

El Cajon City Council, Count MENA In!

Advocating for our communities' inclusion & visibility!

What is MENA?

"MENA" refers to the Middle East and North Africa, a geopolitical region comprising many diverse populations, including but not limited to:

Middle Eastern: Afghan, Bahraini, Emirati, Iranian, Iraqi, Israeli, Jordanian, Kuwaiti, Lebanese, Omani, Palestinian, Qatari, Saudi Arabian, Syrian, Turkish, and Yemeni

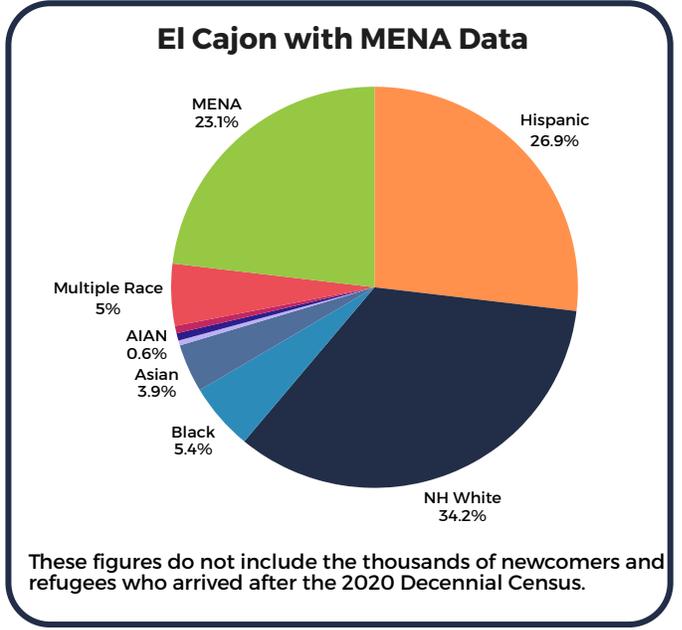
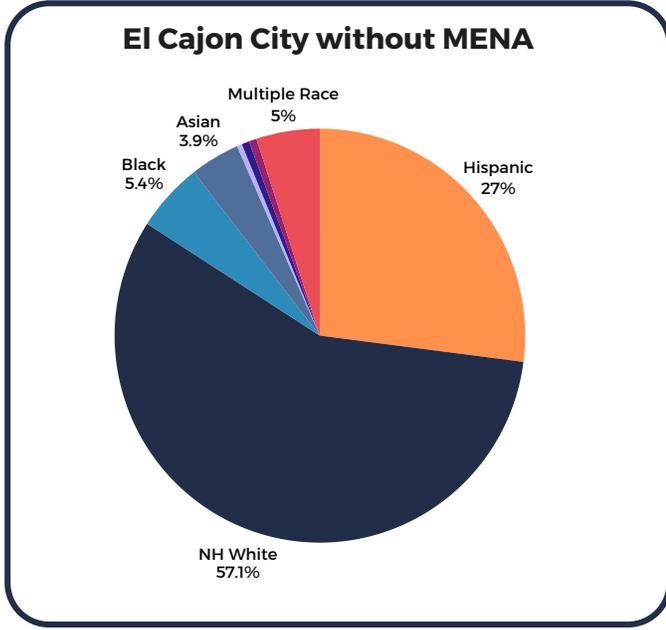
North African: Algerian, Djiboutian, Egyptian, Libyan, Mauritanian, Moroccan, Somali, Sudanese, and Tunisian

Transnational: Amazigh, Armenian, Assyrian, Chaldean, Circassian, and Kurdish

Why is this important?

Currently, MENA communities are not officially counted in state or federal data. Instead, people of MENA descent are often grouped into "White" or "Other" categories. Without a MENA demographic category, critical funding, protections, and services are out of reach.

State and federal agencies use racial and ethnic data to allocate resources for healthcare access (insurance, mental health support, medical research), education funding (scholarships, minority-serving institutions), and workforce and business grants (minority-owned business opportunities).



What information are we missing due to the lack of a MENA category?

- Average household size in El Cajon
- Poverty
- Employment
- Income
- Educational attainment
- Enrollment in public assistance
- Home ownership rates
- Immigration characteristics

If city council were to adopt this resolution, it would expand the data available to better socioeconomically support MENA communities.

