



JUNE 2022

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

**DEEP CANVASS CONVERSATIONS WITH
LATINO VOTERS IN COSTA MESA**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

About Resilience Orange County

The mission of Resilience Orange County is an organization working to strengthen leadership of color towards community transformation. We work to inform and inspire communities of color to thrive and build a just future. To learn more, visit: www.resilienceoc.org/.

Data Collecting Team

Tanya Lopez

Quyen Nguyen

Priscila Garcia

Victor Valladares

Valeria Reyna

Genesis Garcia

Andrea Navarro

Writers and Editors

Roberto Herrera

Gerardo Lopez

Design

Oswaldo Farias



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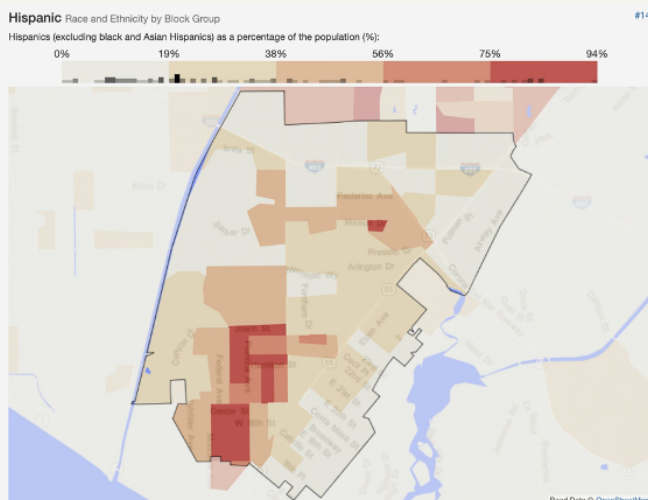
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INTRODUCTION

Resilience Orange County is a social justice organization founded on the notion of communities advocating for themselves to imagine a better future. Our work started in Santa Ana, however, after a decade of base-building there, we identified other areas in neighboring cities that merited our support to invest in and uplift communities of color. Costa Mesa was identified as a community that our organization would like to support and uplift its people of color to imagine and build a better future for themselves, their families, and their neighbors. Our decision to move forward with Costa Mesa was based on the need to invest more resources for the City's Latino population.

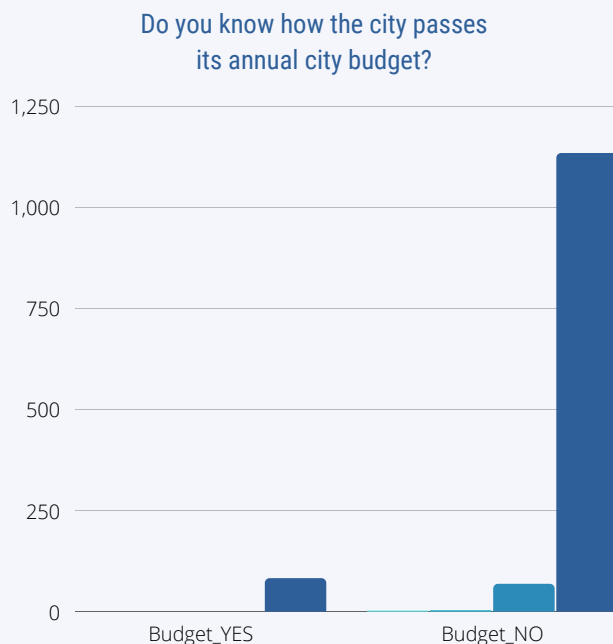
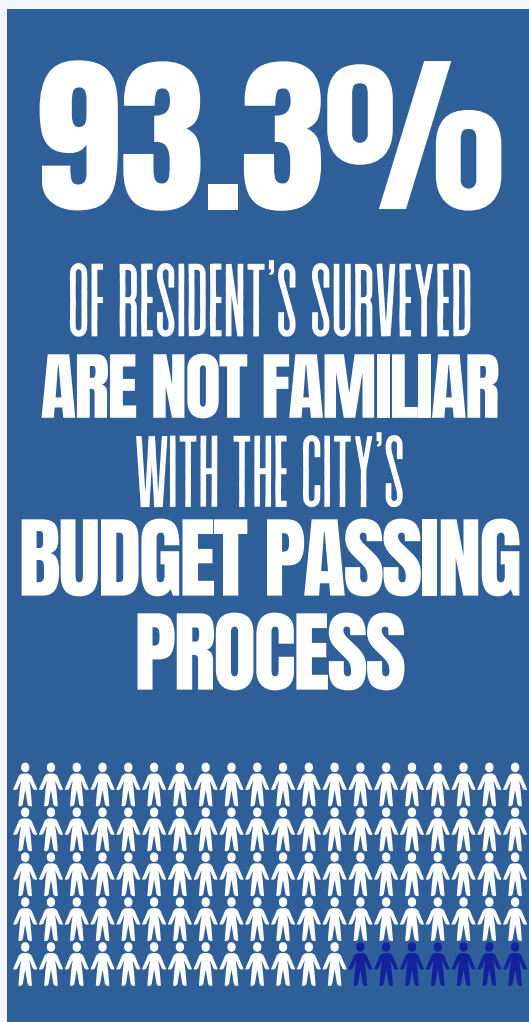
All of our Participatory Research programs are 501c3 efforts and work to deepen our relationship with people of color. Since the beginning of the year, we have developed three campaigns in Costa Mesa. In our last two campaigns, we have been in collaboration with OCCET. The Orange County Civic Engagement Table (OCCET) is a nonpartisan (501c3) regional table dedicated to engaging voters year-round. This progressive AAPI-Latinx-Labor-Environmental Justice Alliance seeks to build progressive transformation of our region so everyone is treated equitably and with justice. Several organizations in Orange County anchor OCCET in cities around the county. These anchor organizations serve the emerging majority of the county – low income immigrant Latinx and Asian American communities. They work across issues of immigrant, economic, and racial justice across the county. Through this innovative partnership, OCCET is committed to increasing the quality, scale and effectiveness of civic participation in communities of color and among low-income populations in Orange County.



