

2012 POLICY BLUEPRINT FOR ACTION



OUR COMMUNITIES. OUR PRIORITIES. OUR COUNTRY.

Presented by the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)

The National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), founded in 1996, is a coalition of thirty Asian Pacific American organizations around the country. Based in Washington D.C., NCAPA serves to represent the interests of the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities and to provide a national voice on policy issues and priorities. Below is a list of NCAPA's members and partners:

Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Asian & Pacific Islander American Scholarship Fund
Asian & Pacific Islander American Vote
Asian American Justice Center *(Member Of Asian American Center For Advancing Justice)*
Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies
Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy, & Leadership
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations
BPSOS
Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement
Hmong National Development
Japanese American Citizens League
Laotian American National Alliance
Leadership Education on Asian Pacifics, Inc.
National Alliance of Vietnamese American Service Agencies
National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association
National Asian Pacific American Bar Association
National Asian Pacific American Families Against Substance Abuse
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Asian Pacific Center on Aging
National Association of Asian American Professionals
National Council of Asian Pacific Islander Physicians
National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development
National Federation of Filipino American Associations
National Japanese American Memorial Foundation
National Korean American Service & Education Consortium
National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance
OCA
Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund
South Asian Americans Leading Together
Southeast Asia Resource Action Center

ABOUT OUR COMMUNITIES

WHO WE ARE:

With a population of over 18.5 million, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders represent 6% of the total U.S. population, according to the 2010 Census.

WHERE WE ARE:

Between 2000 and 2010, the Asian American population grew by 46% and the Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander population grew by 40%. The five states where our communities grew the most are Nevada, Arizona, Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida.

DIVERSITY AND HISTORY:

Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are an enormously diverse community of people with a long history in the United States. As a whole, Asian Americans trace their backgrounds to over 30 countries, and speak over 100 languages. The largest Asian American populations in the United States include Chinese, Filipino, Indians, Vietnamese, Korean, and Japanese communities. Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders trace their ancestry to the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, and other Pacific Islands.

COMMUNITY STRENGTH:

Between 2000 and 2010, the U.S. citizen voting age population of Asian Americans grew 63%, from 2.8% of the total U.S. citizen voting age population in 2000 to 4.1% of it in 2010. Between 2000 and 2010, the U.S. citizen voting age population of NHPI communities grew 39%. States with the highest Asian American share of citizen voting age population include Hawaii, California, Nevada, Washington, New Jersey, New York, Virginia, Maryland, and Massachusetts.

Data Sources: Census 2010 and American Community Survey

ABOUT THE BLUEPRINT

As the 2012 elections approach and our country confronts a range of significant policy concerns, NCAPA presents *Our Communities, Our Priorities, Our Country: Blueprint for Action* as a point of entry to better understand the priorities of Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities. Here, we provide an introduction to six top priority issue areas of concern for AA and NHPs with recommendations for stakeholders, policymakers, and community leaders. These include Civil Rights, Education, Health, Housing and Economic Justice, Immigration, and NHPI Issues.

While the *Blueprint for Action* captures cross-cutting themes and recommendations, we acknowledge that it does not capture the full extent of issues affecting our diverse communities. The focus here is on policy issues, and mainly those at the national level. Moreover, only the top-line recommendations are presented on each issue. We are also aware that there are segments within the AA & NHPI communities that uniquely experience the impact of issues presented here—for example, women LGBTIQ individuals, seniors, and limited English proficient individuals. This blueprint does not specifically address the impact of policy issues on these segments, but provides a point of entry for deeper analysis and discussion.

NCAPA encourages community-based organizations and leaders to leverage the recommendations in the *Blueprint for Action* in order to bring greater attention to the needs faced by AA and NHPI community members. We urge policymakers, allies, and stakeholders to better understand the impact of public policy on our community members and to work with us to ensure that AA and NHPI communities are always part of policy solutions.

Please contact NCAPA at
www.ncapaonline.org and info@ncapaonline.org

ADVANCING CIVIL RIGHTS

All people should live lives free of discrimination. Yet, AAs & NHPIs often face bias and discrimination in the workplace, at the polls, in their neighborhoods, in schools, and within the political process. Not only do our communities endure such treatment based on the perception of being "perpetual foreigners", but individuals are often also targeted for their actual or perceived race, national origin, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, or immigration status.

As many of our community members experience discrimination on multiple levels (for example, individuals who are both LGBTIQ and immigrants), it is important that policy solutions be crafted to understand these intersections. The following recommendations are a few of the many policy solutions that should be put in place in order to advance and preserve civil rights.