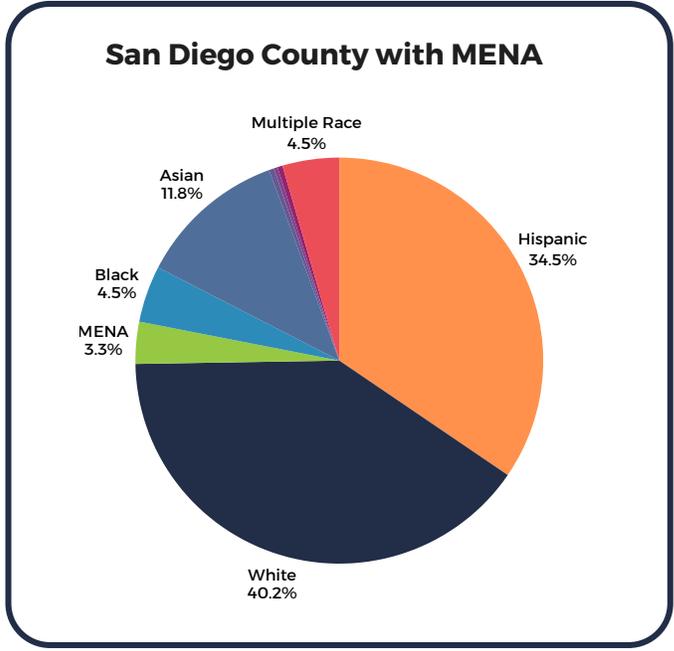
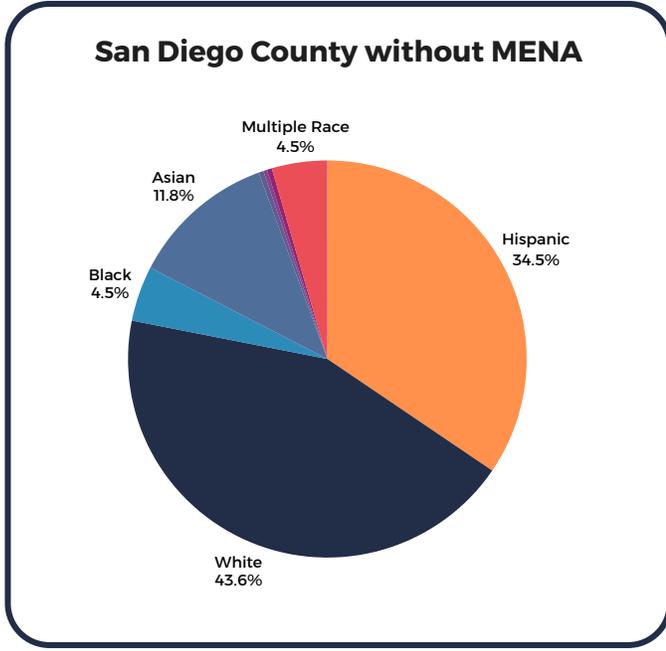
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IN RECENT NEWS!
On October 6, 2025, the State of California signed into law AB 91, the MENA Inclusion Act, creating a Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) demographic data category for state and local agencies, effective January 1, 2028.

CALL TO ACTION!
Support California Assembly Bill 91, the MENA Inclusion Act, which ensures that the unique identities and needs of MENA communities are accurately represented in public data. Pass city council resolutions to express commitment to implementing detailed data collection for MENA populations.

Precedent for MENA Data Resolutions

Federal	State	County	City	Schools
Adopted federally in May 2024. Only provides six categories. Excludes major transnational groups such as Chaldean, Assyrian, Kurdish, and Armenian. No guidance regarding Afghan and Sudanese.	California adopted a bill. Other states include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Illinois New York Nevada New Jersey Colorado Michigan (pending) 	San Diego County Board of Supervisors passed a resolution directing CAO to collect MENA data (April 2024).	Cities in our Southern California region: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Anaheim City of Bell Glendale 	School Districts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> San Diego Unified Glendale Unified San Francisco Unified



Data Sources: U.S. Census Bureau and County of San Diego - Health & Human Services Agency