



Data Dissemination in Communities of Color

The Role of the Census Information Centers (CICs)

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of the
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Introduction

The Census Information Centers (CIC) Program of the US Bureau of the Census is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year but, outside of some internal analyses of annual reports submitted by its member organizations, no systematic independent analysis of the program has been conducted to date. A review of the literature on the dissemination and use of Census data reveals occasional references made to the CICs but very little on the CIC Program itself. This survey by the National Institute for Latino Policy, a member organization of the CIC Program, was conducted as an independent study of the CICs and their views on various topics as an initial analysis of the program that can assist in its future planning and provide a better understanding of the role of the CICs in the work of the Census Bureau. The survey was conducted independently by NiLP to address our concerns about developing an effective national program of Census data dissemination and analysis for Latino and other communities of color following the 2010 Census.

History. Planning to develop the Census Information Center (CIC) Program was initiated by the Census Bureau in 1988 and held its first training conference in 1990 to improve access to census data by racial-ethnic minority groups and economically disadvantaged segments of the population who have been traditionally undercounted in censuses and surveys. The original five participating organizations were: the National Urban League, the National Council of La Raza, the William C. Velasquez Institute, the Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum and the Americans for Indian Opportunity (replaced by Native America Public Telecommunications).

For more than a decade from 1988 to April 2000, an entry in Wikipedia reports that the CIC Program initially did not grow beyond the original five organizations and languished due to a lack of funding and support. In April 2000, the Census Bureau renewed its commitment to close the racial-ethnic minority and economic gap in data access by expanding the CIC Program to include 54 additional organizations representing under-served communities, bringing the number of Program participants to 59 organizations, at which time funding was made available for training, data products, postage and staff to ensure the success of the program. Between 2000 and 2005, 15 organizations left the program for various reasons. In September 2006, the Census Bureau admitted an additional 13 organizations to bring the membership back up to the year 2000 level in an open and competitive process. In 2009, there were 57 CICs listed on **the Census Bureau's website..**

In 2010, the CIC Program is undertaking a strategic planning process with the Census **Bureau's Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO)** team within the Customer Liaison and Marketing Services Office (CLMSO). In so doing, the Program will be addressing such issues as the development of collaborative projects between the CIC member organizations, the possible expansion of the size of the membership, develop strategies for attracting outside funding, and so on. With the 2010 Census on the horizon, the CIC Program will be looking at how to maximize its strategic role in Census data dissemination following 2010.

Mission. The mission of the CIC Program, as articulated by the Census Bureau, is to provide efficient access to Census data products through a wide data dissemination network of organizations. Those organizations effectively process and disseminate Census data to underserved population groups in easily understandable formats. Census Information Centers (CICs) are recognized as official repositories of demographic, economic, and social statistics produced by the U.S. Census Bureau.

CICs have provided training and technical assistance to local governments, businesses, community groups, and other interested data users in accessing and using Census Bureau data for research, program administration, planning, and decision making purposes. Each Census Information Center has its own target audience often requiring unique information. The CIC Program includes organizations, such as chambers of commerce, minority-serving colleges and universities, civil rights, social justice, and social service groups, think tanks, and research organizations.

Census Information Centers have successfully used census data and local information to support activities promoting change in underserved communities. They have used census data and local statistics to help local communities and minority businesses qualify for reconstruction resources in the wake of the September 11 attack on New York City; establish empowerment zones and revitalization areas in Brooklyn, NY, and Shreveport, LA; obtain youth services and construct after school facilities in local communities in Nashville, TN, and Oakland, CA; provide baseline data to measure the effectiveness of national programs on crime in Washington, DC, public housing; develop ways to link children in need with public services in Minnesota; help local organizations draft grant proposals; provide an up-to-date analysis of the needs of stateside Puerto Ricans; and provide American Indians on the Navajo Reservation and across the country access to Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF).

In addition to the Census Information Centers, the Census Bureau's overall data dissemination network includes participants in the State Data Center/Business and Industry Data Center Program, Census Depository Libraries, the Federal-State Cooperative for Population Estimates (FSCPE), and the 12 Census Regional Office Partnership and Data Services. The combined network includes nearly 2,000 entities located throughout the 48 contiguous states, Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, Guam, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. A Memorandum of Agreement is signed with the participants to serve as official repositories for census data.

