



The Importance of Cultural Consideration in Disaster Planning

November 16, 2023

10:30am - 12:30pm



Communicate | Coordinate | Collaborate | Cooperate

COMMUNICATE | COLLABORATE | COORDINATE | COOPERATE



Housekeeping

- ACCESS Coordinator for today - AccessMarsha
- Zoom basics and etiquette
- Put your name, organization and email in the chat
- Otter A.I. and Zoom captioning are turned on
- Ask questions at any time in the chat
- This webinar will be recorded and available at CADRESV.org/Preparedness

Wildfire Safety



Wildfire Preparedness

Page Under Construction

WILDFIRE ALERTS



If you think you're in danger, don't wait for an alert, leave immediately!



RED FLAG WARNING - BE ALERT.
Fire conditions (dry, hot, windy) are occurring.



EVACUATION WARNING - GET READY TO LEAVE.
Fire is close. Leave now if you need extra time.



EVACUATION ORDER - LEAVE IMMEDIATELY.
Fire is here, you are in danger!



Learn more about alerts and preparing for wildfire: Cadresv.org/Wildfire



Translations

- English
- Chinese
- Hindi
- Japanese
- Korean
- Spanish
- Tagalog
- Tamil
- Vietnamese

| | |
|--|---|
| Red Flag Warning from the National Weather Service | + |
| Evacuation Warning - Alert | + |
| Evacuation Order - Alert | + |
| Prepare Before Wildfire | + |
| After Wildfire Recovery | - |
| All Local Trusted Information Sources | + |
| Returning Home After Wildfire | + |
| Wildfire Smoke Safety *NEW* | + |

- Mini Videos
- Wildfire Alerts
- Evacuations
- What to Expect
- Immigrant Support
- Access and Functional Needs

WILDFIRE READINESS

More Info:
cadresv.org/wildfire

Fire is HOT!
Heat is more dangerous than flames. Room temperatures can rise to 600 degrees at eye level. Inhaling this super-hot air will scorch your lungs and melt clothes to your skin.

Fire is FAST!
In less than 30 seconds a small flame can turn into a major fire. In minutes a house can be engulfed in flames.

Fire is DEADLY!
Smoke and toxic gases produced by fires kill more people than flames do, with asphyxiation being the leading cause of fire deaths.

O₂
Oxygen

+

+

=

+

+

+

Fire is DARK!
Fire starts bright, but quickly produces black smoke and complete darkness.

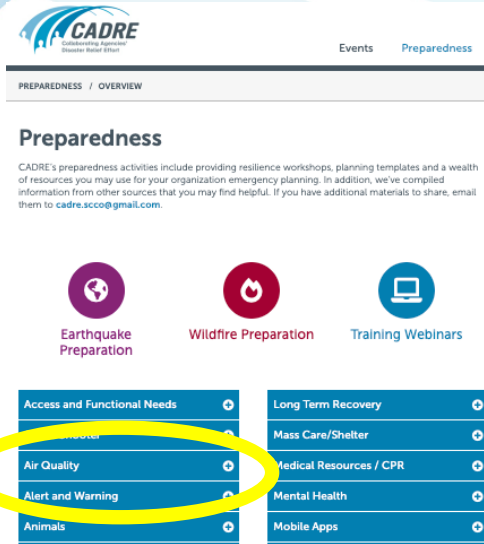
Perfect conditions for a wildfire

Remember, leave immediately if you feel you're in danger, don't wait for an alert or warning!

WILDFIRE ALERTS AND WHAT YOU SHOULD DO:

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| <p>Red Flag Warning – Stay Alert Fire conditions are occurring (dry, hot, windy).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stay alert to your surroundings via news, government websites, and Alert SCC, the county's alert system. Sign up: www.alertscc.com ✓ Have phone volumes turned up to ensure you hear alerts. ✓ Check with your city to learn about their evacuation plans and where you should go. | <p>Evacuation Warning – Be Ready. Fire is close.</p> <p>Leave now if you're sensitive to air quality, need extra time, or have large animals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Prepare animals and children for evacuation. ✓ Coordinate with family members who aren't at home and warn your neighbors. ✓ Have bags packed with essential documents and items to meet personal needs. | <p>Evacuation Order – Leave now!</p> <p>Fire is here, you are in danger. You no longer have time to pack or prepare, get out of the area now!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Close doors and windows on your way out. ✓ Make your house visible for fire fighters by leaving lights on inside and outside the house. |
|---|--|---|

Wildfire Air Quality



Air Quality

Resources for Air Quality

Here are a number of good resources for Air Quality. Find the resources that work best for your situation.

