



**October 17, 2024**

**To:** Legislative and Communications Committee

**From:** Darrell E. Johnson, Chief Executive Officer

**Subject:** Diversity Outreach Update

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**Overview**

The Orange County Transportation Authority continues to broaden its outreach efforts to engage Orange County's diverse populations through multilingual communications and targeted outreach. These efforts help position the agency as a trusted and responsive institution in Orange County. This report offers an annual update on the progress of outreach activities designed to serve the needs of diverse and hard-to-reach communities.

**Recommendation**

Receive and file as an information item.

**Background**

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) collaborates with community members, groups, and organizations that serve Orange County's diverse population, including hard-to-reach, underrepresented, and disadvantaged communities. OCTA's diversity outreach team continues to adapt its strategies to connect and engage with diverse audiences during presentations, community meetings, cultural celebrations, business organization meetings and conferences, and other activities.

**Discussion**

During the past fiscal year, OCTA has significantly increased the frequency of outreach activities by participating in more cultural festivals, resource fairs, and business events. OCTA has also extended outreach to senior centers, mental wellness organizations, and other groups that serve diverse communities. The focus of in-person outreach is to engage the public and increase awareness and understanding of OCTA and its programs, projects, and planning studies. The

engagement is helping enhance relationships with civic, social, business, and faith communities because they see OCTA's involvement and interest in providing transportation solutions to their respective members and constituents. Participation and support from diverse stakeholders is critical to the success of transportation programs, capital projects, and planning studies.

#### Small-Business Outreach

OCTA has expanded its engagement with diverse business organizations by building stronger partnerships and sharing procurement information and transportation initiatives, such as transit marketing programs, capital improvement projects, and planning studies.

The Diversity Outreach team has worked closely with OCTA's Contracts Administration and Materials Management (CAMM) Department to engage with disadvantaged and minority-owned businesses. During the past fiscal year, OCTA attended 63 conferences, workshops, mixers, and other events to share procurement opportunities and CAMM NET resources, reaching more than 15,000 diverse business owners.

OCTA hosted a "Meet the Primes" business event at the OCTA administrative building on February 27, 2024. Small business owners expressed appreciation for the opportunity to engage one-on-one with prime contractors during the event. OCTA also hosted the OCTA Small Business and DBE Summit in the City of Garden Grove on October 8, 2024, attended by hundreds of small business owners interested in working on transportation projects and learning about DBE certification.

#### Diversity Outreach

In fiscal year 2023-24, OCTA participated in 125 community events, cultural festivals, and other activities to inform diverse and underserved populations about OCTA and OC Bus. Major events with high engagement included multiple Tet festival celebrations, Black History Month, Día de los Muertos, Cinco de Mayo, OC Pride, and Mid-Autumn Festival, collectively reaching more than 87,000 participants — a 38 percent increase over the previous fiscal year.

An electronic newsletter with multilingual (Spanish-English and Vietnamese-English) content was distributed to more than 5,600 contacts. Additionally, a multicultural postcard campaign was initiated to engage various cultural and non-English-speaking groups, raise awareness about OCTA's services, and encourage feedback and participation in planning studies. In May and June, two bilingual (Spanish-English and Vietnamese-English) postcards were mailed to

approximately 212,000 households, including approximately 153,000 Spanish-speaking and 59,000 Vietnamese-speaking households.

**Diversity Outreach Results: Fiscal Year Growth**

<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
Number of events attended	40	89	125
Number of participants reached	43,656	53,254	102,837
Number of booth visitors	10,692	16,556	39,713
Total surveys completed	5,546	5,994	14,490

**Earned and Paid Media**

The diversity outreach team leveraged strong relationships with the Vietnamese American community — including news media, cultural influencers, and community leaders — to effectively engage and disseminate information.

On December 1, 2023, 80 diverse community and business leaders attended the Interstate 405 (I-405) Improvement Project Dedication Ceremony. The diversity outreach team was able to secure media coverage from news outlets such as Telemundo, Univision, Little Saigon Television, SBN-TV, Viet Hon, Viet Bao Daily News, Nguoi Viet Daily News, and other media.

The diversity outreach team also provided media support for a mental health awareness event in the City of Santa Ana in collaboration with the Norooz Clinic Foundation, Moving Forward Together, Groundswell, Asian American Senior Citizens Service Center, and other diversity leaders. The event received coverage from Telemundo, Little Saigon Television, and NBC Channel 4, as well as an in-studio interview in the City of Garden Grove for the OC Connect Study with VNA-TV. This combination of earned and paid media not only amplifies OCTA's messages but also strengthens the organization's presence within these communities.

**Diverse Community Leaders Group**

OCTA's Diverse Community Leaders Group comprises business, cultural, and faith leaders from various communities within Orange County. This group meets quarterly to discuss OCTA's programs, services, and initiatives, providing valuable feedback and conveying concerns from their respective communities.

The group has been instrumental in generating public input for studies and projects. Members of this group, along with other community leaders, participated in multiple informal focus groups that staff facilitated for these studies, including Transit Hubs Study, OC Connect, and Transportation Demand

Management Study, as well as the OC Streetcar safety message campaign. The group also offered suggestions to enhance messaging for transit marketing programs, assisted OCTA in reaching diverse audiences with construction updates for the I-405 and other projects, supported active transportation initiatives, and provided feedback on many other programs and projects.

**Summary**

OCTA is continually creating new avenues for meaningful outreach and dialogue with historically disenfranchised diverse community members. The next steps in outreach include further developing the foundation of the trust-building campaign by pursuing more partnerships. This will include outreach to mental health organizations, faith-based communities, and other emerging groups to help reach the goal of enhancing public engagement.

**Attachment**

None.

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