

EVERYONE WINS WHEN **EVERYONE IS COUNTED**



ASIAN AMERICANS COUNT!



**Over 6 million Asian Americans live in California.¹
19% of which live in hard-to-count census tracts.²**

Unique Challenges for Hard-To-Count Asian Americans

The Asian American population grew 34% statewide between 2000 and 2010, a rate over three times faster than California's total population.³ A fair, accurate count of one of California's fastest-growing populations will be crucial for the redistricting process immediately following the 2020 Census.

More than 2.7 million Asian Americans in California are immigrants, most of which are Chinese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Indian American. The Center for Migration Studies estimates that, of the nearly 2.6 million undocumented immigrants living in California, over 460,000 are Asian American.⁴

According to a 2016 poll conducted by Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles, 29% of Asian Americans in Los Angeles County follow Asian news sources.⁵ A third of Asian Americans in the state are considered limited English proficient, a rate higher than all other racial groups, while half of all Vietnamese Americans in the state are limited English proficient.⁶

Although a 2016 Pew Research Center survey finds that 95% of English-speaking Asian Americans use the internet,⁷ Asian American ethnic groups have among the highest rates of limited English proficiency and such surveys leave out these particular groups. This potential language and digital divide needs to be addressed, especially if the primary response option for the 2020 Census will be through the internet.

DISPELLING THE MODEL MINORITY MYTH

Model minority myths often characterize Asian Americans as monolithically successful, but disaggregated data on Asian American ethnic groups often reveal a much different story that make Asian Americans harder to count. Although Asian Americans (26%) have lower than average (36%) rates of low-income status statewide, data disaggregated by ethnic groups show a different story—over half of Hmong and Cambodian Americans have low-income status.⁸ Additionally, although Asian Americans as an aggregated group are more likely than average to hold high school and college degrees, disaggregated data shows that over a third of Cambodian, Laotian, and Hmong American adults age 25 years and older statewide do not hold high school degrees, a rate similar to Latinos.⁹

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

According to a recent Census Bureau report, among all racial groups, the Asian American community is least likely to complete the census. The survey also found that Asian Americans had the lowest levels of familiarity with the census, were most concerned their responses would not be kept confidential, and were least likely to feel that census participation mattered to them.¹⁰

Overcoming these challenges will be made more difficult because of the Census Bureau's shift to an online response format. In addition, the paper format that will be offered will not be available in any Asian language. This will have a negative impact on low-income, limited English proficient Asian Americans who lack digital access and/or literacy – in essence, undercounting the hardest to count within an already hard-to-count community.

To achieve an accurate count of Asian Americans, outreach efforts need to reflect the complexity and diversity of the community. A one-size-fits-all approach will not work. Translate materials into many different Asian languages. Utilize ethnic media to promote the benefits of an accurate count. Conduct targeted outreach through trusted messengers within each ethnic group and region who can deliver tested talking points that will resonate and inspire action. Reinforce the strict confidentiality provisions of the census to assuage community concerns about their responses.

ENDNOTES

- 1 U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B01003.
- 2 <http://civilrightsdocs.info/pdf/census/2020/Table1c-States-Number-Percent-Asians-HTC.pdf>
- 3 U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census SFI, Table QT-P6; 2010 Census SFI Table QT-P6.
- 4 Center for Migration Studies, 2015.
- 5 Poll of Asian American registered voters in Los Angeles County, Asian Americans Advancing Justice – Los Angeles and the Pat Brown Institute at California State University, Los Angeles, 2016.
- 6 U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B16004.
- 7 English-speaking Asian Americans stand out for their technology use: 2016, available at: <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/02/18/english-speaking-asian-americans-stand-out-for-their-technology-use/>
- 8 U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table C17002.
- 9 U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, Table B15002.
- 10 2020 Census Barriers, Attitudes, and Motivators Study Survey Report, January 24, 2019.

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