

**Language and Cultural Access Recommendations**  
**2020 California Citizens' Redistricting Commission**  
**Submitted 1/11/21**

**Presenters:** Commissioners Akutagawa and Fernandez

**Purpose:** The purpose of the Language Access sub-committee is to recommend the languages to be provided by the Commission in its outreach materials and during its public meetings. The recommendations will lead to the contracting of interpretation and translation services.

**Outcomes:** For the full Commission's consideration, the Language Access sub-committee has identified multiple language and cultural factors and recommendations that could impact the Commission's ability to ensure greater accessibility and broad, inclusive and equitable participation in the redistricting process.

**Process:** Over four California Citizens' Redistricting Commission meetings from late October 2020 to early December 2020, multiple panels featuring experts from diverse communities presented community information, barriers and recommendations for accessibility, outreach and engagement. (The presenters, presentation dates, and summary of their recommendations follow below on page 6-20.) We also reviewed and analyzed the following resource documents:

California Secretary of State

[2017 memo](#)

[2020 memo](#)

Judicial Council of California

[Language Access Survey Report](#)

[Language Need and Interpreter Use Study Report](#)

[California Complete Count Language and Communication Access Plan \(LACAP\)](#)

[Community Outreach & Engagement Recommendations Letter submitted by a network of 22 diverse organizations across California](#)

**Recommendations:**

(See document titled: Language Access Recommendations by County)

1. Contract statewide for translation and interpreter services for the following non-English languages:
  - Chinese (Mandarin)
  - Chinese (Cantonese)
  - Spanish
  - Tagalog
  - Vietnamese.
2. Contract for area-specific (city/county) translation and interpreter services for the following non-English languages as noted in the document Language Access Recommendations by County

• American Indian*	• Korean
• Arabic	• Punjabi
• Armenian	• Persian
• Cambodian	• Syriac
• Hmong	• Thai
• Japanese	

\* (Need to confirm translation needs with the Native American communities)

3. Work with local communities to provide area-specific (city/county) translation services for the remaining languages as needed.
4. Work/partner/invest in Community Based Organizations, Tribal leaders/Tribal Organizations, ethnic media and other institutions who are trusted entities/messengers in communities to collaborate on:
  - outreach and engagement
  - development and distribution of culturally appropriate and accessible in-language materials
  - interpretation at public meetings, depending on the languages spoken in the area/region

**Request for Commissioners:** When working with your Zones, please inquire if there are specific areas that require interpretation/translation services and the population numbers associated with those non-English speaking communities.

***Following are outreach recommendations and considerations that were common across most to all of the language and cultural access panel members:***

**1. Use Trusted Entities/Messengers**

- Partnerships with trusted messengers matter.
  - Invest in community health centers, community-based organizations (CBOs), Tribal Leadership/Tribal Organization Leaders and other institutions who have deep roots, established trust, and in-depth understanding of diverse communities and community members (advocacy/civic engagement organizations, health/education services, faith-based organizations, business sector) to conduct outreach efforts to educate hard to count communities regarding the redistricting process.
    - Teachers and family members (females) most trusted in the Latino community.
    - Collaborate with faith-based institutions but keep in mind that Middle Eastern North American (MENA) community members are not necessarily religious.
  - Working with trusted messengers will help increase participation rates. They can refine the message in a way that connects with the community. Without trusted messengers then there may be very little, if any, community participation.

**2. Working with Communities**

- In the Pacific Islander and Native American communities,
  - Need to follow a community protocol or consult Tribal Councils before any redistricting work is to be done.
  - In Pacific Islander communities, it's important to understand who the elders are who can move things quickly.
    - Ability to work quickly requires trust and resources. Building relationships is important.
    - For Native American communities, give time for Tribal Councils to make decisions. Often, there are multiple steps in the decision-making process.
    - Process will need to move slower and COVID has had a disproportionate impact on the community
- People will be conversing, coordinating, and communicating to identify Communities of Interests (COIs) and district lines. Respect the community process that will naturally take shape.
- Be honest and clear about your role and expectations—and be willing to adapt to meet the needs of the community. Show respect by being open to other ways of thinking and behaving.
  - Empower CBOs to gather information needed, and work with community partners to promote public meetings and hearings.
- Each community is not a monolith. There are many different sectors and demographics, including differences by age, gender, immigration/refugee status, political ideology, religion, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, etc. Each requires specific, targeted strategies to engage.

