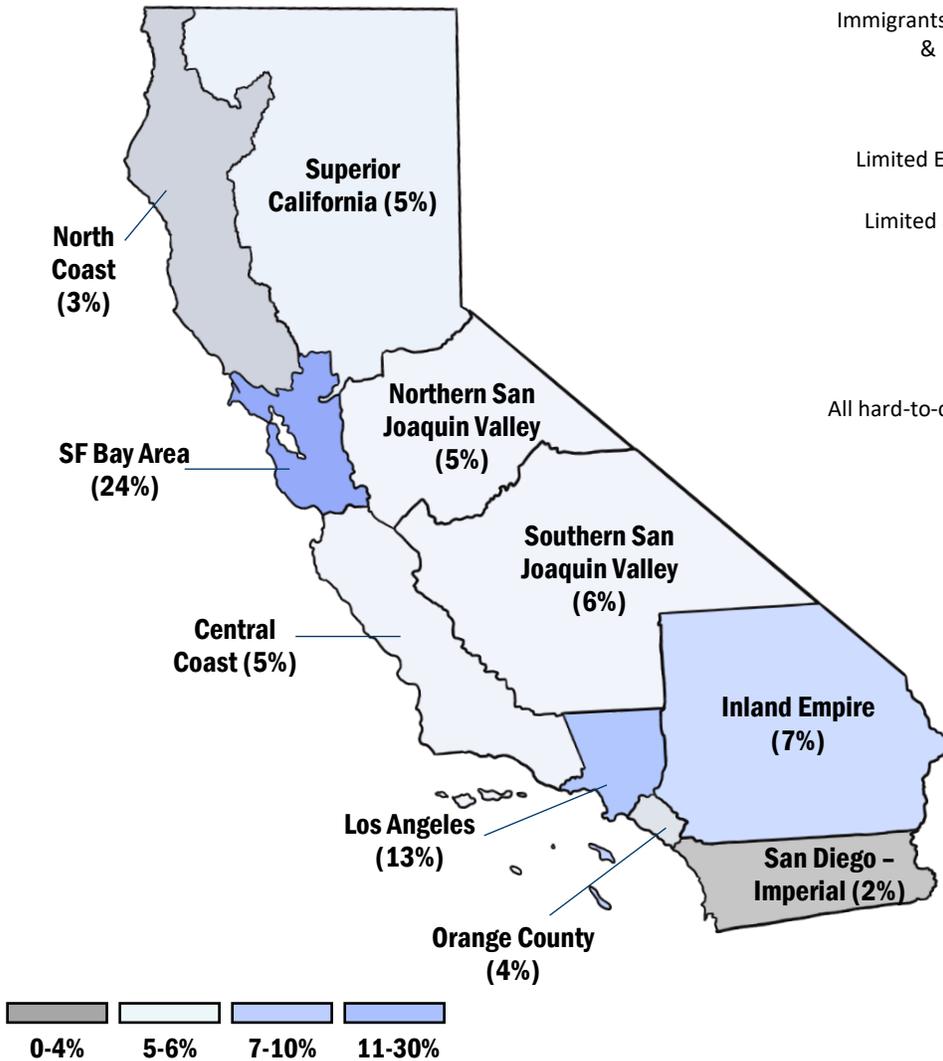
In addition to diverse background characteristics, analysis of grantees' census-related efforts showed a variety of census experience, geographic and population focus, and funding received. Nearly 20% had experience with both 2000 and 2010 Census efforts. However, 46% had no prior experience with the census. Across the 10 regions in California, 49% of surveyed grantee respondents selected the Bay Area and/or Los Angeles County as their focal regions, three percent of grantees were focused statewide, and two percent focused on San Diego/Imperial Counties (see the map on the following page for the comprehensive regional distribution). Of the populations labeled hard-to-count, approximately half of the grantees focused on Latinx/Hispanic and immigrant populations. Furthermore, 51% of grantees conducted outreach in Spanish. Approximately one-third of surveyed grantees received more than \$100,000, with five percent receiving more than \$500,000. The textbox on the next page provides a summary several key characteristics of grantee partners engaged in census 2020 efforts.

By funding organizations with demonstrated expertise in advocacy and outreach, as well as those that are deeply trusted by historically undercounted communities, the collective investments of the Funders' Initiative created a strong foundation for ensuring inclusion of communities that have historically been missed in prior census counts. Moreover, the diversity of grantees funded through this initiative and the range and depth of their expertise in engaging and supporting historically undercounted communities made it possible for grantees to experiment with and leverage a range of creative strategies to effectively outreach and provide support to their target communities, even in the face of a pandemic and fear-mongering political strategies designed to suppress participation by particular communities. More detailed information about these activities is shared in the next chapter.

Grantee Partner Overview

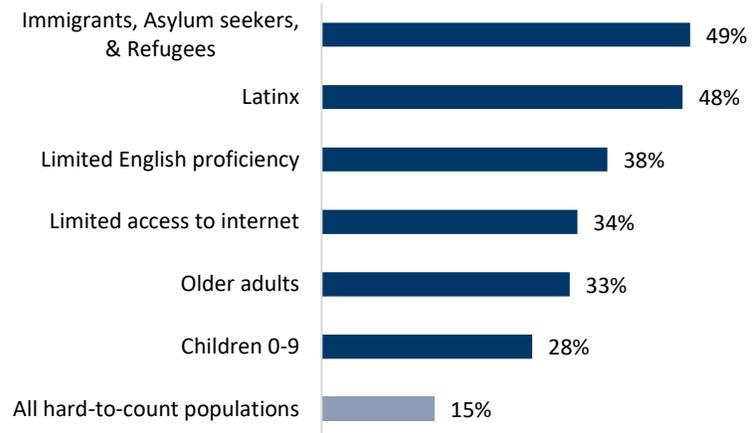
Regional Focus

Regional Census 2020 grantee focus, n=234



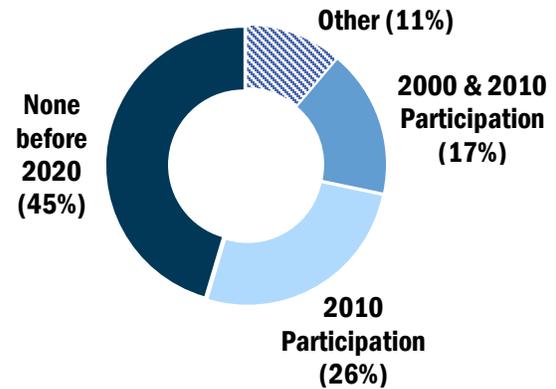
Hard-to-Count Population Focus

(n=234)



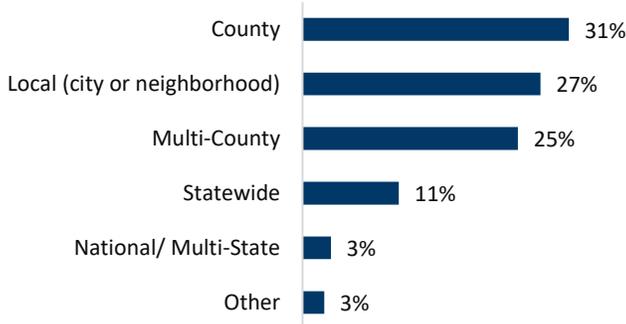
Census Experience

(N=152)



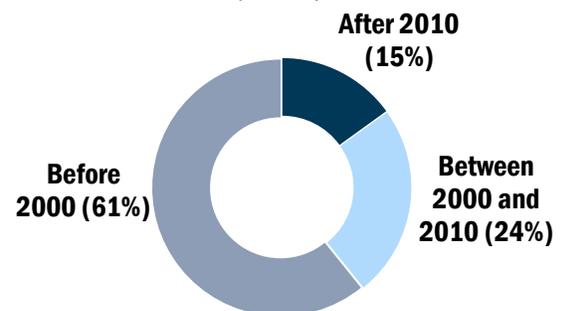
Geographic Scope

(n=153)



Year Established

(n=153)



Data drawn from Funder Survey

3 | Census 2020 Campaign Activities

Grantee partners across the state engaged in a variety of activities that were tailored to reach a diverse range of historically undercounted populations and support broad efforts to ensure they were counted in the census. Generally, census activities supported through the initiative fell in one of five core strategy areas: census community education and engagement; media, communications, and messaging; advocacy and organizing; training and technical assistance; and census resourcing and implementation support. This section provides an overview of the types of activities within each of these categories and highlights key findings from these census efforts. Data were drawn from an analysis of the grantee survey, grantee interviews, funder interviews, and our Twitter analysis to highlight the key activities undertaken by grantees and to offer nuances, where possible, on how these activities differed by target population and region.

Census Community Education and Engagement

Most grantees aimed to reach historically undercounted populations through census community education and engagement-related activities. Over 78% of grantee survey respondents reported this strategy area as a core part of their work. Many grantees originally planned to conduct in-person outreach to their target populations through tabling at community events; presentations and workshops at schools, community centers, and religious institutions; and door-to-door canvassing. However, the COVID-19 pandemic and shelter-in-place order in California forced many organizations to suddenly shift their in-person engagement strategies in favor of more socially distanced activities. To ensure that their strategies for reaching their target populations were still effective, even as they were in the process of pivoting to adapt to shelter-in-place constraints, grantees leveraged their relationships with community leaders and organized creative outreach and education activities that were tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of diverse communities. Key education and engagement efforts included:

- **Engaging trusted messengers to conduct meaningful outreach.** Several grantees stressed the important role that trusted messengers played in reaching historically undercounted populations. Trusted messengers helped organizations tailor their outreach strategies to extend their reach and connect messaging about the census to what is important to their communities. Examples include engaging farmworkers in Tulare County to use their lived experience to identify ideal timing for implementing a texting strategy for disseminating information about the census, convening ministers to disseminate consistent census messaging to their parishioners in the San Joaquin Valley and Ventura County, recruiting Hmong clan leaders in Fresno to identify formal and informal events to promote the census, and partnering with monks to raise awareness about the census at the Lao Buddhist Temple and refer community members to The Fresno Center Questionnaire Assistance Center (QAC).
- **Providing culturally and linguistically tailored census materials and services.** For many historically undercounted populations, the lack of accessible and in-language materials and supportive services proved to be barriers to completing the census. To support communities with diverse language needs, grantees developed, translated, and culturally tailored census education materials and offered in-language services in-house, or partnered with other organizations that were better equipped to provide these resources and supports. For example, one grantee launched a hotline to provide in-language assistance to the limited English-speaking Punjabi Sikh population in San Joaquin Valley while another partnered with other organizations to record

census messages in Hmong, Lao, Vietnamese, and Khmer for canvassers to use for their socially distanced, door-to-door outreach in Fresno. A grantee also utilized large print and Braille resources made available through the state Census Office and Sacramento Region Community Foundation to provide census information to for communities that are visually impaired. Additionally, organizations in the Bay Area, Fresno, and Orange County disseminated translated census information by integrating it with their COVID-19 relief efforts, such as through food and diaper distribution and over-the-phone wellness checks.