California Air Resources Board website has a lot of good educational materials.

[Air Now](#)

[California Air Resources Board](#)

[Emergencies and Indoor Air Quality](#)

[California Smoke Information](#)

[Purple Air](#)

[Bay Area Air Quality Management District](#)

[County Public Health DIY Filter Fan](#)

[DIY Air Filter/Fan combo](#)

- ✓ BAAQMD
- ✓ EPA
- ✓ CA Air Resources

School Air Quality Activity Recommendations

PROTECT STUDENT HEALTH DURING POOR AIR QUALITY

Air quality is an important consideration for schools when planning student activities. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is available to assist schools with understanding local air quality and actions to take to protect student health. To find out more, visit www.BAAQMD.gov or call 415-749-4900.

The following school activity recommendations are based on consultation with health researchers and several important principles drawn from recent studies.

Air Quality Level

| Activity | LEVEL 1 AQI 0-50 PM _{2.5} 0-12 µg/m ³ | LEVEL 2 AQI 51-100 PM _{2.5} 13-35 µg/m ³ | LEVEL 3 AQI 101-150 PM _{2.5} 36-55 µg/m ³ | LEVEL 4 AQI 151-200 PM _{2.5} 56-150 µg/m ³ | LEVEL 5 AQI 201 or higher PM _{2.5} 151-500 µg/m ³ <small>School districts may consider closures based on site-by-site concerns.</small> |
|----------------|---|--|--|---|--|
| Recess (15min) | No restrictions | Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.* | Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.* | Exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities. Sensitive individuals should remain indoors.* | No outdoor activity. All activities should be moved indoors. |
| P.E. (1hr) | No restrictions | Ensure that sensitive individuals are medically managing their condition.* | Sensitive individuals should exercise indoors or avoid vigorous outdoor activities.* | Exercise indoors or limit vigorous outdoor activities to a maximum of 15 minutes. Sensitive individuals should remain indoors.* | No outdoor activity. All activities should be moved indoors. |



DIY Air Filter



Objectives

Present updated information on changing demographics

Explore various ethnic and cultural barriers to access of information and resources

Share lessons learned and discuss potential collaboration to improve to inclusion, trust, equity

Raise public awareness of immigrant rights and protections in emergency situations.



Agenda

Santa Clara County Diversity is changing

Planning for Climate Change

Integrating immigrant rights into disaster planning & training





Who are we talking about?

Culture can be interpreted as any group of people who

- feel safer or more comfortable with each other,
- have their own sources of information,
- have likely experienced discrimination,
- may have trust issues outside of their own group.

While this webinar is focused on immigrants, this might also include LGBTQ, unhoused, people with a disability, people with a criminal record, survivors of domestic violence, etc.



Who are we talking about?

Immigrants can be defined as any non-citizens or naturalized US citizens.

This includes

Naturalized citizens

Green card holders,

Temporary visa holders

Refugees

Asylees, and

Undocumented immigrants





Speakers

Araceli Gonzalez, Division Director of Emergency Programs & Housing Services Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County

Meera Kymal, Managing Editor, India Currents Magazine

MyLinh Pham, Executive Director, Asian American Center of SCC

Syed Hussaini, Regional Disaster Response Coordinator, Islamic Relief USA

Teresa Castellanos, Immigrant Services Coordinator, Santa Clara County Office of Immigrant Relations



Undocumented Immigrants come from many countries

134,100 undocumented immigrants lived in SCC in 2021. Many undocumented immigrants came here "the right way"