Operations. The Census Bureau does not provide funding to CIC Program participants, but provide access to the full array of its data products, training and technical support free of charge to the Census Information Centers. In return, the Census Information Centers discuss what census data mean for local communities. The Census Information Centers produce reports, fact sheets, briefs, and other materials in different formats, on more specific subjects, and for more unique geographic areas (communities) than those produced by the Census Bureau. Census Information Centers work in partnership with the Census Bureau through its Customer Liaison and Marketing Services Office (CLMSO) currently headed by Barbara Harris.

The responsibilities of the CICs include:

- Disseminating Census Bureau data and information to persons served and local communities.
- Providing training, education, and technical assistance to persons served and local communities on how to access Census Bureau data.
- Assisting data users in understanding and accessing Census Bureau data and information, and answering questions from the public and persons served about what the data means for local communities and neighborhoods.
- Supporting Census Bureau programs by assisting with outreach, promotion and recruitment efforts for the Census Bureau's censuses and surveys.

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Who Are the CICs Today?

This 2009 CIC Survey was independently conducted for the CIC Steering Committee by the National Institute for Latino Policy, a CIC, to provide current information on the characteristics and opinions of the Census Information Centers on a variety of issues. In this section, we profile the CICs.

Year of CIC Memberships. The CICs responding to this survey indicated joining the program between 1988 and 2007, a 19 year span. Those that became CICs in 1988-2000 were 37 percent of the total, 26 percent in 2001-2004, and 39 percent in 2005-2007. Close to a quarter of the respondents (22 percent) did not know when their CICs were established.

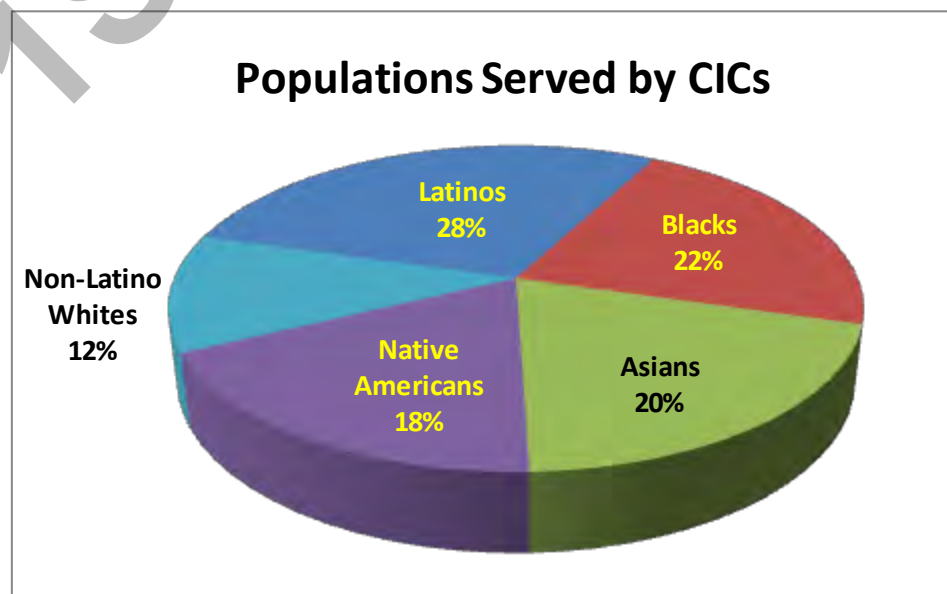
Organization Type. More than two-thirds (69 percent) of the CICs are hosted by community-based organizations, and 31 percent are university-based. The mix of organizational type has changed significantly over time, with an increase in community-based over university-based CICs in the long-term. Among the early (1988-2000) members, 64 percent of the CICs were community-based, compared to 40 percent in 2001-2004, and 93 percent in 2005-2007.

Gender Breakdown. The gender breakdown of the CIC respondents was 67 percent male and 33 percent female.

Racial-Ethnic Breakdowns. The racial-ethnic breakdown of the populations served by the CICs is as follows: Latinos (by 35 percent of the CICs), Blacks (27 percent), Asians (25 percent), Native Americans (22 percent), and non-Hispanic Whites (14 percent). The racial-ethnic breakdown of the leadership of the CICs is: Asian (22 percent), Latino (22 percent), Black (14 percent), Native American (14 percent), non-Hispanic White 12 percent) and other (14 percent).