- **Virtual contests, raffles, and trivia events.** COVID-19 and the statewide shelter-in-place order forced organizations to pivot their outreach and engagement strategies, which led to some creative activities that helped drum up excitement and raise awareness about the census. One grantee in Tulare County held an online video contest that challenged youth to create a two-minute video explaining to their families why census completion is important. Several grantees in the Bay Area and Tulare County also reported hosting census trivia and Lotería events on Facebook.
- **Phone banking and texting.** Due to the pandemic, many grantees shifted to a phone-based strategy, which complemented their virtual outreach and engagement efforts. Organizations reached out to their clients via phone and text during shelter-in-place to conduct wellness checks as well as to provide information and assistance on filling out the census form. Some organizations in San Joaquin Valley, Stockton, Fresno, Ventura County, and Los Angeles County used phone list information from Political Data, Inc. (PDI)¹³ to reach more community members in designated HTC tracts and others utilized a phone tree approach to leverage the social network and contacts of trusted messengers.
- **Art-based outreach and engagement.** A few grantees utilized art to connect the census to issues that are most important to historically undercounted communities. In one neighborhood in Fresno, a community mural depicts elements of local culture and landmarks that highlight important programs that derive their funding from census data, which served as a reminder for residents to complete the census. One grantee in Merced County partnered with local businesses to display a census-themed art installation and paint census imagery in windowfronts to raise awareness about the census. The organization also partnered with the local school district to distribute 800 census-focused art kits to students engaged in distance learning and held a census art contest.

Media, Communications, and Messaging

The California shelter-in-place order led many grantees to shift their focus from in-person outreach and engagement strategies to digital activities that centered on effective, targeted, and tailored messaging about the importance of the census. According to the grantee survey, media and communications was the second most common activity across all grantees (59%). Evaluation data indicates that grantees from the Southern San Joaquin Valley were exceptionally active in this arena with all but one respondent from Southern San Joaquin Valley having engaged in communications and media activities – 92% compared to 57% of grantees from other regions conducted this type of activity. Grantee messaging and campaign efforts spanned across a variety of mediums, including social media, radio, television, and billboards.

¹³ Political Data, Inc. is an app that was used by many census partners to conduct phone banking and door-to-door canvassing and track associated data.

Census messaging was also adapted to fit the unique cultural, linguistic, and geographic contexts of historically undercounted communities across the state. Core strategies included:

- **Social media campaigns.** Grantees that leaned into the media, communications, and messaging strategy reported that social media was an important platform for raising awareness about the census. Organizations took to popular social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter to share tailored census information in multiple languages with targeted, historically undercounted communities. Examples of compelling content include a [census comedy skit](#) put on by a group of young Hmong creatives in Fresno to encourage their community to fill out the census through humor and song; “Census Hour” events that featured public figures, celebrities and influencers, trusted messengers, and community leaders discussing the importance of the census; and [videos](#) that showcased Sikh contributions to California’s history and highlighted the census as a tool for documenting that story and bringing resources to the Punjabi Sikh community in Fresno. Grantees also optimized the Twitter platform to get the word out through targeted census campaigns. (See the textbox on the next page for more details.)
- **Disseminating census information via ethnic media outlets.** Several organizations took to television and radio to promote the census, especially among low-broadband individuals and families and older, monolingual adult populations in historically undercounted communities. Grantees participated in interviews, held specialized census programming, paid for advertisements, and created public service announcements (PSAs). Illustrative examples of these activities included census cooking shows that taught viewers how to prepare traditional Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, and Vietnamese dishes while educating viewers in Fresno about the census; social media campaigns directed at Pacific Islanders in East Palo Alto, PSAs that featured Hmong community leaders; and radio ads and segments toward Vietnamese communities in San Jose aimed at dispelling misinformation and fear-based narratives about the census among immigrant and non-English speaking communities.
- **Press conferences.** In a couple regions, press conferences were held in partnership with several regional stakeholders, aimed at encouraging community members to complete the census. In Sacramento County, a coordinated press conference was organized as part of a regional “media blitz” to raise awareness about the census. Similarly, in Kern County, a joint multilingual press conference with the Complete Count Committee helped uplift census work in the county and launch coordinated canvassing efforts. Additionally, the San Joaquin Valley Health Fund was invited by the State Attorney General’s Office to promote Digibus, a mobile census QAC, and lift up the work of grantee partner organizations on informing and assisting historically undercounted communities with completing the census.

Census Messaging Campaigns on Twitter

Grantee organizations used Twitter to launch “census campaigns” which were designed to spread awareness about the census and encourage people to complete the census through this platform. Overall, tweets that incorporated census campaign hashtags constituted about six percent of all the census-related tweets from the handles in the census Twitter network (please see Appendix E for a complete description of the Twitter network and additional detail on the Twitter campaign analysis). Given that census Twitter campaigns were a key digital outreach strategy pushed by several different Census stakeholders, this finding points to the opportunity to increase coordination around census campaigns in the future. However, for the 2020 census, the campaign strategy did yield key learnings. For example, **to increase visibility, several census campaigns were strategically connected to a holiday or event.** Additionally, census campaigns helped to **foster consistency in messaging throughout the census network and to target outreach to specific populations.** To assess effectiveness, we examined campaign reach by calculating retweet activity and the number of distinct Twitter handles engaging the message (i.e., the number of Twitter handles retweeting the campaign hashtag, given that one Twitter handle can retweet the hashtag multiple times). **The reach of each census campaign varied, based on the length and timing of the campaign.** As shown below, the “counts” column reflects the number of tweets that were shared during their respective census campaign timeframe.

As noted in Exhibit 4, *The Día del Niño* and *Digital Action Weekend* campaigns were the most successful campaigns, reflecting the highest amount of activity and engagement. Besides these two campaigns, the reach of other census campaigns was relatively low. Furthermore, there was wide variation in the number of Twitter handles participating each census campaign. While some campaigns had relatively fewer participating Twitter handles (e.g., *LGBTQ Census Week of Action* had 6 handles), other campaigns had more widespread participation across the census network (e.g., *Digital Action Week* had 49 unique handles).

Exhibit 4: Summary of Census Messaging Campaign on Twitter

Dates	Re-Tweet Counts	# of Handles	Campaigns
March 23 – 30	5	5	United 2020 Black Census Week
April 13 – 20	56	21	Latino Week of Action
April 21	5	2	Disability Day of Action
April 30 – May 2	229	20	Día del Niño
May 1 – 3	131	49	Digital Action Weekend
June 17	23	9	Our Power, Our Census
June 22 – 26	93	6	LGBTQ Census Week of Action
July 6 – 12	25	10	Faithful Census Week of Action
July 7 – 14	34	7	Arab American Census Week of Action
July 28	32	14	Census Day of Action
August 17	1	1	Census Challenge Day

Resonant Messaging

A specific focus of this evaluation was to document effective messaging developed by grantees to encourage census participation by historically undercounted populations. One way in which we assessed messaging effectiveness was to consider *resonance* of particular messages. Specifically, our Twitter analysis examined the census-related tweets during the enumeration period that received the most engagement.¹⁴ Our analysis revealed that the tweets with the highest engagement focused on sharing updates on the census timeline and clarifying the Bureau’s everchanging census-related decisions, particularly as they related to the citizenship question and undocumented immigrants. Thus, the most widespread tweets aimed to combat misinformation and fear-focused rhetoric to ensure maximum participation in the census.

In addition to examining Twitter messaging patterns, we also analyzed interview data and grantee documents and reports to learn more about what messages resonated with historically undercounted populations. Our analysis indicates that messaging that resonated with these populations emphasized the following themes:

- **The ease of completing the census.** A major obstacle to census participation is the misperception that filling out the form is burdensome. Grantees noted that a key part of their messaging focused on assuring communities that filling out the form is convenient, easy, and accessible in multiple languages. Several grantees stressed that keeping their messaging simple and focused on the process for completing the questionnaire resonated with most communities. As one grantee noted, “We used our messaging to focus on the positive and the ease of the census, that it was simple and would take no more than 20 minutes to complete all nine questions.”
- **The importance of inclusion of *all communities* in the census.** Grantee partners also noted the resonance of messaging that centered on “inclusion” of all Californians, reflecting a sense of purpose and hope for creating a more equitable California. One partner described this messaging focus as being “centered on ensuring that communities, particularly those that have been systemically and historically excluded through all civic processes, are not missed and forgotten, rather they are counted.” For a couple of grantee partners that worked with indigenous and African-American/Black communities, messaging focused on instilling a sense of empowerment and activation, best noted by one grantee partner who shared the following quote: “We’re here. We are proud of who we are, and we are going to make sure that we are counted.” Lastly, several grantees shared that they actively worked against anti-immigrant messaging that came from the Trump Administration, by focusing on messaging for immigrant communities that revolved around a sense of belonging and the right to be accurately included in the census count.



¹⁴ Engagement was measured by adding the number of “favorite” tweets to the number of retweets times two. Retweets were given heavier weight because content was shared on other handles’ accounts, thus engaging a broader audience.

- **The connections between census engagement and key social and political moments in 2020 (e.g., racial justice uprisings and the 2020 election).** Census partners responded to 2020 events with messaging to inspire a greater sense of civic duty to complete the census. Specifically, this messaging amplified the importance of filling out the census in light of the racial justice uprisings and the Trump Administration’s actions against immigrant communities. The census network responded to 2020 events with Twitter content that framed messages in a way that underscored the importance of the census as it related to these key moments.

- **Assurances around data safety and privacy.** Given the various efforts to undermine data privacy, grantee partners noted the importance of designing messaging that assuaged fears that negative repercussions could result from completing the census questionnaire. To this end, grantees that worked with African-American/Black, immigrant, farmworker, Latinx/Hispanic, and Arabic communities all noted the importance of centering their messaging around dispelling misinformation and myths around the census. These messages focused on safety and confidentiality, noting explicitly that their information would not be shared with immigration officials or other law enforcement agencies.