- Students whose visa expired
- H1B worker visas that expire (USCIS has 2 year backlog)
- Asylee applicants and Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) who are unable to apply for legal status in time (lack of understanding, lack of funds, lack of legal assistance)
- TPS (Temporary Protected Status) expires or revoked but still unsafe to return home
- Married but spouse did not apply for green card



New Americans in SCC

Teresa Castellanos, Office of Immigrant Relations

Demographics and Economic Contributions of Immigrants in SCC

Population

We define “immigrant” as any non-citizen or any naturalized U.S. citizen. They include naturalized citizens, green card holders, temporary visa holders, refugees, asylees, and undocumented immigrants, among others.





The total population of Santa Clara County in 2021 was 1,886,350.

765,800
the number of immigrants living in
Santa Clara County in 2021

Immigrants made up 40.6% of the
total population of the county in 2021

If we include the children of
immigrants, we are talking about 60%
of the population being made up of
immigrant families



Demographics

THE NUMBERS

55.9 % of households in Santa Clara County had at least one immigrant person living there.

22.2% of immigrants in Santa Clara County were recent arrivals, with five years in the United States or less

77.8% of immigrants in the county had lived in the United States for more than five years.

GENDER

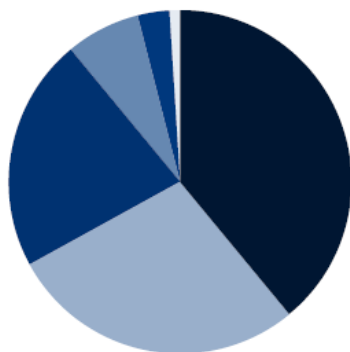
U.S.-born residents in the county self-identified as **47.5%** female and **52.5%** male.⁵



Immigrant residents in the county self-identified as **51.0%** female and **49.0%** male.

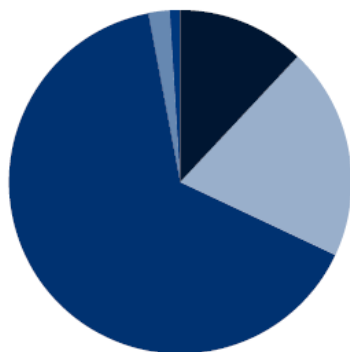


Race Comparison US born Vs Immigrant



Share of the U.S.-born population in the county by race:

- White (38.8%)
- Black/African American (3.0%)
- Hispanic (28.5%)
- Native American (0.2%)
- Asian American/Pacific Islander (22.2%)
- Mixed/Other Race (7.3%)

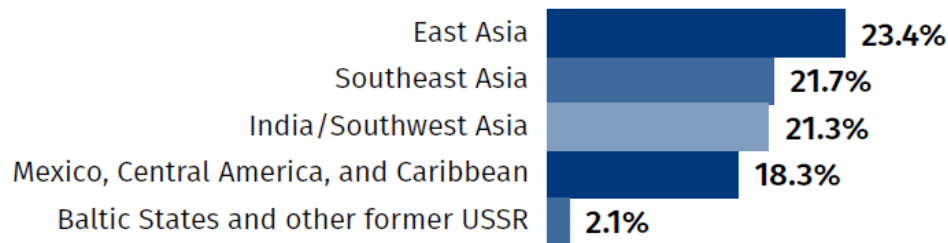


Share of the immigrant population in the county by race:

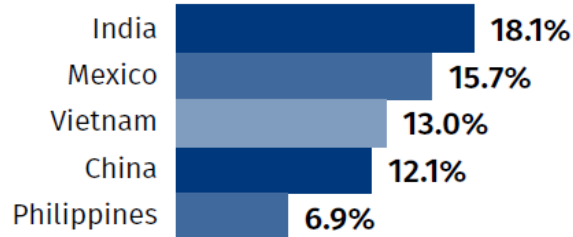
- Asian American/Pacific Islander (64.6%)
- Black/African American (1.3%)
- Hispanic (19.8%)
- White (12.6%)
- Mixed/Other Race (1.7%)

Top Regions & Countries for immigrants in SCC

The top regions of origin for immigrants living in the county:



