



We Want a Full and Fair Count on the 2020 Census

July 23, 2020

In June 2019, Canal Alliance and Community Action Marin were selected by the Marin County Board of Supervisors to lead countywide efforts to count all residents in the 2020 Census, with a particular focus on increasing response rates in historically undercounted communities. Since then, we have successfully partnered with nonprofit organizations, city and county government agencies, state and federal census offices and community members to 'get out the count' and encourage everyone to respond to the census survey.

The 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution affirms the intent of the Census to reflect an exact population count irrespective of a person's race, gender, economic or citizenship status. Yet a memorandum from the Trump Administration on July 21st calls on the Department of Commerce to "for the purpose of the reapportionment of Representatives following the 2020 census ... to exclude from the apportionment base aliens who are not in a lawful immigration status under the Immigration and Nationality Act."

Trump is trying to remove undocumented residents from the process of redistricting which takes place after every decennial census. His administration's goal is to redefine which people count as "persons" and scare all immigrants from participating in the census. Coming just one year after a Supreme Court decision preventing Administration efforts to include a citizenship question on the Census, this latest action is also a further assault by the Administration in its ongoing war on low-income and minority communities. In violation of basic civil rights, this action seeks to further exclude and marginalize Latino immigrants, and creates a chilling effect for those who wish to participate, comply with Census mandates, and make their voices heard.

Why is accurate and complete Census data so important? Not only do census numbers determine apportionment of seats in the House of Representatives for each state, they also impact allotments of \$1.5 trillion dollars in federal funding for education, food assistance, and health care that are lifelines in historically undercounted communities.

While these funding streams are always critical, they are even more important now as the COVID-19 pandemic has lifted the veil on the systemic inequities that exist for low-income communities of color. Our ability to access funds in proportion to our population will determine our capacity to provide needed services and respond to ongoing surges in COVID-19 cases whose numbers disproportionately impact low-income minority communities in densely populated urban areas like San Rafael's Canal neighborhood. Undocumented immigrants are valuable members of our communities who provide essential support to our economy and communities and deserve to be counted per the Constitution. They pay taxes and we are not asking for charity to help poor people.

Non-citizens have been included in the census and for congressional representation throughout our nation's history, including under both Republican and Democratic administrations. Please stand with us in opposition to any attempt by the Administration to diminish their voices. We are stronger and more resilient together.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chandra Alexandre".

Chandra Alexandre
CEO, Community Action Marin

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Omar Carrera".

Omar Carrera
CEO, Canal Alliance