- **The connection between an accurate census count and COVID-19 supports.** Multiple grantees noted that, as the COVID-19 pandemic escalated, they needed to direct more of their energies towards providing direct services and support to the communities that were being disproportionately negatively impacted by the pandemic. These impacted communities were the very same that they were trying to reach through their census outreach efforts. Thus, grantees used their COVID-19 relief efforts as an opportunity to develop census-focused messaging that highlighted the intersection between an accurate census count and key issues such as health care provision, vaccinations, and adequate distribution of personal protective equipment. Relatedly, one grantee partnered with a communications consultant to develop messaging that tied in the importance and value of essential workers and the census, which was then shared across multiple social media platforms.



Advocacy and Organizing

Given the COVID-19 pandemic and political and legal challenges associated with Census 2020, advocacy and organizing were other important areas where grantees reported activity. Over 70% of Los Angeles County, Central Coast, and Orange County grantee survey respondents reported that they conducted

advocacy and organizing activities. The unprecedented level of census interference at the federal level spurred grantees to engage in a variety of complementary advocacy and organizing activities that leveraged collective power to counter the fear instilled by anti-immigrant policies and lift the voices of historically undercounted populations, especially undocumented immigrant communities. Key activities included:

- **Litigation and policy advocacy.** The threat of the federal government’s addition of a citizenship question to the census galvanized organizations to counter this effort. Grantees mobilized partner organizations to submit public comments to the federal government to oppose the addition of a citizenship question to the census, and another organization served as a plaintiff in a lawsuit filed by MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund) and Asian Americans Advancing Justice regarding the exclusion of undocumented immigrants in the final census count. Furthermore, concerns about the hurdles brought forth by the COVID-19 pandemic also led to advocacy efforts to support an accurate census count. For example, one grantee participated in a collaborative that advocated for additional state investment in census outreach, a national delay in homeless enumeration amid the pandemic, and technical improvements to the state’s PDI census data infrastructure and technology.
- **Community organizing.** Complementing policy and legal advocacy activities were grantees’ community organizing efforts. Grantees shifted to virtual organizing to engage community members in promoting the census within their network. Some of these activities included phone banking, texting, using email campaigns, and organizing census parties to mobilize volunteers to conduct census outreach and raise awareness about the census in historically undercounted communities.
- **Convening regional census stakeholders.** Some grantees played a role in convening census stakeholders in their region to create space for collaboration, discussions about best practices, and resource and information sharing. For example, during the beginning of COVID-19 and the shelter-in-place order, one organization in the Los Angeles region coordinated with local partners and the regional ACBO to identify remote outreach and census questionnaire assistance strategies as well as with the State Census Office to determine what types of activities were permissible under U.S. Census Bureau regulations. In the San Diego-Imperial County region, a grantee partnered with other organizations that serve similar target communities to engage them in census efforts; the organization held convenings to provide census information and capacity building trainings using a train-the-trainer model and translated census materials.

Training and Technical Assistance

Another area of activity reported by grantees focused on training and technical assistance. Grantee survey findings indicated that over 65% of grantees from Northern and Southern San Joaquin Valley provided technical assistance to other organizations. Northern and Southern San Joaquin Valley grantee engagement in technical assistance and training activities was proportionally higher, as compared with grantees in other regions. Training and technical assistance efforts aimed to strengthen the capacity of CBOs to broaden their reach in historically undercounted communities for a more accurate census count. Activities included:

- **Facilitating capacity-building trainings.** To support CBOs conducting direct outreach to historically undercounted communities, some grantees offered capacity-building trainings to bolster their efforts. Training topics ranged from census messaging, data, evaluation, mapping, digital

outreach, graphic design, and public relations. Some organizations utilized a train-the-trainer approach to help partners to train their own staff and other local organizations.

- **Providing individualized technical assistance to support targeted census outreach.** In addition to capacity building trainings, grantees also provided individualized technical assistance to partner organizations. Examples of these technical assistance areas included outreach planning, data analysis support, legal guidance, and grant application support.

Census Resourcing and Implementation Support

Lastly, census resourcing and implementation support activities proved to be important efforts to broadening regional reach into HTC communities. Twenty-two percent of grantee survey respondents reported activity in this area. Effective census outreach and education in historically undercounted populations required collaboration and coordination to overcome hurdles brought forth by the pandemic and unprecedented level of census interference by the Trump Administration as well as deepen the bench of trusted CBOs that could reach these communities. Thus, grantees strategically leveraged their networks and communicated census information to their partners throughout the period to enhance their outreach activities. Notable efforts included:

- **Participating in the Local Update of Census Addresses Program (LUCA).**¹⁵ Nine grantee organizations reported having participated in LUCA in the grantee survey, however grantee interviews yielded no substantive qualitative data to add nuance from the grantee perspective around this experience. This is likely because this was one of the earliest census-supporting strategies funded by the initiative and thus may not have been top-of-mind. Multiple *funders*, however, lifted up LUCA as something that proved to be a critical strategy that should receive more investment in future census efforts, particularly when reflecting about the amount of household movement that occurred as a result of the pandemic.
- **Regranting to smaller CBOs.** To expand census outreach efforts, at least 26 grantees regranted funding to partner organizations that have deep relationships and trust in different historically undercounted communities. In the Bay Area, the Asian Law Alliance provided funding to activate smaller organizations that serve AAPI communities in census outreach efforts but may otherwise not have been able to participate. Similarly, in the San Diego-Imperial County region, the Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans (PANA) regranted \$119,000 to partners in the Refugee and Immigrant Census Hub coalition as well as smaller CBOs serving Southeast San Diego, black communities, AAPI communities, and refugee populations.
- **Coordinating with the U.S. Census Bureau and Complete Count Committees.** The COVID-19 pandemic forced all organizations to rethink their outreach strategies. At the start of that confusing and tumultuous period, it was unclear to many organizations what pivots were permissible by the U.S. Census Bureau. During that time, at least 35 grantees supported partner organizations in their region by liaising with the Bureau and Complete Count Committees (CCC) to

¹⁵ The Local Update of Census Addresses Program (LUCA) is a process that provides a voluntary opportunity for designated representatives of tribal, state and local governments to review and comment on the addresses used to conduct the decennial census. The LUCA schedule for the 2020 Census spanned from January 2017 to September 2019. Further information about LUCA can be accessed here: <https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/decennial-census/about/luca.html>

help answer questions about federal guidelines and policies, report concerns and issues, and coordinate the enumeration activities.

The depth and breadth of the strategies used by grantees to engage, mobilize, and advocate for historically underserved populations is truly remarkable. Moreover, the persistence demonstrated by grantees in their efforts to continue to move forward despite repeated challenges, as well as the creativity and cultural sensitivity reflected in their efforts (as well as their pivots) are also striking. As this chapter demonstrates, the grantees of the Funders' Initiative engaged in an incredible amount of activity, despite the barriers imposed by the 2020 context. The next chapter describes outcomes that resulted from these efforts.

4 | Statewide Funders' Initiative Outcomes

As a result of the Statewide Funders' Initiative, funder investments, partner coordination, and grantee efforts to engage historically undercounted communities in the census contributed to a range of outcomes. This chapter provides an overview of those outcomes, organized by the three key areas that were the focus of our evaluation: (1) the Census 2020 Campaign, (2) aligned civic engagement and movement building, and (3) the impact of the Funders' Initiative.

California Census 2020 Campaign Outcomes

All those engaged in the census campaign faced unforeseen and unprecedented challenges in their efforts to engage historically communities to ensure that they were counted in this decennial census. Between the COVID-19 pandemic, the massive wildfires, the ever-shifting timeline, and the interference of the Trump Administration, the barriers to engaging communities were formidable.

And yet, despite the general sense of chaos that marked 2020 and all of the challenges that upended years of careful planning by the initiative's partners, initial results¹⁶ indicate that, for Census 2020, California surpassed its Census 2010 self-response rate (SRR) by 1.4 percentage points. As shown in Exhibit 5 below, all but two regions (Region 2: North Coast and Region 8: Los Angeles County) exceeded their 2010 self-response rates.

Exhibit 5. Overview of Self-Response Rates, by Region and Statewide¹⁷

Region	2020 Regional SRR	2010 Final SRR	Difference from 2010
1: Superior California	69.3	67.4	1.9
2: North Coast	65.0	65.3	-0.3
3: San Francisco Bay Area	75.3	72.2	3.1
4: Northern San Joaquin Valley	65.8	61.3	4.5
5: Central Coast	72.0	69.5	2.5
6: Southern San Joaquin Valley	66.2	65.6	0.6
7: Inland Empire	66.7	63.3	3.4
8: Los Angeles County	65.1	69.0	-3.9
9: Orange County	76.6	71.7	4.9
10: San Diego- Imperial	73.6	68.1	5.5
California	69.6	68.2	+1.4
National	67.0	66.5	+0.5

The increase in the state's self-response rates compared to 2010 is an indicator of outreach and education success, and is a remarkable achievement, especially considering the many obstacles census workers faced in 2020. It speaks to the power and potential of this entire public/private venture wherein the skills and expertise of advocates, organizers, and community-based organizations, coupled with

¹⁶ As of the writing of this report, the Census data was still undergoing quality checks and therefore not yet finalized.

¹⁷ Retrieved from <https://2020census.gov/en/response-rates/self-response.html>

significant investments and partnership from philanthropy, the state, and the Census Bureau, were strategically and successfully leveraged in service of a stronger count.

That said, while the overall SRR is positive compared to the last decennial census, California's self-response rate ranked 17th in the country when compared to other states and territories. It is also still too early to tell the extent to which HTC populations were accurately counted, as the Bureau's analysis is still underway. That said, the fact that Los Angeles County's SRR is 3.9 percentage points *below* the 2010 rates is an indicator for concern, given that Los Angeles County is considered the hardest-to-count county in the country¹⁸ and that this county had been hardest hit by the pandemic by the end of 2020.¹⁹ Moreover, recent reports indicate strong concern that people of color and children were likely undercounted in the Census. The Bureau's acting director, Ron Jarmin, noted in a November 2020 blog post that preliminary analysis showed that there was a higher rate of households that did not answer the race and Hispanic origin questions in 2020, compared to 2010. He also recently revealed that the Bureau has had to deal with higher "nonresponse rates for specific characteristics than we've experienced in past censuses"²⁰ which could also result in data inaccuracies in the count.²¹ Finally, a recent report by Dr. Bill O'Hare, a leading expert in the census children's count, indicates that the 2020 census had a higher net undercount of children than in 2010.²² Though Dr. O'Hare's report focuses on the child undercount at the national level, and we are still awaiting further analysis to understand the status of the child count at the state level, it is still a cause for concern, particularly for child advocates. While overall self-response rates indicate campaign outreach success despite the difficulties of 2020, these recent preliminary reports indicate that we may need to brace ourselves for a less rosy picture with respect to specific undercounts, particularly for children and people of color, and there may be yet more work to be done to support greater success in reaching historically undercounted populations in 2030.

