



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	11/2/2020
Organization / Entity	County of Imperial
Responsible Person / Title	Esperanza M. Colio, Deputy County Executive Officer
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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?

Local Grassroots Approach.

The County of Imperial (“County”) followed a grassroots approach to reach the Hard to Count (HTC) population as the County engaged the incorporated cities, local nonprofits and others to create a strong, community based Complete Count Committee. From the very beginning, the County and Cities understood that a successful census strategy relies on community partners. The County took the lead of coordinating the effort, development and implementation of the outreach plan will be a regional effort comprised of representatives from the cities, special districts, educational organizations, regional agencies, community based organizations, business associations and other countywide stakeholders. By including representatives from various sectors of our community, we were better equipped to understand the needs of the people of Imperial County and to assist them through the census process.

Description of specific collaborations, partnerships.

Complete Count Committee members include national, state, local, and grassroots organizations who have a proven record of accomplishment

-serving the most vulnerable and hard-to-count members of our community. With such a diverse committee, the County has the capacity and motivation to develop, implement, coordinate and maximize resources, outreach activities, and leverage existing services to ensure a complete count. Organizations like United Way, NALEO Educational Fund, Campesinos Unidos, Comite Civico del Valle and many more, represent state identified HTC communities, are considered “trusted messengers” and have relationships with the most vulnerable members of our community. The Complete Count Committee seeks to coordinate efforts and link services to streamline the work of various stakeholders and meet the County’s 2020 Census goals.

Unincorporated Areas - Special Districts.

The unincorporated communities of Bombay Beach, Heber, Niland, Seeley, Salton City, Palo Verde, Poe Subdivision, Ocotillo and Winterhaven make up a chain of HTC areas in the Imperial County. Our special district partners located in these communities will provide a vital connection between the inner cities of the Imperial County and those hard-to-count communities. These districts will relay communications through their established libraries, parks and recreation programs, community and health centers, schools, churches, utility offices, civic buildings, and elected officials. County staff is working with committee members to create a robust inventory of these assets and resources in those HTC areas. This inventory will be important in implementing a strategic and targeted outreach campaign

COVID-19 and the US Census Bureau’s operational adjustments.

During the COVID-19 stoppage and adjustments, the County saw that the chosen approach was working well and did not need further changes. The choices to collaborate with community groups and cities was proven effective to reach the HTC target and engage them during a very uncertain period. The County was very fortunate to make these friendships with community leaders and strengthen established communication lines with the incorporated community leadership.

- 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?

The County of Imperial (County) is proud of the small town neighborly feel within our cities and unincorporated communities. Many communities throughout the county promote activities and current events through trusted messengers within the religious

congregations and/or social clubs for the elderly. At the initial start, which also was referred to as the educational period, the County relied heavily on the community events that are held annually throughout the County such the California Midwinter Fair and Fiesta, El Centro Mardi Gras Parade, and the Holtville Honey Festival. While the outreach effort was outstanding, at times turnout was not the best to reach maximum effectiveness and other means of outreach was needed to be invented in order to reach the 2010 Census participation numbers and exceed them.

In early March of 2020, COVID-19 brought a sudden halt to the normality of the County and forced our population indoors. This scare forced the County Census 2020 effort to take a different look at how we would spread the word of participation. Mobile Caravans, Phone Banking, and door-to-door delivery of Census 2020 information was our new answer to reaching the communities and especially pinpointing the Hard-to-Count areas. The County noticed that the Mobile Caravan was the one activity that really made a difference in the education and **NRFU** phases. As mentioned before, the small town community feeling reacted well to this form of outreach and announcing to the public prior to and live feeds prepared the community for the arrival of the Census 2020 caravan which was greeted by the public outside their homes with children waving. To conclude, good communication and a set goal by the County with its partners allowed overcoming the multiple setbacks and pauses throughout the campaign.

What hindered the operations?

The County did not have one operational failure nor do we feel that our partners did either but we do believe that the start-stop-start again directions that was passed down due to the COVID-19 scare really hurt our efforts. Many County employees and its partners were given stay at home orders and were required to work remotely from home which also slowed progress in our local efforts.

Contracted partner's outreach

What outreach tactics worked well?

Local partner outreach was exceptional and proved that the County has special people that want to make a difference for their communities. Feedback from our partners showed that the in person door-to-door canvassing was the method of outreach with the most success of educating the public about the Census.

Mobile caravans were next on the partner list of successful outreach tactics. This method of outreach was a welcomed idea when the local temperature exceeded 115 degrees or more. Although it was not possible to get face-to-face with the public, the response numbers would show an upward trajectory a couple of days after the events.

The last method of outreach that was well utilized during the last weeks of the project was the Mobile Question Assistance Kiosks MQAK, which would attract the interest of locals and with the help of a US Census Bureau worker, the individual was able to fill out the Census 2020 questionnaire. Local TV/radio talent would also advertise well in

advance when and where these MQAK's would be set up. Many times an added incentive of shave ice or hot dogs was given in exchange for their time filling out the questionnaire.

School Messages/Marquees/Banners coordinated with schools helped promote the Census messages using their existing infrastructure to deliver messages. Banners & Lawn Signs were also placed in different locations including schools, churches, community centers, and other strategic points for community members to promote the importance of their participation and the ways to respond.

What hindered the outreach?

All the partners agree that the COVID-19 stoppage in the outreach effort was the main hindrance on all their outreach efforts.

- 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.

The constant-change with the final date for Census completion did not allow for regularly scheduled events. The uncertainty on dates to re-start also hindered the Census Bureau staff availability, making it difficult to plan events or MQAKs that could have been more impactful if a Bureau representative was available to respond the questionnaire for community members.