### 3. Utilize Ethnic Media

- Engage and partner with ethnic media
- Utilize social media platforms specific to the diversity of communities, i.e. TV, radio, print ethnic media, WeChat, YouTube, etc.

### 4. Public Meetings/Hearings

#### • Timing

- Meetings should be scheduled well in advance, with clear information about topics in notices and agendas.
- Advance public notice and outreach materials should be accessible and in multiple languages.
- Provide some certainty about time for community members to provide testimony at each hearing
  - Implement an appointment system for public comments
  - Mix weekday evening/weekend hearings. Schedule outside of “traditional business” hours to allow for more participation.
- When interpreters are needed for testimony or comments, extend time limits to allow for additional interpretation time.

#### • Location

- Meet communities where they’re at (physical, linguistically, culturally) – select in-person hearing locations where community members are already gathering and are comfortable
  - For Tribal communities, consider both on and off Reservations/Rancherias.
- Encourage Commissioners to visit venues/spaces where there is a high concentration of community members to:
  - educate about redistricting
  - break potential feelings of mistrust
- Look at faith and cultural venues/festivals.

#### • Virtual

- Technology for virtual hearings should be accessible, consider locations for streaming due to limited or unreliable broadband access.
- Provide phone-in options

### 5. Translation/interpretation work

- Collaborate with community-based organizations to develop in-language materials
  - Trusted messengers can help develop the appropriate materials to distribute, if necessary.
  - Provide sufficient time and funding/stipends for community partners to support redistricting outreach.
- Offer interpretation at redistricting meetings, depending on the languages spoken in that region.

## **6. Education**

- Offer targeted in-language or informational workshops depending on the needs of particular communities so community members feel included.
- Help people to understand/get educated about what redistricting will mean for them then encourage engagement by submitting comments.
  - Explain how it affects their daily lives

## **7. Important language and communication considerations:**

- Have clear information and clear processes to reduce confusion
  - Keep in mind that dialogues about redistricting use complex or unfamiliar terms: “contiguous,” “communities of interest,” “racially polarized voting.”
  - For many immigrants and refugees, redistricting will be a first-time experience.
  - Lack of knowledge about local processes and issues may make people feel unqualified to participate
- Due to language, literacy, and/or cultural barriers there may be embarrassment about limited English proficiency
- For the range of languages and communities, there are variations in dialects, word usage, pronunciation, idioms.
- Use plain language (avoid jargon, acronyms) and videos – we can’t assume literacy levels
  - Assume reading level of 6<sup>th</sup> grader
- Black refugee/immigrant and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander communities are rooted in oral traditions
- Be mindful of accessibility (visual, auditory, physical, virtual)

**Panel Presentations: The following experts from various diverse organizations participated in language/cultural access panels during the public 2020 California Citizens Redistricting Commission meetings:**

Presenter/Organization: Rosalind Gold, NALEO (statewide Latinx, facilitates full Latino participation in the American political process)

