CENSUS 2020: BUILDING CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY NETWORKS

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October 22, 2019
Presentation

- Why Civic Engagement is so Important
- San Mateo County and the Office of Community Affairs
- Census 2020 Overview
- Why it Matters
- Challenges
- Strategies for Civic Engagement
The health of a democratic society may be measured by the quality of functions performed by private citizens.

- *Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America*
... be actors, and not merely critics of others...

Theodore Roosevelt, 1st annual Conference on Good City Government, and a founder of the National Civic League (National Municipal League)

Inclusive Civic Engagement

- Everyone has a place at the table
- Display greater civic pride
- Individual volunteerism to organization involvement to electrical participation
- Combining knowledge, skills, values and motivation to make a difference
Case Study: Engaging San Mateo County Residents in Census 2020 Outreach Efforts

Goal: to create long-term relationships that extend beyond the Census
San Mateo County is located in California, nestled between San Francisco and Santa Clara Counties.

SAN MATEO COUNTY AND OFFICE OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
San Mateo County, California

- 770,000 population
- 455 square miles of land / 292 square miles of water
- 57.7 miles of coastline
- 20 incorporated cities
- Elevation from sea level to 2,629’
San Mateo County Manager’s Office of Community Affairs

• Serves as a liaison between County departments and the community to facilitate information sharing and feedback

• Make sure to capture the community’s voice to understand how to inform the County’s strategies

• Oversees:
  ➤ Census 2020
  ➤ Immigrant Services
  ➤ Community Engagement (community plans, rezoning, new ordinances)
  ➤ Special Projects (public art, beautification projects)
Every ten years the federal government is required to count every person living in the United States. This survey will take place on April 1, 2020 – officially Census Day 2020.
What is the Census?

• Official count of every person living in the United States
• Happens every 10 years
• Each household is asked to complete a census form
• Information collected is reported as statistics
What is Census Data Used For?

- To give funding for education, health, child care, transportation, and community programs

- To make sure all residents are represented fairly in local, state, and national government

- To help community leaders, businesses, and nonprofits make good decisions about programs and policies
What will the Census Ask?

Basic information about each household:

• Number of people living there
• Home ownership
• Phone number

For each person living in the household:

• Name
• Sex
• Age / Date of Birth
• Race / Ethnicity

Census 2020 WILL NOT ask about citizenship status

Household includes all people living in a residence, whether related or not.
How is Data Kept Private and Secure?

• By law, the information you give on the census form is confidential.

• Your responses will be combined with information from other households to produce statistics, so people in your household will not be individually identified.

• The Census Bureau has different ways to protect your personal information:
  ➤ Computer technologies
  ➤ Statistical methodologies
  ➤ Security procedures

• All staff at the Census Bureau take an oath for life to protect the privacy of responses collected, and sharing any details is a federal crime
  ➤ Fine of up to $250,000
  ➤ Federal prison sentence of up to 5 years
How and When Can Residents Participate?

MARCH 2020

• Most residents will get a postcard with instructions on how to fill out the census form ONLINE
• Some residents will get a PAPER form to fill out or you can request one
• Information to complete the form can be provided over the PHONE

APRIL 2020

• Census Bureau will send reminders in the mail
• Residents can get help filling out the form at Assistance Centers

MAY 2020

• For those who have not completed the form, Census Bureau workers will visit residences to collect information through an IN PERSON INTERVIEW
Census 2020 has a unique set of challenges this time due to new technologies being tried, as well as our current political climate and distrust by residents.
New Challenges to Complete the Census

- Census 2020 underfunding → Fewer local offices + field staff for non-response follow up
- Moving primarily online → Concerns about data security + digital access & literacy
- Fear & lack of trust in federal government → Concerns about data privacy
- Attempt to add citizenship question → Anxiety among immigrant communities
Census 2020: What’s at Stake?

