

Engaging Diverse Communities

A Workbook Guide For Small Water Systems

*Funded through a Proposition 1 Integrated Regional Water Management
Grant from the California Department of Water Resources*



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About this workbook

Communicating and engaging effectively with the community can be challenging, especially for a small water system, with limited resources, that serves an ethnic and linguistically diverse community.

Failing to fully engage all elements of a community, however, can lead to detrimental business and operational impacts. If a non-English-speaking neighborhood can't or doesn't know how to communicate system issues with their water purveyor, the agency may not know what needs fixing until the problem reaches a more urgent, or costlier, level. If an agency is conducting long-term planning without engaging all groups within their community, they may end up with a plan that doesn't fit the community it purports to serve, leaving it with a sure-to-fail system.

This workbook is designed to help small water systems in culturally and linguistically-diverse communities think through how best to engage and serve their community.

The workbook is not intended to dictate answers, but rather to ask questions and guide the user through a process that, when completed, will yield answers, directions, and strategies for the organization as it seeks to better serve its diverse customers.

How To Use This Workbook

Take it one step at a time. This workbook is not designed to be completed in one sitting. It's a process that, taken in small steps, can take days or even months to complete.

Each section in this workbook builds on the previous section, so it is important to do them in order. Take your time with each section. As your strategies and understanding develop, you can go back and delve deeper into previous sections to gather more data.

While the workbook includes numbered lines for you to write down various types of information, those are just included to help you. Don't feel obligated to fill all ten numbered lines in a section if you only have three things to include. On the other hand, don't be limited by the number either. If you have identified 12 issues and there is only room for five, include everything that is needed. Every agency's needs will be different so it is important to make this guide work for yours.

Finally, take your time with this process. Involve others if it helps to brainstorm and move the process along. Keep making progress, even if it's small. It's important to keep the process going until the end.

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1. Who is your customer?

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In this section, you will learn how to use readily available data, including from the US Census, to better understand the demographic makeup of your customers. You will also be able to make demographic projections to ensure your agency is prepared for future needs.

Key Takeaway: A list of languages on which your agency should focus.

2. What does your customer think of you?

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In this section, you will gather information directly from the community to better understand their perceptions about your agency and their level of understanding about water issues. You will identify opportunities for enhanced communication and delivery of services.

Key Takeaway: A list of issues and insights, identified by the community, on which your agency should be focusing.

3. What would you like your customers to know?

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In this section, you will learn how to develop messaging around the issues you've identified thus far. You will learn about key messages and supporting messages and how to incorporate them into your communication strategies.

Key Takeaway: A list of key messages, with corresponding supporting messages, that should be incorporated into your agency's communication efforts.

4. How do you communicate with your customers?

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In this section, you will learn how to perform a communications audit of your agency to catalogue your current assets and identify any gaps in information/educational materials for your target audience.

Key Takeaway: A list of all your current communications materials and a list of what other materials are needed, and in what languages.

5. Who in your agency is directly serving your customer?

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In this section, you will identify your agency's current language skills and how they match up with the needs of the community you serve. You will also delve into how to recruit new hires with the needed language skills.

Key Takeaway: A list showing where you most need multilingual staff and how close you are to meeting those needs.

6. Final thoughts

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In this section, you will explore what else you can do if you want to delve deeper into this process.

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A step-by-step guide on how to access US Census Data.

1

Who is your customer?

It may be easy to lump all of your customers together and simply assume that you “serve everyone.” And while that may be technically correct, it does a disservice to your organization and to your customers, as each customer group may have different needs and may consume information in different ways. For your organization to really understand and effectively serve its customers, it must first understand who they are.

A good place to start is [US Census data, which can be obtained through census.gov](https://www.census.gov). The website provides detailed demographic information for your community at a county, city, tract or block group level. Gathering data from census.gov can be a bit overwhelming for the uninitiated, but we have included an [appendix](#) to this document that walks you step by step through accessing the data you need.

Use the data from [census.gov](https://www.census.gov) to answer the following questions:

In order from greatest percentage to lowest percentage, what are the most prevalent ethnic groups* in your service area?

Ethnicity	Percentage of Population
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

**Please note that the US Census counts Hispanics as White. To get the correct number from each of these categories, subtract the number of Hispanics from the number of Whites to get the right number for each. Some data may include the category “Non-Hispanic White,” which already subtracts Latinos from the White category.*

In order from greatest percentage to lowest percentage, what are the most common languages spoken at home in your service area?

Language	Percentage of Population
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

Now take a look at the top few languages other than English. For each of those languages, note the Census data point titled "Percent speak English less than very well."

Language	Percentage speak English less than "very well"
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

This is a critical number, because it begins to identify language-isolated communities...that is, groups of people who may not have access to information or services that are not offered in their language.

If, for example, 20% of your community speaks Vietnamese, but out of the Vietnamese-speaking community, 0% speaks English "less than very well," then that means communicating with that community in English might suffice. But if 15% of your community speaks Mandarin, for example, and 50% of the Mandarin-speaking community speaks English "less than very well," then that means you have at least 7.5% of your population who is language-isolated and unable to consume the information you provide, make informed decisions about your services, or communicate with you regarding any issues or concerns they may have.

Imagine sending a notice to a neighborhood about water-safety concerns. If it's a largely Latino neighborhood with a large language isolation percentage, they may not be getting the message that their water is not safe.

Another great resource for gathering data is student demographic data at local schools. Used in conjunction with US Census data, student demographic data can shed critical light on upcoming trends.

