
PRESIDENT OBAMA'S
RECORD WITH THE
ASIAN AMERICAN AND
PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY

MAY 2016





“No community should be invisible to its government.”

President Barack Obama, October 14, 2009

President Obama’s Record with the Asian American and Pacific Islander Community

Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are now the fastest growing racial group in the United States. According to the U.S. Census, the AAPI population [grew by approximately 46% from 2000 to 2010](#), faster than any other major racial group nationwide. There are now over [20 million](#) AAPIs living in the United States—almost triple the number in 1990—and this rapid growth is largely driven by immigration. By 2060, AAPIs are expected to increase over four times as rapidly as the total U.S. population and grow to more than [47 million](#).

Yet the “model minority myth” – the belief that all AAPIs are educated, wealthy, and successful – has prevented AAPI communities from fully benefitting from federal programs and resources available to vulnerable and underserved communities.

President Obama has made great strides to improve the lives of people across the country, including by recognizing the tremendous growth and unique needs of the diverse AAPI community.

Reestablishing the White House Initiative on AAPIs

In October 2009, President Obama reestablished the [White House Initiative on AAPIs](#) (Initiative) through [Executive Order 13515](#). The Initiative, housed in the Department of Education, works to improve the quality of life and opportunities for AAPIs by facilitating increased access to and participation in federal programs, where AAPIs remain underserved. Through its innovative approaches ranging from interagency collaboration to on-the-ground community outreach, the Initiative seeks to highlight both the tremendous unmet needs in the AAPI community as well as the dynamic community assets that can be leveraged to meet many of those needs. The Executive Order also established the [President’s Advisory Commission on AAPIs](#), which is also housed at the Department of Education and is comprised of community and business leaders representing the diverse AAPI community.

- ✓ Since 2009, the Initiative has held hundreds of roundtables, stakeholder meetings, and summits in the majority of states, the District of Columbia, and the Pacific Islands, connecting countless individuals to federal resources.
- ✓ The Initiative has worked with senior leaders through its Interagency Working Group to publicly release individual strategic plans for 24 federal agencies and offices to increase access to federal resources.

- ✓ In 2013, the Initiative established a Regional Network, composed of over 250 federal officials from regional offices nationwide working to connect local AAPI communities to available federal resources and services. In over three years, the Regional Network alone has convened nearly 100 community roundtables, technical assistance trainings, and issue-specific workshops in more than 35 cities across the country.
- ✓ In 2014, the Initiative created its E3! Ambassadors Program, enlisting young leaders to “educate, engage, and empower” their campuses and communities on key issues facing the AAPI community.
- ✓ The Initiative supported the launch of two professional development programs to ensure that the federal workforce truly reflects the diversity of this country: a Senior Executive Service development program for managers and a virtual experiential training-based program to develop skills for emerging federal employee leaders.
- ✓ In 2012, the Initiative convened more than 200 foundation, federal, and community leaders at a National Philanthropic Briefing, resulting in a \$1 million commitment to a planning grant for the AAPI community.

Welcoming and Creating Opportunities for Immigrants and Refugees

The United States is a nation of immigrants, built on the belief that anyone can make it if they try. From DREAMers to high skilled workers to those seeking to reunite with their family members, AAPIs are impacted by every layer of our immigration system.

- ✓ On June 15, 2012, the Administration announced the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy. DACA provides an opportunity for certain undocumented individuals who came to the United States as children to seek temporary relief from removal on a case-by-case basis. Approximately [1.3 million](#) Asian Americans are undocumented immigrants, comprising 12% of the total undocumented population and with the highest numbers coming from India, China, the Philippines, and Korea.
- ✓ In November 2014, the Administration also announced [new deferred action policies](#) for young people who came to our nation as children, as well as parents of U.S. citizens and lawful permanent residents who have lived here for years. We continue to defend these policies in court in order to be able to implement them.
- ✓ The Administration announced a [Filipino World War II Veterans Parole Program](#), which will allow certain family members of World War II veterans who are currently in the family immigration backlogs to seek parole on a case-by-case basis so they may care for their aging relatives in the United States.
- ✓ Recent improvements for high skilled workers, intracompany transfers, and students studying science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) benefit individuals from Asian countries of origin. For example, in FY 2014, [over 80%](#) of H-1B visa beneficiaries hailed from Asian countries, with India and China as the highest countries of origin. Spouses of these high skilled workers on their path to getting their green card are now able to work and contribute to their families and our economy. In addition, approximately [76% of students](#) on F and M visas hail from Asian countries with [42%](#) of these pursuing studies in STEM fields.
- ✓ On November 21, 2014, the President established the White House Task Force on New Americans—a government-wide effort tasked with better integrating immigrants and refugees into American communities. Through the Task Force, the Administration launched the [Building Welcoming Communities Campaign](#) to support municipalities seeking to build more inclusive, welcoming communities, and the [“Stand Stronger” Citizenship Awareness Campaign. The Stand Stronger Campaign works to enhance awareness around the rights, responsibilities, and benefits of citizenship.](#)

Expanding Health Care Access

Since passage of the Affordable Care Act six years ago, [20 million](#) uninsured adults have gained health insurance coverage, including some of the 2 million uninsured AAPIs. Among AAPIs under the age of 65, the uninsured rate has declined by more than [60 percent](#) since 2010, falling from 16.8 percent in 2010 to 6.2 percent in the first three quarters of 2015.