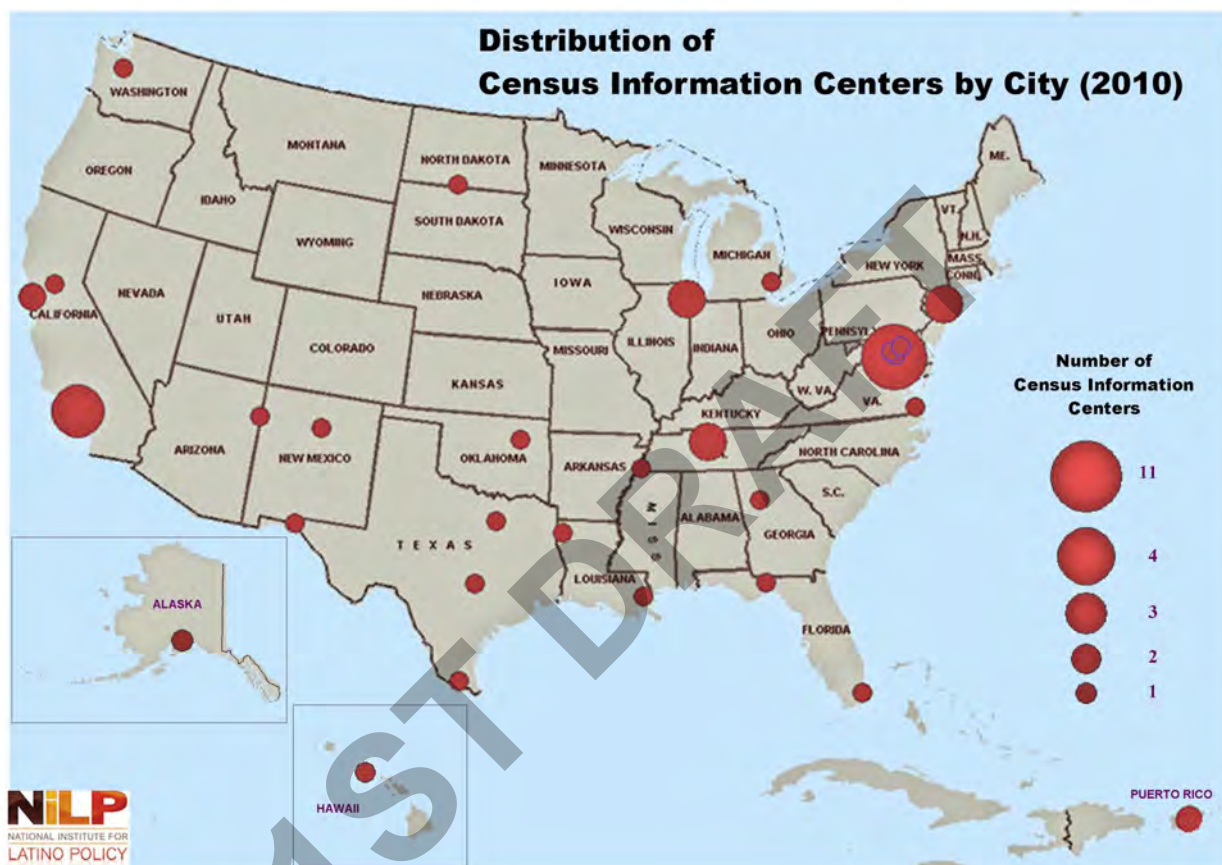
Table 1 - Year of CIC Memberships (%)

1988	2.6
1989	None
1990	7.9
1991	None
1992	None
1993	None
1994	None
1995	None
1996	10.5
1997	13.2
1998	None
1999	None
2000	18.4
2001	14.3
2002	2.0
2003	2.0
2004	2.0
2005	8.2
2006	14.3
2007	6.1
Missing	22.4



The Role of the Census Information Centers (CICs)

Geographic Breakdown and Scope. Geographically, the CICs are located in 28 cities, covering 16 states, Washington, DC and Puerto Rico. The largest concentrations of CICs are in the following urban centers: Washington, DC-Rockville, Maryland area (24 percent), followed by Los Angeles (8 percent), Chicago (6 percent), Nashville (6 percent) and New York City (6 percent). In terms of states, DC and the territories, the CICs are concentrated in the following: District of Columbia (18 percent), California (16 percent), New York (10 percent), Tennessee (8 percent) and Texas (8 percent).



