



COUNTING THE INLAND EMPIRE

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Image by Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

After facing a major setback in 2010, Riverside and San Bernardino Counties are committed to the process of ensuring a complete count for the 2020 Census. The Inland Empire has been severely underrepresented and underfunded due to failed Census collection efforts. According to Karthik Ramakrishnan of the Center for Social Innovation for UCR (CSIUCR) nearly 25 percent of Inland Empire households failed to mail back their Census questionnaire in 2010, requiring costly in-person follow-ups. More concerning, however, was that 40,000 residents did not receive a Census questionnaire in 2010, requiring yet additional in-person resources. These residents lived at nontraditional addresses, vacant houses, or were located in isolated areas. Luckily, the 2020 Census, although being conducted during a pandemic, finds the Inland Empire with a structured and better-funded outreach plan than it had ten years ago.

The California Complete Count Committee is an advisory panel appointed by Governor Jerry Brown to oversee and coordinate California's education and outreach program for the 2020 Census. It is responsible for spending more than \$154 million on census outreach. Working through local governments, Tribal Govern-

ments, community-based organizations and media, the California Complete Count Committee funded work to complement work being done nationally by the U.S. Census Bureau. The Census Bureau is responsible for canvassing and conducting the actual enumeration process nationally. The California Complete Count Office helps to get the word out about the Census to Californians statewide. It targeted the hardest-to-count Californians through grassroots culturally appropriate outreach and multicultural, in-language media efforts.

The Inland Empire region has been awarded nearly \$2.7 million in state contracts for census outreach, with \$1.48 million allocated for Riverside County and \$1.21 million allocated for San Bernardino County, according to the Center for Social Innovation for UCR (CSIUCR). The two counties have launched a joint campaign to ensure a complete count of the region: IE Counts. IE Counts works in collaboration with the Center for Social Innovation of UCR (CSIUCR). IE Counts has launched the Inland Empire Complete Count Committee (IECCC) to bring together leadership from different sectors to coordinate outreach efforts. The IECCC, led by the director of CSIUCR Karthick Ramakrishnan, is a leadership body designed to boost Census participa-

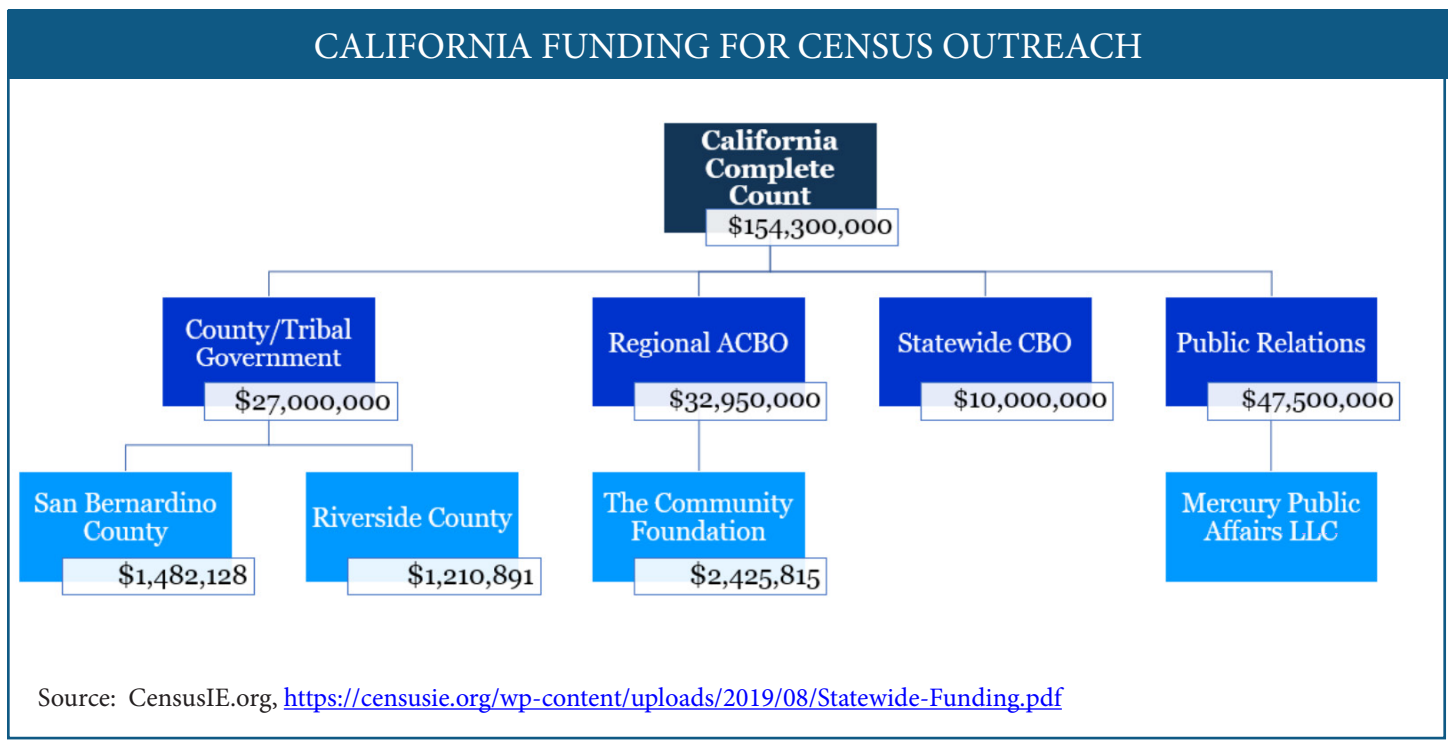
tion for an accurate count. The committee is comprised of leading representatives from the nonprofit, government, education, business and philanthropic sectors. Branching out from the head IECCC are six subcommittees: Education, Recruitment and Training, Media & Marketing, Interagency Coordination, Field Outreach, Stakeholder Expansion & Advocacy, and Data, Research & Evaluation.

