



## **White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Highlights**

On October 14, 2009, President Barack Obama signed [Executive Order 13515](#) reestablishing the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Initiative) and the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Commission) to address issues concerning the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. This Executive Order carved out a key avenue of access to the federal government for AAPI communities and affirmed President Obama's commitment to AAPI communities. The following highlights a few accomplishments of the Initiative, Commission, and agencies, over the past four years, made possible through our work with community partners.

### **Building an Engagement Infrastructure**

- **Connected with diverse AAPI communities across the country.** The Initiative and Commission have hosted over **200 events** including national gatherings, roundtables, open dialogue sessions, and workshops in **25 states**, the District of Columbia and Pacific Islands, and in **50 cities**, reaching more than **30,000 people**. Federal agencies learned about local demographic trends, challenges faced by immigrant and refugee communities, and ways in which community leaders, non-governmental organizations, and small businesses have joined forces to create and build thriving communities.
- **Built strategic partnerships with philanthropy and corporate stakeholders.** In collaboration with Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy and the Department of Health and Human Services, the Initiative held several convenings, conference calls, and webinars for philanthropic and private sector stakeholders to raise awareness about AAPIs with limited English proficiency, barriers accessing health insurance coverage, the Administration's activities and programs to promote health insurance outreach and enrollment, and challenges and opportunities for integrating new AAPI immigrants and refugees.
- **Established an Interagency Working Group (IWG) of more than 20 federal agencies and executive offices.** The IWG created and implemented [agency plans](#) to increase the AAPI community's access to federal programs and services. The IWG houses four subcommittees that coincide with the Initiative's four cross-cutting goal areas of research and data, language access, workforce diversity, and capacity building. These subcommittees respond to the community, share best practices, and recommend strategic goals that can be incorporated into agency plans.
- **Expanded the IWG to the regional level.** The Initiative formed a regional IWG of nearly 80 individuals to help facilitate information sharing and coordinate community engagement with the AAPI community across the federal regional agencies. The regional IWG (1) meets quarterly to share information and discuss ways in which regional offices can work together; (2) convenes regional roundtables with local AAPI communities; (3) builds partnerships between the federal regional offices, the Commission, and the local and state commissions; and (4) submits an annual progress report on its engagement efforts.

### **Advancing Data Collection, Analysis, and Dissemination on AAPI Communities**

- **Collected data disaggregation practices from schools.** The Initiative solicited public input on practices and policies regarding existing education data systems that disaggregate data on subgroups within the AAPI population. The information will be used to develop best practices on data disaggregation efforts in the AAPI community, assist in closing the achievement gap, and work to target funds to needy communities.

- **Released a report on Federal approaches to disaggregating data.** The Initiative partnered with the Office of Budget and Management to release the [Statistical Policy Working Paper on Federal Agency Approaches to Providing Statistical Information on Detailed Asian and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Groups](#). Federal standards explicitly acknowledge the need for adequate samples to provide information of acceptable statistical quality and to maintain confidentiality of respondents' information. The report shares information on how agencies are creatively collecting and reporting detailed race and ethnicity data from their surveys.
- **Hosted national symposium to promote data disaggregation.** In partnership with the National Commission on Asian American and Pacific Islander Research in Education, the Initiative hosted [iCount: Equity through Representation](#), a two-day symposium that addressed the hurdles educational institutions and community groups face to achieving data disaggregation and brainstormed best practices to implementing data disaggregation systems at those institutions. The event featured a briefing for representatives from philanthropic organizations, panels comprised of representatives from the 40 educational institutions in attendance, and intensive breakout sessions designed to identify concrete solutions to the problem.