CAMPAIGNS

Timeline

Between February 3rd, 2022 and March 9th, 2022, Resilience OC's **first campaign** reached **1215 voters through phone banking and door-to-door canvassing**. While our initial contact rate was slow, over this time period it improved. As it turned out, our initial phone banking efforts were crucial in building up the relationships that would allow for our door-to-door efforts to be more fruitful as our campaigns went on. These early conversations aimed to gather feedback on the following three questions: (1) How familiar are you with the city's budget passing process? (2) What are the top 3 issues affecting you? (3) How important is it for the city to support and connect with the immigrant community in Costa Mesa? **93.3%** of the voters we spoke with shared that they were not familiar with the budget passing process. According to the responses we gathered, **"housing insecurity"** was by far the most common issue faced by Costa Mesa residents. Participants also shared an **overwhelming support** for the City of Costa Mesa to do more to support and connect with their immigrant neighbors.



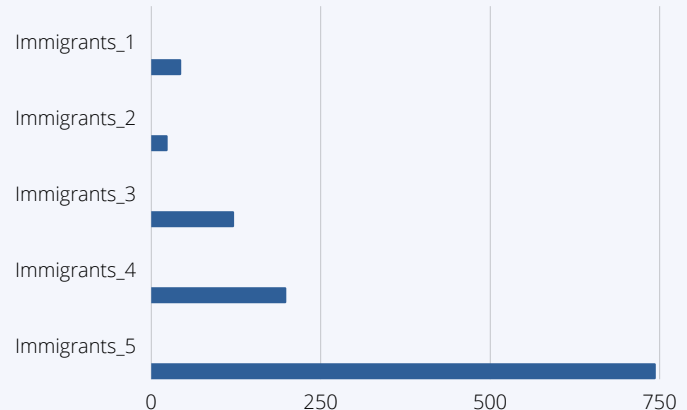
Data on Budget Familiarity

- 1215 Total Voters
 - 1134 said NO (93.3%)
 - 81 said YES (6.6%)

Data on Immigration Question

- Total Voters: 1,128
 - 1 Super Opposes [43] - (3.8%)
 - 2 Lean Oppose [23] - (2%)
 - 3 Neutral [121] - (10.7%)
 - 4 Lean Support [198] - (17.5%)
 - 5 - Super Supportive [743] - (65.8%)

How important is it for the city to support and connect with the immigrant community in Costa Mesa?

