



Inland Empire Regional Snapshot

Region 9



OCPSC
consults with
community-based
organizations
for Regional
“Community
Connections”



Known as the Inland Empire, Region 9 covers two counties, Riverside and San Bernardino, which is the largest county by area in the United States. Home to over 4.6 million people, the Inland Empire's population is 52.5% Latino and skews younger than most parts of California, other than the Central Valley. This region is one of the fastest growing regions in California, with people moving from neighboring counties.

The region, including High Desert communities like Victorville, Apple Valley, and Adelanto, as well as Low Desert cities such as Coachella Valley, Mesa, and Blythe, faces heightened vulnerability to extreme heat, droughts, mudslides, and wildfires, especially in under-resourced areas. City, regional, and state entities collaborate to provide emergency and preparedness activities, community awareness campaigns, and resources to decrease catastrophic outcomes, such as

those seen during the 2024 San Bernardino fires.

With picturesque landscapes, a growing art district, and relatively affordable housing, the lure of the Inland Region has grown exponentially. Rapid growth of warehouse and residential developments has severely impacted and replaced once-flourishing and revered agricultural spaces, farmlands, and open fields.

The region serves as both a state and national conduit for the trucking industry, which plays a dual role as a major economic driver while exacerbating an already compromised and limited traffic system. This contributes to poor air quality due to elevated levels of pollution from emissions, increasing adverse health outcomes such as asthma, cancer, and other respiratory conditions in children and senior populations.

The Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (OCPSC), housed within the Governor's Office of Service and Community Engagement (GO-Serve), was established in July 2022 to tackle California's pressing statewide issues through effective public awareness and community engagement. Regional Snapshots can be used as a starting point for state agencies to understand demographic data and effective outreach approaches for community engagement. The Snapshots are a result of facilitated conversations with OCPSC's Trusted Messenger Network.



Region 9 Snapshot

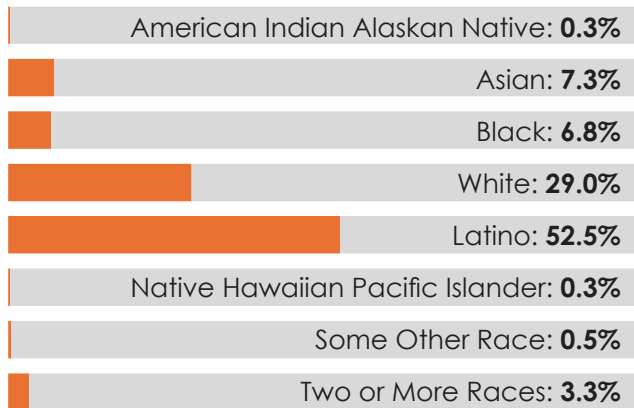
Total Population: 4,637,725



11.8%
of State Population



Population by Race/Ethnicity



14.5%
of Population
with Limited
English
Proficiency

California: 17.2%

Top Languages Spoken other than English:

- Spanish
- Chinese
- Vietnamese

Population **Below** 200% Federal Poverty

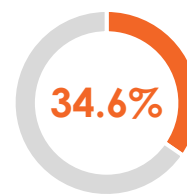


**Inland
Empire**

Counties: Riverside, San Bernardino

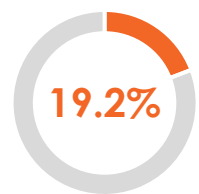
Largest Populated Cities:

Riverside, San Bernardino, Fontana



**Renter
Population
Percentage**

California: 44.2%



**Housing Units in
Hardest to Count
Census Tracts**

California: 27.3%

8.2%
Uninsured **Adults**



California: 6.9%

7.5%
without **Broadband**



California: 7.4%

DATA NOTES: The data above was obtained from the 2019 -2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates. The Hard-to-Count totals were created by the Demographic Research Unit, a department of the California Department of Finance, and is from the 2025 vintage.

Community Insights

Purposeful partnerships for deeper engagement

While an organization may have a niche scope of work and reach, many embrace the “village” concept — recognizing the power of cross-sector collaboration in uplifting individuals across demographics, races, and cultures. Partnerships expand outreach to families and children.

“Traditionally, Latinos turn to our faith as the answer for all things. Reach Out partners with faith-based organizations because they are the center of the community, easily identifiable, and provide a safe, welcoming, non-judgemental space for the community to receive relatable and reliable information, resources, and comfort. Churches are like extended family.”

Mayra Mixco-Chavez, Reach Out



Interactive engagements or two-way conversations increase information retention and allow for tailoring the content to personal experiences and in the language of the recipient of the information.

Create safe spaces to connect

Community-based organizations acknowledge historical and systemic inequities contributing to the distrust of government and others. They support residents in navigating access to critical information and resources in Spanish and other languages. Given the sprawling geography of the region, they engage with residents where they already go, making outreach more accessible and convenient.

Understand the context and challenges

The Inland Empire's challenges include environmental vulnerabilities leading to adverse health outcomes, especially for children and older adults. Community-based organizations tie environmental and health education into their outreach to recognize residents' concerns.

“Farmworkers do not have a safety net when they are unable to work, such as during the pandemic, storms, and immigration enforcement. To reach them, we go to the fields and worksites, communicate virtually, and canvass door-to-door. We have to shift gears every day to reach vulnerable populations who are under attack.”

Luz Gallegos, TODEC



“You have to listen to those who are struggling the most, and make sure they can bring their solutions to the table. Then, you have to build partnerships and get the resources to make those solutions a reality.”

Michelle Decker, Inland Empire Community Foundation





Region 9 Inland Empire

Building Resilient Communities

Community-based organizations in the Inland Empire have a long-standing history of ensuring their respective communities' voices, needs, and hopes are included and represented. While Inland Empire organizations may focus on a particular geographic area or issue, they also operate as a "village." There is a spirit of camaraderie among community partners who seek innovative solutions to some of the region's toughest challenges, including environmental and health vulnerabilities, industrial expansion, and climate disasters. Vulnerable community members are often the most impacted by crises.

Partnering with small community-based organizations, such as **Building Resilient Communities**, is an effective approach to reaching diverse communities. Many of the small community-based organizations in the Inland Empire collaborate with faith-based organizations, small businesses, local governments, and State Agencies. This Collaborative focuses on talking through local challenges, finding community-based solutions, and sharing best practices to lessen equity gaps.



"We have to embrace the concept of the whole community. It takes everyone to prepare, respond, and recover. It's not just the government. It's not just us community-based organizations. It's neighbor-to-neighbor. It's everyone."

Debra Williams
CEO, Building
Resilient Communities



A convening of small community-based organizations organizing to lessen equity gaps in the Inland Empire

Building Resilient Communities culminates the Collaborative's collective social determinants of health themes via their signature *Ark of Safety Community Resilience Summit* series for disaster preparedness training and coordination to remove barriers that have adversely affected people in times of disaster and their overall health.

Rooted in faith, Building Resilient Communities' **Debra Williams** offers leadership tips on working collaboratively. She learned these lessons during the COVID-19 pandemic while advocating with diverse entities to address historic inequalities unmasked by crises.

- Integrate cultural norms within collaboratives
- Conduct self-care and check in with each other
- Coach and lead by example
- Probe people for feedback and get everyone engaged
- Be trauma-informed
- Make meetings a safe place – it's okay to be vulnerable, including laughing, crying, and not knowing