The top countries of origin for immigrants living in the county:



**1.03
million**

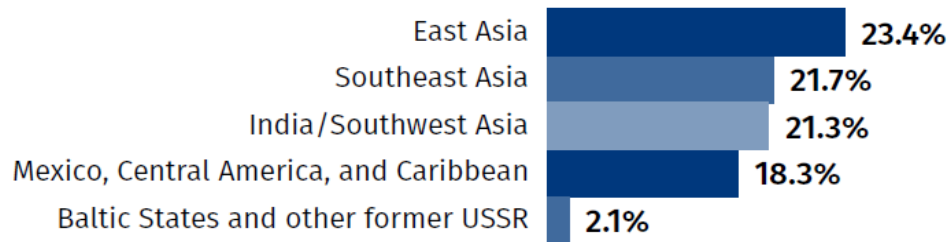
people worked in the county in 2021. Of these,



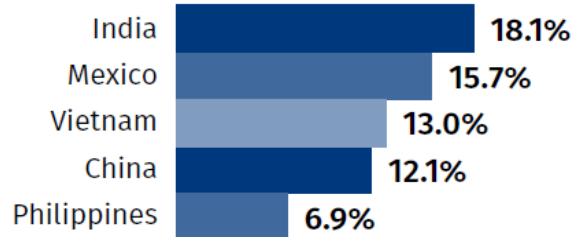
or **494,800** workers, were immigrants.

Language in SCC

The top regions of origin for immigrants living in the county:



The top countries of origin for immigrants living in the county:



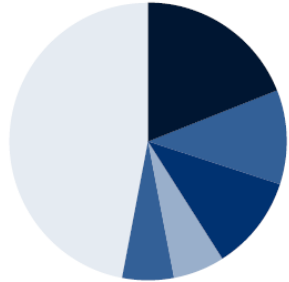
**1.03
million**

people worked in the county in 2021. Of these,



or **494,800** workers, were immigrants.

All immigrants



The top languages spoken at home other than English among immigrants:



Language in SCC

Immigrants with Limited English Language Proficiency

158,200

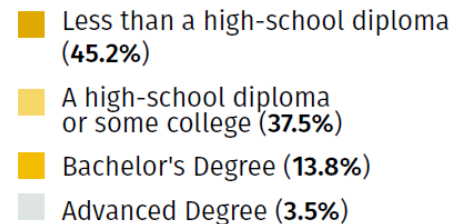
immigrants living in the county had limited English language proficiency, making up



of the immigrant population.⁶



Among those with limited English language proficiency, educational attainment was as follows:

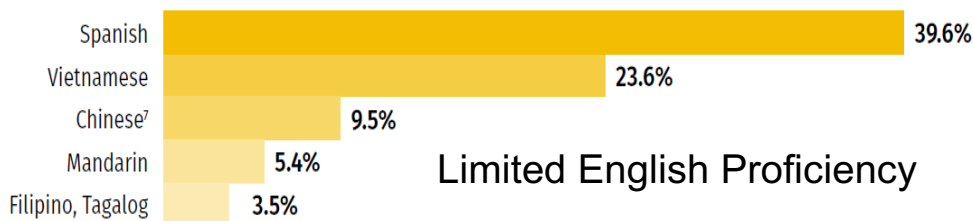


In 2021,



of immigrants speak a language other than English at home.

Among those, the top languages spoken at home other than English were:





What's the problem?

It's easy to underestimate or discount the impact of obstacles that we have not experienced.

Physical Obstacles

- **Language** - Over 100 languages spoken in SCC homes and official information is translated into maximum of 5. 158,200 immigrants living in SCC have limited English language proficiency
- **Literacy** - Unable to read or understand instructions or complete applications for assistance.
- **Transportation** - No vehicle, public transportation disrupted, expensive. Most resources located in San Jose area and people in North and South County could not access.
- **Time** - Cannot take time off of work to access help
- **Documentation** - Cannot produce required documentation to prove eligibility



Mental or Emotional Obstacles

Immigration concerns

- 55.9% of SCC households have at least one immigrant member
- Fear of impact of accepting help on status for self or family member
- Emergency shelters or services feel unsafe if they are located in or near government facilities, particularly law enforcement.