Civic Engagement and Movement-Building Outcomes

Beyond the specific objective of supporting a complete and accurate census count by ensuring that historically undercounted populations in California are accurately counted, the Funders' Initiative's second goal was to support a stronger civic engagement and movement-building infrastructure across the state to improve conditions and opportunities for politically, economically, and socially underserved Californians going forward. To that end, this evaluation yielded findings of progress in three key areas: (1) strengthened capacities for civic engagement and mobilization, (2) strengthened infrastructure for civic engagement and movement building, and (3) alignment across equity-focused issues and movements.

¹⁸ Wozny, K. US News & World Report. *California Boosts Outreach Efforts for 2020 Census*. (June 2019).

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/articles/2019-06-10/california-ramps-up-outreach-efforts-for-2020-census>

¹⁹ Levin, J., and Palmeri, C. Bloomberg News. *Los Angeles is Now Worst-Hit U.S. Metro Area for COVID-19 Cases*. (December 2020). <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-12-17/los-angeles-is-now-worst-hit-u-s-metro-area-for-covid-19-cases>

²⁰ Wang, H.L., NPR. *What the Census Data Can—and Can't—Tell Us About People Living in the US*. (August 2021)

<https://www.npr.org/2021/08/12/1010222899/2020-census-race-ethnicity-data-categories-hispanic>

²¹ In these instances, the Bureau fills in the blanks by relying on government records, interviews with neighbors, and, as a last resort, educated guesses using a statistical technique called imputation. Imputation is especially worrisome, given that a former bureau director has warned that this technique tends to overrepresent white individuals who do not identify as Latino, while underrepresenting people of color. <https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/7009433-July-29-2020-Statement-by-John-Thompson-for.html#document/p3/a2050455>

²² Count All Kids Census 2020. *Census Data Release Shows the 2020 Census Had a Higher Net Undercount of Children than in 2010*. (August 2021). <https://countallkids.org/resources/census-data-release-shows-the-2020-census-had-a-higher-net-undercount-of-children-than-in-2010>

Strengthened Capacities for Effective Civic Engagement and Mobilization

While the 2020 context made conducting an education and outreach campaign challenging, evaluation data indicate that, over the course of the campaign, grantee organizations were still able to strengthen specific capacities that are critical to mobilization and civic engagement efforts. In some arenas, the chaos of the 2020 context actually motivated and fueled the strengthening of specific capacities, as grantees were forced to respond to a constantly shifting environment. Outcomes in this arena include:

- **Increased adaptive capacity.** A recurring theme mentioned by both grantee and philanthropic partners was the ability for organizations to adapt and make adjustments to their census strategies, particularly in light of the ensuing challenges from the persistent disruptions caused by COVID-19 and operations challenges at the Bureau. As described previously, grantees were able to pivot to both support communities disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and use these support opportunities to raise awareness about the census. Another example of demonstrated adaptive capacity included grantees' successful strategy pivots from planned in-person activities to more digital, phone, and online strategies. Lastly, organizations reported feeling more confident and better equipped to shift and adapt to face extenuating challenges.
- **Increased capacity for digital and virtual census outreach and education.** While many grantee partners did not plan for extensive digital engagement, the COVID-19 pandemic drove organizations to build capacity for online and virtual forms of engagement. As a funder in Los Angeles said, "we saw demonstrable capacity built around the use of digital tools. A lot of organizations ramped up their social media and leaned into learning how to integrate digital tools for their outreach." Evidence of strengthened digital/online outreach capacity included increased use of Facebook Live and Zoom for census education activities and Twitter use to promote virtual presentations, panels, and webinars covering topics such as the implications of an undercount, the value of the census for specific racial/ethnic groups, and information around the Trump Administration's push to include a citizenship question. Other grantees strengthened their partnerships with local ethnic media partners that could better engage with specific communities, ranging from organizations partnering with television media to reach monolingual, elderly Hmong community members to connecting with local radio stations to reach farmworkers in San Joaquin Valley, Inland Empire, and Ventura County.
- **Increased capacity to train community leaders in census efforts.** Grantee partners also reported that they had strengthened their ability to train and engage community leaders to serve as trusted messengers for effective census outreach. While many organizations were able to tap into already-established community bases, others gained new knowledge about reaching other historically undercounted populations they had not previously engaged. Across the state, grantee partners reported that they trained thousands of community leaders on census outreach, education, and enumeration efforts, relying on promotora models, youth-led organizing, volunteer bases, and engaging faith-based communities to motivate community members to complete the census. Grantees shared that this resulted in a mobilizable base for other civic engagement efforts.
- **Strengthened capacity to use data to inform strategies.** The use of data, research, and analytics to help inform census outreach was a core component of census campaign efforts. Ranging from

"We all had to build digital capacity to do this work. Now, did we build the capacity to the point where we are all digital organizers? No, but I think we all gained exposure about what the possibilities are and that to do this work well, we need to build our staff capacity in digital organizing." – Grantee partner

the State Census' Statewide Outreach and Rapid Deployment (SwORD) mapping and spatial analysis tool to acquiring PDI voter data for phone banking and engaging data consultants, grantee partners strengthened and deepened their understanding of data to make rapid strategic decisions. Some organizations leveraged their strengthened data capacity to lead data analysis to support regional campaigns in strategically targeting specific neighborhoods or tracts that had low or stagnant response rates.

Strengthened Infrastructure for Civic Engagement and Movement Building

Funder survey respondents strongly agree that the census efforts resulted in a strengthened infrastructure to support ongoing civic participation of California communities. Indeed, over the course of the campaign, as funders and grantees endeavored to meet their goals around census outreach while also attending to the fallout of COVID-19 and engaging in solidarity with racial justice efforts, evidence of a strengthened infrastructure for civic engagement and movement building began to emerge. This includes:

- **Expanded community bases and increased coalition building.** Several organizations shared their census work resulted in an expansion of their community bases to support more long-term engagement on civic processes and community improvement efforts. Further, organizations also noted that the census served as the vehicle to support organizations coming together in broad-based coalition building to support joint actions and strategies for reaching historically undercounted communities, and many of these partnerships have continued beyond the census.
- **Regional infrastructures to support civic engagement and movement building.** As illustrated in the adjacent quote, philanthropic partners strengthened the civic engagement infrastructure in California by funding organizations and bringing them together to build trust and learn from each other. Funders also supported early census planning by providing funding support to tables, such as the Census Policy Advocacy Network and other collaborative efforts, and among racially and geographically diverse statewide organizations to help inform and shape policy on the census and to support post-census activities, such as redistricting. Another strong example is the formation of Inland Empowerment, a coalition of nine organizations in the Inland Empire that strengthened their partnerships through the census and are now actively engaged in reapportionment and redistricting efforts. Lastly, as one organization shared about the power of this new regional infrastructure: "We're also seeing similar infrastructure being built, but on redistricting. We have broad-based coalitions with diverse perspectives that represent diverse groups have tremendous power. What we've learned is that these tables

"Our base-building increased dramatically last year, especially after we jumped onto the Action Network to do it more efficiently. Especially with base-building and power-building within Native communities. We hadn't worked formally with many of them in the past and now we were just connecting across the state. This was really powerful, and it was actually happening through the census."
– Grantee partner

"We were really able to see a strengthened civic engagement infrastructure within California of organizations that were able to learn from each other's best practices, to develop trust, to engage with each other on census and other civic engagement. This is often overlooked, but so important. And often, foundations create competition between organizations for funding, but because there was a fair amount of funding, distributed across regions, the funding was able to be spread out." – Grantee partner

can achieve a lot and that philanthropic support made a tremendous difference for how things actually transpired through the census.”

- **Census tables and collaborations leveraging their relationships post-census to support other issues. (e.g. racial justice, redistricting, Getting out the Vote, and COVID-19 support).** Through the census, grantee organizations continued their relationships post-census to support other pressing issues. In fact, these partnerships were so effective that the State of California leveraged them for its COVID-19 recovery efforts. After the enumeration period, many organizations across the state focused on engaging communities in the 2020 election while other more service-oriented organizations pivoted to supporting their communities with resources to recover from the pandemic and focusing on vaccination drives. With analysis of census data currently underway, statewide and regional advocacy organizations have been engaged in ensuring that redistricting commissions are diverse, representative and community led.
- **New partnerships to engage in future cross-collaboration.** A strong theme also arose about organizations having built relationships with other organizations that have the potential for future partnership and collaboration. Grantee partners valued the many opportunities for connection offered through the census campaign, noting the many new partnerships they had established with organizations ranging from the State Census office, local county agencies, statewide policy advocates, and other local organizations. Many others shared that the pandemic brought partnerships even closer together as they worked together to troubleshoot how to best reach communities through the census campaign. Several others also shared that these new and strengthened connections could allow for alliance-building around aligned issue areas for advocacy.
- **Strengthened networks and relationships.** Multiple organizations indicated that conducting census outreach to historically underserved communities during the 2020 context resulted in stronger relationships and networks. Indeed, doing this work in a health and sociopolitical context wherein those same communities were being disproportionately harmed created multiple opportunities for organizations to develop relationships and collaborate to more effectively and powerfully advocate for and support their communities even as they continued outreach efforts.