Panel Date: 10/29/2020

<b>Outreach Recommendations/Feedback/Considerations</b>
<p><b>Overall Accessibility of Commission Hearings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Robust number of public hearings, with several focusing on specific regions/areas of California.</li><li>• Meetings should be scheduled well in advance, with clear information about topics in notices and agendas.</li><li>• Diverse hearing days and times, outside of “traditional business” hours. Mix weekday evening/weekend hearings.</li><li>• Technology for virtual hearings should be accessible, consider locations for streaming.</li><li>• In-person hearings locations should be places where community members are comfortable.</li><li>• Provide some certainty about time for community members to provide testimony at each hearing; consider implementing an appointment system.</li><li>• Ensure public can share maps or other visuals with CCRC in “real time.”</li></ul>
<p><b>Best Practices for Language Accessibility Initial Development and Translation of Key Information</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use professional translators for all key information; supplement with community review:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Post translations in a timely manner.</li><li>- Obtain community review of translations; provide sufficient time and stipends for community reviewers.</li></ul></li><li>• Establish a Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) for the CCRC:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- The Secretary of State and many county election offices have LAACs; their materials, such as toolkits, can be a model for CCRC resources.</li></ul></li><li>• Use “plain language” for initial English-language versions of key information</li></ul>
<p><b>Best Practices for Language Accessibility Interpreter Services at Hearings and Written Testimony</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide Spanish-language interpreters for all hearings.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Consider establishing a dedicated Spanish-language video channel for hearings.</li></ul></li><li>• Permit community members to use their own interpreters, such as family members.</li><li>• Where interpreters are needed for testimony or comments, extend time limits to allow for additional interpretation time.</li></ul>

- Permit the submission of written comments in any language and arrange for expedited translation of the comments.

**Best Practices for Language Accessibility COI's and the Statewide Database Tool**

- COI (Community of Interest) tool should not be sole manner of submitting COI input to CCRC. → Permit submission of testimony and drawings through e-mail, and “lowtech” methods such as phone or “hard-copy” mailings.

**Partner with Trusted Community Groups and Other Institutions Familiar with Diverse Latino Community Members**

- Build on foundation of civic engagement efforts, including naturalization promotion, non-partisan voter engagement, and Census mobilization.
- Expand networks which may not be solely focused on civic engagement –health and education services, faith-based organizations, business sector.
- Spanish-language media are a critical partner –print, broadcast, and digital.

**Other considerations:**

- Dialogues about redistricting use complex or unfamiliar terms: “contiguous,” “communities of interest,” “racially polarized voting.”
- More than one of every four California Latinos (28%) are not yet fully proficient in English.
- Variation in dialects, word usage, pronunciation, idioms.
- A significant number of California Latinos are from Mexican or Central American indigenous groups who speak neither English nor Spanish.
- Latin American indigenous languages include:
  - Zapoteco
  - Mixteco
  - Triqui
  - Guatemalan Mayan languages
  - At least 20 other languages
- Teachers and family members (females) most trusted. Use images of these trusted messengers for outreach & education

Presenter/Organization: Julia Liou and Dr. Thu Quach  
*Asian Health Services* (underserved health care services in Oakland and surrounding communities. Languages provided: Arabic, Korean, ASL, Lao, Burmese, Mandarin, Cantonese, Mien, Karen, Mongolian, Karenni, Tagalog, Khmer, Vietnamese)  
Panel Date: 10/29/2020

### **Outreach Recommendations/Feedback/Considerations**

#### **Recommendation #1 for Engaging Diverse Asian American Populations**

- Invest in **community health centers** and **community-based organizations** who have deep roots, established trust, and in-depth understanding of diverse Asian American communities
  - Cultural and linguistic competency
  - Trusted source as messengers
  - Role of outreach, education, and engagement
  - Convene townhall meetings with stakeholders

#### **Recommendation #2 for Engaging Diverse Asian American Populations**

- **Engage with ethnic media and social media platforms specific to the diversity of Asian American communities**
  - Traditional TV
  - Radio
  - Print ethnic media
  - WeChat
  - YouTube

#### **Other considerations:**

- Conduct workshops in language
- Postcards in different Asian languages.
- Printed public comment cards (translated in-language) to break digital divide
- Appointment window for their turn.
- Give time to devote to public education.
- Have clarity of information and the process to reduce confusion
- Explain how it affects their daily lives



Presenter/Organization: Rahmo Abdi and Jeanine Erikat  
*Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans - PANA*  
(African, Middle Eastern, Muslim, and South Asian (AMEMSA) refugee communities, economic, social, & civic inclusion of refugees in the San Diego region, throughout California. Common languages served include Somali, Swahili, Oromo, Amharic, Tigrinya, Arabic, and Farsi.

