

September 15, 2020

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Board of Supervisors
County of Ventura
800 South Victoria Avenue
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SUBJECT: Receive and File Report on 2020 Census Update

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended that your Board receive and file this report on Census 2020 activities and accomplishments.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact

DISCUSSION:

Census Results To Date

The final weeks of the 2020 Census are upon us. Through Thursday September 9 2020, Ventura County's census self-response rate was 75.5%. This self-response rate compares favorably to both the current national average self-response rate of 65.6% as well as the State of California's current self-response rate of 68.0%. Ventura County's self-response rate is the fourth highest statewide and continues to be the highest among the five counties in California Census Region 5 (Central Coast). Perhaps most significant, the County was among the very first counties to exceed their 2010 Census self-response rate.

As your Board is aware, field work by U.S. Census Bureau staff has been significantly delayed by the COVID-19 pandemic; however, Bureau staff are currently conducting both field enumeration of non-responding households and group-quarter counts (elder care facilities, military bases, etc). The count of individuals experiencing homelessness is currently scheduled to occur the last week of September. The status of these field efforts is dynamic and will be orally reported to your Board during the presentation of this report. The positive results to date on the self-response front, which represent the

large majority of census responses, speak to the work and efforts of your Board, County staff and the Ventura County Community Foundation (VCCF), our local cities and other community-based organizations (CBOs), both public and private, without whose partnership the county would certainly not be in our current position.

Additional specifics on the relative response rates of the top 20 self-responding counties as well as Ventura County's 10 cities are contained in tables 1 and 2 below.

Tables 1 and 2: Top County and Ventura County City Response Rates

20 Highest Responding CA Counties			Ventura County City Response Rates		
Rank	County Name	Response Rate	Rank	City Name	Response Rate
1	San Mateo	77.5	1	Moorpark	82.6
2	Contra Costa	76.2	2	Camarillo	82.5
3	Santa Clara	76.1	3	Thousand Oaks	81.3
4	Ventura	75.5	4	Simi Valley	81.1
5	Orange	75.4	5	Ventura	74.7
6	Marin	75.3	6	Santa Paula	73.0
7	Alameda	74.2	7	Ojai	71.9
8	Sacramento	73.7	8	Fillmore	70.9
9	Yolo	73.0	9	Oxnard	68.2
10	San Diego	72.6	10	Port Hueneme	67.2
11	Solano	72.2			
12	Placer	71.8			
13	Santa Barbara	70.3			
14	Santa Cruz	70.0			
15	Sutter	69.7			
16	Stanislaus	69.3			
17	Sonoma	69.2			
18	Napa	69.1			
19	San Benito	68.8			
20	San Luis Obispo	67.5			

* September 9 data

Final Response Period Activities

As we enter the final weeks of the non-response follow-up period, the County, VCCF and the Ventura County 2020 Census Complete Count Committee (CCC) have continued tracking census tracts with lower response rates and are actively working on using the following main outreach tactics, among others, during these final response period weeks:

- The final (fourth) of CCC outreach grants, approved in late August, awards approximately \$74,000 to eight grantees whose activities are specially targeting county census tracks with low response rates.
- Telephone canvassing by CCC and CBO volunteers is occurring and focusing on lower responding tracks.
- An additional \$41,000 in County-funded and \$30,000 in CCC round 4 grant-funded digital, print, out-of-home and mobile signage outreach is occurring during September.
- A \$30,000 CCC business outreach plan encouraging local employers to support their workers in completing the census has been funded by the CCC.

Background

In February of 2019 your Board approved the County's participation in 2020 Census outreach on behalf of, and in partnership with, the state and the U.S. Census Bureau. Well prior to this time, however, County staff had been working with VCCF leadership on planning census outreach. Your Board will recall as part of our collective efforts, the County and VCCF jointly established a local CCC, the Ventura County 2020 Census Complete Count Committee, to coordinate our outreach along with that of more than 250 local community non-profit organizations, business leaders, cities and school districts that have joined in the work of our local CCC.

On September 17, 2019 your Board gave authorization for several additional Census 2020-related actions. Among other authorizations, these included:

- Authorization for \$550,000 in payments to VCCF for census outreach and educational services and expenses, as recommended by the CCC.
- Authorization for the County Executive Officer to approve up to \$288,754 in additional payments and purchases for census outreach and educational services, expenses and Internal Service Fund charges.
- Authorization for the County to provide an additional \$545,000 of in-kind staff, facility and miscellaneous resources in support of the CCC's census outreach efforts. This amount was in addition to \$421,000 of planned in-kind support to be funded through then-existing FY 2019/20 agency and department budgets.

On April 7 of this year your Board received a detailed status report on the County's progress on its state-approved 2020 Census Outreach Implementation Plan. At that time your Board was also briefed on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the County's and CCC's census outreach efforts, which, in summary, required that the large majority of future in-person County and CCC outreach activities would need to be

rescheduled, indefinitely delayed or cancelled. Such events included local census kick-off events, attendance at community and neighborhood events, and the hosting of both County and non-profit Questionnaire Assistance Centers (QACs) and Questionnaire Action Kiosks (QAKs), among other activities. At that time the County and VCCF were working closely with outreach grantees to replace such activities with interim virtual outreach events, telephone canvassing and additional media outreach, among other alternative activities.

Due to the extended impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, these interim alternatives, activities and plans have continued throughout the entirety of the active census response period as it is not anticipated that many of the original planned activities will be able to occur prior to the end of the remaining census response period.