“For me, the movement building taking place in the Inland Empire—that work came about because of the Census campaign. It could not have been any more transformational, because now we’re all working together in some way through the Redistricting Hub, we’re all in each other’s orbit now.”
– Grantee partner

“I’ve been living and working in nonprofits here in The Valley for 20 years, so I did have a good sense of organizations that have been here for a long time, but by being involved in the census work, I was able, also, to get to know new organizations that were not in my radar. We’re now looking to reach out to these new organizations whenever we need help in our advocacy efforts.” – Grantee partner

“The census created spaces for relationships to be created and I really see them continuing. We can engage other organizations to help us advance immigrant rights issues—to bring them into our coalition calls and brainstorm actions or policy agendas together.” – Grantee partner

The Census Twitter Network

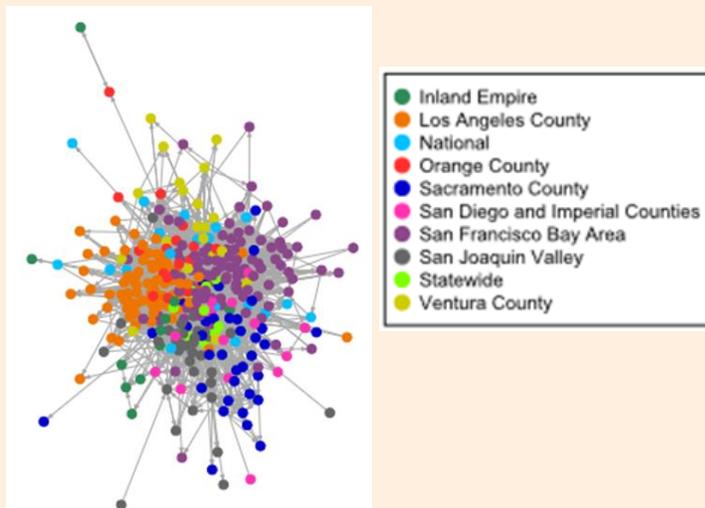
The California Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative is comprised of a variety of actors, including funders, grantees, and key partners that supported members of the network by sharing critical census news and information at state and national levels. While the challenges of the 2020 context made it unfeasible for us to conduct a comprehensive social network analysis, we were able to conduct an analysis of the initiative's Twitter network, which offers some information about connectedness of the network, at least through social media. For more information about this Twitter network and our Twitter analysis, see Appendix E. Among all these actors, the evaluation identified a total of 345 affiliated Twitter handles that meaningfully engaged with the Twitter platform, with the majority of those handles coming from the Los Angeles, San Francisco Bay Area, and Sacramento regions. An analysis of this network, comparing the pre-enumeration period with the post-enumeration period, revealed the following key findings:

The Census 2020 Twitter Network was well connected, especially at the regional level. The images of the initiative's Twitter network reflect a highly connected network. (Network connectivity refers to the number of connections held by a particular Twitter handle.) The network connectivity pre-enumeration was already strong, with 99.98% of the network having at least one connection to another member, indicating good positionality for collaboration. The regional clusters reflected in the network maps indicate that connectivity was strong at the regional level, which is appropriate, given the nature of census outreach work. In other words, Twitter handles within the same region are more likely to follow one another as they may share a common set of messages, events, and target populations. While the network maps do not indicate strong cross-regional collaboration, they do indicate that state-level and national-level actors are highly connected in this network, which are healthy indicators of strong pathways for information sharing. However, the network maps do point to a greater opportunity for cross-regional collaboration, which perhaps can improve via Census 2030 efforts.

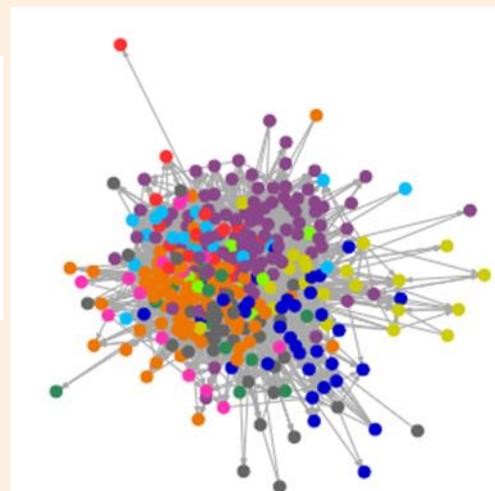
The Census 2020 Twitter Network strengthened slightly from the pre-enumeration period to the post-enumeration period. Specifically, comparing connectivity from the pre-enumeration period to the post-enumeration period, data showed the density of the network increased from 5% to 7% (density is the number of connections in the network, shown as a proportion of the number of possible connections). Furthermore, the percentage of handles that follow one another increased from 48% to 51%. While these percentage differences are not high relative to the opportunity for more Twitter handles to follow one another (e.g., there were many handles that remained unconnected during both the pre and post enumeration periods), the fact that that data show any amount of increase post-enumeration points to the potential for strengthened engagement and collaboration with Twitter content across the network post-Census. Moreover, the network maps show a tighter network at post-enumeration, highlighting this strengthening across time.

Grantee organizations became more central in the post-enumeration network. When comparing the list of the top 15 Twitter handles with the highest number of connections, at post-enumeration, the proportion of grantees in this list (as opposed to funders or other census partners) grew and included the following new grantees: Asian Americans Advancing Justice -Los Angeles, NALEO, and the Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights (CHIRLA). The addition of these grantees to the list of highest-connected handles signals increased engagement in Twitter content for these organizations, which could create more pathways for information sharing, collaboration, and advocacy around census-aligned issues and in support of equity-focused movements. While the number of grantees with the highest centrality increased, funders also continued to play a prominent role. While there were fewer funders in the list overall, their rank in the top 15 was higher at post; funders reflected four of the top five most central handles at post, as opposed to only two out five at pre-enumeration, perhaps reflecting the central role that some funders played with connecting grantees to one another.

Pre-Enumeration Twitter Network



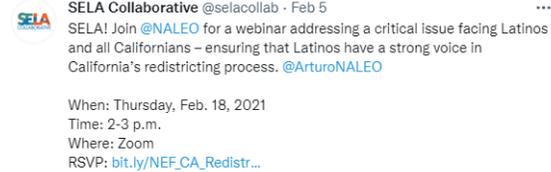
Post-Enumeration Twitter Network



Alignment Across Equity-Focused Issues and Movements

Recognizing the potential for census efforts to serve as a catalyst or platform for movement building, this evaluation also examined the extent to which alignment was taking place between the census and other equity-focused issues and movements. Analysis of interview, Twitter, and survey data as well as grantee documents reveal evidence of alignment and support across a number of critical issue areas, including:

- Redistricting/Resource Allocation.** Across interview respondents, a main theme centered on grantees continuing census efforts beyond the enumeration period and seeing through a community-led, representative process for redistricting and the “drawing of boundary lines” for the next 10 years. Some organizations spoke about pivoting their efforts and remaining engaged with advocacy efforts for the 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission. In particular, several local and statewide grantee partners convened around key alliances and collaboratives such as the Integrated Voter Engagement (IVE) Redistricting Alliance to engage and educate community residents, ensure representation of underrepresented communities in the redistricting office, and supply technical assistance in the drawing of community maps. Lastly, a few service-oriented organizations also shared that they hoped to remain engaged in redistricting but lacked the capacity and funding to fully engage.



“Census is the tool to help us build power for any movement: Black Lives Matter, immigrant justice, any type of movement. Just as importantly, census is ultimately about redistricting and resources and so continuing this work is critical so that we can truly transform communities for the next 10 years.”
– Grantee partner

“It doesn’t end with the official count. We continue to engage our supporters and communities that we are going to continue this work, especially around redistricting and providing testimony about an undercount and the challenges of the pandemic and political climate to make sure we are justly redrawing our boundaries.” – Grantee partner

- Getting out the Vote/Voter Engagement.** Relatedly, organizations also named the connection between the census and mobilizing voters for elections. As mentioned by one grantee partner working in Orange County with Cambodian communities, “We connected the census as the vehicle for ensuring voices are heard and voting does the same thing. As soon as the census ended, we jumped right into GOTV efforts.” Indeed, grantee partners focused on keeping communities civically engaged—by sharing information about the electoral process, providing opportunities for communities to learn how to keep track of their elected officials, and understanding the ballot and voting process. Another organization focused its efforts on young voters, recognizing their power and potential for long-term, year-round



If you are unable to vote in-person, don't forget you can vote-by-mail. 🗳️ Mark your calendar for your state's vote-by-mail deadlines for the general election. #VOTE

State	Mail	Mail	Mail	Mail	Mail	Mail	
Alabama**	10/29	Illinois	10/29	Montana	11/2	Rhode Island	10/13
Alaska	10/24	Indiana*	10/23	Nebraska	10/23	South Carolina*	10/30
Arizona	10/23	Iowa	10/24	Nevada	10/20	South Dakota	11/2
Arkansas**	10/27	Kansas	10/27	New Hampshire**	N/A	Tennessee**	10/27
California	10/27	Kentucky*	10/27	New Jersey	10/27	Texas**	10/23
Colorado	All Mail	Louisiana*	10/20	New Mexico	10/20	Utah	All Mail
Connecticut	11/2	Maine	10/20	New York*	10/27	Vermont	11/2
Delaware**	10/30	Maryland	10/27	North Carolina	10/27	Virginia	10/23
DC	10/27	Massachusetts**	11/2	North Dakota	N/A	Washington	All Mail
Florida	10/24	Michigan	10/30	Ohio	10/31	West Virginia*	10/28
Georgia	10/30	Minnesota	11/2	Oklahoma	10/27	Wisconsin	10/29
Hawaii	All Mail	Mississippi*	N/A	Oregon	All Mail	Wyoming	11/2
Idaho	10/23	Missouri**	10/21	Pennsylvania	10/27		

© PICO California and 9 others

engagement for the elections. The Twitter analysis captured 125 retweets related to GOTV and voter engagement.

- Immigrant Rights.** Evaluation respondents, particularly those that directly work with or advocate on behalf of immigrant communities, also emphasized the alignment between the census and immigrant rights. For some grantee partners, this came from the census being one of the few ways that undocumented immigrants can be civically engaged. Others saw the census contributing to strengthened connections and alliances with other advocates for potential future mobilization. As noted by one organization in the San Joaquin Valley, “the census strengthened our connections with organizations who may not center immigrants, but now we can coordinate with to serve our immigrant communities better.” Complementing this finding, our Twitter analysis showed that immigration/immigrant rights was the third-most retweeted issue area during the post-enumeration period (218 retweets) and the top issue area in the pre-enumeration period (157 retweets). This relatively high amount of retweeting among census partners about immigration/immigrant rights signals heightened social media visibility of this issue surrounding the census enumeration period.
- Racial Equity and Racial Justice.** Many organizations made connections between the census and efforts to advance racial equity and racial justice for communities across the state. Grantee partners recognized that an undercount on the census would have disproportionate and severe consequences for communities of color across the state. Other organizations noted that the racial justice uprisings helped to further connect the census to a broader racial equity movement. Twitter analysis showed that racial equity and racial justice was the most retweeted topic in the post-census enumeration period. Specifically, actors in our Twitter network retweeted 448 racial equity and racial justice messages. Furthermore, 70 tweets during the census enumeration period connected the census with racial equity and racial justice. The content of these tweets generally related to the following themes: (1) an accurate census count can help address society’s racial equity issues through building political power; (2) census will help determine police funding and accountability and provide the resources needed to fight for racial justice; and (3) taking the census is a way to support the Black Lives Matter movement.
- COVID-19 Pandemic and Recovery.** Grantee partners also noted that the COVID-19 pandemic only served to further bolster the importance of census for communities. While several organizations worked to support communities with direct financial support, resource sharing on unemployment, renter’s relief, food distribution, and other benefits, they also focused on shifting their census messaging to note the importance between census and public health and health care. Our Twitter analysis highlighted that COVID-19 was a central theme among census-related

“The racial justice uprisings of 2020 allowed us to further connect the racial justice movement and situate the census as part of that movement as a whole.” – Grantee partner



CAIR Sacramento Valley/Central California
@cairsvcc

...

