**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The Fresno Center calls for April 1 census day participation by all Asian American and Pacific Islander communities amid COVID-19 concerns**

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*Statewide California collaboration amongst 12 Asian-Pacific Islander nonprofits endorse participation online, via phone, or by mail to reach historically undercounted communities*

**(March 26, 2020) Fresno, CA** — The Fresno Center (TFC) a non-profit known for being a one stop social services and mental health agency announced today its efforts to endorse participation in the Census 2020 by phone, mail, or online amidst of the COVID-19 outbreak.

“We want to stress the importance of participating in this year’s 2020 census. Completing the census is our privilege and responsibility and it is easy. Community members can complete the census by phone, mail or online,” said Pao Houa Lee, Job Development Coordinator for The Fresno Center. “This is the first year that the census is available online and given the current pandemic crisis, community members can complete the census without breaking the self-quarantine and social distancing regulations.”

A California statewide network of 12 Asian American and Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander-serving (NHPI) community-based nonprofits are conducting in-language outreach in 22 languages which in addition to those previously listed, also include Bengali, Burmese, Hindi, Hmong, Iu-Mien, Khmer, Lao, Marshallese, Samoan, Punjabi, Thai, Tongan, Urdu, Vakaviti, Chamorro, and English. In addition to in-language resources, the network’s outreach efforts include community education, coalition building, digital media efforts and social media outreach with heavy emphasis on digital content given the cancellation of community events, in-person gatherings, and sponsored activations to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Historically, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities have been undercounted, resulting in missed federal funding for the states and counties in which they reside impacting their communities with the loss of programs that benefit schools, hospitals, local transportation, public works and more.

“Since 2010, Fresno County has seen an estimated 12 percent growth in the Asian American communities and an estimated 26 percent growth in Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities,” said Lee. Cheri Cruz, Public Relations Director for The Fresno Center says completing the 2020 census will help decide how billions of dollars will reach our families. Cruz states “your answers will determine funding for dozens of programs such as resources for schools, childcare programs, road maintenance, and social assistance programs.

The census provides data to law makers who are our policy makers.”

Community outreach efforts began in 2019 and will continue leading up to April 1 Census Day through July 31, 2020, when the count will be complete. An in-language public service announcement available in approximately 20 Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander languages (including English) is set to debut in March along with digital flyers, posters, sponsored ads and user-generated content amplified through social media networks of local small businesses, faith-based organizations, community centers, and more.

As April 1 Census Day approaches, all are encouraged to participate online, by phone, or mail.

For more information on the importance of Census 2020 outreach to the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities and other key facts and statistics, visit [Count Us in 2020](https://www.countusin2020.org/resources-nhpi) – a Census resource hub hosted by the Asian American Advancing Justice affiliation, a collaboration of five leading organizations advocating for the civil and human rights of Asian Americans and other underserved communities to promote a fair and equitable society for all, together with Empowering Pacific Islander Communities.

“We’re so excited to see the continual support from our community leaders. We’re even more excited to have seen so many community members already engaging and completing the paper forms that were sent on March 12, 2020. We rely on the community leaders to get words out and on the community members to make sure they are counted and aren’t forgotten,” said Lee.

List of Statewide Partners:

* Asian Resources, Inc.
* Jakara Movement
* Asian Americans Advancing Justice
* Asian Law Caucus
* Chinese for Affirmative Action
* Asian Law Alliance
* The Fresno Center
* Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON)
* Orange County Asian Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA)
* Union of Pan Asian Communities (UPAC)
* AAPIs For Civic Empowerment
* Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)

**ABOUT THE FRESNO CENTER**

The Fresno Center (TFC) a non-profit founded in 1991, its mission is to assist individuals in becoming self-sufficient, self-fulfilled, and productive members of the community while fostering cultural preservation and promoting cross-cultural understanding. It has a long-standing history of providing traditional and culturally competent, and linguistic services to the growing needs of underserved and unserved, low income residents in Fresno County.