



State of California – Government Operations Agency  
 California Complete Count-Census 2020  
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**GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor**  
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## FINAL REPORT TEMPLATE

### General Information

Date of report	<b>November 16, 2020</b>
Organization / Entity	<b>Contra Costa County</b>
Responsible Person / Title	<b>Julie Enea Senior Deputy County Administrator</b>
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### Narrative Report

**1) List your goal(s) and objectives as it appears in your strategic and implementation plan. What and how did you revise the objectives due to COVID-19 and the US Census Bureau’s operational adjustments?**

#### Goals

1. Achieve a Self-Response Rate of at least 76.9% (2010 Participation Rate according to the US Census Bureau. Note, since our goals were developed, the Census Bureau has published estimated 2010 Self Response Rates. For Contra Costa County this is 72.1% and a more accurate comparison).
2. Increase participation in hard-to-count (HTC) communities.
3. Collaborate with the U.S. Census Bureau, State, regional groups, the Regional Administrative Community Based Organization (ACBO), Contra Costa cities and special districts, and Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to avoid duplication and effectively communicate the Census message.
4. Build additional capacity and strengthen Contra Costa County CBOs through Census outreach efforts.

#### Objectives

Due Date: November 16, 2020

1. Messaging Partners: Community Partners agree to amplify Census messaging through social media, newsletters, and email blasts. Messages may be targeted to specific populations and in multiple languages as needed. We increased our focus on messaging partners due to COVID.
2. Hosting Questionnaire Assistance Centers or Questionnaire Action Kiosks. Our Questionnaire Assistance strategy was greatly impacted by COVID. We were able to do some phone assistance and implemented some questionnaire assistance towards the end of the Census operation.
3. Census Speakers Bureau: The County will work to match requests for a Census 2020 Speaker at community events with local trusted messengers, Complete Count Committee Members, and Census staff to present at various local events. The Speaker's Bureau was greatly impacted by COVID. We were able to attend some virtual meetings.
4. Mini-Grant Program: Applying for mini-grants to implement a Census Outreach idea, such as:
  - Community Events
  - Youth Film Festivals
  - Soccer Tournaments
  - CBO outreach efforts (to fund larger CBO outreach events to leverage existing resources)

Our grantees also had to pivot during COVID and increased social media outreach and added phone banking and food distribution activities instead of their planned activities.

5. Adopt-a-Block Program: Community Organization volunteers to canvass in HTC Census Blocks to encourage residents to fill out their Census questionnaires. This program will work in concert with SwORD's live self-response data to target areas with a low self-response rate. Community Organizations and/or volunteers will be provided with training and a stipend for the canvassing. We were unable to implement the Adopt-a-Block Program due to COVID. We pivoted to phone banking and increased social media.

**2) Reflecting on your own operations and outreach strategies throughout the campaign, please provide a response with specific examples for the following questions. Please also indicate which timeframe you are referring to in your response (i.e., education, NRFU period).**

**Contracted partner's operations**

***What worked well operationally?***

- Training trusted messengers in the education period months in advance of Census throughout the county to reach people directly in their own communities, particularly for communities who speak English as a second

language. We heard time and again that residents preferred to see outreach in their native language even if they spoke English fluently.

- Funding local community-based organizations during the activation phase was an efficient way to get our funding out and into the hands of community members who could most effectively conduct outreach to their communities.
- Our Health, Housing, and Homelessness Coordinated Outreach Referral and Engagement (CORE) homeless outreach team was a major factor in our success with counting our unhoused population in the Service Based Enumeration (SBE) and Targeted Non-Sheltered Outdoor Locations (TNSOL) Census operations. Although communications with our Area Census Offices (ACO) was not always clear, we were able to rely heavily on our CORE team to provide the needed information and conduct additional clean-up efforts with unhoused populations to ensure all our residents who were unhoused were enumerated correctly.