Panel Date: 11/6/2020

## **Outreach Recommendations/Feedback/Considerations**

### **Recommendations**

- Offer interpretation at redistricting meetings, depending on the languages spoken in that district.
- Offer targeted in-language workshops depending on the needs of that particular district.
- Important to recognize literacy levels, so creating videos and other more accessible content is helpful for communities.
- Trusted messengers
  - Partner with Community Ethnic-Based Organizations to conduct outreach efforts to educate hard to count communities regarding the redistricting process.
  - For many immigrants and refugees, redistricting will be a first-time experience.
- Expand the window for public comment to allow (time) for translation.
  - Meaning the meeting items are translated from English into preferred language, then written public comment is translated from the preferred language back into English by translators to be presented to the CRC
- Advance public notice and outreach materials should be accessible and in multiple languages.
- Live captioning in multiple languages.
- Informational videos in multiple native languages.

### **Other considerations:**

- 24% of Black immigrants in California are East African
- Language needs of the African immigrant & refugee community have always been overlooked.
  - Aggregation of languages mean some are ignored
- There are over 60 languages spoken at home by Black immigrants in California
  - More than 2,000 languages across the continent of Africa
- Amharic is the most spoken language by African immigrants in California followed by Kru, French, Swahili, Somali, French Creole, and Arabic.
- Communities are rooted in oral traditions.
- Trust is established by community leaders who are cognizant of the diversity and politics of the region
- Funding to support outreach will be important.
  - In communities that are new, costs are higher to do work. To be equitable think of what is needed to do the work

Presenter/Organization: Tavae Samuelu

*Empowering Pacific Islander Communities – EPIC*

(Native Hawaiians & Pacific Islanders (NHPI), education, health, immigration, voter engagement)

Panel Date: 11/6/2020

### **Outreach Recommendations/Feedback/Considerations**

#### **Recommendations:**

- Language access is achieved when individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) can communicate effectively with your program staff and participate in your programs and activities.
- Language justice is the right everyone has to communicate in the language in which they feel most comfortable.
- Storytelling culture
  - Talk story to open things up
  - Dialogue to reach equilibrium
- In the Pacific Islander community, have to follow a community protocol.
  - Ability to work quickly requires trust and resources.
  - Building relationships is important
  - Process will need to move slower and COVID has had a disproportionate impact on the community
- Important to understand who the elders are who can move things quickly.
  - For 2020 Census, conducted power mapping in Pacific Islander communities
  - For many, 2020 was the first time working on the Census so they had to lean on elders who had worked on previous Censuses.
  - Was able to identify translators and communication channels
  - Had to rely on digital tools
- Education leads to understanding which leads to motivation.
- When translations are provided in languages that communities can understand, it speaks to the importance.
  - When something is not in their language, it's telling communities that "you don't matter."
- Partnerships with trusted messengers matter.
- Use plain language and videos – can't assume literacy levels

**Other considerations:**

- 45% of Pacific Islanders are limited English proficient
- Top 5 counties with NHPI
  - LA
  - San Diego
  - Orange
  - Alameda
  - Sacramento.
- Top translation needs in CA (Primarily Southern California):
  - Marshallese
  - Tongan
  - Samoan
  - Vakaviti (primarily in Northern California)
- Census resources had no Pacific Islander translations so organization provided: Chamorro, Chuukese, Marshallese, Native Hawaiian, Palauan, Tongan, Samoan, and Vakaviti.
- Not a lot of community-based organizations in the Pacific Islander community
- Don't have ethnic media resources

Presenter/Organization: Eric Harris and Tho Vinh Banh, *Disability Rights California (DRC)* and Russell Rawlings, *CA Foundation for Independent Living Centers (CFILC)* (representing disability communities)  
Panel Date: 11/6/2020