For example, if your Census population is 20% Hispanic, but Hispanic high school enrollment is 25%, middle school is 30% and elementary school is 40%, you can instantly see that big demographic trends are on the horizon. Based on these numbers, within the next 5-10 years, your organization is going to be serving a much larger Latino population. You may want to start looking now at what changes your organization should make instead of being caught unaware and unprepared in a few years.

You can find student demographic data for each school on the Education Data Partnership website, www.ed-data.org/state/CA or by going directly to the specific school's website.

Take a moment to gather data for the schools in your service area:

School	Language	Percentage of Population
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		



Are there any schools where a minority group makes up the majority or near-majority of the student population? Are there any ethnic groups overrepresented in the student population compared to the overall community population? Are there any major differences between elementary, middle, and high school student demographics?



The purpose of this exercise is to try to identify potential demographic trends.

Were there any interesting findings you discovered looking at school demographic data and comparing it to comparable data from the US Census data?

Based on the census data, school data, language isolation data, and any other information you've reviewed, what are the top non-English-speaking groups your organization should be targeting for outreach (some communities may just have one, others more)?

Ethnicity	Language	Percentage of Population
1.		
2.		
3.		

We will delve more into how an organization can better serve its diverse community throughout this document. But as a thought exercise, based on your understanding of your community's demographics from all the data you've gathered above, how well do you think your organization represents that diversity? How effective is it at communicating with its customer groups?

2

What does your customer think of you?

Before developing outreach plans, strategies or key messages, it is imperative to understand what the community currently knows and thinks about your organization. Oftentimes the community's level of knowledge or even awareness of your organization is not what you think it is.



So, what should you do? Listen.

Talk with organizations and community leaders in your area who already work with your target communities. These individuals and organizations know and have built trust within their community. Note that in this context, community leaders aren't necessarily elected officials or people with lofty titles. More often than not, they are clergy, community advocates, social workers, teachers, non-profit organization leaders and others who directly work day in and day out with your target communities.



It's surprisingly very common in some communities for residents to not even know who their water purveyor is.

This is more common in places where specific demographic groups have a higher tendency to be renters. In many areas, water bills are sent to the property owner, not the renter, so the person living in the apartment has no idea who provides their water.

It is difficult for a water agency to effectively speak about water safety or water conservation when large percentages of the audience have no idea who the agency is.

Talk with these individuals to get a sense of the community's understanding of water issues, their awareness and perception of your organization, and potential issues or concerns they may have about their water.

This opportunity is not the time to educate these individuals and organizations about your agency or water issues. This is an opportunity for you to listen to them and take note.

Guide the discussion but allow the conversation to flow into areas you may not have anticipated. This is often when you discover the most valuable information.

Ask open-ended questions about their perceptions regarding the quality of the water, any water-related challenges the community may be facing, the community's satisfaction with your organization, etc. Keep questions broad and follow wherever the conversation leads.

While these individuals most likely will not have had previous in-depth conversations with their communities about water issues, they can still provide useful information that you can delve further into. They may not specifically reference your water treatment plant or Consumer Confidence Report, but they may say things like, “In my neighborhood the water has a funny smell...I don’t know if I trust it.” That piece of information may lead to further questions and may help you develop questions for your meetings with other community leaders.

So how do we identify these organizations and community leaders? Start with the school list you developed in the previous section. Each school has an **English Learner Advisory Committee (ELAC)** Coordinator who works directly with the parents of English-Learner students. These coordinators meet regularly with parents and are a resource to them on a host of issues, even beyond education.

Look at the list of schools you developed, identify the schools with the highest student population percentage for your target audiences. These are great places to start. Reach out each of them and identify who their ELAC Coordinator is.

School	ELAC Coordinator	Contact Information
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Next, use **neighborhood or block group data from the Census Bureau** to identify specific areas within your service area that have higher concentrations of your target audience. A slightly less accurate but easier way of doing this is to go on Google Maps and locate the schools you identified above. The areas surrounding the schools would very likely be neighborhoods with a higher target audience concentration.

Look at those neighborhoods you’ve identified on **Google Maps**. Are there any places of worship with services in the target languages within those neighborhoods? Look for community centers, any community organizations, social service and health organizations, etc. Go on their websites briefly to see if the organization caters to your target population.



Also look for community-wide organizations serving your target audience. Are there any ethnic chambers of commerce serving your target audience? Any non-profit organizations serving that community? Depending on your community, look for organizations like farmworker rights groups, immigration assistance services, community or resource centers, health navigators and promotoras, etc.

What are some of the organizations, places of worship or resources you found?

Organization	Contact	Contact Information
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

This is a great place to start. Reach out to each organization and set up an appointment to talk with them, over the phone or in person. Let them know you’re trying to get a better understanding of the water needs of the communities they serve.



If possible, try to schedule an hour with each of them to ensure enough time to delve into the topic in a meaningful way.

Develop your list of questions ahead of time. Remember, these are simply a starting point. It’s more important to let the conversation develop, rather than sticking rigidly to your list. You can use the questions below as a starting point, but you should develop your own initial list of questions.

This is a great place to start. Reach out to each organization and set up an appointment to talk with them, over the phone or in person. Let them know you’re trying to get a better understanding of the water needs of the communities they serve.

If possible, try to schedule an hour with each of them to ensure enough time to delve into the topic in a meaningful way.

Develop your list of questions ahead of time. Remember, these are simply a starting point. It’s more important to let the conversation develop, rather than sticking rigidly to your list. You can use the following questions as a starting point, but you should develop your own initial list of questions.