### ***What hindered the operations?***

- COVID-19 was of course the biggest hinderance to our outreach operations. It completely derailed our strategy of peer-to-peer outreach and forced us to shift to a more digital/virtual approach as we all adjusted to the "new normal". In addition to a shift in strategy, many of our outreach partners were stretched thin due to conducting rapid response related to COVID. Towards the end of the Census operations we were able to conduct more in person outreach as we adapted to the precautions needed to prevent spread of the virus.
- In September as we attempted to do more in person assistance wildfires and smoky air thwarted our efforts.
- The social unrest and distrust of the government, particularly the Federal Government greatly impacted our ability to reach communities who were wary of responding to the Census to begin with. In particular, immigrants and those that speak a non-English language were most impacted.
- Second to COVID, the lack of Information and communication from the US Census Bureau (USCB) was an enormous hinderance in effectively reaching a complete count. For instance, in West County we never heard from the Oakland ACO about TNSOL operations and had to rely completely our Health, Housing, and Homelessness Core Team to enumerate encampments, particularly in Richmond. Additionally, USCB staff often contacted the County or CBO in various capacities and unaware of concurrent outreach conducted by USCB. This caused confusion and frustration among our partners.
- Lack of communication and coordination from Mercury for micro-media campaign.
- The State did a lot of helpful up front outreach, but it would have also been helpful to know early in the process the "big buckets" the State planned to invest in such as large transit buys or robust digital ad markets. These big-ticket items cost more at a local scale and using the State's buying power would have been more effective. This left us struggling to determine the best use of county funds available and often too late in the process.
- The County's contracting and invoicing process hindered the pace of grant approval and fund dispersant.
- Inconsistent data formats for planning and reporting activities required significant staff time to review and provide quality control.

### **Contracted partner's outreach**

#### ***What outreach tactics worked well?***

- Early communication between government and community-based organizations. By cultivating relationships more than a year in advance of the Census count between the county and our community-based organizations helped drum up more support and awareness of the census than in previous counts.
- Focusing efforts on peer-to-peer communication to engage all residents around the Census was pivotal to reach all residents in a way that was effective, culturally competent, and relevant to their own identities and backgrounds.
- Providing outreach material and website information in non-English language contributed to a sense of inclusion for all Contra Costa county residents.
- Direct questionnaire assistance was by far and away the most effective form of outreach that led to direct results of hard-to-count community members being counted accurately.
- Once COVID forced us to shift to more virtual and digital tactics, phone banking became a pivotal way for us to continue with some peer-to-peer outreach and ensure community members had not only responded to the Census but were safe, healthy, and not in need of food or financial assistance.
- Hiring a Census Outreach Coordinator and Outreach Specialists (interns) helped to provide dedicated staff time to focus on outreach activities.
- Strong collaboration and high level of communication between staff, Complete Count Steering Committee, UWBA, and State allowed for more advocacy throughout the county, region, and state to ensure the Census Bureau was following through on their job.
- The combination of SwORD Hard to Count analysis and additional staff GIS analysis to understand various Hard to County characteristics and how they impact different communities within the County. In particular, detailed language analysis allowed us to understand where non-English languages populations are concentrated so that we could tailor communications and outreach in those areas with the preferred language(s).

#### ***What hindered the outreach?***

- As mentioned above, COVID-19 greatly hindered our strategy of reaching people on a peer-to-peer basis. Once the county developed and adapted to safety measures to prevent the spread of the virus, we were able to conduct limited peer-to-peer communication, but not at the level we were hoping prior to the pandemic.
- The Micro-media plan being implemented behind schedule was a huge hinderance to our ability to flesh out ads in our county. We were relying on the state's buying power to purchase ads throughout the region, particularly in transit. However, Mercury was slow in providing a clear ad buy plan and we ended up having to rely on our own contacts in the county to eventually get ads up on transit, including BART. All counties in Region 3 were hoping for a more coordinated campaign and effort from the state's contractor throughout the Bay Area that was well thought out and started well in advance of the count.

- Another hinderance were the changing deadlines and disinformation from the federal government. This made it particularly difficult for us to conduct outreach as the current administration consistently changed its own position and spread misinformation, particularly around counting immigrants.