## **Outreach Recommendations/Feedback/Considerations**

### **Building a Culture of Access**

- Reasonable Accommodation
  - Plain language
    - Assume reading level of 6<sup>th</sup> grader
  - ASL and Captioning (there is sign language in other languages)
    - For example:
      - Chinese
      - Japanese
      - Spanish
  - Simple registration process for meetings
  - Meeting agenda and time
  - Develop process to request to speak
  - Identify who is speaking
  - Plain language (avoid jargon, acronyms)
  - Clear communication (turn taking)
  - Describe visual contents
  - Phone-in, video options
  - Staff available for access support
- Inquire about Access Needs
- Dedicated staff for access provisions
- ADA and other federal and state law compliance
- Working with partner agencies to ensure access

### **Accessible Materials & Communications**

- Acceptable document formats
  - PDF, Word, RTF work with screenreaders
- 14-point Arial (or sans serif font best) printed materials (28-point font for presentations), Braille
- Image descriptions (alt text)
- Audio descriptions (video)
- Clear, slow communication

### **Accessible Virtual Meetings**

- Accessible platform
- Explaining accessible features (shortcut keys)

**Accessible In-Person Meetings**

- ADA Accessible location/navigational spaces
- Parking, public transportation
- Require microphone use for all speakers
- Assistive listening devices

**Outreach Ideas**

- Use disability resources to identify regional disability organizations
- Consult and work with disability partners to develop outreach virtual and in-person meetings, workshops, etc.
- Use social media (use disability community hashtags)

Presenter/Organization: James Woodson, Kevin Cosney, Lanae Norwood, *Black Redistricting and Census Hub*  
(outreach to engage historically undercounted black communities in the census and redistricting process)  
Panel Date: 11/17/2020

## **Outreach Recommendations/Feedback/Considerations**

### **Black Hub Recommendations and Key Considerations**

- **Focus on Quality over Quantity.** Redistricting is inherently rooted in community. People will be conversing, coordination, and communicating to identify COIs and district lines. Respect the community process that will naturally take shape and be prepared to receive the value that community will bring.
  - Collectivized input. To what end are we looking for individual input and just achieving certain numbers (1 person/1 map) vs. hearing from communities (50 people/1 map)?
- **Work to Clarify Roles.** It will be important to be clear about your role in community engagement vs. the role of other stakeholders and partners. CBOs are already preparing to organize communities, educate residents, and collect data and information. The CRC should work to clarify its role, empower CBOs to gather information needed, and work with community partners to promote public meetings and hearings.
  - CBOs will only have limited face to face time with community members
- **Think about Accessibility for Key Constituencies.** The Black community is not a monolith. There are many different sectors and demographics within the Black community, including differences by age, gender, political ideology, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, etc. Each requires specific, targeted strategies to engage. In particular, think about how you will engage these 4 demographics:
  - currently incarcerated residents
  - houseless individuals and families
  - faith communities (including Christian and Muslim)
  - African immigrants and refugees
    - Training from CRC, provide in language translation so community members feel included.
- **Partner with a Third Party if you choose to re-grant funding.** It will prevent you and staff from having to choose winners and losers, but will also avoid conflicts that may occur for community groups who may be receiving funding from the very entity they are directing their advocacy towards.
- **Focus on similar sectors as CCCO (geographic, demographic, and industry).** The State Census Office focused its outreach on regions, particular hard to count demographics, as well as important industry sectors (e.g. business, labor, faith). These are good guides to determine the communities you may want to solicit input and feedback in each region

- **Hire staff that can act as outreach specialists (e.g. State Census Office regional managers, US Census Bureau Partnership Specialists).** Each outreach specialist can be assigned a particular region or sector to engage and act as a liaison.
- **Form a communications working group, led by your communications director or comms firm, to ensure there is a strong mechanism for coordination on materials development and outreach/promotion.**
- **Field test new technologies (e.g. Census Political Data Inc.)**
- Phone vs paper vs technology, do it all. Whatever is most convenient is best.