Of the 12 Regional Census Offices, the CICs are concentrated in the following: Philadelphia (22 percent), Los Angeles (18 percent), Charlotte (12 percent) and Dallas (10 percent). The regional offices with the fewest CICs are: Detroit (2 percent) and Seattle (2 percent). The Philadelphia Census Regional Office covers the Washington, DC metro area, which is why it has such a large percentage of CICs within its area.

Asked the geographic scope of their work, the largest percentage of CICs indicated they did their work at the national (39 percent) and regional levels (29 percent). This is followed by the statewide level (10 percent), city/town level (12 percent), county level (10 percent) and neighborhood level (2 percent).

Funding Sources. The main funding sources of the CICs are: foundations (37 percent), their host organizations (35 percent) and government (31 percent). These are followed by: individual contributions (22 percent), special events (10 percent), and fees (6

percent). Those that run as a totally volunteer operations represent 14 percent of the total, and 6 percent don't know what their funding sources are.

There were racial-ethnic differences in the main funding sources for the CICs along racial-ethnic lines. Asian-led and Latino-led CICs indicated that they received most of their funding from foundations (50 percent each). In contrast, Native American-led CICs mostly received government funding (71 percent), and nonO-Latino White-led CICs indicated government funding and individual contributions as their main funding sources (50 percent each). Black-led CICs identified their host organization as their major funder (57 percent).

Main Functions. The CICs in this survey identified the dissemination of Census data as their main function (indicated by 82 percent of the respondents), in congruence with the mission of the CIC Program. This was followed by: conducting community-based research (69 percent), academic research (53 percent), geographic information systems (GIS) work (43 percent), and 2010 Census outreach (31 percent).

Along racial and ethnic lines, there were differences in the CICs' main functions. Asian-led CICs indicated that they mostly focused on data dissemination and community-based research (91 percent each), while Latino-led CICs focused on data dissemination (91 percent). Black-led CICs indicated that they concentrated on community-based research and mapping (GIS) (83 percent), and Native American-led CICs on academic research (86 percent).

There were also differences according to the organizational type of the CICs. Those CICs that were community-based indicated that their main function was Census data dissemination (88 percent), while those that were university-based indicated that it was mapping (GIS) (73 percent).

Indicating the origins of the CIC Program heavily based on strengthening the nonpartisan redistricting capacities of community-based organizations, 71 percent of those CICs that became members of the CIC Program in 1988-2000 indicated that their main function was mapping (GIS). In contrast, 56 percent of those joining in 2001-2004 and only 21 percent of those joining in 2005-2008 indicated that mapping (GIS) was their main function.

Dissemination Methods. The main methods used by the CICs to disseminate Census data are: email (82 percent), telephone (69 percent), community presentations (61 percent) and a dedicated website (53 percent). The least used methods are: snail mail (14 percent), academic publications (29 percent), academic presentations (43 percent),

**Table 2 - States/
Territories of Surveyed
CICs (Number of CICs)**

Alaska	1
Arizona	1
California	8
District of Columbia	11
Florida	2
Georgia	1
Hawaii	1
Illinois	3
Indiana	1
Louisiana	2
Maryland	3
Michigan	1
Mississippi	1
New Mexico	1
New York	3
North Dakota	1
Oklahoma	1
Puerto Rico	2
South Dakota	1
Tennessee	4
Texas	4
Virginia	3
Washington	1

Table - Primary Data Dissemination Methods (%)

Email Requests	83.3
Telephone Requests	70.8
Community Presentations	62.5
Community Publications	45.8
Academic Presentations	43.8
Academic Publications	20.2

and community publications (45 percent).

There were differences in the main data dissemination methods used by the CICs along racial-ethnic lines. Asian-led CICs primarily used email and telephones (91 percent), while 100 percent of the non-Latino White-led CICs primarily used email. Latino-led CICs mostly used email (91 percent) and community-based presentations (71 percent), Native American-led CICs a dedicated website (86 percent), and Black-led CICs telephones and academic presentations (71 percent each).