**3) Describe challenges and changes occurring outside or within your organization / agency that had an impact on the outreach work. Describe how you responded to these changes to work toward achieving a complete count.**

- Political climate/distrust of government, including the Federal administration threats to count or not count undocumented immigrants.
  - Response: Working with trust partners and community organizations on the ground to provide one-on-one communication in hard to count areas
- COVID-19
  - Response: Pivoting to phone banking and digital outreach
  - Response: Organizing COVID safe events such as caravans and working with food distribution, COVID testing, and other essential services.
  - Response: Continued focus on Questionnaire Assistance
- Changing enumeration deadlines
  - Response: Updated partners and general public as needed
- Coordinating with USCB, particularly with SBE and TNSOL. The CORE team experienced challenges coordinating to be on the ground during SBE help reach the unhoused population in Contra Costa County
  - Response: The County issued devices to CORE Team members to assist in self-enumeration during their ongoing work in the weeks following SBE.
- Staff time and competing priorities. The County only had one full time staff member dedicated to Census Outreach full time.
  - Response: The Department of Conservation and Development, County Administrator's Office, and Office of District III Supervisor Diane Burgis all provided a staff member to work on Census part-time in addition to their other duties. Other County departments also provided in-kind support of Census Outreach activities.

**4) For county and ACBO partners, what was the county (or region's) 2010 response rate and what was the 2020 response rate? If the response rate met and exceeded the 2010 response rate, what contributed to that? If it did not meet the 2010 response rate, what were some of the challenges for that? For other partners, please note what data you used and how you used data for your strategies.**

- Final 2010 self-response rate: 72.1%
- Final 2020 self-response rate: 77.4%
- Both the state and county dedicated increased funding to Census 2020 compared to Census 2010 (due to the challenges as discussed) and this led to our local governments taking more ownership, allowing us to increase our connections with community-based partners. In 2020, the county started working more than a year in advance of the Census to train trusted messengers and organizations throughout the county to conduct outreach and prepare their own communities for responding and being counted in Census 2020.

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- The silver lining of COVID is there was additional time to conduct targeted outreach in hard to count communities, which helped the county exceed our 2010 Self-Response Rate.
- When comparing 2020 and 2010 SRRs, it's important to remember there was a foreclosure crisis in 2010 with many vacant units that did not have people to respond to the census.

### **5) Please describe the process and results of your partnership coordination and how it educated and motivated the hard-to-count populations to complete the Census questionnaire.**

The Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors authorized \$500,000 of county funds be allocated to Census 2020 to support achieving a complete count. The funds were specifically to be granted out to cities, county departments, and community-based organizations to assist the county in conducting Census outreach in all areas and communities. We awarded over 80 grants and subsequently trained trusted messengers to understand the importance of the census, how to be counted, and spread awareness in their respective communities. Each organization was provided with training, swag, outreach materials, and support to conduct outreach activities to best meet the needs of their communities. Grantees proposed a range of outreach approaches including training community members, hosting census events, phone banking and canvassing, conducting questionnaire assistance, providing census material and assistance alongside food distribution sites, coordinating census caravans, engaging via social media, and other approaches to educate their community members about the importance of responding to the census.

### **6) Please provide a list of key partners and describe their contributions of how they made a difference in your outreach efforts.**

- Community Based Organizations
  - Our main partners were community-based organizations. We granted funds to 67 organizations to help us conduct outreach in all communities throughout the county.
- County Departments and Cities
  - We supported to various county departments and cities.
  - Worked with county departments to educate county employees and layer in census messaging to their communications with county residents and partners.
- Health, Housing, and Homelessness CORE Team
  - A major partner was Contra Costa County's Health, Housing, and Homelessness CORE team who was pivotal in counting our unhoused population. They coordinated directly with the Regional ACOs to provide needed information and went out into the field to support the TNSOL operation and enumerate residents who were missed.
- United Way Bay Area
  - United Way Bay Area (UWBA) (our Region 3 Administrative Community Based Organization) was a pivotal part of our success and helped us take a more regional approach to our outreach and work in tandem with all

seven Bay Area counties to support one another's goals and objectives. UWBA was also extremely helpful in serving as a liaison between the state and the county. They also provided a lot of technical expertise in tracking self-response rates, navigating phone banking programs, supporting questionnaire assistance centers, language translation, and providing training materials.