One of the focal points of IECCC is the Field Outreach subcommittee which branches out into the Regions Committee and the Hard To Count (HTC) Committee. The HTC Committee has been a primary focus of the IECCC given the 2010 Census's failure to account for a large rural population. The HTC Committee is in charge of coordinating census outreach for six areas: High Desert Area, San Bernardino Metropolitan Area, Morongo Basin Area, Riverside Central Area, Riverside Southwest Area, and Riverside Eastern Area. Each of these areas has been assigned a regional coordinator responsible for getting a total count in each area. The HTC Committee is also tasked with reaching out to Hard to Count Communities which include the homeless, LGBT, Limited English Proficient, and disabled populations. Hard to Count communities are designated by census tracts and block groups according to their California Hard-to-Count Index, a metric that incorporates 14 variables correlated with an area being difficult to enumerate.

IE Counts has taken a multi-faceted outreach approach that has targeted media outlets, non-profits, and has mobilized college students to join the counting process. IE Counts social media presence has been bolstered with the usage of hashtags like: #StudentsCount, #ChurchesCount, and #TongansCount. IE Counts also conducted job fairs to recruit federal Census workers, ran a Super Bowl ad emphasizing the importance of the Census, and hosted several other outreach events to promote the Census and recruit employees. For example, in the beginning of February, IE Congressman Pete Aguilar hosted a workshop on how nonprofit organizations can help to ensure a full count in San Bernardino.

IE Counts works in collaboration with Census IE. Census IE is a project of the Community Foundation to target the under-served areas and coordinate Census awareness and outreach. The Community Foundation was selected by California Complete Count to serve as the Administrative Community Based Organization to lead Census 2020 efforts in the Inland Empire. Three components comprise the structure of Census IE: backbone organizations, regional coordinators, and partner organizations.

Backbone organizations are local organizations that receive small grants from the Community Foundation, to innovate new tools to support outreach efforts. There



are four backbone organizations: The Community Foundation, Inland Empowerment, CSIUCR, and the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO). The Inland Empowerment, for example, created a community asset map to support event coordination in addition to launching a portal to identify target areas. The Center for Social Innovation of UCR is also sub-contracted by the Community Foundation. CSIUCR provides the Community Foundation with data analysis and research evaluation through a HTC Matrix that shows the HTC population in each sub-region.

Regional Coordinators are assigned to one of seven sub-regions in the Inland Empire to support local collaboration, promote targeted strategies, and work towards manageable goals in their sub-regions. Regional coordinators fulfill three main roles: they convene stakeholders and coordinate activities to reduce overlap and ensure that all HTC communities are accounted for, serve as a resource for training and information, and serve as a pipeline for both bottom-up and top-down feedback. Lastly, partner organizations are those that have committed their energies to ensuring a complete count of the Inland Empire in 2020.

Census IE has applied a four-pronged outreach strategy. First, it aims to integrate the Census into existing points of contacts. This includes collecting pledge cards through events and forums, churches, classes, and community gatherings. This occurred from September 2019 to February 2020. Second, Census IE focuses on canvassing, particularly in communities where undercount is the highest. This occurred from September 2019 to February 2020. Third, Census IE deployed three types of trusted messengers: volunteers, high profile messengers and media spokespeople to encourage IE residents to fill out the Census. This process was ongoing through Census enumeration. Fourth, Census IE promoted the “Get Out the Count” Campaign. This campaign focused on contacting people by phone or text during the self-response period, from March to April 2020.