- ✓ The Department of Health and Human Services has led the implementation of the Affordable Care Act. To ensure that all AAPI families understand the law, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Office of Behavioral Health Equity hosted consumer-focused webinars and produced videos in Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese to support health insurance outreach, enrollment, and understanding of health insurance benefits. In addition, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) partnered with the Initiative to produce in-language google hang-outs and videos on the Affordable Care Act in Burmese, Chinese, Hmong, Khmer, Korean, Lao, and Vietnamese. CMS also translated its Coverage 2 Care roadmap into Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.
- ✓ In May 2015, the Department of Health and Human Services announced approximately \$101 million in Affordable Care Act funding to 164 new health center sites across the country. These new health centers are projected to increase access to comprehensive primary health care services for nearly 650,000 patients in communities that need them most. Approximately \$2 million was awarded to local AAPI health and community centers in four major metropolitan areas, ensuring AAPIs have access to quality health care resources and support.

Forging Educational Equity

Ensuring that every student in our country graduates from high school prepared for college and a successful career is central to rebuilding our economy and securing a brighter economic future for all Americans.

- ✓ In [FY 2013](#), federal agencies provided a total of \$664,096,068 to Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander-Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs). The top five agencies in total dollar amount providing funds to these institutions were the Departments of Education, Defense, Commerce, Energy, and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). Together, these agencies provided over \$600 million to AANAPISIs, or 91% of reported dollars.
- ✓ In January 2015, the Department of Education and the Department of Justice released joint guidance reminding states and school districts of their obligations under federal law to ensure that English learner students have equal access to a high-quality education and the opportunity to achieve their full academic potential. This is the first time that a single piece of guidance has addressed the array of federal laws that govern schools' obligations to English learners. The Department of Education also released two factsheets about schools' obligations under federal law to ensure that English learner students can participate meaningfully. The fact sheets were translated into Chinese, Cambodian, Hmong, Korean, Laotian, Tagalog, and Vietnamese, as well as other non-Asian languages.
- ✓ In May 2012, the Department of Education issued a Request for Information (RFI) on disaggregation practices to institutions nationwide. As a direct follow-up, the Department of Education and the Initiative hosted an *iCount: Equity Through Representation* Symposium in June 2013 as part of a larger effort to raise awareness about how the lack of data disaggregation masks significant educational needs of the AAPI community. The Department of Education and the Initiative hosted a second two-day convening in September 2015, with an emphasis on raising awareness, providing models of success, and discussing the future of the national effort to improve our understanding of AAPIs.

Protecting Civil Rights

Since 2009, the Initiative has strived to make sure that no matter who you are, no matter where you came from, no matter what you look like, America forever remains the place where you can make it if you try. Safeguarding fundamental civil and human rights has been a central part of the Administration's goals.

- ✓ The Department of Justice successfully recommended the addition of an “Anti-Sikh” category, an “Anti-Hindu” category, and an “Anti-Arab/Anti-Middle Eastern” category to the hate crime reporting in the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reporting Form.
- ✓ In November 2014, the Initiative, the Department of Education, the Department of Justice, and the Department of Health and Human Services launched the [AAPI Bullying Prevention Task Force](#). The purpose of the Task Force is to increase awareness of federal resources and remedies within the AAPI community, analyze data to better understand the prevalence of bullying among AAPI students, and explore and recommend effective policies to address the community’s concerns. The Task Force has also hosted more than 25 listening sessions with AAPI students, parents, and community members around the country.
- ✓ As part of the efforts of the Task Force, the Initiative launched a national public awareness campaign around bullying prevention, called “[Act To Change](#).” The campaign, with translated resources in key AAPI languages, is backed by a coalition of more than 50 supporting organizations and rallies AAPI influencers and community leaders in encouraging youth to take the pledge against bullying.
- ✓ In an effort to reaffirm the Department of Justice’s commitment to protecting civil rights and preventing and prosecuting hate crimes, the Department is working with local community leaders and law enforcement to address discrimination, violence, and harassment targeting people because of their appearance, their place of origin, or where they worship. U.S. Attorneys are holding a series of events around the country to address backlash against Muslim, Arab, Sikh, and South Asian Americans. The 14 events in 11 districts will build on both the Department’s prosecutorial work in countering post-September 11th backlash, as well as its outreach efforts, including the new interagency initiative to combat religious discrimination throughout the country. =

Helping Businesses Grow and Hire

The success of the [1.5 million AAPI-owned businesses](#) in the United States, which employ more than 2.8 million workers, is critical to our economy. AAPI-owned businesses contribute millions to the overall U.S. and global economics, and start/grow at a faster rate than the national average.