Other challenges faced were the limited equipment and resources some partners had to complete their scope of work. Volunteers came together to make it work by travelling in privately owned vehicles to the rural areas to be able to reach out to the community. Some cancelations due to COVID-19 and deadlines hurt efforts in counting and assisting with completing the census but after the reopening, partners and their volunteers worked together to complete tasks to their best of their ability.

- 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.

The 2010 response rate for the County was 58.5%. In 2020, the County reached a 62.5% response rate, which surpassed the last two Census benchmarks. The Census 2020 effort was like no other before experienced. Having control of the outreach plan and taking ownership of the count to ensure that everyone was counted made all the difference. New partnerships were forged in this effort which also increased our understanding of how the community receives its information. Trusted messengers like the LGBT Resource Center, Campesinos Unidos, Calexico Neighborhood House, and Comite Civico del Valle played a key part in reaching special groups in our county.

Although there is room for improvement, the County is set on surpassing the 2020 benchmark in 2030.

- 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 help and special efforts put forth by our partners and influences from Region 10 played were key to the success of this project. At an early stage in the effort, we as a team were unfamiliar in how to approach and educate the population of the importance of the Census. However, the team came together monthly to discuss strategy and educational resources to learn what seemed to work for other regions of California. What seemed to be a hamster wheel came together and proved to be very clear; our communities need the grass root door-to-door, face behind the voice method of education.

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

	Guadalupe Ponce	CSBG Director	Campeños Unidos
	Luis Olmedo	Executive Director	Comite Civico Del Valle, Inc.
	Ricardo Ortega	Special Project Director	Neighborhood House of Calexico
	Rosa Diaz	CEO	I.V. LGBT Resource Center
	Adriana Nava	Community Services Dir.	City of El Centro
	Alfredo Estrada Jr.	County Fire Chief	Imperial County Fire
	Adrian Chilpa	Detective	El Centro Police Explorers
	Haley Dowsey	Personnel Technician	City of Holtville
	Crystal Duran	County Librarian	Imperial County Free Library
	Martha Singh	President	Mana of Imperial Valley
	Diana Rosas	Lead Partnership Specialist	US Census Bureau
	Anthony Plancarte	Partnership Specialist	US Census Bureau
	Joaquin Jordan	President	Quechan Indian Tribe
	Dr. David Breeckner	Executive Director	IV Desert Museum
	Alexis Brown	Assistant City Manager	City of Imperial

- 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?

Having a large Spanish speaking population, the County incorporated the California Complete Count Language and Communication Access Plan to develop a plan to ensure that language and communication access was linguistically and culturally appropriate and provided equal and meaningful access to California’s vulnerable populations. At each point, staff worked with the community and the state to ensure that services and information are linguistically accessible and appropriate. Radio and Television media campaigns were available by the State and their partners to

increase community outreach and education, which is a highly used public information vehicle in the County. County leadership also incorporated additional Spanish/English radio campaigns targeted at our HTC population along our southern border with Mexico. State Census Office and the U.S. Census Bureau created and reproduced the majority of handouts and written communication, in English and Spanish. These materials were utilized during the entire outreach efforts. The Complete County Committee - Census Region 10, and the local partners, produced additional marketing materials targeted to local events in our communities.

- 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.

The 2020 Census has ended but the goal of giving a voice to everyone in this county has just begun. Many in our community had no idea of what a census was or what it meant for their community. Residents' fear of government intervention and the sharing of too much personal information was always a major obstacle for our team to overcome. Breaking down walls of fear and uncertainty was the main goal for the County and its partners when calls or in person visits were made to homes. It was very understandable and we could relate to many families out there. Phone banking became a critical part of our strategy; however, canvassing was a great way to reach our communities. Canvassing allowed for a time where people could listen to the trusted members of their communities; however, that soon changed.

The COVID-19 Pandemic brought on a new and stronger fear to the many HTC families in our communities. The County and its partners overcame their own fear of this disease and looked for opportunities to bring joy and entertainment to many that had enclosed themselves in their homes to wait it out. Caravans made a big impact in our effort to reach the public and raise awareness on the 2020 Census. Our first caravan had quite a few battles in it and coordination took a bit of time to lay out the final routes; however, the caravans were a success. Taking what we learned in the first caravan we chose to build on the next by including advertising, music, more participants, and a local talent that would be delivering the Census message from the first car. Twenty or more decorated cars from all of the partners and volunteers traveled through the streets of our hardest to count communities. The caravan was received by children and adults with enthusiasm; they cheered and waved as the caravan passed near their homes. It was quite a site to see the looks on the faces of people young and old sitting in lawn chairs and waving as the cars passed. Knowing that these people were sheltering in place in their homes due to COVID-19 made the Census crew more excited to be doing their part as something positive had finally come to their neighborhood. Response numbers began to climb in our area immediately after the first caravan took place and the many others that followed; the connection with the community was made.



Imperial County Board of Supervisors Raymond Castillo (center), Luis Plancarte, Chairman of ICBOS, and Rosa Diaz (left) toss necklace beads to revelers during the El Centro Mardi Gras Light Parade & Street Festival along Main and 8th streets. JOSELITO N. VILLERO PHOTO



Quechan Indian Tribe Council



EL Centro Police Department Explorers Group Phone Banking Team.



Comite Civico Del Valle - 2019 Farmworkers Breakfast



Caravan Outreach at City of El Centro



Calexico Complete Count Committee



Caravan Outreach at City of Calexico



City of Brawley partners gather for official Census 2020 kickoff.



El Centro Christmas Parade



Carrot Festival at City of Holtville

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

Attachments

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 – Uploaded

b) Updated list of subcontractors - Uploaded

c) Evaluations or analytical reports, if any

d) Sample products* - Uploaded

* 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

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