Interview questions:

1. What are your overall impressions of [Water Agency]?
2. What could [Water Agency] be doing to better serve the [Latino, Hmong, African American, etc.] community?
3. What do you think is the community's perception of the quality and safety of the water they receive?
4. Do you think there are enough people who speak [target language] at [Water Agency] to effectively serve the [target] community?
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. Who else should we be talking with about this topic?



As you talk to the various community leaders, look for new insights and patterns. Feel free to edit your questions as you go along if the interviews offer new insight or approaches.

What are some of the main themes, insights, and issues that emerged from your interviews?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

It's always important to confirm and add more nuance to the themes that emerged from the community leader interviews by actually going out and talking to actual community members. There are multiple ways of doing this, depending on your community, that don't involve elaborate or expensive focus groups or surveys. Identify places that community members may frequent. These could be big box stores like Walmart or smaller niche shops like ethnic markets—Mexican meat markets (carnicerias) or Asian markets are perfect locations, depending on your target market.

Spend some time visiting these places and engage people as they enter or exit the venue. Even talking to someone for three to five minutes can help you get the information you need. If, for example, during the community leader interviews, the issue of water quality came up, use the person-on-the-street interviews to ask about water quality. Ask what their perception is, why they feel that way and what, if anything, could help them change that perception.

Be ready to adapt your questions as you get new information. And be observant. If you see everyone coming out of Walmart has bottled water in their cart, ask why they are buying bottled water instead of using their tap water. That may lead to conversations about their perception of the water's quality and safety.

Ask them for the name of the agency that provides their water. You may find that many people do not know the answer to that question. If they do know who the agency is, ask them what they think of it.



Keep it friendly and informal, a brief conversation.

Try to speak with as many people as you are able until you feel you have a good sense for the community's perceptions regarding water issues and your agency.

After conducting the community leader interviews and the person-on-the-street interviews, what are the main insights and issues you've discovered?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

How do these differ from what you thought they would be prior to engaging in this process?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

In the next section we will delve into how to turn those insights into effective messages to educate the community and enhance perceptions.

3

What would you like your customers to know?

Now that you've identified the issues of priority in the community, you can begin to develop key messages around those issues.

When we are talking about "key messages" in this workbook, we are not talking about creative taglines, slogans, mottos or other typical marketing tactics. That may or may not come later. What we are referring to is, at its simplest, most concrete core, what is it that you are trying to convey?

So, for example, if the issue people have focused on is a perception of poor or unsafe water quality, we aren't looking right now to develop messages about how the water is frequently tested, the availability of Consumer Confidence Reports, or about state safety standards. At its very core, assuming it's true, the key message is, "Your water is safe to drink."

As simple as that message is, it's not always easy to distill down to that level. We often find ourselves wanting to add supporting ideas, messages and arguments. There will be a time later when those are needed. But for this exercise, we are simply after the key idea you wish to communicate.

For each of the issues identified in the previous section, distill it down to a simple message.

Issue	Key Message
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

Go back, reread what you just wrote, and edit it again. Remove all extraneous information. Keep rewriting until you have that basic kernel of a message for each of the issues.

Keep in mind that it's possible you may never speak those exact words or print them on a brochure or website verbatim. These key messages are not necessarily for direct audience consumption. But all of your community outreach, education, and engagement efforts going forward—everything you write, say, or publish—will be rooted in these key messages. "Your water is safe to drink" can be the foundation to a whole campaign, a brochure, or a community presentation, without necessarily uttering the words "Your water is safe to drink."

Now you can start developing supporting messages for each of those key messages. Supporting messages are statements that show why the key message is important or why it is true. So, for example, if your key message is, "We are dedicated to better serving our diverse community," a supporting message could be "We are prioritizing hiring people who can speak Spanish with our Latino customers." In this case, the supporting message shows what you're doing to make the key message factual.

Try to come up with a couple of supporting messages for each of your key messages.

Key Message	Supporting Messages
1.	a. b. c.
2.	a. b. c.
3.	a. b. c.



Know that you can always come back and amend those supporting messages as you gain more information, develop new strategies, or the situation changes. Your key messages, however, are more long-termed and should remain unchanged until that specific issue is resolved or there are major changes that require it to change.

Now that you have your key and supporting messages ready, you can start looking at how you get that information out into the community.

4

How do you communicate with your customers?

By this point, you have a better understanding of who your customers are, their knowledge and perception of water issues and your agency, and a set of messages you want to communicate with your customers to either enhance or counter those perceptions. But how do you get those messages out into the community?

Start with a communications audit. A communications audit, at its core, is nothing more than taking inventory of what communications pieces you currently use.

These could be things like your website, a brochure about water conservation, a Consumer Confidence Report, a shut-off notice, etc. Take some time to identify and list all (or at least the major ones) of your current communications materials.

Communication Materials

- | | |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 9. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 10. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 8. _____ | |

Which of the materials listed above are also available in the target languages you identified at the beginning of this workbook?

Communication Materials Available in Target Language

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

If you have a lot of pieces that are not already in your target language(s), it may seem overwhelming to even think about producing everything in multiple languages. Don't let that dissuade you. Think smaller. Of the communication pieces not available in your target language(s), which are the 3-5 most important ones?

Document Translation Priority

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

You don't have to do them all at once. Start with the top document on your priority list and work your way down the list. If you don't have in-house capabilities to translate materials, professional translation companies can do it for you at a reasonable cost. Consider partnering with neighboring water agencies to translate similar materials and split the cost. You may also search online for other agencies who have already produced the same forms or materials in your desired language and, with their permission, adapt those documents for your use.