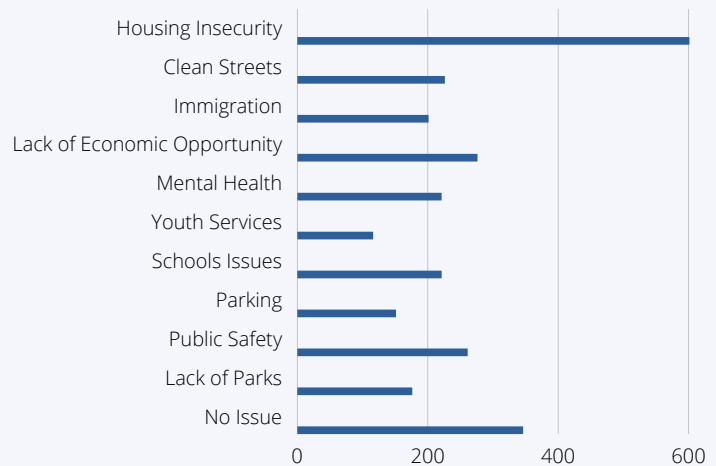


TOP ISSUE: HOUSING INSECURITY

Top Issue - Housing Insecurity

Our data shows that “housing insecurity” is the overwhelming and pressing issue the Latino community is facing in Costa Mesa. One voter shared they would **vote to support their neighbors because they know a lot of them are getting kicked out. The voter shared they want to make sure their community stays intact.**

What are the top 3 issues facing Costa Mesa residents?



Our second campaign in Costa Mesa ran from March 21st, 2022 through April 24th, 2022, where we reengaged the same voters from earlier in the year. Our continued presence in the community led to **211 in-person deep canvassing conversations**, which was about 17% of those contacted in our initial outreach efforts. In this second pass we offered possible solutions (like a rental assistance fund, a youth fund and a immigration legal defense fund) to issues that were identified in the earlier campaign. . We asked for their familiarity with the programs, gathered their thoughts on the fund and closed with a direct ask if they would support such a program. All three funds (rental assistance, youth, and legal defense) fared well with Latino voters in Costa Mesa.

RENTAL ASSISTANCE FUND	YOUTH FUND	LEGAL DEFENSE FUND
<p>We asked: How familiar are you [the voter] with a rental assistance fund?</p> <p>We then shared the following information about District 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from the City shows that 80% of the population in District 4 are renters. Most don't own their home and pay monthly rent. • District 4 also has one of the highest rates for multi-family homes - meaning there are more than 1 family living in each household. 	<p>We asked: How familiar are you [the voter] with a youth fund?</p> <p>We then shared the following information about District 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 4 has one of the highest youth populations. 32% of the population are 18 and under. 	<p>We asked: How familiar are you [the voter] with a legal defense fund?</p> <p>We then shared the following information about District 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District 4 has the highest immigrant population. 39% of the district residents are immigrants. Compare this to District 6 whose immigrant population makes up 11% of the district's total population. <p>*** The City categorized Immigration into two categories; "naturalized," & "immigrant." "Immigrant" is defined by the city of Costa Mesa as individuals who are foreign born including legal permanent residents, DACA recipients, asylum seekers, temporary visa holders, and undocumented community members. This data point can be found on the City's redistricting website. It is the adopted Redistricting Map 115.</p>
<p>Our follow up included these probing question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have you or your neighbors seen an increase in rent over the past few years? If yes, what impact has that had • Does having higher rent make it harder and harder for you to pay for your other bills or expenses? What expenses have you had to cut to make ends meet? • If the City offered a pilot rental assistance program, would you be interested in being part of that program? 	<p>Our follow up included these probing question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you know any youth who you think would benefit from being preoccupied with positive youth development activities? • If the City was to pass a youth fund, are there any programs you would be interested in seeing? • Do you think these programs will benefit youth and their social emotional wellbeing? 	<p>Our follow up included these probing question</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you think deportations impact families and communities? If so, in what ways? • Do you personally know anyone who may identify as an immigrant? • Do you think a legal defense fund would benefit the Latino community in Costa Mesa?