- ✓ President Obama has helped firms by cutting taxes for small businesses, including AAPI-owned businesses, and enhancing access to the loans they need to grow and hire—signing into law 17 small business tax cuts and taking action to expand access to credit. Between 2009 and 2011, over \$9 billion through more than 18,000 Small Business Administration loans went to AAPI small businesses.
- ✓ In FY 2015, the Small Business Administration made over 8,000 loans totaling approximately \$5 billion to AAPI small business owners across the country.
- ✓ For the third year in a row, the federal government has exceeded the 23 percent goal of contracting dollars awarded to small business. Over \$5 billion in federal contracts was awarded to AAPI firms in FY 2015.

Protecting Vulnerable Workers

Keeping workers safe and healthy will lead to better opportunities and a level playing field where all workers have a chance to realize their dreams.

- ✓ In 2014, the Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and the National Labor Relations Board launched a “Vulnerable Workers Project,” a federal interagency working group working in conjunction with the Initiative. The [Vulnerable Workers Project](#)’s goals are for federal agencies to: (i) gather information about the specific employment and labor issues that the AAPI workforce encounter in high-risk and low-wage industries; (ii) educate AAPI communities about their federal civil rights and labor protections; and (iii) operationalize the information obtained in the listening sessions into strategic enforcement and policy priorities of the federal agencies.
- ✓ The Environmental Protection Agency, the 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 created the first interagency working group to address the myriad health and safety issues affecting AAPI nail salon workers, 40 percent of whom make up the national nail salon workforce. The working group developed a plan to assess and improve regulations, programs, and outreach strategies to ensure nail salon worker health and safety.

Supporting Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Communities

The Administration has long supported efforts to build the capacity of NHPs through expanded resources and services.

- ✓ The health and strength of the Hawaiian Home Land Trust and Native Hawaiian beneficiaries are among the top priorities for the Department of the Interior. In May 2015, the Department took a critical step on behalf of Native Hawaiian communities to ensure that the Hawaiian Home Lands Trust is managed in a fair, transparent, and sustainable manner. The Department proposed rules that seek to clarify its process to review land exchanges involving Hawaiian home lands and amendments to the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act proposed by the State of Hawaii with the primary goal of protecting the interest of the Hawaiian home lands and Native Hawaiian beneficiaries.
- ✓ In October 2015, the Department of the Interior also proposed to create an administrative procedure for re-establishing a government-to-government relationship if the Native Hawaiian community decides to form a unified government.
- ✓ Following the Administration’s first-ever community tour and regional summit in Guam, 11 federal agencies convened the [Pacific Island Task Force](#) to (i) engage agency officials around the specific needs of NHPs in order to increase opportunity and access to federal programs, with a specific focus on supporting non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the region; (ii) ensure the inclusion of the Pacific region in grant programs, where possible; (iii) develop capacity building and technical assistance support for NGOs in the Pacific region to address specific needs; and (iv) promote data disaggregation with federal partners to include NHPs. The Initiative released an [accomplishments report](#) documenting the Task Force’s work in April 2016.

Advancing Data Collection, Analysis, and Dissemination

Promoting data disaggregation systems helps the federal government determine where to provide resources where they are most needed.

- ✓ The Department of Health and Human Services established new data collection standards in 2011 in accordance with the Affordable Care Act. These new standards now include seven categories for Asian Americans—Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Other Asians—and four categories for Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders—Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, and Other Pacific Islanders. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Census Bureau launched the Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) in 2013 to collect health information on NHPs throughout the country. For the first time, nationally representative data on the health status of the NHPI community are expected to become available in 2016.
- ✓ The Initiative, in collaboration with Data.gov, launched Data.gov/AAPI, the most comprehensive hub of government data on AAPIs.
- ✓ The Initiative also released a [best practices report](#) to promote innovative approaches and methodologies to further disaggregate race and ethnicity data within federal agencies. The Department of Housing and Urban Development reviewed and identified several areas for further disaggregation of AAPI data, including: the American Housing Survey (AHS), which is conducted biennially and included the collection of Asian subgroup data in 2015; Subsidized Households Form 50059 for subsidized multifamily housing, which will now mirror the recent expansion of data collection efforts at the Department of Health and Human Services; and the Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR), which will now break out “Asian” and “Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander” populations.
- ✓ The Department of Labor released two reports on the economic status of AAPIs in [2011](#) and [2014](#). Both reports feature detailed data on several AAPI subgroups and economic indicators such as labor force status and earnings. The Department of Labor’s Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) annually publishes the Labor Force Characteristics by Race and Ethnicity report, which recently added unemployment rates and related labor force estimates within the AAPI community in its August 2014 report. For the first time, in the August 2014 report, BLS included disaggregated data for Asian subgroups, including: Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese, among others. The BLS will continue to publish disaggregated data in future annual reports.

Expanding the Diversity of Our Nation’s Highest Courts

Creating a judicial pool that resembles the nation that it serves has been a top priority for the Administration.

- ✓ The men and women the President has nominated to enforce our laws and deliver justice represent his [unprecedented commitment](#) to expanding the diversity of our nation's highest courts.
- ✓ President Obama has appointed more AAPI judges than all Presidents in history combined. He has appointed more than four times as many women of AAPI descent to the Federal judiciary as all Presidents in history combined, including the first woman of AAPI descent to ever serve as a federal appellate judge.