Next, revisit your communications audit, including everything you currently have available in English and other languages. What's missing? When talking with community members did you identify any knowledge gaps or misinformation?

For example, does the community mistrust the safety and quality of the water because the nearby river is filthy and odorous, yet you exclusively utilize groundwater that has no connection with the dirty river conditions? Then maybe a brochure talking about groundwater would be useful. You received negative feedback regarding high monthly bills? Maybe a piece that shows how the fees on their bill cover not only water, but community parks, pools, fire departments, etc., demonstrating the value the community gets beyond just the water.

The communications audit showed you the materials that you have. Now what are the gaps that you need to fill?

Additional Needed Communications Materials

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Prioritize your list and tackle items one at a time.

With the materials you need in hand, now you are ready to move on to the next step.

Remember all of those organizations you identified in the second section of this workbook? It's time to revisit them. Reach out to those ELAC coordinators, ethnic chambers of commerce and community organizations. Thank them again for the input they provided and let them know how you've used that information. Ask them if there are any opportunities to go talk to their groups about your services, the issues identified by the community organizations, and what you're doing in response. ELAC coordinators meet monthly with parents of non-English-speaking students. They are typically happy to let you do a presentation or hold a conversation during that time.

Community organizations may be open to having you come speak to their board or their membership. Some may even have community events at which you can have a table and talk directly with the community. These are all excellent opportunities to strengthen your relationship with these organizations and start communicating your key messages directly with the community.

Contact those organizations. What are the outreach and engagement opportunities that come out of those calls?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Look for additional opportunities around ethnic holidays or observances. Communities with large Latino populations often have community celebration events around Hispanic Heritage Month (runs middle of September to middle of October), or Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead—traditionally celebrated at the end of October or beginning of November). Communities with large Asian populations may have events around Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month (May). Start by reaching out to radio stations who serve those linguistic communities. They often organize these events.

Start putting all of these events on a community outreach calendar and look to have opportunities for engagement throughout the year.

5

Who in your agency is directly serving your customer?

You have spent most of the time going through this workbook looking outward at the community—who they are, what they need, how to engage them. This final section deals with looking inward at your organization. It is often the most challenging of steps in this workbook, it's also one of the most important ones.

Start by identifying which sections, or departments, within your agency have the highest opportunities of direct interaction with members of the public. It could be things like the front office or your billing department. Maybe it's the water meter readers or the crews working out in the streets. For your organization, who are the folks most likely to interact with the public?

Groups or Departments Most Likely to Interact with the Public

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Do there appear to be a sufficient number of people who speak the target languages in each department? Are there gaps? What happens if someone speaking the target language interacts with one of these departments and there's no one there who speaks their language? How does that reflect on the organization? How do they get their questions answered?

Identifying gaps does not mean the agency needs to immediately replace current employees with those who can speak the target languages. But it does mean that you have identified a need that can and should be addressed.

Groups or Departments	# of Employees	# of Target Language Speakers
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

You can work with the community organizations with whom you've now built relationships to recruit job candidates with the desired language skills when a position opens up. You can work with your Human Resources department to ensure that job postings and recruitment efforts include publications and media that target those specific groups, and that job announcements are posted in the targeted languages.

To be clear, you are not hiring for specific ethnic or cultural qualities. You are hiring for specific language skill sets—skills that are needed in those positions because of the high likelihood of interaction with customers who speak that language.

You can also work with your Human Resources department to make bilingual ability a desired, not required, skill. This shows individuals with that skill set that you are serious about looking for and hiring individuals with that ability and that you value their contribution. Be sure to clearly state this preference in the job posts and job descriptions.

What are some strategies and approaches your organization is willing to implement to fill language skill gaps in areas with high customer interaction?

Take a step further in analyzing your agency and take a look at the board. Does your board accurately represent and reflect your diverse community? Are there enough board members who live in those sections of the community, speak the language, and represent the individual needs of those groups?

If the board is not representative of the community, there may be very little you can do to remedy that. If your board members are elected at large, you may study the impacts of switching to district-based elections, thus increasing the chances of electing individuals that represent different areas of the community. But those are higher level governance issues.

However, identifying board representation as an issue allows you to shine light on it and to look for ways to counter shortcomings. A good board, when made aware of the lack of representation, may choose to take extra steps to engage underrepresented groups. This could be things like neighborhood presentations, board participation in community events, development of board advisory committees with members of underrepresented groups, etc. But this definitely requires board buy-in and proactiveness.

If your board is not fully representative of the community it serves, what are some strategies you can employ, with board support, to increase engagement between the community and the decision-makers within your agency?

Board Engagement Strategies

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 5. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 7. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 8. _____ |

 **It's imperative to have board support not just for this step, but for all the issues and efforts addressed throughout this workbook.**

6

Final Thoughts

If you've gone through this guide and put in the work at each step, you should now have a much better understanding of your diverse community and its needs. You've also developed a strong foundation for effective community engagement.

You can keep building on this foundation. Remember to periodically reassess your key messages. Track your successes and note your challenges. Adapt your strategies as needed. Celebrate your accomplishments with your board and staff, to get them to see the value in this work.

Keep nurturing your relationships with the community organizations. They can be a partner and a valuable resource in your outreach, recruitment and translation efforts.