- Federal Funding
- Congressional apportionment
- Redistricting
- Representation of all community segments

California (FFY2015-in million dollars)

- Total: $76.66 Billion
- Per resident: $1,000

**Health**
- Medi-Cal
- Medicare Part B
- Health Center Programs

**Social Services**
- SNAP/CHIP/WIC
- Foster care
- LIHEAP

**Housing**
- Section 8
- Shelter Funding

**Education**
- Special Education
- School Lunch
- Head Start
- Title I

**Transportation**
- Federal Highways Funding
Did you know that 3 out of 4 Californians belong to 1 or more groups that tend to be undercounted?

Data Source: American Community Survey, 2013-2017 (5-year)
California Demographics

The primary and perpetual challenge facing the U.S. Census Bureau is the undercount of certain population groups. This challenge is amplified in California where more residents are considered traditionally hard to count (HTC).

- Total population 38,982,847 / estimated 11 million HTC Californians
- 61% White / 37% Hispanic or Latino / 13% Asian / 6% African American
- 17% are limited-English speaking populations
  - Spanish 64.5% / Chinese 9.9% / Vietnamese 4.9%
- Almost 25% have an income below 150 percent of the poverty level
- 17.5% age 25+ are not high school graduates

Data Source: American Community Survey, 2013-2017 (5-year)
Groups That Tend to be Undercounted

- LGBTQ
- Middle-Eastern North Africans (MENA)
- Immigrants and Refugees
- Homeless Families
- Asian American & Pacific Islander
- Limited or no broadband access
- Limited English Proficiency

- Farm-workers
- Latinos
- Veterans
- African-Americans
- People with Disabilities
- Children Ages 0-5
- Homeless Individuals
- Seniors/Older Adults
- Tribal Communities
- Native Americans

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Undercounted San Mateo County Residents

- In San Mateo County areas include 13 out of 20 cities
- Unincorporated areas
- Dispersed all over the county
San Mateo County Challenge: Affordable Housing

- Median household income: $105,667
- Median value of housing units $917,700
- Studio apartment average rent: $2,384
  - Only 14% of households can afford a home
  - Yearly salary needed to buy a median value home: Almost $200,000
Lack of Affordable Housing Impact

• Because of lack of affordable housing opportunities residents are living in non-traditional housing units
  ➢ Garages, basements, sheds, recreation vehicles

• These units do not have an official US Post Office address, and therefore would not be included in the Census Bureau’s Master Address file and will NOT receive a census questionnaire
Local Update of Census Addresses (LUCA)

• Only opportunity for local cities/counties to review and comment on the Census Bureau’s master address list prior to the 2020 Census

• Two-pronged review:
  ➤ Traditional housing units: approved planning or building permits, parcel splits, single-family home conversions, verify apartment unit types (Unit A v. Apt #1) which will be livable by 2020
  ➤ Non-traditional housing units
LUCA: Canvassing Efforts

- Identified areas most likely to include high concentrations of non-traditional housing units (6 cities + unincorporated areas)
- Worked with city planners and community based organizations
- Canvassed areas to record units to supply to US Census Bureau for inclusion in their Master Address File
  - Stayed on public sidewalks, never entered private property
  - Noted specifics of unit: unit type, color, location
One Neighborhood Scenario – North Fair Oaks

- 1.2 square miles
- Almost 300 units
- 2 people per unit
- Total of 600 people

300 x 2 people = 600 people
600 x $1,000/year = $600,000/year

Potential Federal Funding Lost:
$6 Million Over 10 Years

SMC Identified 1,900 units =
$38 Million Over 10 Years
San Mateo County created a Complete Count Committee, as required by the State of California, to qualify for funds to assist in outreach and support efforts to all county residents.
Coordination

- Share best practices, research
- Avoid duplication of efforts
- Ensure consistency in information dissemination
- Real-time response tracking

- Create strategy, messaging, materials
- Develop communication templates, toolkits, training
- Guide and support outreach efforts
- Provide technical expertise (GIS/SwORD)
Collaboration

**County Census Steering Committee (Governance)**

**Complete Count Committee**
January 2019 - June 2020

**Strategy Work Groups**
March 2019 – August 2019

**Community Outreach**

**Local and Ethnic Media**

**Language and Access**

**Outreach Mini-Grants**
June 2019 - May 2020

**Community Action Teams**

**Census Ambassadors**

**Answer Questions**
Facilitate Access
April – June 2020

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Developing tools and applications to assist in outreach efforts to residents as well as provide digital access and language services to help complete census forms.
Technology Applications: Texting Pledge Tool

I support a full 2020 Census count in San Mateo County!