**Other considerations:**

- Key Challenges related to Redistricting
  - Housing & Homelessness
  - Mass Incarceration
  - Immigration
  - Government Distrust and Lack of Confidence
- From Census Message Testing program
  - 20% typically uses internet on their cell phone vs. other methods (at home, school, library, etc)
  - Of the 5 entities, they tested in terms of who people trust the most to give accurate information, state government was ranked lowest behind CBOs, friends and family, federal government, and state government
- Unlike the Census, with redistricting, there are differing interests so there is a greater need for early coordination among community partners

Presenter/Organization: Nahla Kayali, *Access CA Services*  
(culturally sensitive community-based organization dedicated to empowering all underserved populations, with a focus on Arab-American & Muslim- American communities, Middle Eastern & North African communities (MENA). 13 different languages: English, Arabic, Spanish, Pashto, Farsi, Dari, Tigrinya, Tigre, Armenian, French, Urdu, Hindi, and Punjabi.)

Panel Date: 11/17/2020

### **Outreach Recommendations/Feedback/Considerations**

#### **Recommendations for Increased Access/Participation**

- Build relationships with trusted messengers/community leaders/community-based organizations (ex. AccessCal) from the MENA (Middle Eastern & North African) community to help with increased participation
- Collaborate with faith-based institutions but keep in mind that MENA community members are not necessarily religious. Also look at cultural venues/festivals
- Reach out to the MENA population in their primary language to help build the relationship
- Collaborate with and educate the MENA population about the redistricting process to encourage participation by creating educational materials in MENA languages
- Collaborate with MENA media outlets to announce opportunities through their channels
- Motivate MENA community members to attend commission redistricting meetings to learn more about the process
- Encourage Commissioners to visit venues/spaces where there is a high concentration of MENA community members to educate them about redistricting that will break potential feelings of mistrust
- Educate MENA communities on what redistricting will mean for them – make the issues relatable and of their interest
- Develop and host training opportunities for MENA community members to feel empowered to learn how to participate in redistricting and collaborate with organizations such as AccessCal to develop these materials
- Have personal conversations to connect with them first and gain trust. Need to meet each person where they are based on their own language and culture.

#### **Other considerations:**

- MENA (Middle Eastern & North African)
- Arab communities are from the MENA region and are united by sharing the same language of Classical Arabic – which is the appropriate version for translation and is utilized for reading and writing
- Arab communities may also be very diverse and come from 22 different countries who speak different Arabic dialects. For example, Egyptian Arabic uses different words and phrases than Syrian Arabic or Moroccan Arabic



- There's a variety of languages spoken by the MENA communities in California including but not limited to:
  - Arabic
  - Pashto
  - Armenian
  - Kurdish
  - Farsi/Persian
  - Dari
  - Somali
  - Hebrew
  - Turkish
  - Berber
- The MENA region is one of the linguistically most diverse regions with more than 60 languages being spoken throughout.
- Muslims speak hundreds of different languages and follow different cultures according to their countries of origin
- Limited English proficiency varies across the MENA communities depending on different factors
- Level of English depends on their educational background/professional background/socio-economic status
- MENA communities who come in as immigrants are either coming to work, study, or be re-united with family. For those who are coming for work or study, they in general would have strong English proficiency
- MENA communities who have been arriving as refugees – their English level also varies as there are refugees who are very proficient or there are refugees who must learn upon arrival

### **Common Barriers to Engagement/Participation**

- Language, literacy, cultural barriers: unaware of the opportunities available to participate or may also be embarrassed due to limited English
- Lack of knowledge about local processes and issues: may make people feel unqualified to participate
- Lingering fear/mistrust of government: Some may have experienced trauma as a result of speaking during public/government meetings in their home countries
- Too little time and too little resources: attending meetings is hard especially for those who work long hours with low paying jobs – civic participation is not considered a priority
- Lack of awareness of opportunities for involvement: not knowing about opportunities to participate
- Fear of deportation/political repression: if they participate, they will worry they will be sent back home because they spoke up in a public meeting
- Gender roles: in some families is not deemed appropriate for women to participate

Presenter/Organization: **Chairman Robert Smith and Chris Nejo, Pala Band of Mission Indians**

(The Pala Indian Reservation is located in northern San Diego County)

