Although we gather virtually, it’s important that I acknowledge that my family and I settled in Long Beach originally called Puvunga and is home to the Acjachemen and Tongva nations the original stewards of this territory. I am committed to uplifting the name of these lands and community members from these Nations who reside alongside us.

Source: metzli projects
Mahalo, Si Yu’us ma’åse’, fa’afetai to those who came before me.

Victor Kaiwi Pang
Sharon Ku’uipo Paulo
Clinton Helenihi
Mary Salas
Pat Luce
Haunani Apoliona
Dr. Kenneth E. Galeai
Dr. Faye Untalan
Salafai Suafa’i
June Pouesi
Kawen Young
Lono Kollars
Audrey Alo

Rita Scanlan
Mona Foster
High Chief Leuluso’o
Fualauto’alasi Leatutufu
William Afeaki
William Emmsley Jr.
Dr. Jobie Yamaguchi
Dr. Shawn Malia
Kanaiaupuni
Mona Porotesano
Stanton Enomoto
Guy Ontai
Dr. Sela Panapasa

Simeamativa Aga
Darlene Kehaulani Butts
Val Jacobo
Rev. Misi Tagaloa
Rev. Malaki
Heidi & Joey Quenga
Alisi Tulua
Sefa Aina
Tana Lepule
Rita Scanlan
Catherine Ofa Mann
Manufou Liaiga-Anoa’i
Leafa Taumoepeau
Tavae Samuelu

tuh-veye sahm-weh-loo

she/her/hers

Executive Director

Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
When people ask me where I’m from, they don’t believe me when I say water.

Terisa Siagatonu
Defining Pacific Islander

U.S. CITIZENS
(Guam, Hawai’i [U.S. state], & Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands)
- Live & work in the U.S. legally
- Qualify for public benefits (e.g., health care)
- Vote in elections
- Eligible to serve in U.S. military

COMPACT OF FREE ASSOCIATION MIGRANTS
(Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of the Marshall Islands, & Republic of Palau)
- Live & work in the U.S. legally
- Labeled “nonimmigrants” but are not considered citizens or nationals
- Not eligible for most federal benefits, some U.S. states may provide limited benefits
- Eligible to serve in U.S. military

IMMIGRANTS FROM ISLANDS WITHOUT U.S. ASSOCIATION
(Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Samoa, Tokelau, Kiribati, & others)
- Not citizens or nationals
- Must apply for legal permanent resident status to work & live in the U.S. legally, similar to other immigrants
- Must wait 5 years to apply for public benefits
- Cannot vote or serve in U.S. military

U.S. NATIONALS
(American Samoa)
- Live & work in the U.S. legally
- Similar to other immigrants, must obtain citizenship to obtain full benefits
- Qualify for most federal benefits, some state or local benefits
- Cannot vote when living in states
- Eligible to serve in U.S. military
EPIC was established in 2009 by a group of young Pacific Islander (PI) leaders who recognized the urgency to address the growing needs of PI families. With experiences ranging from grassroots organizing to higher education administration, these young leaders prioritized building a strong and unified advocacy voice for PIs; collecting disaggregated data that illustrated the needs of PI families; and establishing a pipeline of strong leaders who can be advocates and influencers in, and on behalf of, the community.
What is EPIC doing to promote participation?

National & Statewide Coordination
Direct Outreach and Education
Materials Production
Media Work
State Advocacy
Census Messaging
After much advocacy by leaders like Kawen Young, NHPI community members in Southern CA were able to create their own campaign with a messaging framework that centered storytelling and honoring the work of ancestors. Photos were taken by Lono Kollars.

In 2010, marketing for the NHPI community featured stereotypical images of hula dancers and generic oceanscapes. Pacific Islander leaders expressed concerns that the campaign didn’t truly reflect the community it sought to reach.

"The honor of the individual rests within the tracks of their ancestors."

In addition to a poster campaign, they created PSAs in Chamorro, Samoan, Tongan, and Marshallese. The videos were intergenerational with prominent community leaders like pastors and filmed at churches, schools, hospitals, and playgrounds to demonstrate the impacts of Census participation.
Convening participants told us they would need outreach and education materials that are culturally-specific, in-language, and feature their trusted messengers who are hyper local and connected to a broader global community.

These images feature Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian tattoo motifs as well as the traditional voyaging canoes of each region of Oceania. Each design tells a story and part of overall messaging that Census data is integral to our collective narrative.

EPIC spent much of 2019 preparing for the decennial Census. We held convenings across the country to hear from over 150 Pacific Islander community members about what they need to ensure a full and complete count.

EPIC partnered with Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC) to develop factsheets and PSAs in: Chamorro, Chuukese, Marshallese, Native Hawaiian, Palauan, Samoan, Tongan, and Vakaviti. You can find them all at countsuin2020.org/nhpi.
Count Us In 2020

www.countusin2020.org/nhpi
In-Language Materials
Pacific Islanders and COVID-19

Photo by Nancy Pastor for CalMatters
One family described the anguish and guilt of watching a loved one struggle out of bed to the ambulance — “the least Pacific thing that you can do,” Samoa said — because the first responders wouldn’t come inside. Another family revealed how three breadwinners were hospitalized with the disease, unable to care for their kids...

Already, the rate of infection among Pacific Islanders has alarmed public health experts and community leaders. As of Sunday, the novel coronavirus had infected Pacific Islanders at a rate more than twice that of the state as a whole — and killed them at a rate 2.6 times higher, the highest rates of any racial or ethnic group.
Videos of Trusted Messengers
NHPI Census Toolkit
Bay Area Regional Pacific Islander Taskforce
College of San Mateo Mana Program
Island Block Radio
Fiji Indigenous People’s Foundation
For The Qultures
Hui O Hawai’i of Sacramento
Kutturan Chamoru Foundation
Marshallese Youth of Orange County
Motivating Action Leadership Opportunity (MALO)
Mt. SAC ARISE Program
National Pacific islander Educator Network
NHPI Alliance
NHPI CCC of San Diego
One EPA

Pacific Islander Health Partnership
PICCC of San Mateo County
Pacific Islander Wellness Initiative
Poly By Design
Samoan Community Development Center
Samoan Solutions
Taulama for Tongans
To’utupu’o e ‘Otu Felenite Association (TOFA)
UCLA PI Student Association
UC Riverside PI Student Association
UTOPIA San Francisco
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