RENTAL ASSISTANCE FUND	YOUTH FUND	LEGAL DEFENSE FUND
<p>If the voter expressed an unwillingness to support the fund because of potential increased taxes . . .</p> <p>We explained to them the city wouldn't collect more taxes but rather reallocate existing revenue the city already has.</p>	<p>If the voter expressed an unwillingness to support the fund because of potential increased taxes . . .</p> <p>We explained to them the city wouldn't collect more taxes but rather reallocate existing revenue the city already has</p>	<p>If the voter expressed an unwillingness to support the fund because of potential increased taxes . . .</p> <p>We explained to them the city wouldn't collect more taxes but rather reallocate existing revenue the city already has</p>
<p>We closed with a direct ask for support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you [the voter] support the fund? 	<p>We closed with a direct ask for support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you [the voter] support the fund? 	<p>We closed with a direct ask for support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you [the voter] support the fund?

After reviewing all three funds with the voter, we asked them to prioritize one. This was a difficult question, as all three funds fared well with the voters, being that each fund met a portion of their needs. Their decision to select one fund over the others did not mean they were not supportive of all three funds. In fact, in many cases the voters would prioritize all three if given the opportunity.

Total In-Person Deep Canvass Conversations: 211 Conversations

- (131) or **62%** of Latino voters prioritized a Rental Assistance Fund
- (45) or **21%** of Latino voters prioritized a Youth Fund
- (35) or **17%** of Latino voters prioritized a Legal Defense Fund



NARRATIVES

The following summaries below illustrate the narratives and stories voters shared with us that highlight the need for Costa Mesa to do more in an effort to meet the rising crises they are facing. These crises included the financial stress imposed by rising rent, the lack of developmental opportunities for youth (both academic and extracurricular), the need for local civic engagement efforts, and the lack of legal infrastructure and financial support to aid the immigrant community in Costa Mesa.

The Latino community in Costa Mesa emphasized the immediate and residual impacts of COVID. They expressed how the pandemic still continues to impact almost all aspects of their lives, including their mental & physical health as well as their financial stability. Voters shared that the crisis of COVID is not over and their need for support has only grown since then.

Deep Canvass Narratives for Youth Fund

- **Super supportive of the Youth Fund to secure a brighter future for Costa Mesa's youth** - Latino voters shared that they were very supportive of the City of Costa Mesa investing in a youth fund. They shared that a primary driver to their conclusion to support a youth fund was based on the need for their children to succeed in life as a way of securing their family's future.
- **Variety of programs to meet the community needs** - Latino voters expressed the need for youth programs to be expansive and diverse to meet the needs of youth of all ages.
 - **Youth Age Ranges**
 - Small children & Toddlers
 - Youth 6 years to 12 years old
 - Youth 18 and under
 - Young adults under 25
 - **Diversity of Youth Programs**
 - Childcare programs to support community members' ability to work and support their family
 - After-school Programs before parents are able to return home from work and pick up their children from school so they are not left at home alone
 - Educational support like helping youth with homework assignments or tutors
 - Recreational, social and sports programs that are not related to school or tutoring
 - Mental health services and resources to address rising stress or other health strategies for mental wellness

Deep Canvass Narratives for Legal Defense Fund

- **Super Supportive for Immigration Legal Support in Costa Mesa**

- Latino voters shared that they were very supportive of the legal defense fund to support the immigrant community in Costa Mesa. Some of the voters expressed their displeasure for deportations and family separation as they empathized with the hardships that come with raising children on their own.
- Other voters, while not directly impacted, showed compassion and empathy and understood the significance a legal defense fund can have on their families, neighbors and loved ones.
- In reference to the fund, voters shared that the City of Costa Mesa should do more to provide the financial support, including assistance with an immigration attorney and other efforts that would make the City of Costa Mesa welcoming for its undocumented residents.

- **Infrastructure to Support the Immigrant Community in Costa Mesa**

- A narrative emerged that voters would love to see the City of Costa Mesa aid in centralizing legal support services within the city to make it easier for the immigrant community to access legal services.
- Voters shared that it takes a considerable amount of time to get to Santa Ana, where a majority of non-profit legal service providers are located. The burden comes for the immigrant community as they have to work less hours to account for any travel time or appointment unavailability, coupled with the unpredictability and prolonged travel times that it takes to reach Santa Ana by public transportation, as mentioned by another resident.