Lack of information or misinformation

- Language and cultural differences can cause confusion on where to get help, eligibility and resources available to immigrants.
- Immigrants from some countries have a deep distrust of mainstream media and need to receive information from a source they trust.
- Unsure of how to be safe, immigrants are particularly vulnerable to misinformation and scams
- Conflicting or evolving information and mandates with no explanation, create lack of confidence in government competence



Changing Demographics

There are 148,000 Indians residing in Santa Clara County

Languages Spoken

Assamese
Bengali
Gujarati
Hindi
Kannada
Mal
Marathi
Nepali
Punjabi
Tamil
Telugu
Urdu
Mayalam

Additional Obstacles to Disaster Relief

- lack of interpreters/bilingual /bicultural staff
- lack of culturally acceptable food (Indian vegetarian options, for example)
- lack of CBOs/service providers informing about emergency preparedness/disaster relief



Santa Clara County has the 2nd largest Vietnamese community in the country

Obstacles

- Many elderly Vietnamese have limited English and no transportation.
- Reluctant to leave East San Jose comfort zone of Little Vietnam.
- Would not report COVID for fear of being separated from family with no Interpreter and left "at the mercy of doctors and nurses." Tried many herbal or home treatments.
- Did not want to report personal information required to be vaccinated.
- Mis-information and anti-vax campaigns caused some people reluctant to give *any* vaccinations to newborns and children.
- Unreported increase in domestic violence and mental health issues.
- Took months for SCC to support ethnic service providers in their efforts.



Additional challenges that immigrants might experience in a disaster

Beyond emergency assistance (based on disaster related need), individual disaster relief is based on quantifiable personal losses. The less you started with, the less relief.

- Poverty tends to be higher among immigrants than US-born Californians, partly due to limited eligibility and access to safety net programs. Typically, disaster relief funds cannot be spent to address pre-disaster poverty.
- Climate change will produce little monetary loss for many individuals - only suffering. Lost wages by undocumented workers is not currently eligible for any benefits.
- Emergency Responders are tasked to do the greatest good for the greatest number. Those with the most need can be the most difficult to serve, and may be left behind as we try to serve the majority.
- Addressing challenges pre-disaster is necessary.



Develop Trust Before Disaster

Distrust of government or authority

- By definition, **refugees** and **asylees** cannot return to their country of origin because they were persecuted by their government or persecuted by others and not protected by their government.
- **Undocumented immigrants** do not feel safe sharing personal information or calling attention to themselves. The disaster may seem less dangerous than deportation.

Mental Health Issues, PTSD

- Immigrants (in particular refugees and asylees) have likely had multiple traumatic experiences in just getting here. PTSD may cause extreme reactions to perceived threats.
- Cultural stigma around mental health issues makes these issues difficult to address and may cause exclusion from the disaster relief process.
- People who have already lost everything once may be prone to depression or lack of ability to participate in recovery efforts.



Community Health Partnership 2023 Focus Groups on COVID Experience

513 Participants in Spanish, English
and Vietnamese focus groups held
in San Jose, Gilroy and Mt. View

Challenges

- **Economic Hardship** - Most were Latinos or Asians, working age, living in poverty, and Medi-Cal beneficiaries
- **Mental Health** - $\frac{3}{4}$ of focus groups mentioned Mental Health, half of interviewees said itw as most challenging, and a significant portion reported they continue to face. Low expectations, distrust, lack of resilience
- **Access to Care** - Telehealth visits: prefer communication in person, problems hearing/understanding; unfamiliar with virtual platforms, Uninsured or underinsured, Untreated chronic diseases, pain, lack of energy, mobility
- **Children's Education & Online Learning** -



Immigrants find it harder to obtain aid or get clear information. CHP Continued

Nearly 1/3 of applicants for the CA Emergency Rental Assistance Program were denied. 93% of denials met low-income eligibility and 83% of applicants failed to respond, or provided "inconsistent or unverifiable" information.