There were also differences according to organizational type. The community-based CICs indicated that they disseminated data primarily through email requests (88 percent), while university-based CICs did so through academic presentations (73 percent).

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Assessing the CIC Program

Most Helpful Aspects. The CICs were asked what aspects of the program they found most helpful. Three are seen as most helpful: training in the use of Census data and programs (76 percent), the networking with other CICs (74 percent) and the formal connection with the Census Bureau (67 percent). It was interesting that one of the main features of the CIC Program historically, providing the CICs with free Census data, ranked fairly low with 49 percent citing it as most helpful. This probably reflects that fact that access to data has become technologically much easier and less costly since the program started in 1988, making training in data access much more valuable today.

Along racial-ethnic lines, there were differences in which aspects were viewed as most helpful. Black-led CICs found the networking with other CICs as most helpful (86 percent), while non-Latino White-led CICs found the free data and training received as most helpful (83 percent each). Asian-led CICs found most helpful the formal connection to the Bureau and networking with other CICs (82 percent each), and Latino-led CICs pointed to meeting Census staff and the training received (64 percent each).

Table 3 - Most Helpful Aspects of CIC Program (%)

Training	75.5
CIC Networking & Sharing	73.5
Formal Census Bureau Connection	67.3
Meeting with Census Staff	51.0
Free Census Data	49.0

According to organizational type, the community-based CICs gave the formal connection to the Census Bureau they got from the CIC Program as most helpful (74 percent), while the university-based CICs saw this as being less helpful to them (53 percent). Being university-based clearly requires less than validation than independent community-based CICs feel they need and which the CIC Program provides.

Least Helpful Aspects. The least helpful aspect of the CIC Program was identified as the free data provided by the Bureau (29 percent). Very few of the respondents, however, indicated that any aspect of the program was least helpful and 12 percent volunteered that all aspects of the program were helpful. Overall, the CICs see the program in a very positive light.

Promoting More Interaction between CICs. Asked how to make the CIC Program more interactive for the member organizations, two were mentioned most. The first was holding periodic teleconferences on subjects of interest to the CICs (53 percent), followed by establishing CIC caucuses or affinity groups along racial, ethnic, sector and other lines (41 percent). Approaches already attempted by the CIC Steering Committee received less support: a listserv (18 percent), CIC business meetings between conferences via teleconferencing (31 percent), an independent website (33 percent), and a newsletter (33 percent). Two other approaches were volunteered by single respondents: creation of joint CIC projects and having the program provide financial support to the CICs.

Asked how to promote more interactivity specifically at the CIC conferences, majorities supported having more presentations by the CICs themselves (53 percent) and holding more social events (51 percent). The least favored was holding CIC recognition events for outstanding work by individual CICs (33 percent).

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2010 Census Information Needs

With the Census Bureau in the last stages of preparations for the 2010 Census, the CICs were asked what topics they preferred to hear most about concerning the 2010 Census. About three-quarters (74 percent) indicated they preferred to learn about the role of CICs in 2010 Census outreach best practices, followed by those interested in learning about funding opportunities for 2010 Census outreach (61 percent). These were both topics featured in the October 2009 CIC Training Conference in Chicago.

At least 30 percent were interested in the following 2010 Census updates: minority contracting (45 percent), employment recruitment (41 percent), Census data products (41 percent), the American Community Survey (37 percent), the Partnership Program (37 percent), and language programs (31 percent).

The following 2010 Census topics elicited the least interest: the Integrated Communications Plan (18 percent), the Census in Schools Program (22 percent), Complete Count Committees (25 percent), the redistricting data program (25 percent) and the role of the regional Census offices (25 percent).

The Role of CICs	73.5
Funding Opportunities	61.2
Minority Contracting	44.9
Employment Recruitment	40.8
Census Data Products	40.8
American Community Survey	36.7
Partnership Program	36.7
Language Programs	30.6

CIC Training Needs

To help in identifying the data and other training needs of the CICs, they were asked what topics they would be interested in being trained at the 2009 CIC Training Conference.

There was a wide range of topics identified by the CICs, with the two most popular being: the American Community Survey (ACS) (53 percent) and DataFerrett for beginners (47 percent). The training focus of the 2009 CIC Training Conference was the DataFerrett Program.