- **Mixed Status Families**

- Based on the deep canvass conversations with Latino voters, there were different ways that they connected with, or were in relationship to, the immigrant community in Costa Mesa. Voters directly shared having undocumented family members or knowing someone in Costa Mesa including their extended family members, the elderly, their friends and neighbors who are part of the immigrant community. Others expressed explicitly knowing youth in Costa Mesa who are undocumented, while some shared their parents are undocumented.

- **Understanding Immigration Legal Defense & Due Process Rights**

- One voter shared their hesitancy to support a legal defense fund as they were under the impression that everyone is already entitled to an attorney, regardless of whether or not they are a citizen. After discussing how due process rights are not guaranteed in immigration court and the need for an immigration attorney is high, even for Costa Mesa residents, this voter expressed being a lean supporter of this initiative.
- Another voter was confused and thought that the immigrant community would have to pay more taxes. When we explained that it would not affect the amount they would be taxed, but rather that the City would reallocate existing funding it already has, the voter then expressed strong support for the fund.

Deep Canvass Narratives for Rental Assistance

- **Super Supportive of a Rental Assistance Fund**
 - In many of our deep canvass conversations, Latino voters overwhelmingly supported the idea of the City developing a rental assistance fund to meet these rising needs and changes in Costa Mesa. In many of these conversations, many mentions were made in reference to stronger protections and mitigation efforts to address the issue of “housing insecurity.” Some voters made reference to efforts the City of Santa Ana has passed to relieve some of the financial and housing stress renters are facing including rental assistance and rent control.
 -
- **Rising Rent** - Overwhelmingly, “**rising rent**” stood out the most in our deep canvass conversations with Latino voters in Costa Mesa. Below are varying narratives they shared:
 - Rent Paid Per Month
 - While we only captured what voters were willing to share, some shared paying \$2,100 for a 1 bedroom. However, many residents shared annual rent increases of \$100 or \$110 on average, with one resident mentioning having to bear two rent increases in a year. Some residents mentioned that while rent would increase, the conditions of their home or apartment would not.
 - “**Fixed Income**” came up often in our conversations with the Latino community in Costa Mesa. Residents expressed fear in their ability to meet the rising rent, including all their living expenses. These residents were mostly elderly and others mentioned Section 8 housing.

- Mitigation Efforts like Rent Control
 - “Rent control” was also mentioned several times in our deep canvas conversations with Latino voters.. They had a general understanding of “**rent control**” as a **mitigation effort** to address their needs, vocalized support for it and some even had families in neighboring cities like Santa Ana, where they have enacted such policies.
 - Some voters also spoke candidly about “*gentrification*” and its impact on rising rent and displacement.
- Financial Stress
 - Several times in our conversations, voters expressed **deep financial stress** about the rising rent. In a similar thread, the Latino community expressed a “sense of urgency” where such programs to mitigate rising rent “can’t wait for tomorrow.” Shrouded in doubt, they shared these programs would not come soon enough to meet their needs. Other Latino community members shared a sense of “displacement,” a sense of being on the way out, on the verge of eviction, or feeling pushed out of the City. One resident shared already planning on leaving the City because they can no longer afford it.

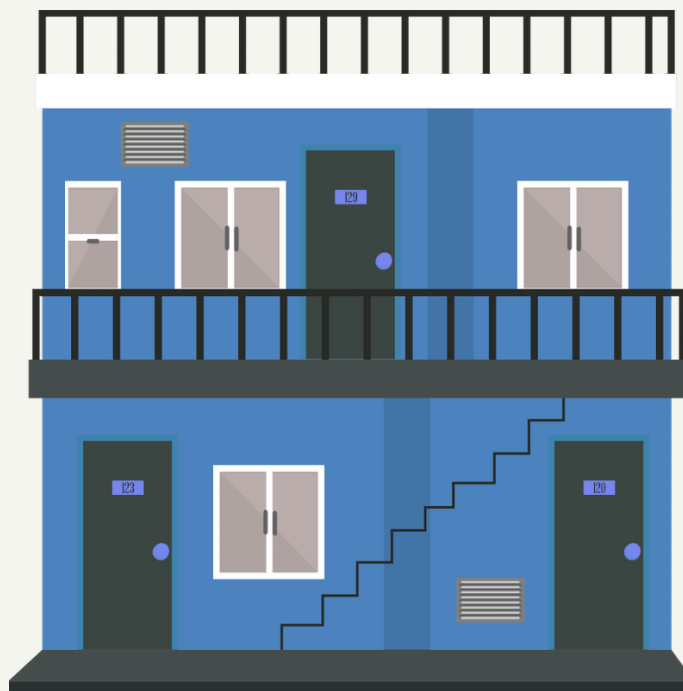
**Overwhelmingly,
“rising rent” stood out
the most in our deep
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with Latino voters in
Costa Mesa.**