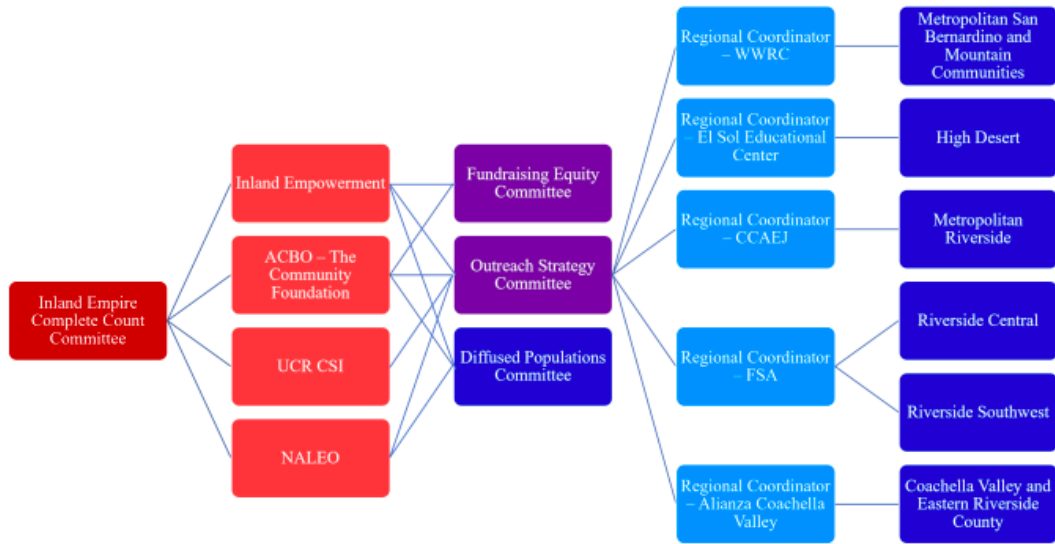
Census IE, in partnership with Riverside and San Bernardino Counties, also launched the Census Champion program. The program aims to identify and equip trusted community members to talk to their peers and media about the 2020 Census. Champions must be committed to the Census process. Thus, the process of becoming Champion requires one to be a trusted

INLAND EMPIRE HARD TO COUNT

Region	Total Population	HTC Population	HTC Percentages	Below Poverty Line	Without Health Insurance	Foreign-Born	People with Disabilities	Renter Occupied Units
High Desert	451,483	165,222	36.60%	33.13%	13.57%	16.33%	12.92%	58.02%
San Bernardino Metropolitan	1,585,334	586,699	37.01%	27.51%	20.12%	29.39%	10.06%	59.76%
Morongo Basin	695,689	185,898	26.72%	24.85%	20.25%	29.38%	9.04%	61.00%
Riverside Central	296,506	56,534	19.07%	31.99%	20.58%	19.85%	16.49%	59.07%
Riverside Southwest	868,306	200,064	23.04%	25.28%	21.59%	27.46%	10.40%	55.63%
Riverside Eastern	463,391	155,196	33.49%	31.73%	24.73%	32.97%	9.96%	48.89%

Source: Inland Empire Areas, <http://iecounts.org/inland-empire-community/>

INLAND EMPIRE COMPLETE COUNT COMMITTEE



Source: Census IE, <https://censusie.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/What-is-CensusIE.pdf>

source among their peers, attend a Census 2020 training meeting, and commit to participate in monthly webinars to stay updated on 2020 Census information.

There were supposed to be three key waves of Census outreach. However, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the timeline for Census collection efforts. From mid-March onwards, all households should have received a postcard with instructions on how to participate online, over the phone, through the mail or at questionnaire assistance centers. Residents should have completed the Census at this time. The self-response phase which started in March, continued through October 15, 2020. The non-response follow-up started in May and went on until the 2020 Census deadline of October 15, 2020. IE Counts also held in-person group quarters enumeration and mobile questionnaire assistance before mid-October. In-person group quarters enumeration from July to September was a special process for counting people who lived in group quarters owned or managed by a third party. Mobile questionnaire assistance also occurred on the same timeline, where Census Response Representatives went to key locations like grocery stores in low-response communities to assure that people had the support they needed to complete the Census.