Join San Mateo County + Bay Area Counts 2020 by texting COUNT to 650-200-2743

www.smccensus.org  #SmcCounts  #EveryoneCounts  #BayAreaCounts2020

Message and data rates may apply, text CNT to no longer receive messages

Text COUNT to 650-200-2743
Help Line Number / Help ChatBot

Ask CA Census 2020

Virtual Assistant!

CA Census 2020
Ask me anything or click on one of the buttons above to ask a random question, explore popular/trending questions or click on “All Questions” to show a complete list of what you can ask.

CA Census 2020
I'm still learning, but I'm getting smarter all the time. Check back often to see all the new things I've learned!

Type your question here

Alexan Innovation Technology | Get this Chatbot for free!
SwORD – Statewide Outreach and Rapid Deployment

- Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping technology
- Capture outreach activities and impressions
- Real-time access to census survey responses by census tract
  - Can deploy teams to areas where response rates are low
Enabling civic engagement with community-based organizations as well as individual county residents
April 1, 2019 - Census Community Kick-Off Event

• 1 year before official Census Day

• Convened organizations, funders, and residents to learn more about San Mateo County census efforts

• Upcoming funding opportunities from state, regional, and county

• Start building relationships with county and other community organizations
Funding Available for Community Based Organizations – Two Phases

1. **Phase 1 Funding: Up to $1 million**
   - Limited to non-profit 501(c)3 organizations
   - Requests for **regional outreach leaders** and **questionnaire assistance centers**

2. **Phase 2 Funding: Up to $500,000**
   - Limited to not-for-profit organizations
   - Requesting **innovative** and **creation** outreach ideas
Community Action Team Regions

- Eight regions based upon several factors:
  - Geography, Demographics, Organization Coverage
- Each CAT comprised of multiple organizations, promoting collaboration

Questionnaire Assistance Centers

- Computer location staffed with trained employees or volunteers
- Multi-lingual staff based upon specific demographics of the area served
- US Census Bureau help guides in 59 languages + English
Innovative + Creative Outreach Ideas

• Smaller, grassroots organizations
• High-school civics clubs
• Faith-based organizations
• PTAs or Parent Boards
AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

ROLE
- Census Ambassadors serve to educate, encourage & support fellow community members
- They serve as a leader and a resource in their communities

BENEFITS
- Develop personal and professional skills through civic and community engagement, communication, leadership, and relationship building

OBJECTIVES
- Learn how to approach and engage community
- Be able to explain key aspects of Census and why it is important
- Effectively address misinformation, questions and concerns
- Direct folks to support
Ambassadors Support

Organizations and community groups that want to host an Ambassador Program will receive from San Mateo County:

- **Training** on how to engage & educate community members about Census 2020
- **Resources** to help answer questions, address misinformation, direct to support
- **Outreach materials** to share with community members (factsheets, postcards)
- **iCount t-shirt** and **backpack**
- **Outreach tracking tools**
Ambassador Programs

- League of Women Voters and San Francisco Peninsula People Power (Elections + Census focused)
- Midpeninsula Boys and Girls Club (Youth-focused)
- San Mateo County Adult Schools (Immigrant-focused)
- Catholic Charities (Faith-based)
Questionnaire Assistance Kiosk

• Computer location only – **no trained staffed** required

• Libraries, doctor offices, businesses, schools

• Sign up on county website
  ➢ Meet technical requirements
  ➢ Attend brief training
  ➢ Display promotions materials
  ➢ Have user guides available (in 59 languages)
Continued Civic Engagement

• Ambassador volunteers **continue** to be resources and civic leaders in their communities

• Grassroots local community leaders with **increased capacity** for outreach and organizing

• Community-based organization network is **poised to work together** on future civic issues
Higher Sense of Community + Engagement =

- Cities or communities have a higher educational performance
- A lower crime rate
- Higher physical and mental health
- Environmental Sustainability
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THANK YOU

Questions?

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