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California Black Power Network

Black Voter Experience Reflections from Civic Engagement Practitioners

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ABOUT US
The California Black Power Network (CBPN) is a new long-term statewide power-building effort dedicated to organizing Black grassroots groups and residents to change the lived conditions of Black Californians.

OUR NETWORK
CBPN is a vibrant and growing ecosystem of grassroots, Black-led groups locally, regionally and throughout the state in community and strategic collaboration acting together to address discrimination, systemic racism, and anti-Black racism. It is envisioned that the number of participating local and regional groups will grow substantially beyond the 35 who participated in the Black Census and Redistricting Hub, including strategic partnerships with the Black Equity Collective, Empower Network/LiveFree, and other emerging networks.

OUR CAMPAIGNS
CBPN is built on the work of the California Black Census and Redistricting Hub and the African American Civic Engagement Project, both projects of California Calls. During this work, we served as the State’s Black census outreach contractor and engaged over 1.3 million residents through phoning, door knocking, and digital organizing (My Black Counts) to motivate them to vote and complete the census. We also engaged nearly 500 community leaders and residents in 51 community conversations to identify key communities of interest during the state’s redistricting process. CBPN is currently developing a comprehensive, multi-issue policy agenda that will drive our work and focus in the future.

OUR GEOGRAPHIC REACH
Our census and redistricting coalition included 35 Black-led and Black-serving organizations with coverage in 13 counties across 6 regions of the State (including the Bay Area, Sacramento Valley, Central Valley, Inland Empire, Los Angeles, and San Diego).
WHY A FOCUS ON BLACK VOTERS IN CALIFORNIA?

1. California has the 5th largest Black population of any state in the country.
2. Black communities continue to be impacted by the issues facing California (e.g. COVID-19, health inequities, education inequities, public safety, housing and homelessness).
3. The Likely Black voter is aging and not being replaced by younger Black voters.
4. Black residents are being pushed out of traditional urban hubs and into new emerging communities without established organizing infrastructure.
Why is a Black Voter Engagement Strategy Necessary?

1. Black Voter Turnout was about **13 and 7 percentage points higher** than the state average in 2020 and 2021 respectively, but...

2. Black voters age 65 or older turned out at **83.9%** in the 2020 general election, while Black voters 18 to 24 turned out at **63.4%** (20.5% gap!).

3. In 2021, the gap was even wider. Black voters age 65 or older turned out at **72.0%**, while Black voters 18 to 24 turned out at **32.1%** (39.9% gap!)

4. As the Likely Black voters age they are not being replaced by younger Black voters.
Where is the Black Population in California?

- Black communities have historically been concentrated in urban areas of Los Angeles & the Bay Area, but more recently, emerging populations in San Diego, the Inland Empire, the Central Valley, and Northern San Joaquin Valley need to be recognized.

- Counties with the largest Black populations include Los Angeles (944,640), San Bernardino (223,454), San Diego (211,886), Alameda (198,654), Riverside (197,681), and Sacramento (197,590).
Outreach and Engagement Strategies

- **Strong digital campaign and brand** (e.g. My Black Counts, AACEP Voter Guide) to reach people in a different way (even amidst social distancing during COVID-19 restrictions)

- **Sustained engagement of community residents beyond voters** (i.e. drawing throughline from census to redistricting to voting and next 10 years of policy fights that might matter to Black community)

- **Focused engagement on young people** in general and young voters in particular (e.g. My Black Vote Counts)

- **Integrated Voter Engagement strategy** (i.e. mixing direct service, community organizing, policy advocacy, mutual aid, etc. from trusted messengers with voter engagement, education, and outreach)

- **In-Reach Strategy** (i.e. engaging people in county jails)
Black Voter Data: Challenges & Mitigation Strategies

**Challenges**

- Difficult to ID Black voters through their surnames
- Self-reporting is not a representative sample
- Multi-racial voters can struggle with how to identify
- Census-based challenges in drawing conclusions about non-majority Black areas

**Mitigation Strategies**

- Base-building & identification
- CID Data Advisory Committee
Panelists

Ramla Sahid
Executive Director
Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans

Sheryl Lane
Executive Director
Building Blocks for Kids

Min. Quan Williams
Civic Engagement Lead Organizer
Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement
Q & A

COUNT ME IN

BALLOTS