Committee contact:

civilrights@ncapaonline.org

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Voting Rights:

Support the continuing vitality of the Voting Rights Act, including full enforcement of Section 203 (requiring language assistance in the elections process in specific jurisdictions); and ensure access to the voting process for all U.S. citizens by opposing voter suppression efforts, such as voter photo identification requirements

Racial and Religious Profiling:

Support legislation, such as the End Racial Profiling Act, prohibiting racial and religious profiling by federal, state, and local law enforcement; strengthen the existing Department of Justice Guidance on racial profiling; and oppose measures allowing indefinite detention of individuals without charge

Employment Discrimination and Bias-Based Bullying and Harassment:

Support enforcement of existing anti-discrimination policies and passage of legislation, such as the Employment Non-Discrimination Act, Workplace Religious Freedom Act, and the Student Non-Discrimination Act, which expands anti-discrimination policies to preserve rights of those discriminated against on the basis of race and national origin, as well as gender identity and sexual orientation; and support legislation to combat bias-based bullying in schools, such as the School Safety Improvement Act, and bias-based harassment in other institutions, such as the military

ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

AA & NHPI students and families face diverse educational challenges, including disparities in accessing high quality educational opportunities to culturally competent and linguistically appropriate outreach. For example, within the Cambodian American community, only 24% have a high school degree, 11% have a bachelor's degree, and 3% have a graduate or professional degree. As our community's population grows, it is important that AAs & NHPIs have the appropriate resources in schools to learn. The following recommendations are a few of the many policy solutions that should be put in place in order to advance educational opportunities.

Committee contact:
education@ncapaonline.org

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Students with Diverse Needs:

Ensure that schools have the capacity to serve AA & NHPI students by including high quality data, increased resources for English Language Learner (ELL) students, and protections for safe schools in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

Professional Development for Educators:

Support educators and staff by providing high quality and research-based professional development to work with diverse AA & NHPI students, particularly AA & NHPI ELL students and limited English proficient families

AANAPISI Institutions:

Provide adequate funding and technical assistance to designated Asian American Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISI) to increase access to affordable and high quality higher education

ADVANCING HOUSING AND ECONOMIC JUSTICE

The foreclosure crisis has wreaked havoc on neighborhoods throughout the country, threatening access to affordable and stable housing choices for many AAs & NHPIs. With the subsequent recession and slow pace of the economic recovery leading to significant job losses and declining wealth and assets in our communities, many AAs & NHPIs have been stripped of their financial security and means for upward mobility.

Furthermore, AAs & NHPIs who become unemployed remain in this position longer than any other ethnic group. These economic hardships continue to severely impact the most vulnerable in our communities, and only exacerbate our nation's wealth disparities and racial economic inequalities. The following recommendations are a few of the many policy solutions that should be put in place in order to advance and preserve economic justice.

Committee contact:
housingandeconomicjustice
@ncapaonline.org

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Community Development and Affordable Rental and Homeownership:

Support housing and neighborhood revitalization programs that increase the supply of affordable housing, promote housing stability, preserve access to affordable homeownership opportunities, and revitalize neighborhoods for low-income and low-wealth communities

Consumer Protection, Asset Building and Financial Security:

Support asset building programs that assist individuals and families to make informed financial decisions, increase savings and develop assets, improve access to credit, and provide strong consumer protections in the financial marketplace

Job Development and Workforce Protections:

Support workforce investment and economic development programs that create jobs, provide job training opportunities, enhance protections in the workplace and ensure the stability and revitalization of our neighborhoods in rural and urban areas

Wage Gap:

Support efforts to eliminate current gender wage gaps and support family supportive policies such as paid sick days

ADVANCING THE INTERESTS OF NATIVE HAWAIIANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders trace their ancestry to the original peoples of Hawaii; the U.S. Territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI); and other Pacific Islands. Like Alaska Natives and American Indians, Native Hawaiians have a special political and legal relationship with the federal government due to their status as indigenous peoples who once exercised full sovereignty in areas that are now part of the U.S. As such, Native Hawaiians are treated by the federal government as not only a racial class of peoples, but also as a political classification with the right to self-determination and self-governance.

The U.S. also has a special historical and political relationship with other jurisdictions in the Pacific – namely the U.S. Territories and the Freely Associated States. Over the years, federal policies and programs have been designed or changed to take into consideration the unique circumstances of Native Hawaiians and residents of the Pacific Islander jurisdictions. The following recommendations are a few of the many policy solutions that should be put in place in order to advance the well-being of NHPI communities.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Federal Recognition of Native Hawaiian Governance:

Support self-governance by administratively or legislatively implementing federal recognition afforded to other indigenous peoples, including American Indians and Alaska Natives

Trust Relationship in Federal Programs:

Support the reauthorization of the Native Hawaiian Home Ownership Act and, the Native Hawaiian Education Act. Support the expansion of the Native Small Business Administration 8(a) Business Development Program to include support for eligible Native Hawaiian organizations. Advocate for the inclusion of the eligible geographic definition of the Substantially Under Served Trust Areas (SUTA) in key federal capital programs such as the U.S. Treasury New Market Tax Credits, and Department of Energy renewable energy programs

Equitable Treatment and Support for U.S. Affiliated Pacific Island Jurisdictions:

Support legislation that includes funding eligibility for American Samoa, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas in key federal programs such as the Workforce Investment Act and the Juvenile Accountability Block Grant Program. Restore Medicaid eligibility for Compacts of Free Association Migrants and lifting of Medicaid limitations for Pacific Island territories. Implement the recommendations of the Guam War Claims Review Commission Report

REFORMING THE IMMIGRATION SYSTEM

Asian Americans are part of our country's rich immigration history. In fact, nearly two-thirds of Asian Americans are foreign-born. Despite the contributions of Asian immigrants to all sectors in our country, community members have experienced a long and deep history of racist and restrictive immigration laws.