Table 5 - CIC Training Preferences (%)

American Community Survey	53.1
DataFerrett (beginners)	46.9
Developing Communications Plan	40.8
Identifying hard-to-count communities	38.3
Mapping (GIS)(advanced)	36.7
American Fact Finder	34.7
Mapping (GIS)(beginners)	32.7
Redistricting Data	32.7
Finding Census Data	30.6
Local Employment Dynamics (LED)	30.6
DataFerrett (advanced)	30.6
Current Population Survey-SIPP	26.5

The next tier of interest was in training in the following: developing a 2010 communications plan for their communities (41 percent), identifying hard-to-count communities (39 percent), American Fact Finder (35 percent), geographic information systems (GIS) for beginners (33 percent), finding Census data (31 percent), redistricting data (33 percent), Local Employment Dynamics (LED) (31 percent), DataFerrett for advanced users (31 percent), and the Current Population Survey (CPS) (27 percent).

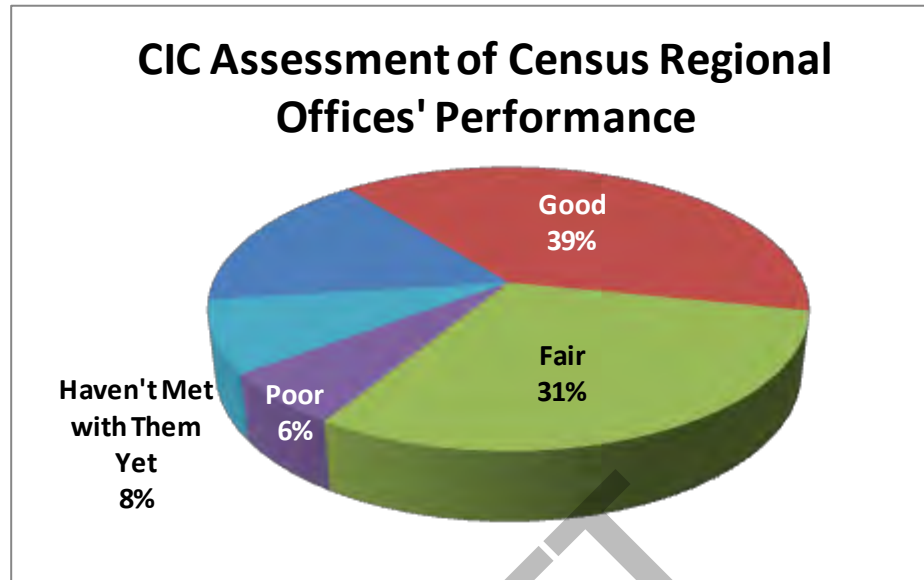
Only one or two respondents also volunteered the following topics: using PUMS and bringing back Advance Query. It appears, at this point, that the Census Bureau currently has no plans to restore Advanced Query.

Asked about their interest in topics related to their preparations for 2010 Census outreach, the top preference was for strategies for reaching hard-to-count populations (73 percent). This was followed by types of support the CICs could receive from the regional Census offices (55 percent), and how CICs can promote partnership agreements in their communities (41 percent).

The least interest was in the following: becoming a Be Counted Center (14 percent), becoming a Questionnaire Assistance Center (24 percent), recruiting 2010 Census enumerators (27 percent) and becoming a Complete Count Committee (29 percent). There appears to be less of an interest by the CICs in these more direct services aspects of 2010 Census outreach, given their other responsibilities.

Almost all (96 percent) of the CICs indicated they would be involved in 2010 Census outreach activities. As indicated in the previous section, the CICs are interested in learning of ways that the Census Regional Offices could support their outreach efforts for 2010. When asked how they would characterize their relations to their local Census regional office's Partnership Program, the majority (55 percent) saw it as good to excel-

lent, 37 percent saw it as poor to fair, with 8 percent stating that they haven't met with the regional partnership staff yet. Given that the CICs are an official part of the Census Bureau, it should, however, be of concern that only 16 percent found the relationship to be excellent.



The Role of Race and Ethnicity. Significant differences appeared along racial and ethnic lines in the CICs' training preferences. In terms of preferred training topics, Black-led CICs were most interested in the American Community Survey (ACS) (71 percent), while Native American-led CICs focused on DataFerrett for beginners (71 percent), and non-Latino White-led CICs on Population Estimates (67 percent). On the other hand, Latino-led CICs focused on developing communications strategies (55 percent), while Asian-led CICs were most interested in the ACS and the Current Population Survey (CPS) (64 percent).