Despite the challenges associated with conducting the census under unprecedented conditions, much has been accomplished thanks to the support and resources provided by your Board, the hard work of County staff, and the outstanding work and partnership of VCCF and our CCC members and participants. Information on the initial and COVID-19 modified outreach activities were provided in the April 7 update to your Board. A summary sampling of the County's and CCC's 2020 Census efforts and accomplishments are listed in the following section.

Summary of County and CCC Census Outreach Activities

- Outreach through local community organizations serving as trusted messengers is among the primary mechanisms for conducting successful outreach to our hard-to-count communities. Through the County's direct contribution of \$550,000 to the CCC outreach fund, 28 census outreach grants were provided to local CBOs and four of our local cities. These County-funded grants were detailed in the April 7 report to your Board.
- Including the above County funded outreach grants, 62 total outreach grants were funded through the CCC outreach fund in four rounds totaling \$945,700. A listing of all grant recipients, by round, is included as attachment 1 to this letter.
- An additional eight grants for census outreach were given to CCC subcommittees totaling \$524,888. A listing of subcommittee grants, by round, is included in attachment 2 to this letter.
- A combined County and CCC funded Census Marketing campaign has to date generated nearly thirty-five million impressions and twenty-five thousand visits to the campaign website¹. To date the County has funded \$212,515 towards this campaign while the CCC grant fund has provided \$223,000. This campaign has included digital media, newspaper, radio, social media and out-of-home advertising including multiple large billboards, transportation shelter ads, street

banners, mall panel ads as well as other signage, in English, Spanish, Tagalog, Mixteco, Zapoteco and Purepecha.

In addition to portions of the originally funded media campaign which are still in-progress, an additional \$40,000 in County-funded final media, digital and out-of-home outreach will occur over the next several weeks. A summary of all to date campaign print, radio, digital and out-of-home outreach, both before and during the COVID-19 pandemic, is included as attachment 3 to this letter.

- In addition to their efforts on County-specific outreach and activities, County staff have been actively supporting the CCC. Participating as Chair of the CCC Public Relations and Marketing Subcommittee, County Executive Office Public Information Office staff worked with local vendors to design and implement both of the above joint media outreach campaign. Human Services Agency staff also served as co-Chair of the CCC CBO/Health and Human Services Subcommittee, while additional County staff served as members of multiple other CCC subcommittees. Additionally, our County Public Health Director served as Co-Chair of the CCC itself and, together with our County Assistant CEO, served on the CCC Steering Committee which reviewed and provided final approval on all CCC grants.
- As detailed in our April 7 report to your Board, prior to that date County staff in multiple agencies and departments completed over 100 census outreach activities and events designed to inform the public and encourage participation in Census 2020. Examples of County staff activities include placing census materials in mailings such as vote-by-mail ballots, tax bills, waterworks utility bills and animal licenses. County staff also hosted booths and participated in community events such as the Ventura County Fair, the Camarillo Airshow, and Oxnard's Fiestas Patrias celebration. Census materials were handed out at multiple job fairs, Farmworker Resource Program events, farmers' markets and the CSUCI student move-in day. County staff have served as chairs or co-chairs of two of the most active CCC subcommittees. A detailed list of County activities is included as attachment 4 to this letter.
- The County of Ventura's Farmworker Resource Program (FRP) incorporated messaging on the importance of completing the Census as part of its on-going outreach and assistance to farmworkers who contacted the program. Upon the outbreak of COVID-19, the FRP incorporated Census information in all their farmworkers outreach, including:
 - 90,000 flyers distributed with farmworker paychecks
 - Over 2,000 farmworkers contacted during in-person farms visits
 - Weekly live Facebook shows on 94.1 Radio Indigena
 - Monthly Radio shows on 94.1 Radio Indigena
 - More than 200 boxes of food distributed by the FRP

- As previously reported, the majority of the County's 37 QACs and QAKs, which opened on Thursday, March 12, were closed the following week due to state and local public health COVID-19 orders. The large majority of 82 community based QAKs and QAKs funded through CCC grants were likewise closed or did not open and alternative outreach activities were pursued wherever possible.

A limited number of County QAKs (terminals only) were able to remain open in Ventura County Medical Center ambulatory care clinics to serve individuals at these locations for medical purposes, as was one County QAC location at the Area Agency on Aging headquarters to serve individuals who were at that location obtaining services for other reasons.

In July, QAKs at each of the County's libraries were reopened on an appointment basis.

This report has presented a summary status on the 2020 Census in Ventura County. As reported, much has been accomplished and much additional work will continue through the end of the final weeks of the non-response follow-up period. Ventura County remains at risk for an undercount; however, we believe the collaborative work of County staff along with VCCF, our local cities, communities, business leaders and faith-based organizations, local schools and a wide range of underserved, cultural and special-needs advocate organizations will help achieve the most complete census count possible.

County and VCCF staff are available at today's meeting to answer any questions your Board may have about the census efforts.

This letter has been reviewed by the County Executive Office, County Counsel, and the Auditor-Controller's Office. If you have any questions, please contact me at 654-2681 or Mike Pettit at 654-2864.

Sincerely,



Michael Pettit

Assistant County Executive Officer



Michael Powers

County Executive Officer

Attachment 1: Community-Based Organization Grants

Attachment 2: CCC Subcommittee Grants

Attachment 3: County and CCC Market Campaign Items

Attachment 4: County Activity List