TODAY: Join CAIR-CA & guests from @fresnometrobcc & @CANativeVote for #2020Census chat on Racial Equity. It’s critical we ensure everyone’s counted while recognizing that 100s of years of systemic racism & oppression has excluded communities. Tune in on any CAIR-CA Facebook page!



tweets during the enumeration period. Census partners tweeted about both the census and COVID-19 683 times. Their most frequent type of Twitter census messaging related to COVID-19 lifted up the importance of the census in light of the impacts of COVID-19. These messages typically highlighted how the census would determine funding for the health care and economic resources needed to recover from COVID-19. For example, one tweet from Homies Unidos stated: *“COVID-19 has made it clear that our healthcare system needs more resources. The #2020Census will help decide the funding LA County receives for healthcare & emergency services for the next decade. Be counted #CensusDay!”*

Movement Building via Twitter

Overall, Twitter analysis showed that retweeting relationships among the census network increased from pre-enumeration to post-enumeration. Specifically, the frequency in which handles retweeted one another increased across time. This signals that handles within the census Twitter network engaged more with one another’s content during and after the census enumeration period as opposed to before. This heightened engagement implies that actors within this census network are more aware of one another’s key issue areas and campaigns and are contributing to building awareness of these issues and campaigns among their own Twitter networks, which may indicate increased alignment across issues. Thus, the Twitter analysis, combined with the interview findings, point to the census supporting increased alignment across census partners, particularly around redistricting, GOTV, immigrant rights, racial equity and racial justice, and COVID-19 recovery.

Impact of the Statewide Funders’ Initiative

The intention behind the creation of the Statewide Funders’ Initiative was to create a vehicle for funders to learn, leverage and effectively support census efforts regionally and across the state. Specifically, the initiative was designed to facilitate more effective coordination and deployment of philanthropic resources to ensure an accurate and complete count, which was not easy, given the sheer size of the state, the extreme diversity within and across regions, and the different geographic contexts within the state (and even within regions). This section focuses on the contributions the Statewide Funders’ Initiative made towards a more effective Census 2020 campaign and in service of aligned civic engagement and movement building efforts. These contributions are organized under three thematic areas: (1) coordinating philanthropic engagement, (2) serving as a bridge between the broader Census 2020 ecosystem, and (3) laying the groundwork for future collaboration. Data sources that informed this section include a funder survey and interviews with funders and key census partners.

Coordinating Philanthropic Engagement

Overall, we heard overwhelming agreement across funders, grantees, and partners that California’s Statewide Funders’ Initiative was an effective vehicle for organizing philanthropy in support of the 2020 Census. Over 93 percent of funders agreed (36.7%) or strongly agreed (56.7%) that this was the case, with many underscoring the complexity the 2020 census context, and the subsequent importance of a statewide body to facilitate philanthropic investment and engagement.

“I never miss a meeting because it's super highly organized—it has a strong coordinator and it has a really strong steering committee of funders. There’s always a learning component there, so I do feel like, as a program officer who's working in this very spread out set of issues, that I feel very much able to stay on top of it.” –Funder partner

Three specific areas of impact surfaced in this area as evaluation respondents reflected on the specific value of the statewide Funder Table:

- **Serving as a centralized hub of information and action.** Across the board, interviewed funders expressed explicit appreciation for the role that Statewide Funders’ Initiative played in providing real-time information about national and statewide census developments and opportunities for action and investment. Multiple funders —many of whom were not involved in census efforts previously and who only had a few hours a week to dedicate to the census within full-time jobs—deeply valued the time saved by not having to actively stay on top of every moving detail, and instead being able to rely on information offered through trusted partners. Amidst a rapidly unfolding census backdrop where timing of action was urgent, this supported quick decision-making and action. For example, one foundation representative shared that instead of losing time needed to figure out how to respond to the census citizenship question issue, he could direct his foundation to quickly sign onto letters to the California Supreme Court. As simply summarized by another, “I [could move forward with] the confidence that I didn’t have to know everything.”

“I mean, it was very messy, and I don't know where we would have been without the Statewide Funders’ Initiative, because it gave us a power as a group. And instead of us going toe to toe [with the state], we could then share our concerns and approach the issue as a group. That created an equal footing in a way that we wouldn't have had by ourselves.” – Funder partner

- **Catalyzing and streamlining philanthropic investment.** Evaluation respondents also emphasized the importance of the Funders’ Initiative’s efforts to catalyze and streamline census investments. Just over 92 percent agreed (50%) or strongly agreed (42%) that the Statewide Funders’ Initiative reduced duplication of efforts regionally and across the state. In some cases, regional pooled funds connected to the Funder Table offered important formal vehicles for local and, in many cases, smaller funders to invest resources in support of census outreach. As exemplified by the quote to the right, individual funders also shared that their investments were shaped by information and direction provided by this table. As shared by one, “[The Funder Table] helped to keep me current with the many factors getting in the way of an accurate count and helped me to be a better internal advocate for increasing our support for census outreach, which ended up being almost ten times more than what we funded in 2010.”

“What was really important through the Funders' Initiative was just understanding who funded where so that I felt like I had a real understanding of where the gaps were, and that directly informed my motivation for grantmaking to fill in the gaps ... I felt like I had a good understanding of ... where funders were gravitating towards and where they were not and where there were more hard-to- count communities that needed resources.” –Funder partner

- **Harnessing the *power* of philanthropy.** The value of the statewide Funder Table was not simply practical. There was a small subset of participant funders who noted the value of the statewide table in aggregating power and ensuring that philanthropy had a voice in Census 2020 decision-making. Especially given the massive amounts of money that the state had allocated toward the census, some individual funders felt that it would have been much more difficult to navigate the inevitable messy politics within regions and with the state without the weight of the larger collective—which included powerful statewide funders—behind them. Some national partners perceived that California’s strengthened statewide focus on historically undercounted

populations within a “built-in equity framework” could also be traced back to the collective power of the Statewide Funders’ Initiative.

Serving as a Bridge within the Broader Census 2020 Ecosystem

The other clear area of impact where evaluation respondents saw the value add of the Statewide Funders’ Initiative was in the role that the Funder Table played as a bridge within a complex and, at times, chaotic Census 2020 ecosystem.

- **Bridging between regional and national philanthropy.** Evaluation respondents named that the active participation of multiple California philanthropic leaders at national tables shaped national census work and vice versa. A national partner shared, “It was very much a two-way relationship where we really relied on state-based funders to share intelligence and let us know what types of resources and supports would be useful to state funders, sort of helped keep us posted on what was happening on the ground, what sorts of challenges were their grantee is facing, where were they running into barriers around working with the census bureau? Then, in turn, we were sharing resources and intelligence information back with them.” As exemplified in the quote to the right, multiple regional funders described similarly benefiting from the statewide table not only for staying abreast of state-level developments but hearing about what was happening in different regions. One regional lead described the subsequent cascade, as she “turned around and shared that information to push funders along” in her region.

“We found the Statewide Funders' Table, and particularly the work that GCIR was doing around it, very helpful to talk through what the state was doing. How can we align and collaborate our efforts around grantmaking and technical assistance?”—Funder partner

- **Advancing a model of public-private partnership.** Participating funders, national partners, and even representatives from the state itself characterized the relationship between the Statewide Funders’ Initiative and state’s census efforts as a powerful model of public-private partnership. On the one hand, this was simply attributed to how the Statewide Funders’ Initiative represented a centralized “voice of philanthropy” that allowed for deep coordination with the state. More importantly, however, several lifted up that the Funder Table provided formalized structures to engage with the state, with a state representative invited to and joining quarterly meetings with all funders and engaging in meaningful real-time conversations around census efforts on the ground. One shared, “The state can't do it alone. And philanthropy can take risks where public dollars can't.”
- **Complementing state census investments.** Within the census ecosystem, the Statewide Funders’ Initiative was seen as providing distinct benefit because of the “nimbleness” associated with philanthropic capital. State census representatives, funders, and grantees all directly compared this nimbleness to resources and requirements associated with the state’s census support. According to evaluation respondents, there were four specific ways this served to benefit census implementation. Namely, philanthropic dollars allowed for census grantees to: (1) *engage early*, which created space for planning and partnership building even before state dollars were released, (2) *bolster participation* among smaller organizations who did not have the capacity to pursue state funding, and (3) *pursue advocacy and narrative change campaigns* amidst a chaotic and contentious census context, and—mostly importantly—(4) *innovate and pivot their work to be responsive to needs on the ground*. A number of grantees particularly underscored this last theme when interviewed, expressing value for the trust that philanthropic partners had in them--

both so that they could focus on the work instead of the reporting, and gain “wriggle room” that allowed for them to be “more creative with our outreach.”