If you want to go beyond the strategies derived from this guide, you can consider formalizing your strategies into policies, developing a formal community outreach plan or revamping your employee hiring and training processes.

Know that change is always difficult and you will likely receive pushback from different areas within your organization. But change is also what keeps an organization viable and moving forward. Don't get dissuaded by detractors.

Most of the strategies and elements (aside from material production, design and translation) are free or very low cost, so budgetary concerns should not be an issue.

 **Keep taking small steps in the direction of your goals and you'll soon be effecting changes with big, positive results.**

Appendix

How to access US Census data

The following is a step-by-step guide to accessing demographic data from the US Census Bureau.

Step 1: On your internet browser, go to data.census.gov. This is the section within the US Census Bureau website where you can access census data. Within this site you can access and create maps, tables or query specific data sets.

Step 2: To get started, you can use the search box below "Explore Census Data" to look for what you need. You can use natural language here to explain what you want. So, for example, you can just type "Languages spoken at home in Sacramento County." Or "Ethnicities in Grimes, CA." Or "Population by age in Clearlake City, CA." Whatever you're looking for, just type it in and it will take you to a list of tables and maps showing data from the decennial Census, the American Community Survey or other reliable Census Bureau sources.

Step 3: Browse the results to see which report has the data you are looking for. Simply click on the report title to see the corresponding data table. Be sure to scroll to the side to make sure you're viewing all available columns.

Note: results are filtered through selected reports

Label	Estimate	Margin of Error
Population 5 years and over:	1,491,474	*****
Speak only English	982,360	+13,237
Speak a language other than English	509,114	+13,238
SPEAK A LANGUAGE OTHER THAN ENGLISH		
Spanish	208,812	+9,324
5 to 17 years old	45,832	+4,435
18 to 64 years old	145,460	+6,799
65 years old and over	17,520	+1,619
Other Indo-European languages	127,879	+10,058
5 to 17 years old	23,534	+3,848
18 to 64 years old	89,748	+6,989
65 years old and over	14,597	+2,441
Asian and Pacific Island languages	155,791	+6,357
5 to 17 years old	12,187	+2,723

Your search results include a list of related reports (Figure 1) and a data table that corresponds to selected report (Figure 2).

Use the Explore Census Data search bar. ex. try searching "languages spoken at home in sacramento county"

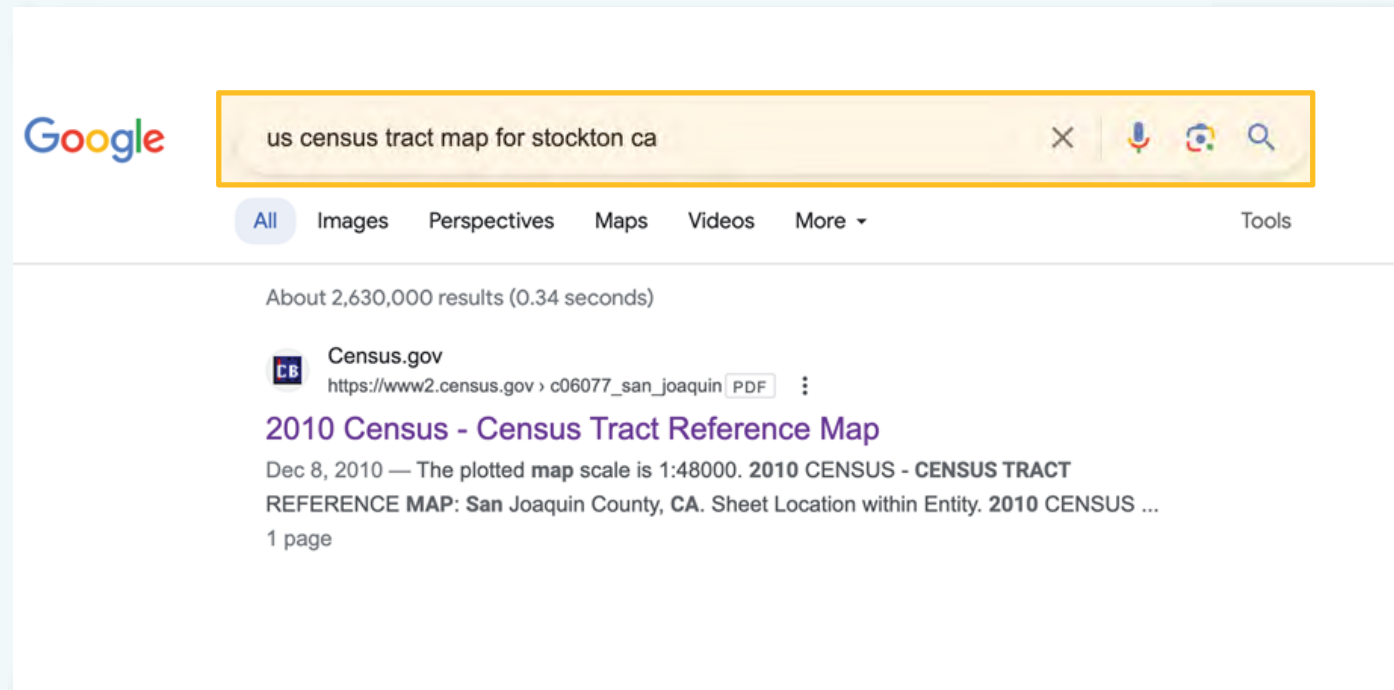
Try searching for [poverty](#) in [Georgia](#) in [2020](#)