In terms of 2010 Census outreach topics, while Asian-led CICs were most interested in learning about Regional Census Office support (82 percent), most Latino-led CICs were interested in information of hard-to-count population outreach strategies (91 percent).

Conclusions

With the 2010 Census only months away, the preparation of the CIC Program to play a **critical role in the dissemination of the decennial data and this year's American Community Survey (ACS) statistics** to poor and working class populations and communities or color needs to assume some priority for the Census Bureau and the Census Information Centers. With these vulnerable populations being hit hardest by the economic crisis facing the country and their continued lag in Internet and computer access, the need for the CIC Program to develop a strong intermediary sector and services for timely and efficient Census data dissemination is a challenge that will require some creativity and additional resources.

In recognition of this challenge, the CICs have seen their role change from primarily being one of data dissemination to a broader one that includes community outreach and promotes participation in the 2010 Census and other activities. When the program **began over a decade ago, the Census Bureau's providing the CICs with free data was a major resource** for these communities. However, advances in data management and dissemination technology has made this aspect of the program less important and its training component more important. These are trends that this survey has documented.

This survey has also provided a profile of the CICs with more information than has been so far available that can prove valuable for program planning to address these issues. There has been some discussion about the need to expand the CIC Program member organizations from the current 57 to at least 100. As this survey indicates, there are 27 states and 4 US territories that do not have a CIC. It could be a priority to at least expand the program to have all states and territories represented with one CIC each, which would bring the total to 90.

The Census Bureau should also consider reorganizing the ways in which it provides training to the CICs. Besides the one or two national training conferences it currently holds, they should be considering more frequent and intensive teleconference or webinar training sessions. The survey also found an interest in organizing part of the CIC Program around caucuses or affinity groups around specific communities and functional areas, such as racial-**ethnic populations as the Bureau's Race and Ethnic Advisory Committees (REAC) Program** does. As this survey found, there appear to be significant differences in the interests and organization of the CICs along racial and ethnic lines.

The Bureau should also consider ways to increase its support of the CIC Program to provide resources to enable collaborative projects between the CICs, and between the CICs and the Bureau. In so doing, the differences between community- and university-based CICs need to be recognized in terms of their different needs and resources, as well as between national and more local CICs. Attention to these internal differences **between the CICs has not been adequately taken into account in the CIC Program's past programming.**

The Bureau needs to also work with the CICs in attracting private funding for joint CIC projects. Although some have advocated that the Census Bureau itself provide some operational funding for individual CICs, up until this point this has not been the case. The CICs themselves have recently begun to work with the CIC Program to explore ways to attract private funding for CIC activities by leveraging the relationship with the Bureau and considering developing working groups that would develop collaborative CIC projects in areas such as nonpartisan redistricting, surveying local community Census data needs, developing common data dissemination website designs, and in other areas.

The CIC Program has the potential of being a powerful intermediary between the Census Bureau and hard-to-reach communities in the areas of data dissemination and **analysis. The Census Bureau's current methods and mechanism of data dissemination** to communities of color and the poor and working people have had limited success in reaching these populations. By developing the capacities of the CICs individually and collectively, the Census Bureau has the opportunity to promote efforts for full access to the data it generates as it is currently doing in promoting full participation in the 2010 Census. As the CIC Program begins its second decade of operation, this is a goal that will serve to make the work of the Census Bureau more relevant to all Americans.

Methodology

This was a web survey administered by the National Institute for Latino Policy (NILP) CIC using the Zoomerang program. The survey was conducted between August 19 and September 12, 2009. Of the 57 CICs in the program, 49 responded to the survey for a response rate of 86 percent.

The survey questions were developed in consultation with the members of the CIC Steering Committee and Census Bureau staff. This survey is not an official activity of the US Bureau of the Census and the opinions expressed in this report are not necessarily shared by the Bureau or the CIC Program. This report was prepared independently by the National Institute for Latino Policy for the CIC Steering Committee.

CIC Census Staff

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Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Customer Liaison and Marketing Services Office, Last Revised: September 11, 2009

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