Laying the Groundwork for Future Collaboration

A final legacy of the Statewide Funders’ Initiative extends beyond the census itself. As evaluation respondents talked about what they gained from their Census 2020 experience, clear outcome themes emerged that point to a foundation for future engagement and collaboration. Areas where the Funder Table offered value toward this end included:

- **Creating/reinforcing a sense of community.**

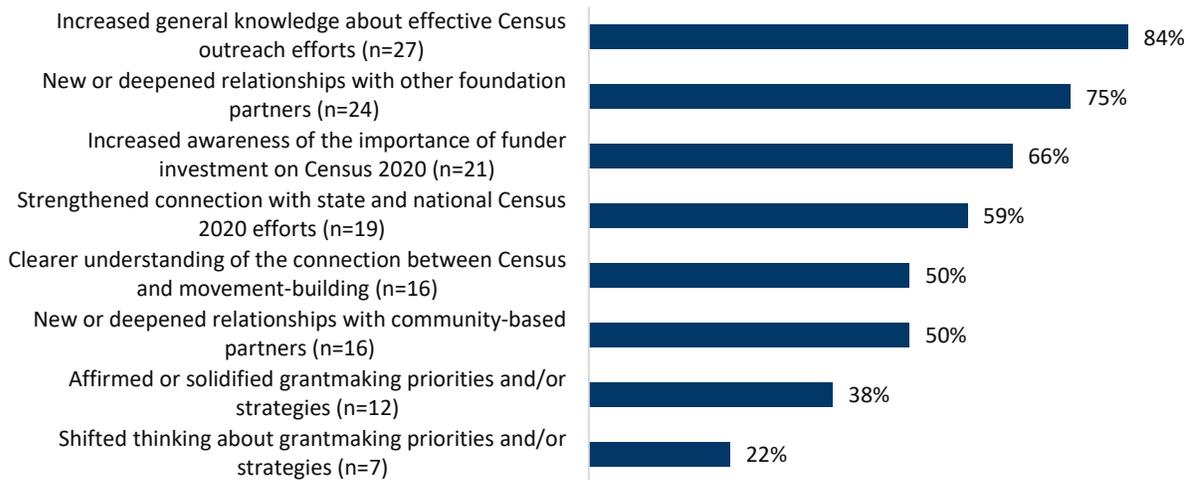
Another strong theme that emerged from funder interviews was the sense of community they gained through the Funder Table. Participating funders valued the opportunity to “tap into a unified conversation among those who had an interest in reaching hard-to-count communities.” Many shared that they benefited from a space where they could connect with and learn from others, and “not feel on their own.” As shared by one funder, the camaraderie with others helped to know “we’re in this crazy campaign together.”

As shown in Exhibit 6 on the next page, 75 percent of surveyed funders indicated that they gained new or deeper relationships with other foundation partners through their participation, and several interviewed funders remained hopeful that these relationships could continue to be leveraged for future partnership opportunities. At least one funder observed that census collaboration is “very aligned with where California’s philanthropic sector has evolved to, which is high coordination and collaboration.”

- **Strengthening engagement of individual funders.** Exhibit 6 summarizes what individual funders reported gaining from their participation in the Statewide Funders’ Initiative. The greatest areas of benefit were not unexpected given the findings above—including increased general knowledge of effective Census outreach efforts (84%), new or deepened relationships with other funders (75%), increased awareness of the importance of Census investment (66%). While reported as outcomes by fewer percentages of funders, the bottom categories of outcomes are notable in that they suggest a level of organizational change that might be leveraged going forward.

“Census work really laid the foundation for so much of our partnership work, in terms of building that muscle, as I said, of coordination and communication. Really understanding where the opportunities for partnership were. So that when COVID hit, we were ready to hit the ground running because those relationships were already built, there was a foundation for a partnership which resonated for folks.” – Funder Partner

Exhibit 6. Reported Funder Outcomes (n=30)



Despite all of the chaos that marked 2020, and the persistent emergence of new obstacles throughout this census journey, the participants in the Funders’ Initiative were still able to contribute to a range of outcomes that not only affirm all of their hard work over the course of this challenging year but also inform learning for future efforts. The next chapter highlights those learnings, offering specific recommendations for the road ahead.

“California was a really important early model, or the learnings from 2010 really helped inform some of the early work around how to think about census in 2020, especially around thinking about census as a strategy to build long-term power, in addition to the more immediate goal of trying to achieve a fair and accurate census, especially for historically under-counted communities.” – Funder partner

5 | Recommendations for the Road Ahead

As of the writing of this report, the U.S. Census Bureau continues to be in the process of reviewing and analyzing census data quality. Moreover, results about specific populations labeled as hard-to-count are not scheduled for release until 2022, rendering it impossible to know yet whether the efforts funded through the CA Census 2020 Statewide Funders' Initiative contributed to more successful inclusion of historically undercounted populations than in 2010. That said, the state is already feeling the impact of apportionment results, which led to the loss of a congressional seat, something that has never happened in the entire history of California's statehood. While it is not yet clear whether an undercount is a factor in preliminary census results, demographers noted that the results reflect the state's slow population growth as well as people leaving the state due to the high cost of living and massive inequities experienced by low- and even middle-income families across a number of arenas, including education, health, housing, and economic security. Ultimately, this affirms the decision to focus the initiative not just on census campaign outcomes but also on aligned civic engagement and equity-focused movement building.

This chapter offers recommendations for the road ahead, focusing specifically on preparations for Census 2030, continued support for civic engagement, and ways to continue and improve the Statewide Funders' Initiative. These recommendations were informed primarily by the reflections offered by funders, grantees, and initiative partners.

Prepare Strategically for Census 2030

When we asked funders and partners to share lessons from Census 2020 that can help inform future efforts, the resounding theme that emerged was to *start earlier* to ensure that all who are engaged in census efforts have the time to prepare, coordinate, and align efforts to ensure effectiveness. Another strong and related theme was that engaging in census is not something we should consider doing every 10 years but that it should be a continuous focus²³, as there is so much work to be done in the years in-between census counts. Other, recommendations lifted up by California philanthropic partners and community-based organizations related to preparations for Census 2030 include:

- **Deepen investments in LUCA.** Funders emphasized the importance of committing more resources to the Local Update of Census Addresses Program (LUCA). This is one of the least visible census strategies, and yet it is one of the most critical for ensuring that those working on the ground to reach historically undercounted populations have accurate data for their outreach efforts. Population shifts within the state and communities are growing in significance and it is important to know where people live in order to reach them. One funder emphasized that the 2020 context made the critical nature of LUCA even more clear, because “with this pandemic, especially in Latino with communities, it's like everybody either got evicted or moved somewhere else.” Another emphasized the implications for philanthropy, noting “if philanthropy is going to have a role to play in terms of influence with government, whether it's county or state, we need to start earlier, before LUCA,

²³ The Funders Census Initiative (FCI) has offered a set of recommendations aimed at the role and actions that philanthropy can take now and during the subsequent years prior to Census 2030. The following ten-year plan can be accessed here: <https://funderscommittee.org/resource/a-blueprint-for-philanthropic-census-engagement>

because we need to make sure that we are raising this and getting this into budgets at the county and the state levels.”

- **Advocate now to ensure that government at all levels is adequately prepared for census investments and participation.** Several respondents acknowledged that the state set aside an unprecedented level of resources to support census efforts, but they also emphasized the need to “keep pressure on the state to ensure it continues to invest significantly in the census.” Respondents added that the state should be encouraged to not only fund significantly, but to disburse those funds earlier (one recommendation was a year-and-a-half ahead of the official start date) and in lump sums so that organizations have the resources they need to staff up and philanthropy can better plan for their own contributions to the effort. In addition to state-level advocacy, respondents emphasized the importance of advocating for government investments at local levels so that cities and counties are appropriately prepared and resourced to “activate community” and engage in census activities well in advance of the actual census period.

“Even at the local level, we need to make sure to get census into the county strategic plan. We need to make sure to get the city to quickly adopt the resolution and get started earlier. There are probably some key things that we could do: like five years out, we should get the county to make census community outreach part of their legislative agenda and possibly also have a strategy document on related to advocacy to start readying things.” – Grantee Partner

- **Engage in multi-level capacity building much sooner.** A number of interview respondents indicated that there are certain kinds of capacity work that can be done much earlier so that all census actors can be ready and equipped to engage their roles more effectively. One funder noted that much of the philanthropic community, for example, could benefit from “re-educat[ion] about what you can and cannot do between public charitable and private foundations,” adding that this would be “so useful because a lot of people don’t know you can do a lot.” Two others talked about the importance of investing more in supporting organizations “to become greater data users,” noting that while many are focused on creating “good census data,” they also ask, “are we making investments that builds their capacity to use this data and how they’re interacting and using this data and understanding its power?” Finally, another respondent suggested that, instead of inviting all organizations to the same trainings, that they instead invest in creating capacity-building “tracks” in order to better meet the needs of the diverse range of organizations engaged in this work as well as differing levels of experience with the census.
- **Invest in strategic messaging support.** Several respondents noted that there are a number of ways they can prepare in advance of Census 2030 to ensure strategic messaging effectively reaches and resonates with historically undercounted populations. For example, a few expressed a desire for clearly articulated statewide objectives for overarching media and messaging plans, developed well in advance of the campaign. One respondent added that these objectives should be developed in “easy-to-understand language so our local partners can focus resources on local media or gaps in marketing outreach efforts.” Others suggested that more tangible supports could also be developed earlier, such as having more printed materials in multiple languages in advance of the outreach process or making easily customizable digital files so that partners could customize them while also maintaining an “overall consistent message and easy-to-recognize design.” Addressing translation needs early, as part of the preparation process, was emphasized by multiple respondents, who cautioned that translation should not be treated as “an afterthought.”

- **Build digital capacity.** Census 2020 was the first year that an online format for completing the survey was introduced. While it is still not clear what impact the online format may have had with respect to completion rates, multiple funders emphasized the urgency of building digital capacity, in case online completion becomes the dominant method of enumeration in the future. This includes investing *now* to address inequitable access to digital broadband in historically undercounted communities, recognizing that “many people lack equitable access to the technology required for full civic participation.” It also includes ensuring ample technical assistance support to ensure that organizations working on the ground have the technology and skills needed to engage in effective digital outreach and provide support for community members who are not proficient in online mediums.
- **Stay committed to census throughout the decade and build organizational capacity to live into that commitment.** One of the realities of the nonprofit world (and now, as an impact of COVID-19), is high organizational turnover. This has obvious impacts for the work on the ground, as organizations have to deploy more of their resources for continuous training as they lose outreach workers, which takes away resources needed for actual outreach. But others noted that the issue of turnover also had impacts at the funder level, when critical staff who served as census champions in their organizations left their positions. A census partner at the national level encouraged funders to think about how to address “inevitable staff change,” particularly as many organizations hire specifically for census efforts, and ensure that “the census as a priority doesn’t leave [with] those staff transitions.” She suggested creating onboarding resources or tools and trainings “to help institutions sort of maintain the knowledge and capacity and the census as a priority throughout the decade.”
- **Mobilize for specific changes to the census form.** At least one respondent indicated that the time in between census periods is ideal for addressing persistent concerns about the census form. This in-between time is an opportunity to consider how to add other demographic categories that will be useful in helping to determine community needs and resource allocations, as well as to more accurately reflect the rich and complex diversity in our communities. Relatedly, one respondent asked “How do we add other demographic categories, like MENA, gender identity, and LGBTQ representation? And how do we fix the Hispanic/Latino question?”²⁴ Given the levels of bureaucracy surrounding the census, this is a conversation that one respondent emphasized “needs to start now.”