### **Protecting the Vulnerable AAPI Population**

- **Advised federal agencies on disaster response efforts after the Gulf Coast Oil Spill.** Immediately after the BP Oil Spill, the Initiative deployed staff to Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama to convene town halls and roundtable meetings with federal officials and Southeast Asian American community members to discuss issues of concern regarding the federal government's disaster response efforts. Initiative efforts in the Gulf resulted in the first federal-wide language translation clearinghouse, in which all materials produced for the oil spill recovery were translated into seven different languages, including Vietnamese, Cambodian Khmer, Spanish, French and Haitian Creole. The Initiative also advised the interagency team coordinating federal relief efforts on how to best serve these communities and convened a Gulf Coast Philanthropic Briefing in Washington, DC to draw attention to the lack of community infrastructure to support the Southeast Asian community during disasters and to spotlight community-led economic development projects in the Gulf Coast.
- **Created interagency working groups to address the needs of Hmong farmers and nail salon worker health and safety.** The Hmong community has the highest rate of poverty among all AAPI ethnic groups. Increasingly, Hmong families have turned to agriculture as a way to make a living and return to their cultural roots. The working group brings together federal agencies and community groups to develop and implement goals and strategies aimed at breaking down the barriers that many Hmong farmers face in accessing economic resources and attaining financial security.

A myriad of health and safety issues affect AAPI salon workers, who make up forty percent of the national nail salon workforce. The Initiative along with the Environmental Protection Agency, Food and Drug Administration, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, the Small Business Administration, and national and community groups has developed a plan to assess and to improve their regulations, programs, and outreach strategies to ensure nail salon worker health and safety.

- **Released an [AAPI women's record](#).** The record summarizes the progress made by the Obama Administration on behalf of AAPI women and girls across the country. The record was released at an AAPI women's roundtable co-hosted by the Initiative, the White House Council on Women and Girls, and the White House Office of Public Engagement, and the event brought together 30 AAPI leaders from around the country to have a dialogue with Administration officials about the issues impacting AAPI women and girls, including domestic violence, trafficking, nail salons, healthcare, immigration and small business.
- **Recognized the Extraordinary Contribution of Filipino Veterans.** The Initiative and the Office of Management and Budget created a Filipino Veterans Equity Compensation Fund Interagency Working Group to increase transparency and provide a thorough accounting of the process to verify valid military service for Filipino World War II veterans. This effort culminated in a [set of findings](#) from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Department of the Army, and the National Archives and Records Administration. This effort marked the first time all organizations involved in the verification process were brought together to examine the process from start to finish and provide a public explanation of each organization's role in the verification process.

## **Increasing Investment and Building Capacity in AAPI Communities**

- **Convened more than 200 foundation leaders, federal officials, and community experts at the White House to discuss the potential for partnership and alignment.** The [National Philanthropic Briefing](#) brought together federal officials and stakeholders to address the specific needs of AAPI communities. As a result of the briefing, the Ford Foundation, the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, and the Kresge Foundation made an initial \$1 million commitment in the form of a planning grant to assist the AAPI community with leveraging philanthropic investment and creating public-private partnerships. Over the past year, the Initiative collaborated with Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) on several briefings to foster awareness on AAPI issues among foundation leaders and cultivate public-private partnerships.
- **Created a comprehensive [Guide to Federal Agency Resources](#) for AAPI communities.** In order to connect communities with federal funding, programs, and resources, the Initiative created an easy-to-use navigational tool meant to provide a brief snapshot of federal resources available to assist organizations and individuals seeking to improve the quality of life of AAPIs. Within this guide, individuals and organizations can find information about grant opportunities, loan programs to help start businesses, federal resources for food and housing for low-income individuals, healthcare programs for veterans and their families, and other such resources.
- **Promoted Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) program.** Since 2011, AANAPISIs nationwide received almost \$823 million in federal support, including over \$485 million from the Department of Health and Human Services alone, which accounted for 49.5 percent of all federal agency funding to Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) that same year. Similarly, the Department of Education provided \$225.5 million to AANAPISIs, Department of Labor funded \$29 million, and Department of Commerce invested \$14 million.
- The Initiative also co-sponsored a Federal Summit on Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) with the Minority Serving Institutions Community of Partners Council and the White House Initiatives on Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Excellence in Education for Hispanics, and American Indian and Alaska Native Education. The Summit provided a forum for these representatives to share best practices and develop innovative solutions to continue their support of MSIs. As a follow-up to the Summit, the Initiative communicates regularly with AANAPISIs, providing updates including federal grant opportunities, upcoming events, and best practices that individual schools have adopted to promote their program and provide students with the opportunity to succeed.
- **Expanded the availability of export financing to AAPI small businesses.** In partnership with the Export Import Bank, the Initiative coordinated a roundtable event that featured trade finance start-up kits for small banks to support their AAPI small business clients in utilizing trade finance products to finance the production and export of goods abroad. In addition, the Initiative collaborated with the White House Business Council and Office of Public Engagement to host a day-long event highlighting federal support for trade and investment across the Asia Pacific region. Supporting the President's rebalancing effort in the Asia Pacific region, the event provided an opportunity for AAPI businesses to engage with senior Federal officials and learn how to contribute to the development of the Asia Pacific region by leveraging government resources.

