

LA County Rallies for Census 2020 Call to Action Day to Ensure That Everyone Counts

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LOS ANGELES, CA – More than 100 individuals from community organizations, unions, and government agencies joined Los Angeles County Supervisors Hilda L. Solis and Mark Ridley-Thomas and Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti on Monday at a ‘Census Call to Action’ rally at Grand Park in downtown Los Angeles. The rally highlighted their shared commitment to ensuring that hard-to-reach populations will be included in the decennial census, despite the fact that Los Angeles County is the hardest-to-count county in the nation.

“The 2020 Census is the first census that will be done primarily electronically, creating an additional barrier for low-income families and communities of color. I am concerned that the effort to add a citizenship question may discourage responses, especially among immigrant communities. Today was a clear demonstration that LA County will work with our municipal and community partners to support our vulnerable communities. We embrace LA County’s diversity and we will make every effort to count every resident,” said Supervisor Solis, who hosted today’s Countywide community rally. “An accurate census count is not only foundational to representative democracy, but it ensures that schools and communities throughout LA County receive their fair share of federal funding. The federal government must not leave our vulnerable communities underfunded and underrepresented. Everyone counts!”

“The 2020 census will significantly impact how the federal government allocates funding and resources,” said Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. “We are raising awareness a full year in advance of the 2020 census launch to ensure that Angelenos are fairly represented in the final census count.”

“Los Angeles is a city where everybody counts — and we’ll work hard to make sure everyone is counted in 2020,” said Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti. “Today is about standing together to reaffirm that promise, and modeling a path that can be followed by cities and counties across America.”

“Los Angeles is leading the way for California by demonstrating how local government can partner with philanthropy and community-based organizations to reach every single hard-to-count resident,” stated John Dobard, Director of Political Voice at Advancement Project California and one of the lead conveners of the Los Angeles Regional Census Table. “We will educate thousands of residents over the coming months and now is the time for organizations interested in conducting census outreach to bring their ideas to the table.”

“We are proud to kick off our collaborative Census efforts one year before Census day,” said Ditas Katague, Director of the California Complete Count, the office that awarded LA County \$9.4 million for a 2020 Census outreach campaign to make certain hardest-to-reach areas are counted. “California is taking the lead by helping ensure Californians get their fair share of federal resources and Congressional representation by encouraging full participation of everyone in the state for the 2020 Census.”

With over 10 million residents, Los Angeles County is considered the hardest-to-count county in the nation. In the City of Los Angeles, the County’s most populated city, residents speak over 200 different languages and more than 70 percent are renters. Hard-to-count populations include individuals who have limited access to technology, are experiencing homelessness, may not participate in the U.S. Census due to a language barrier, or are fearful of the federal government’s aggressive and inhumane actions towards immigrant communities. A Census undercount could translate to fewer federal funds for transportation infrastructure projects, economic development, and programs that help support our most vulnerable residents.

“The addition of an untested citizenship question to the Census 2020 questionnaire and a lack of adequate funding for the Census Bureau to carry out a robust outreach campaign to hard-to-count population groups have placed the upcoming decennial count in serious jeopardy,” said Lizette Escobedo, NALEO’s Educational Fund Director of its National Census Program. “Given the importance of Census 2020 in distributing billions of dollars in federal funding and the allocation of political power to communities across the country for the next 10 years, we cannot afford to have millions of Latinos and other Americans missed in the nation’s decennial count. That’s why we are joining forces with our ¡Hágase Contar! Campaign partners and elected officials in Los Angeles and across the country to educate Latinos about the importance of making themselves count in Census 2020.”

The 2020 Census will launch a year from April 1, 2019, the date LA County observed its ‘Census Call to Action.’ The decennial census is mandated by the U.S. Constitution and is used to determine political representation and to

allocate hundreds of billions of dollars in federal funding to states, schools, and local jurisdictions.

On Nov. 9, the State of California Complete Count Census 2020 Office announced LA County would receive a grant of \$9.4 million to support public outreach programs in the 88 cities throughout the County so that community-based organizations and local governments could tally hard-to-count populations for the U.S. Census.

“We stand up to be counted, because we know that federal resources and funding are distributed based on Census numbers. The 2020 Census is a chance for us to show the entire nation that Los Angeles is proud to be an immigrant city and that regardless of documentation status, L.A. Unified Schools welcomes all,” said Los Angeles Unified School District Board President Mónica García. “An important part of standing up and being counted also means coming to school every day—we encourage all of our students to strive for 100% attendance, work hard, and head towards 100% graduation.”

Since 2017, the County has been working closely with the State, community organizations, and with the City of Los Angeles – the municipality with the highest number of hard-to-count residents – to increase awareness of the 2020 Census and to erase obstacles that may undermine an accurate count.

“We stand to lose about \$2,000 for each person we neglect to count. If we undercount the County’s population by a million people, we could lose \$20 billion over the course of a decade. Freeway projects could be jeopardized, workforce development programs could be affected, and school programs could be cut,” continued Supervisor Solis. “LA County will rise to the challenge to make sure that everyone is counted in the 2020 Census.”