“If we want the 2030 Census to be better, to do a better job of including historically undercounted communities, that means that we need to make sure that the Census Bureau can better center the lived experiences of historically undercounted communities in all of the decisions that they make around policy and operations, and that requires that those resources, those organizations have the staffing and capacity to be able to engage around those issues in advance of when decisions are made, and that requires funding.” – Grantee partner

²⁴ The challenges around the “Hispanic/Latino” question are complex and are rooted in histories of racism, assimilation, and the complexities around how identity is claimed and imposed upon whole groups of people. An interesting source of information on this issue can be found here: <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2014/06/16/321819185/on-the-census-who-checks-hispanic-who-checks-white-and-why>.

Leverage Momentum and Infrastructure for Movement Building and Civic Engagement

Multiple respondents recognized that the collective efforts of the Census 2020 campaign, particularly in the face of so many challenges, ultimately resulted in strong sense of momentum for mobilizing around equity-focused issues, as well as a fairly robust census infrastructure that can continue to be leveraged in support of equity-focused movement building and aligned civic engagement. Specific recommendations include:

- **Continue to utilize the Census 2020 infrastructure, particularly at the regional level, in service of other civic engagement activities.** Multiple respondents recognized the power of the regional 2020 Census infrastructure, particularly considering its network of actors that are already deeply connected with and trusted by historically undercounted communities. One funder shared that there is an “argument to be made about supporting that regional infrastructure, because the work is going to continue on at a regional level.” This evaluation has already captured multiple ways in which that has already happened, as several regions leaned on their census infrastructure to support multiple efforts such as COVID outreach and get-out-the-vote efforts, or to support massive regional initiatives such as IE RISE.²⁵ Undergirding this recommendation was the desire from respondents to keep up the momentum and not lose the advantage of all they had built through their census efforts.
- **Create a resource for easy access to tools and learning to support future endeavors.** A number of respondents expressed a desire for a way to make tools, resources, and learnings easily accessible to funders and other census actors in advance of the census period so that no one has to “reinvent the wheel,” learning and best practices can be shared within and across regions, and actors at all levels can dive into the work more quickly and efficiently. One respondent suggested a Dropbox or Google Drive folder, while another suggested the creation of a toolkit or playbook, particularly for foundations, that enable foundations to participate at whatever level is possible for them so that they can “plug in and plug in early.”
- **Maintain and strengthen the relationships built across the initiative’s census network.** Multiple respondents named relationships as a key strength of this initiative, with one respondent emphasizing that “We need to keep this network alive! It is so powerful!” Others acknowledged that while relationship building is time-consuming, continued investment in it is important and “worth the time—it takes time, there is no shortcut to having trusting relationships.” Several emphasized the importance of continuing to build relationships across regions in order to support more effective coordination and learning across regions and geographic types (i.e., rural, urban, suburban). Some respondents specifically noted the importance of continuing to

“I think we should just keep these Complete Count Committees alive and start meeting every couple months for the next 10 years to just keep talking about the census. I don’t think we need to lose what we just built.” – Grantee partner

“Multi-sector connectivity is really important. Having a direct and mostly open line of communication with the state, community groups as much as possible is critical to make this happen. It is really important because it feels like every minute and every penny counts.”—Grantee partner

²⁵ Inland Empire Roadmap for an Inclusive and Sustainable Economy (IE RISE) is a two-county-wide collaborative that works with communities toward equity-focused systems reform. A key intention is to “set new expectations for [the] region and re-define what is possible for San Bernardino and Riverside Counties. For more information about these efforts, go to <https://ierise.org/>.

nurture relationships with community groups while also attending to cross-sector relationship building. Multiple respondents also encouraged continued relationship building with the state, in order to create opportunities for deeper and more aligned coordination for future efforts. As one respondent shared:

“[We need to] get elected leaders, government staff and intermediaries planning together sooner. Despite all the encouragement from CA Census and others, our early local timeline looked more like it did in 2010 and we lost valuable time to get organized and galvanized.”

Continue and Improve the Efforts of the Statewide Funders’ Initiative

As noted in the previous chapter, funders that participated in this initiative found value in it. Moreover, multiple respondents shared that the initiative should continue in order to provide more robust support for Census 2030 and to support aligned efforts. Respondents also offered some recommendations about ways in which to strengthen or improve the initiative. These include:

- **Recruit more funders, and a greater diversity of funders.** While the Statewide Funders’ Initiative pulled in many more philanthropic funders (and dollars) this year than in 2010, there is a strong desire to recruit more, and to start that recruitment effort now, in order to ensure better information sharing and coordination prior to Census 2030. Several respondents added that they would like to see more diversity of funders recruited, with at least a couple noting that the “larger” or “well-known” foundations had greater involvement in the initiative, and that presence and participation from smaller community foundations was not as strong as they would have liked. To this end, respondents acknowledged the need to do more outreach to a variety of philanthropic organizations, including smaller, more regional, and more family foundations, and to provide them with tangible ways to get involved. At the same time, another respondent encouraged those larger and more “well-known” foundations to be active in the recruitment process. She explained that “hear[ing] from a trusted funder like The California Endowment, the James Irvine Foundation, or the Latino Community Foundation speak out about why we funded it” might compel more funders around the state to participate in the next census.
- **Create clear points of entry that accommodate different levels of engagement.** As noted previously, the census is not a funding priority for many foundations, often because it doesn’t fit within their funding strategies, nor can they easily see a clear through line to their missions. One such funder shared that it was therefore important for the Statewide Funder Table to “begin with a clear and expansive rationale for census education and outreach that helps many funders find a role in the overall effort.” With respect to these “roles,” other respondents encouraged the Funder Table to clearly articulate ways that they can participate that reflect different levels of engagement, to accommodate foundations with different capacities, resources, and funding foci. As one respondent explained, “just giving them the timeline, how to get involved, easy ways to plug in at all different levels, I think, is something that we didn’t have, but it would have been good to have. And maybe, as we look to the 2030 Census, it’s something we can plan for.”
- **Encourage participating funders to be flexible and incorporate responsive funds into their budgets to support Census 2030 efforts.** As the 2020 context became increasingly unstable and chaotic, members of the Funder Table took intentional moments of pause to understand how best to attend to the needs of their grantees and the communities they served. Grantees expressed gratitude for the flexibility of the Statewide Initiative funders, many of whom extended deadlines, reduced

reporting requirements, and/or provided additional, rapid-response funding to support community needs in light of the pandemic. Setting aside rapid-response funding to support adaptive capacity of organizations on the ground was actually a recommendation from the 2010 census; its utility was affirmed in the 2020 effort and funders encouraged this as a continued practice for 2030.

- **Hold more Funder Table meetings and include more “outside learning” and inspirational components into funder meetings.** Multiple respondents shared that they deeply valued the meetings and would have liked to have had more of them. Several noted that they especially enjoyed having time to learn from each other during convenings as well as from others who are “census experts,” particularly as it relates to historically undercounted populations. They requested that more “outside learning opportunities” be incorporated into each funder collaborative meeting. One respondent suggested that the Funder Table try to tap more into the work of national partners, acknowledging that while national census partners are typically more focused on states with less resources and census support than California, the Funder Table can still leverage their connections to learn more about available tools and resources being used in other states. Finally, at least one respondent shared that future funder meetings should incorporate components that keep participants motivated and inspired to do the work.
- **Consider extending the Funder Table’s role beyond the census.** Some respondents expressed a desire for the Statewide Funder Table to more intentionally expand its role beyond the census, to support aligned movement building and continued civic engagement in efforts that are directly tied to the census (such as redistricting). While several funders within the Funder Table engaged in this work, they acted independently, with some collaborating with other funders, but not as an organized, statewide body. A couple of respondents emphasized that “there’s still great potential and opportunity for that, it’s not too late.” They also added that, should they move forward to support aligned movement building and civic engagement efforts, they should consider “how to do this more democratically, and in a co-designed fashion with grantees to define what is movement building.”

“The 2020 Census was such a slog; it was such an unusual year and all of us working on census were just depleted and exhausted toward the end. It was really hard to cross that finish line in October. As much as we loved everything about the census and wanted to see it be as accurate and fair as possible, the flip side was we were burned out. I think offering opportunities where you could be motivated, where we were refreshed in this work and re-inspired to do this work, I think could have been amazing.” – Grantee partner

Conclusion

2020 felt like a year of endless, uphill battles, not just for the census, but for anyone working to achieve more equitable and just outcomes for communities that have been historically underserved, undercounted, and undermined. It was the year of perpetual pivots and almost brutal tests of the adaptive capacity of whole sectors, as well as organizations, communities, and families. As evaluators of this initiative, we, too, were tested. We did our best to respectfully follow participants along this journey, adapting as best we could as we tried to remain in-step with the initiative and the census as they evolved, while also working to be sensitive to the mounting stresses on grantees and funders alike. We shifted our data collection strategies and evaluation design so as not to create further stresses, we met regularly with other evaluators across the state and nationally to share data as well as strategies for how to still work towards an effective and useful evaluation without being overly burdensome. Like the participants in this initiative, we found community in our effort to be collaborative and of service to others. This experience

illuminates yet another facet of this initiative that we found so striking: that the dedication of participants in this initiative to be of service, and to achieve more equitable and just outcomes—for the census and beyond—ultimately resulted in a strengthened infrastructure that contributed to a remarkable amount of collaboration and camaraderie, despite the overwhelming sense of isolation imposed by 2020 context—physically, socially, and emotionally. In those last funder meetings, as the initiative came to a close, we were struck by the passionate tone that participants used when talking about the importance of this work, and by the almost fierce sense of resolve expressed by many of the participants and partners that their collaborative efforts to ensure that historically undercounted communities are seen, valued, supported, and counted must continue. And that the infrastructure to support Census 2030 efforts must start *now*.

It has been an honor to serve as this initiative’s evaluators. The passion, commitment, creativity, and resilience of its participants are both humbling and awe-inspiring. As these initiative actors move on to the next stages of aligned work, we sincerely hope this evaluation offers something of value that can support their efforts as they strive for equity, inclusion, and a greater sense of belonging for all Californians.