Panel Date: 12/3/2020

### **Outreach Recommendations/Feedback/Considerations**

#### **Procedural and cultural considerations to keep in mind when working with Tribes throughout the state**

- **Tribal Sovereignty and Outreach**

- Tribal Councils need to be consulted before any work is to be done.
- Give some time for the Council to make decisions. Often, there are multiple steps in the decision making process. Many times different committees and departments are consulted before a final decision is made.
- Respect confidentiality and the right of the tribe to control information, data, and public information about services provided to the tribe.
- Try to learn how the Native community refers to itself as a group (Tribal name).
- Be honest and clear about your role and expectations—and be willing to adapt to meet the needs of the community. Show respect by being open to other ways of thinking and behaving.

- **Trusted Messengers**

- Native Americans have a low level of trust in government
- It is recommended that outside entities work with Tribal Leadership (or Tribal Organization Leaders) to identify trusted messengers who can serve as community access points.
- Trusted messengers are active in the community and know how to engage with others in a respectful and genuine manner.
- Working with trusted messengers will help increase participation rates. If you spend the time to educate the messenger, we know they can refine the message in a way that connects with the community. Without trusted messengers then there will be very little, if any, community participation.
- Trusted messengers, along with the Tribal Council, will help develop the appropriate materials to distribute, if necessary.
- In addition to trusted community members, messengers can also be Tribal Organizations.

#### **Other considerations:**

- California has the highest American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) population in the country.
- There are 109 federally recognized Tribes in California and 78 petitioning for recognition.
- Interaction with federally recognized Tribes must be conducted on a government-to-government basis.
  - This is in addition to and goes beyond any public involvement and community outreach efforts.
- Each Tribe is independent with unique customs, cultures, laws and protocols.

## **Language Access**

- Ever since first contact with early colonizers, efforts have been made to eradicate indigenous languages.
- Family members who attended Indian Schools or Christian Schools and were punished for speaking their languages.
- Many ancestors chose not to pass on indigenous language in order to protect future generations from racism and discrimination.
- As a result, many languages in California are “sleeping.”
- Efforts are being made to teach a new generation of speakers, some revitalizations programs are really taking off.
- It is recommended to ask each Tribe individually, as a sovereign nation, if they would like any outreach conducted in their languages. Some Tribes may not want to share their language just yet and others may dispute its written form.
- The decision needs to be made by the Tribe or Tribal group. Language can be a sensitive topic so it needs to be approached delicately.
- It's important to acknowledge that California is home to over 90 indigenous languages and hundreds of dialects.

## **Barriers:**

- Some Tribes might not have the manpower or resources to actively engage with their community members the way they want to. Let Tribes know what resources are available for them.
- It's difficult to visit each tribe individually, especially since everyone is so spread out. It would help if public hearings can take place on or near Tribal lands, that is if the Tribe agrees to it.
- You may be met with some resistance (again, some find it hard to trust non-tribal groups) but if that's the case try working with organizations like SCTCA.
- Broadband is an issue. Most Tribes are located in rural areas with limited broadband access. Satellite internet service can be expensive and unreliable.

## **Education is Key**

- The State Census Office educated and trained trusted messengers who then took that info back to their communities. It proved to be a success! The same can be done for redistricting efforts.

Presenter/Organization: Jesus “Jesse” Fraire, *CA Native Vote Project*  
(statewide effort to engage Native American communities across dozens of counties to build political power through an integrated voter engagement strategy and census advocacy.)

Panel Date: 12/3/2020

**Outreach Recommendations/Feedback/Considerations**

**Recommendations:**

- Conduct informational sessions with Tribal communities both on and off Reservations/Rancherias by working with Tribal Governments and Tribal CBOs (in-person/virtually)
- Keep Tribal lands in-mind as communities of interest

**Other considerations:**

- Strong network of Tribal Governments and CBOs throughout the state
- Many Tribal lands have challenges with reliable broadband access and mail services
- Each Tribe is unique and sovereign
- COVID-19 has negatively affected many Tribal communities and some Reservations/Rancherias were closed due to the pandemic
- Due to COVID, turned to phone banking and text banking for outreach.