- Federal, State, Regional, County Legislative & Government Partners
  - Representatives from our federal and state legislators' offices; regional, county, special district, and local government elected officials, along with appointed members of county municipal advisory councils were instrumental in helping to get the word out. They attended training workshops, invited speakers to present at their meetings and events, and pushed out messages via their communications channels. Several local cities and towns issued census response rate challenges.
- Faith Based
  - Faith-based organizations and churches in our county were an enormous help in getting the word out, particularly to our Spanish speaking residents.
- Higher Education
  - Outreach to higher education institutions played a part in getting the word out to students, faculty and staff at those locations via campus clubs and other organizations.

**7) Please describe how you provided accessible and in-language outreach activities, including how you ensured equal and meaningful access to limited English proficient individuals and people with disabilities?**

- We developed digital ads in multiple languages targeted throughout County based on where we knew those languages were spoken using demographic data.
- We provided Spanish language assistance at many events/outreach activities. When we could not provide language assistance, we coordinated with the USCB Partnership Specialists to fill in any gaps.
- Our collateral and our social media toolkit were translated in all required languages.
- Our website featured seven different languages plus sign language information on the home page, contributing to a sense of inclusion and easy access to information in multiple languages.
- We presented about the importance of the Census and provided needed resources to the Developmental Disability Council of Contra Costa County.

**8) Please share a story(s) of how your work has made a difference to Census 2020 and the impact on the community. Please include images and quotes, so we are able to understand the narrative behind the numbers.**

After COVID hit and forced the Bay Area into a long shelter-in-place order, we were encouraged to see the number of our grantees who stepped up and worked with us to completely pivot our strategy of reaching our hardest-to-count residents and

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ensuring that all were counted. Many were eager to find ways to continue reaching out to their community. Grantees took on phone banking and made over 15,000 calls; providing virtual questionnaire assistance; helping us distribute census materials at food sites; planning Census Caravans in 10 cities, helping us pass out 4,000 Census backpacks, 5,000 bilingual Census grocery bags, and countless other swag items. While this year was obviously incredibly challenging, it was also incredibly moving to see the ways in which our community stepped up to continue to support our most vulnerable residents and ensure they were safe, healthy, and counted.



(Pinole Backpack Giveaway)

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(Hercules, Crockett, Rodo Census Caravan)



(Northern California Black Trade Unionists)



(Men and Women of Valor)

**9) Please add any suggestions for the 2030 Census efforts, including timelines.**

- Train and invest in a diverse group of trusted messengers who reflect the demographic makeup of county residents.
- Make questionnaire assistance accessible and inviting throughout the state
- Work with nearby counties in region to plan a coordinated transit ad campaign throughout region in advance of the Census count.
- Advocate to the federal government to strengthen the USCB and make operations more effective and transparent.
- Work between now and 2030 to rebuild relationship between our state and local government and immigrant community.
- Hire a diverse staff that reflect our residents' race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexuality, language, etc.
- Develop reporting template early in the process and all data development should be built to support the final template. For example, the Implementation Plan categories and the Activity Report categories were different, leading to additional staff time reviewing reports.
- Collateral and materials in multiple languages spoken throughout the County. Conduct a thorough survey/demographic evaluation before developing strategy for 2030 outreach.
- Provide "Big Buckets" of State investment prior to County, ACBO, and other Partner plan development process.

## Attachments

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**10) Please confirm that you have submitted the following which will help us better understand the full breadth of the Census work and achievements.**

- a) SwORD uploads of completed activities
- b) Updated list of subcontractors
- c) Evaluations or analytical reports, if any
  - a. Digital ads
  - b. Summary final reports feedback
  - c. Language maps
- d) Sample products\*
  - a. Social Media Toolkit
  - b. Newsletter Toolkit
  - c. Elected/cities
  - d. Schools
  - e. Faith Based
  - f. Sample Ad and translation document
  - g. Census 101 Training
  - h. Spring 2019 Workshops
  - i. Digital Ads sample

\* communication collaterals, including those in additional languages; toolkits; newsletters; phone or radio scripts; guidelines; communication analytics; articles; trainings; and other graphics (a digital copy is sufficient, the original copy is not required)

## **Submission**

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Please submit your final report and attachments no later than November 16, 2020 to: [outreach@census.ca.gov](mailto:outreach@census.ca.gov) with a copy to the RPM/contract manager. Please include your organization name in the subject line.