## **Raising Health Awareness**

- **Developed educational tools and resources on the Affordable Care Act.** To inform and engage the AAPI community about the Affordable Care Act and the enrollment process for the new health insurance marketplace, the Initiative in collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services developed a number of resources, including an [infographic](#) about the impact of the Affordable Care Act on AAPIs and a one-stop resource [website](#) of Asian and Pacific Island language materials for AAPI consumers, small businesses, and providers. We have also held in-language Google Hangouts in [Korean](#) and [Vietnamese](#), with a Chinese language Hangout expected in January 2014.

- **Promoted healthy and culturally appropriate recipes.** To promote healthy eating among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, White House Executive Chef Cristeta Comerford and Chef Ming Tsai teamed up to film a [cooking demonstration](#) in the White House kitchen featuring healthy and traditional Asian recipes that follow the Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommendations that support the Department of Agriculture MyPlate food icon.
- **Developed online resources on AAPI health disparities.** Health conditions that are common in the AAPI community — like diabetes, obesity, cancer, HIV/AIDS and mental illness — often go undiagnosed and untreated. To better inform the AAPI community about federal resources on health conditions disproportionately impacting the community, the Initiative developed an online portal for resources relevant to AAPI populations, including a resource page for mental health and substance abuse following a [White House Briefing on Mental Health and Suicide Prevention](#).

### **Increasing Opportunities for AAPI Employees in the Federal Workforce**

- **Helped launch the Senior Executive Service (SES) Development Program.** While the numbers of Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islander federal government employees closely reflect the total population of AAPIs in the country, AAPI representation at SES, mid- and senior-level management remains low. In response, the Asian American Government Executives Network; with participation from the Initiative, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, and the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission; launched a program to identify and aid applicants in preparation for the SES selection process through intensive training, education, and mentoring. The program has completed its second year, graduating 20 candidates from 12 federal departments and offices, and has opened applications for its third year.
- **Helped start a federal challenge team program.** The Federal Asian Pacific American Council, with participation from the Initiative and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, created an innovative new project-oriented program targeted at developing skills for emerging federal employee leaders while working to solve the dilemmas facing the federal government when addressing the needs of AAPI federal employees and communities. Teams examine and address complex policy and resource issues that the federal government is working to improve for AAPIs, specifically relating to the cross-cutting goal areas of research and data, language access, workforce diversity, and capacity building. The program provides an avenue of professional development to employees to develop leadership and management skills in a project-driven team setting.

Email [WhiteHouseAAPI@ed.gov](mailto:WhiteHouseAAPI@ed.gov) to get updates on the White House Initiative's work on behalf of Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

**For a full list of our accomplishments, please visit [www.whitehouse.gov/aapi](http://www.whitehouse.gov/aapi).**