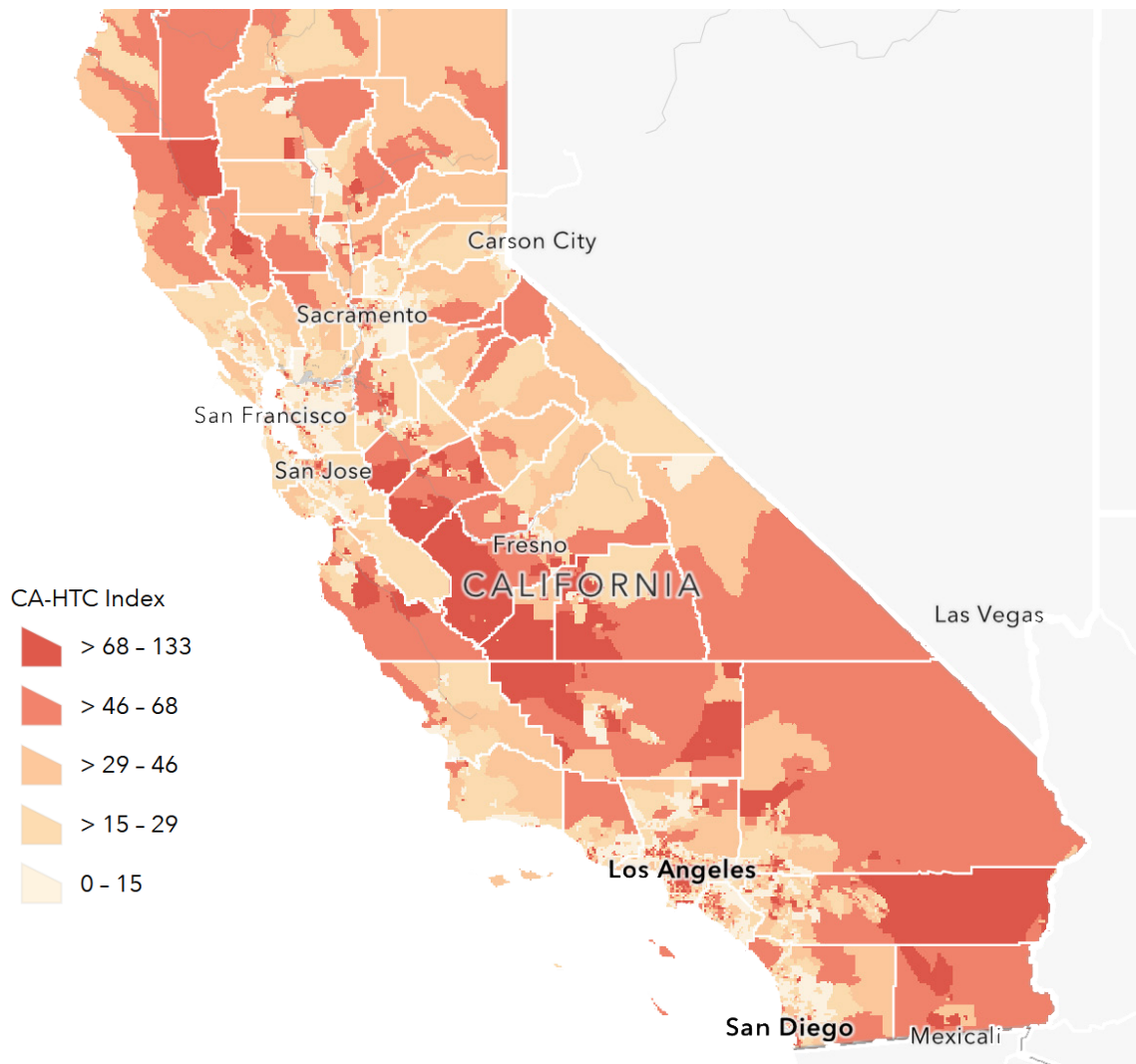
As with all other endeavors, the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted Census outreach efforts in the IE. In an interview with NPR, Ramakrishnan noted that if people are “no longer able to work and they become housing insecure, it becomes more difficult to reach them.” Ramakrishnan added that he thinks that people who live paycheck-to-paycheck and are struggling to get by will be the most undercounted. Census outreach efforts for over a year and a half in advance of March 2020 positioned the Census for success despite the pandemic.

The Inland Empire Community Foundation (IECF), the Census IE Coalition, and all of its partners took several precautions to protect the Inland Empire census outreach personnel from COVID-19, keep Census outreach teams employed, and ensure that there is a full count for the 2020 census. All outreach strategies became digital with Census organizers hosting virtual community events. For instance, the IECF and the Center for Social Innovation at UCR hosted a regular series of community updates via a Zoom webinar in response to COVID-19. Recently, they discussed the implications of COVID-19 restrictions on voting. The joint effort has been working hard to assure that non-profits are receiving the financial assistance and support necessary to navigate funding from the CARES Act. Ad-

ditionally, all partner organizations working to get a full count for the 2020 Census are working from home. The organizations pushing the Inland Empire Census count forward have reassured its residents that while the threat of a global pandemic is serious, it has never been easier to participate in the Census from home.

The IE Counts and Census IE's emergency response to the coronavirus pandemic shows that the region was fully committed to make sure its residents were supported and counted regardless of the public health and organizational challenges it faced. ♦

CALIFORNIA HARD TO COUNT AREAS MAP



Source: California Hard to Count Areas Interactive Map, <https://census.ca.gov/htc-map/>

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