Approximately 1 million of the 11.5 million undocumented people in the country are of Asian origin, and over 40 percent of people waiting in the family immigration backlog are from Asian countries. Today, the broken immigration system makes it difficult for Asian Americans to immigrate to the U.S.; increases hardships for immigrant women and their children; forcibly separates families; and impede the ability of Asian immigrants to fully contribute to this country. The following recommendations are a few of the many policy solutions that should be put in place in order to develop a strong and just immigration system.

Committee contact:

immigration@ncapaonline.org

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Comprehensive Reform:

Support comprehensive immigration reform at the federal level that 1) creates a broad and simple process that provides a path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants, including young people; 2) keeps American families together, including same-sex households; 3) improves and strengthens avenues and protections for immigrant workers and their families to live and work in the country; 4) ensures the due process rights of all in the United States and prioritizes human rights standards through reforms in the detention and deportation systems; and 5) supports the full integration of immigrants and refugees

Anti-Immigrant Initiatives:

Reject enforcement-only approaches to immigration, including anti-immigrant proposals and initiatives at state and local levels that separate families, and increase the vulnerability of survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and other crimes

Sensible Immigrant Measures:

Support pro-immigrant measures including proposals that remove barriers to every level of public education for undocumented students such as the enforcement of *Plyler v. Doe*, in-state tuition proposals, state level DREAM Acts, and the federal DREAM Act, which would provide an opportunity for undocumented immigrant students to adjust their status

LIVING HEALTHY LIVES

Everyone should have access to resources and benefits that enable them to live healthy lives. Yet, AA & NHPI community members are disproportionately represented among the uninsured, and many low-income families must rely on publicly supported health care programs for their health care needs. Currently, more than 2.3 million Asian Americans and 162,000 Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are uninsured. Disaggregating the data further shows higher uninsured rates for Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Korean, Samoan and Cambodian communities. Moreover, our community members face health disparities and unequal access to quality health care services that especially affect those who are low-income, limited English proficient, and new residents.

For AA & NHPI women and LGBTIQ individuals, increasing access to reproductive and preventive health care services are integral to overall health and well-being as well as addressing disparities related to gender, gender identity, and sexual orientation. The following recommendations are a few of the many policy solutions that should be put in place in order to live healthy lives.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS:

Affordable Care Act Implementation:

Promote access to quality, affordable, and culturally and linguistically competent health care, including comprehensive reproductive, mental and behavioral health care, for AAs and NHPs by supporting the full funding and implementation of the Affordable Care Act

Access to Services and Treatment:

Reduce health disparities and expand access to preventive services and treatment of hepatitis B, diabetes, human papillomavirus, HIV/AIDS cancer, mental health, and substance use disorders, as well as reproductive health care such as abortion and contraceptives. Support initiatives to reduce health disparities such as the Health Equity and Accountability Act

Health Data Collection:

Advocate for the collection, reporting and analysis of standardized, disaggregated demographic and health data on AA and NHPs in order to reduce health and health care disparities and eliminate barriers to quality health services

Committee contact:

health@ncapaonline.org

HOW TO USE THE BLUEPRINT

Our Communities, Our Priorities, Our Country: 2012 Policy Blueprint for Action is intended to be used by policymakers, community-based organizations, media, and community members to gain a deeper understanding about the issues affecting AAs & NHPIs, and to take proactive measures to best address them. Below are examples of how various stakeholders can use *Our Communities, Our Priorities, Our Country: 2012 Policy Blueprint for Action*.

FOR POLICYMAKERS AND GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

- As guidance on what stance or action to take on a particular policy issue that may affect AA & NHPI community members
- As recommendations on how to engage with the community when developing policies
- As a resource on organizations that work with AA & NHPI community members

FOR COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANIZATIONS

- As guidance if approached to take a stance on a particular local or national policy issue that may affect AA & NHPI community members
- As background information for speeches, media inquiries, action alerts, newsletters, or coalition meetings
- As talking points for meetings with local policymakers, government agencies, coalitions, or elected officials
- As educational materials for an organization's membership, staff, board members, volunteers, or constituents

FOR THE MEDIA

- As background materials for articles on policies affecting AA & NHPI communities
- As a resource on organizations that work with AA & NHPI community members

FOR COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- As background information to learn more and raise awareness around issues affecting the AA & NHPI communities
- As talking points for individuals engaging in advocacy efforts with local, state, and national policymakers on issues affecting the AA & NHPI communities

We encourage you to use *Our Communities, Our Priorities, Our Country: 2012 Policy Blueprint for Action* to highlight the issues facing AA & NHPI communities. Contact us online at ncapaonline.org or by emailing info@ncapaonline.org