Inability to Obtain Aid -

- Unaware of resources or eligibility requirements,
- Confusing process,
- No assistance with on-line applications,
- shame or fear of public charge rule.
- Some landlords were uncooperative or intimidated residents who tried to apply for Rental Aid.
- No agency follow-up or assistance.



CHP Focus Group Findings / Recommendations

- Simplify application processes and remove application barriers.
- Ensure crisis communication is timely and targeted, and take steps to combat misinformation.
- Increase assistance with health coverage enrollment.
- Increase community-based workshops and trainings in emergency planning and response.
- Provide services in accessible locations throughout the County.
- Prepare the community for future disasters through community-building activities.
- Extend long-term recovery period.
- Build and maintaining partnerships with community leaders.
- Support and maximize the expertise of CBOs.
- Create opportunities for community members to get involved.



Possible barriers to disaster services for the Muslim Communities

Uneasy with Law enforcement
Federal vs local

Gender Customs
Intergender relations
Dress code

Food laws
Muslim dietary laws
Halal food
Fasting

Prayer Accommodations
5 prayers a day
Need a quiet space
Cleansing Ritual

Language Barriers
And literacy

Concern over hate crimes or harassment
DHS warned of more attacks in U.S.

Distrust of Healthcare Services
Skepticism towards the system

Observing Ramadan
Fasting during daylight hours
Shelter challenges



Immigrant Rights in Disaster

National Protected Areas Policy

Immigration enforcement agents should not arrest or intimidate people at or near places where disaster relief is being provided.



Disaster Rights of CA Immigrants

#1 It's safe for immigrants to seek help

President Biden expanded the national Protected Areas Policy which states that immigration enforcement agents should not arrest or intimidate people at or near places where disaster relief is being provided: **emergency response shelters, service centers, places along evacuation routes (such as roadside checkpoints) or where family reunification is underway**

*See page 2 for more **Protected Areas**

#2 Everyone is eligible for disaster relief.

Eligibility for help is based on disaster-related needs – not on immigration status or income. Everyone is eligible for immediate, non-cash emergency relief. Eligibility for some longer-term government programs may require at least one citizen or eligible immigrant in the household. But all immigrants should feel safe to ask for the help they need from the responding non-profit or faith-based organizations.

CA state law ([SB 2327](#)) prohibits disaster relief workers from asking for unnecessary documents or from asking questions about an individual's immigration status. No one should be denied emergency assistance due to a lack of personal documents, which may have been lost or destroyed in a disaster.

#3 Accepting disaster assistance will not affect your immigration status

Immigrants may be concerned that accepting disaster assistance could affect their immigration status. This is not true. The Public Charge Rule (Dec. 22) confirms that disaster assistance will not be considered in a public charge test when a person applies for a green card. This Public Charge Safe to Use List (see page 2**) also includes non-disaster-related benefits and services that are never considered, such as food, medical care, insurance, children's programs, religious activities, education, and more. **Disaster relief assistance is free and does not have to be repaid.**

#4 Everyone has rights – Report Concerns

Everyone has a right to emergency information and assistance in a language they can understand and in a place they can access. Advocates and Service Providers can educate themselves and their communities on immigrant rights before a disaster. They can help identify and mitigate obstacles to access. Afterward, they can make sure people have the accurate information and necessary support to successfully apply for assistance.

It's safe for immigrants to seek help.

Everyone is eligible for emergency disaster relief.

Accepting disaster assistance will not affect status.

Everyone has rights - Report Concerns.

** Immigrant Rights Handout available on CADRE website in English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian, Tamil, Hindi, Amharic, Dari, Arabic and Simplified Chinese.*



Obstacles to Access for the Unhoused

Free transportation to shelters but...

- Busses and taxi's would not allow pets or belongings
- Only to shelters or medical appointments
- Physical disabilities made it impossible to access public transportation
- Limited bus passes for specific agencies or programs



Survey Poll

5 minutes



Communicate | Coordinate | Collaborate | Cooperate

Connect

Serve

Support



Thank You!

We appreciate your partnership!

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