Step 4: If needed, refine your data. Maybe you're looking for data for a whole county or city, which is what the examples above will provide. But perhaps you want to look even closer at specific communities to compare and contrast. To do this, you can consider using Census Tracts or Census Blocks. Census Tracts are smaller geographic borders within a city or

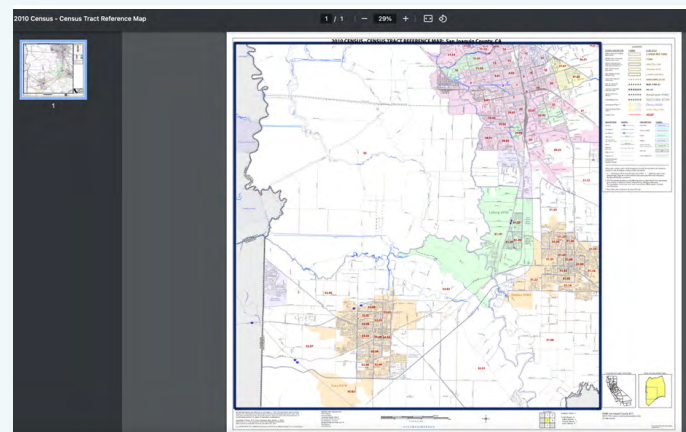
unincorporated area. A large city may be made up of many Census Tracts, and a small town may reside wholly within one Census Tract. Census Blocks are even smaller geographic subsections, often consisting of just a few square blocks. Census Tracts and Blocks are assigned a numerical code, so you'll need that number in order to find data on the US Census website.

The easiest way to find that code is to simply google a Census Tract of Block map for the area you want. So you may Google "US Census Tract Map for Stockton, CA" or US Census Block Map for Lodi, CA."

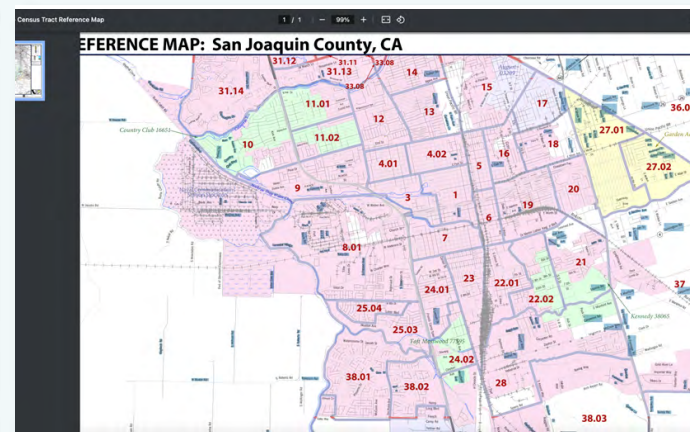
In the first example above, the Google results produce the following:



The first result is from the Census.gov website so we know its reliable. Click on that and it provides the following map:

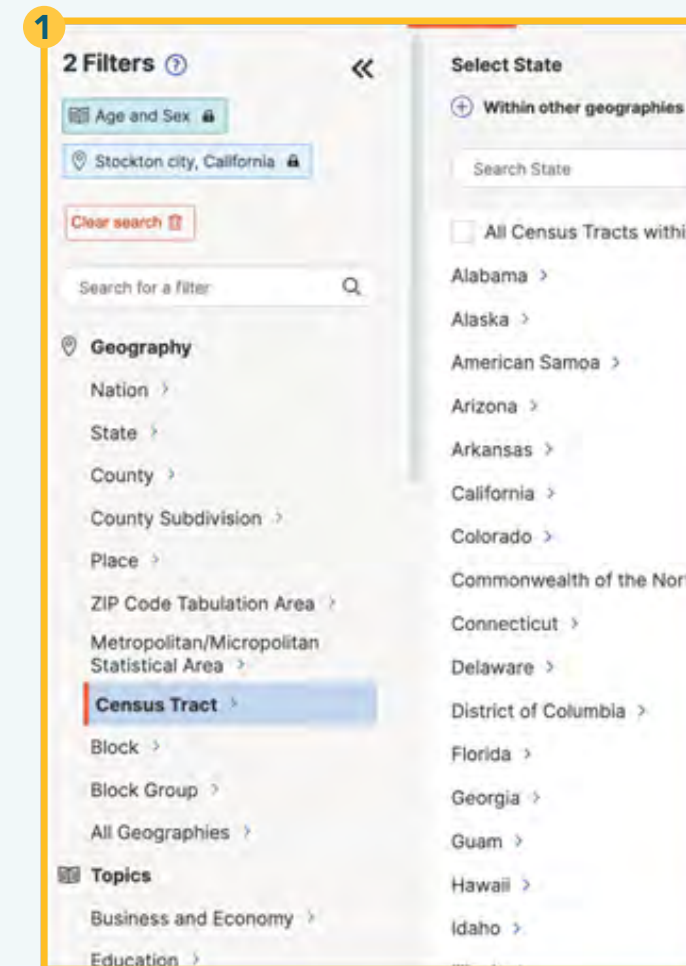


Zoom in to the upper right section of the Stockton map to see how the city is divided into tracts, with corresponding codes:

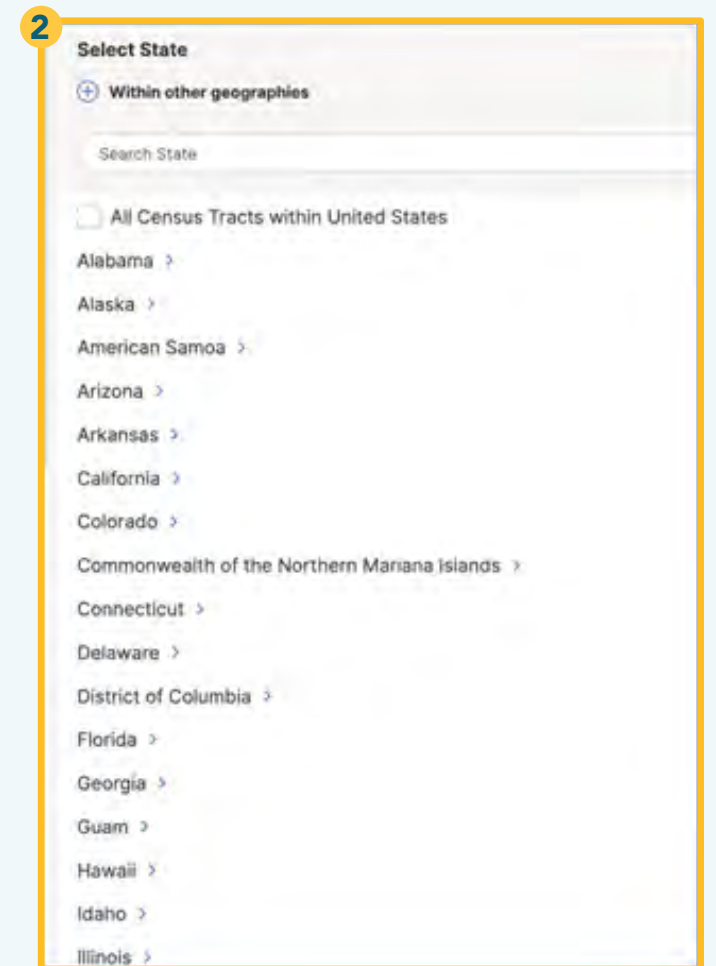


For this example, let's look at Census Tract 4.02. If we started our search with "Age in Stockton CA," it would take us to a list of reports, similar to what we saw in Step 3 of this Appendix.

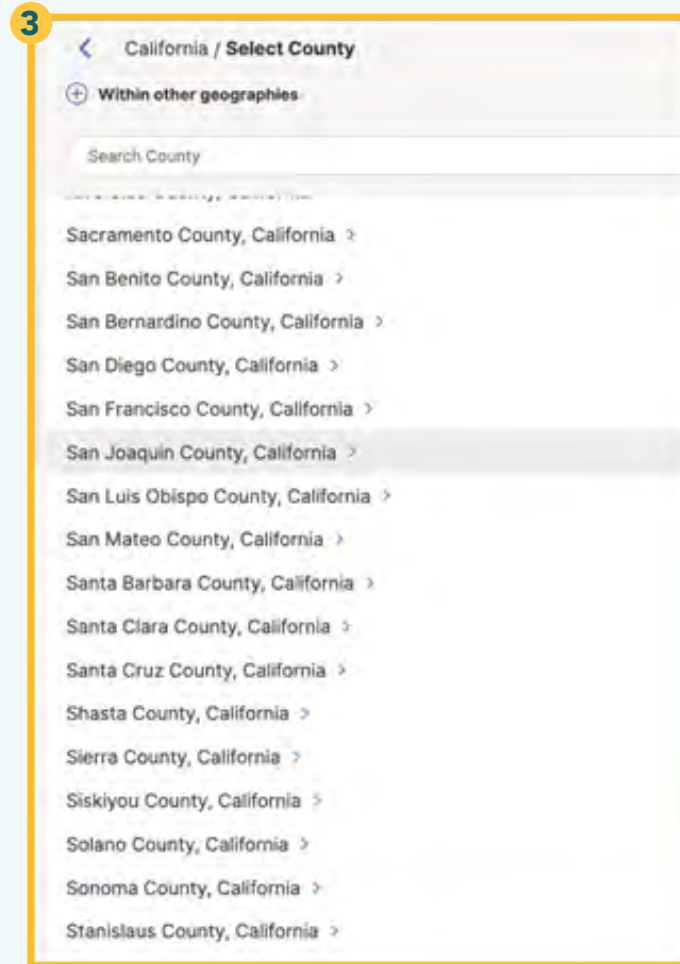
But that information is for the whole city of Stockton, so we have to narrow it down to just Census Tract 4.02.



