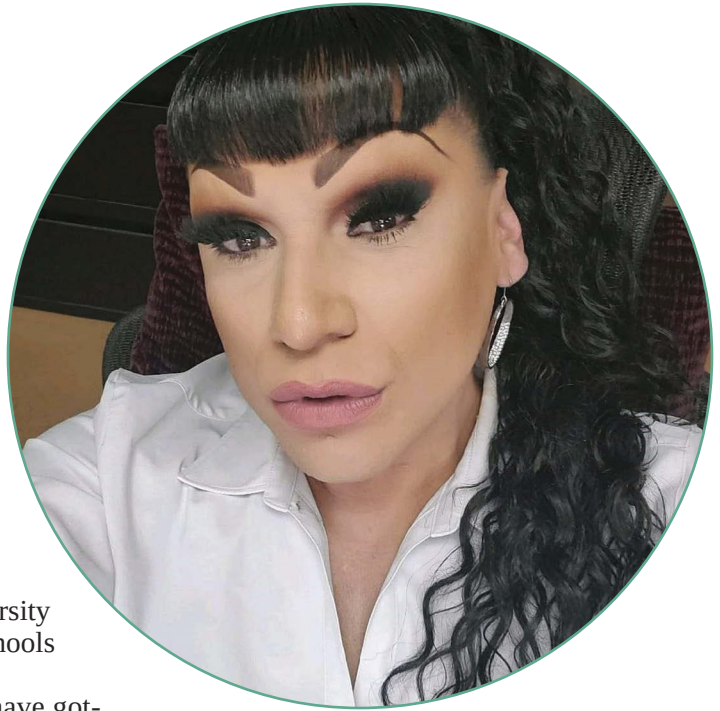


REPRESENTATION MATTERS

For the first time, Census recognizes
LGBTQ community

BY ANNE STOKES



Katalina Zambrano first started identifying as transgender in the seventh grade. She was harassed and bullied. Back in the 1990s, there were no support programs in her community for her or her family. For all intents and purposes in that time and place, LGBTQ rights did not exist.

"I think if I didn't have the support from my family, I wouldn't have made it," she says. "But my family didn't know where to turn because there was no PFLAG [Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays], there was no trans support groups.

"It was stressful for me, it was stressful for my family ... there were no support groups at all for all my young adult life."

Despite the intense harassment from students, faculty and staff throughout high school, Zambrano graduated with her chosen name on her diploma. Unfortunately, the hostility and discrimination didn't end. She struggled to find employment, experienced harassment from law enforcement and faced discrimination from doctors and therapists.

Today, Zambrano has become the change she wished to see in her community. She serves as gender spectrum coordinator with Central Valley Pride Center. She's worked with several LGBTQ advocacy groups counseling youth going through the

same struggles she endured and has helped develop diversity training for local schools and businesses.

While things have gotten better for Zambrano, LGBTQ communities still lack support and services.

"The resources aren't given to Merced Health, the Office of Education, Merced County mental health ... because there is no one counting these people," she says. "On top of that, I feel like a lot of them stay in the closet because there are no resources for them and there's nobody advocating for this community."

This year, however, the Census is recognizing same-sex households for the first time in its 230-year history. Counting LGBTQ communities provides comprehensive documentation that enables schools, government agencies and more to provide resources community members need.

"We matter and we should be counted. If we don't show that we are here and there are many of us, how do we expect anything to change?" she says. "We have to stand up, we have to let people know that there are a lot of us and we need resources ... it's a scary time, but it'd be scarier for it to pass us by and continuing to be this way." ●

**"We matter
and we should be
counted."**

Katalina Zambrano
GENDER SPECTRUM COORDINATOR WITH
CENTRAL VALLEY PRIDE CENTER

Katalina Zambrano became the change she wished to see in her community, serving LGBTQ youth and families.
PHOTO COURTESY OF KATALINA ZAMBRANO



**2020
CENSUS**

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MAKE A DIFFERENCE; GET COUNTED!

Just 10 minutes will impact the next 10 years for your community. Ten minutes — or less — is all it takes to complete the 2020 Census. Yet, thousands of California residents have not completed this simple form, either by mail, online or phone.

Due to the COVID pandemic, Census enumerators are not knocking on every door to seek out individuals not yet counted. Instead, it's more important than ever for residents to complete the Census questionnaire on their own. How?

If you still have your Census form, you can complete it and return it by mail. You also can complete it by phone at 844-330-2020 or online at my2020census.gov. To find out more, visit CountOnMe2020.org. If you haven't already completed the Census, don't wait. Federal officials are considering wrapping up the count as early as Sept. 30. An undercount could mean billions in lost

funding to California and its communities.

What's at stake? More than \$800 billion annually, distributed through 132 federal programs that are crucial to our neighborhoods including veterans, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Census data also is used to determine our state's representation in Congress and emergency responses to disasters and public health crises, such as the current pandemic.

Each person counted brings in at least \$1,000 in funding every year to their community until the next Census count, which will be in 2030.

Answers are confidential and are not shared with third-party agencies, including law enforcement, courts, employers or landlords. Under Title 13, Census workers are required to protect confidentiality by federal law. ●



CENSUS DATA = FUNDING

Here are just a few areas that will be touched by 2020 Census data:

- LGBTQ health services
- LGBTQ support services
- Youth counseling and suicide prevention programs
- Placement of new hospitals and health clinics
- Number of doctors and other health providers needed in certain areas
- Distribution of vaccines and medicine
- Medicare Part B and Medicaid, affecting services and reimbursement rates
- Health insurance, affecting estimates of coverage
- Disability benefits, affecting payouts
- Distribution of transportation funds

- Construction and repair of highways and bridges
- Construction of affordable housing and future neighborhoods
- School construction and closures
- Title I education funding
- Unemployment benefits
- Veterans Services

Plus these special programs:

- Children's Health Insurance
- Child and Adult Care Food
- Rural Health Medical Assistance
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance
- Special Supplemental Nutrition for Women, Infants and Children programs



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