- **Multi-Family coming together to Pay 1 Rent**

- The second most documented topic that emerged from our deep canvass conversations with Latino voters was their need to live together to pay 1 rent (Multi-Family households). While some did not disclose who they live with particularly, others did including extended family members and roommates. Some expressed their inability to pay the rising rent, inability to live alone, or live a single family unit
- **The need for youth to work to supplement the high cost of rents** came up substantially among our conversations regarding multi-family households. Most of the youth supporting their families were youth under the age of 25. In order to meet the costs of rising rent, many of these youth and their families expressed the tragic tradeoff of prioritizing work over their own personal development, like completing their school or their education.

- **Being Afraid to Get Taxed But Then Showing Compassion for their Neighbors**

- A small but significant narrative emerged from our deep canvass conversations with Latino voters. While initially mentioning hesitation to support the rental assistance fund on the grounds of being “taxed” for such a fund, voters expressed compassion and support for the program after we shared that 80% of the residents in District 4 are renters and that the City could possibly reallocate existing funds, to address the issue of **“housing insecurity.”**
- These narratives were not attributed to any particular group, rather were found generally throughout our canvass, even among the renter population. Renters, while initially concerned about “being taxed” were moved by our deep canvass conversations when we contextualized the demographics of District 4 and the City’s ability to reallocate existing funds to meet the community’s needs



CLOSING

In summary, in our first campaign we have been able to identify **“housing insecurity”** as the top issue Latinos are facing in the City of Costa Mesa. In our second campaign, the Latino community overwhelmingly showed support for the City to do more to implement stronger mitigation efforts to meet the rising rent they are facing. All three funds proposed fared well with the voters as an initial step the City can take towards addressing their needs. The voters recognized the limitations of the funds and wanted to highlight the City’s role in doing more beyond rental assistance, a youth fund and a legal defense fund to meet their needs.

In regards to the City of Costa Mesa’s budget passing process, there are important issues that should go without mentioning.

- This year, the City of Costa Mesa failed to have a comprehensive list of all the budget meetings and study sessions regarding the budget. While the City did provide a skeleton of the meetings, It became a moving target.
- Additionally, the City’s presentations in all budget meetings, up until June 7th, have only focused on capital improvement projects and infrastructure, largely leaving out conversations for social programs like rental assistance, youth programs and community services until June 7th.
- The City’s budget passing has made it difficult for community organizations like ours who are largely working to help increase civic engagement opportunities for residents. The difficulty arose when trying to advertise both the importance of voting and also providing input in the city budgeting process. While there are two important events happening on June 7th, 2022, our organization has chosen to largely focus on reminding voters of the primary election on June 7th, however we are also engaging a smaller pool of community members about the importance of providing community input in the budget passing process as well. Our organization can not stress it enough that the City should have gathered community input regarding “social programs” prior to June 7th so as to not impede the civic engagement opportunities for Costa Mesa residents.
- Overall, voters expressed a lack of understanding of the City’s budget passing process and coupled with the City’s lack of a comprehensive outreach & civic engagement strategy has largely left out participation and input from the Latino community.

Lastly, our third campaign this year encompasses outreaching to voters to educate them on the importance of voting in the upcoming Primary Election on June 7th. These “get out the vote efforts” build on the relationships we have been developing with the Latino community since the beginning of the year. We also anticipate additional campaigns and leadership development opportunities leading up to the general election later this year where we will continue base-building with the communities in the City of Costa Mesa.



Resilience Orange County
1415 E 17th Street
Santa Ana, CA 92705
www.resilienceoc.org