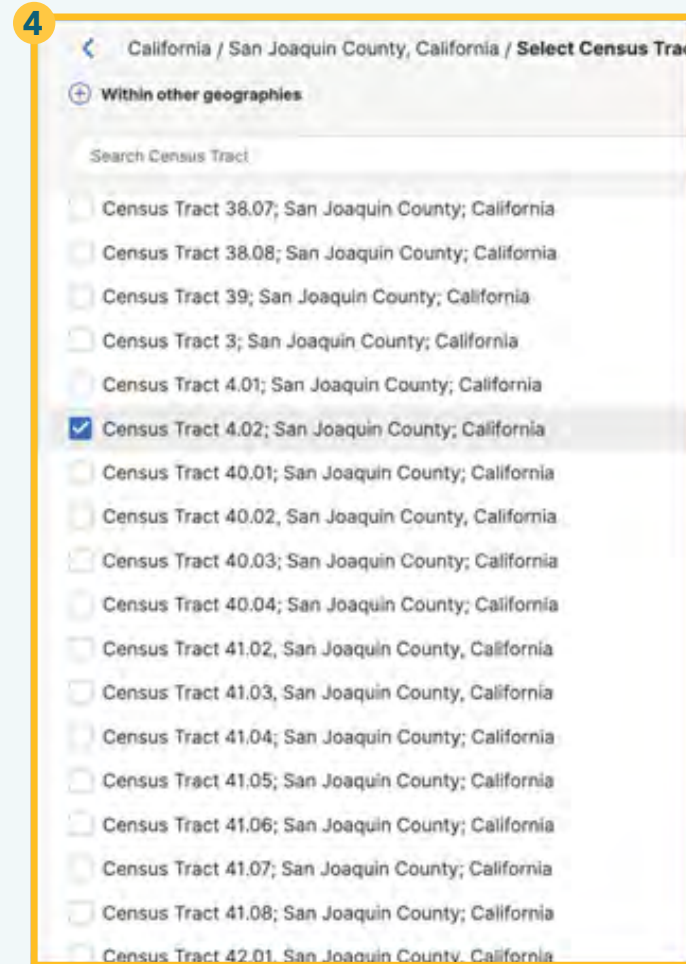
Click on Census Tract in the menu on the right.



Now click on California in the center panel.



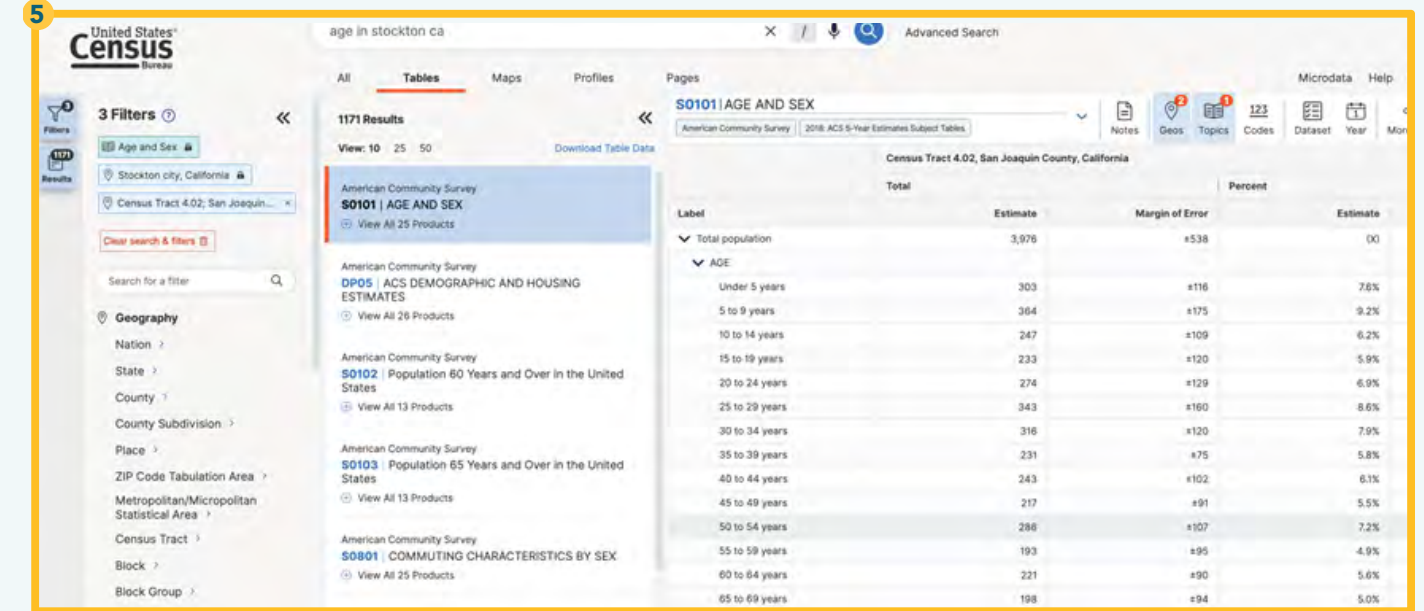
Scroll down and select San Joaquin County.



Scroll down to find and select Census Tract 4.02. Now simply click on the X on the top right of the center panel to go back to the list of reports.

Now select the report you want to look at. You'll notice the top of the report will now read "Census Tract 4.02 San Joaquin County, California." Not all reports break data down

to that level, so if you don't see that title that means you're still getting data for a larger geographic area.



The same steps are repeated for Census Block data. Simply select "Block" instead of "Census Tract" in the first step. You can also select multiple Tracts or Blocks in fourth step to compare data between various smaller geographic areas.

With that, you should be able to begin exploring the US Census Bureau web site and finding the information you are searching for.

One final thing to keep in mind, the US Census Bureau does not recognize Latinos as a race. They lump Latinos with "White," thus inflating the size of the White population and erasing the Latino or Hispanic population. To get a more accurate breakdown of an area's demographics, search for the report titled "Hispanic or Latino, and Not Hispanic or Latino by Race" and look

at the "Hispanic or Latino" population number. Now subtract that number from the "White" population number you got in the Race report and now you'll have a more accurate number for both Hispanic and White populations. You will have to fix the percentage numbers as well by dividing the Hispanic or White number by the total population number and multiplying times 100 to get the correct percentage.

The US Census Bureau website is a great resource but it can be a bit intimidating without guidance. Hopefully this guide helps you get started. But the best way to become comfortable and adept at the site is to spend time playing around with the data and reports and familiarizing yourself with all the great data it has to offer.

