



**President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans,
Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders**

Inaugural Meeting

February 3 – 4, 2022

Meeting Minutes

Action Items from Inaugural Meeting

- White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI) staff will send to the commissioners WHIAANHPI's 14 policy goals and the list of 38 agencies that have been invited to participate in the Interagency Working Group. Staff will follow up with commissioners about their interest seeing in IWG member agency progress reports.
- Commissioner Kerry Doi suggested looking into U.S. Economic Development Administration and Community Development Financial Institutions Fund opportunities for helping Asian American-owned small businesses hurt by the pandemic.
- Mr. Bharat Ramamurti suggested that the Commission encourage private companies to take steps to disaggregate data that the federal government depends on.
- The Commission asked John C. Yang to provide a source for the data he presented on the race and sex of perpetrators of anti-Asian hate crimes.
- Interested parties may reach out to the [Office of Climate Change and Health Equity](#) to receive notices through an email distribution list.
- Chief Commissioner Sonal Shah wanted to invite Dr. John Balbus to subcommittee meetings.
- The Commission would like to learn how to set up interactions with the RN to address urgent needs for community solutions to issues related to environmental justice.

- Ms. Lisa Pino will look into ways for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights to do more outreach and make it easier for people to share information about language access issues.
- WHIAANHPI staff members will share the slide presentations from the meeting with the commissioners.
- Krystal Ka'ai will look into how the Commission can engage with elected officials.
- Staff members will reach out to subcommittee chairs to schedule subcommittee meetings.
- Designated Federal Officer Emmeline Ochiai will convene a meeting of subcommittee chairs.

Day 1: February 3, 2022

Emmeline Ochiai, Senior Advisor, White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI)/President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (PACAANHPI), and Designated Federal Officer

Ms. Ochiai opened the meeting with a brief explanation of the Commission's commitments under the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). Information about the Commission is available online at the [WHIAANHPI website](#), and upcoming meetings will be announced in the *Federal Register*. As part of the Commission's commitment to public participation, comments from the public emailed to [AANHPI Commission](#) will be shared with all commissioners.

Welcome and Introduction

Krystal Ka'ai, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

Executive Director Ka'ai welcomed the commissioners to their swearing-in and underscored the importance of President Joe Biden's Executive Order 14031, "Advancing Equity, Justice, and Opportunity for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders," as a response to the alarming surge in anti-Asian hate and violence in past two years and to the long-standing health and economic disparities exacerbated by the pandemic. With the support and leadership of co-chairs U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Xavier Becerra and U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai, WHIAANHPI and the Commission have an opportunity to create change for the Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) community for generations to come.

Swearing-In Ceremony and Committee's Charge

Secretary Xavier Becerra, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Kamala D. Harris, Vice President, United States of America

Noting that AANHPI communities are the fastest-growing groups in the United States, Secretary Becerra commended their contributions to the country's economy, culture, and society and to the strength of the nation. But systemic barriers have put the American dream out of reach for many, and racism, xenophobia, and nativism continue to threaten the safety and dignity of AANHPI communities. President Biden signed the executive order housing PACAANHPI in HHS to address the challenges of rising hate and health inequities exacerbated by the pandemic; in December, he named its 25 commissioners, who will advise the President on ways to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for AANHPIs throughout the federal government. Secretary Becerra acknowledged that it is a privilege to serve alongside the other commissioners, who are

subject matter experts in their fields and visionary leaders from diverse communities, working to improve the lives of Americans and make the American dream a reality.

Secretary Becerra conducted roll call of the other 23 commissioners. He then introduced Vice President Harris for the swearing-in.

Vice President Harris thanked the commissioners for their lives of leadership. She acknowledged the considerable work that needs to be done to make sure that people from communities that historically have been overlooked or left out are engaged and involved and that government is relevant to their lives and the dreams they have for themselves, their families, and their communities. The Vice President invited the commissioners to give the Administration candid feedback and advice about how its policies, ideas, and other decisions are being received on the ground. Although the work will require a sacrifice of time, with the commissioners' efforts, the policies pursued by the administration will have a broad impact and improve the lives of many people.

Vice President Harris administered the oath to the commissioners.

Commission Co-Chairs' Remarks

Secretary Xavier Becerra, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Ambassador Katherine Tai, U.S. Trade Representative

Secretary Becerra congratulated the commissioners and urged them to get started on the important work of the Commission. He committed the HHS to advancing the WHIAANHPI's priorities in partnership with agencies across government and said it was time to counter the unconscionable lack of respect experienced by many in the country and to insist on the spirit of civility and advancement represented in the Declaration of Independence and the U.S. Constitution.

Ambassador Tai reflected on the pandemic's economic and social impacts, especially on the 1 in 4 AANHPI workers employed in the hospitality, leisure, retail, and other service industries and on small business owners targeted by xenophobia, harassment, vandalism, and threats. Such examples from the past two years explain the Biden administration's focus on equity, equality, and opportunity in its Build Back Better agenda. Those values are also why the Commission's work is so personally and professionally meaningful, she said, as both a second-generation American and a second-generation federal government public servant. Ambassador Tai expressed pride in representing the United States as an ambassador and serving on the President's Cabinet and her hope that the dream of achieving this position—a single generation after her family arrived in America—remains alive for future generations of Americans.

Ambassador Tai described the Commission's charge, which covers seven priority areas:

- The development, monitoring, and coordination of executive branch efforts to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for AA and NHPI communities in the United States, including efforts to close gaps in health, socioeconomic, employment, and educational outcomes
- Policies to address and end anti-Asian bias, xenophobia, racism, and nativism, and opportunities for the executive branch to advance inclusion, belonging, and public awareness of the diversity and accomplishments of AA and NHPI people, cultures, and histories
- Policies, programs, and initiatives to prevent, report, respond to, and track anti-Asian hate crimes and hate incidents
- Ways for the federal government to build on the capacity and contributions of AA and NHPI communities through equitable federal funding, grantmaking, and employment opportunities
- Policies and practices to improve research and equitable data disaggregation regarding AA and NHPI communities
- Policies and practices to improve language access services to ensure that AA and NHPI communities can access federal programs and services
- Strategies to increase public- and private-sector collaboration, and community involvement in improving the safety and socioeconomic, health, educational, occupational, and environmental well-being of AA and NHPI communities

Ambassador Tai acknowledged the work ahead and expressed confidence that that Commission will fill its mandate to build a brighter future for AANHPI communities.

All-of-Government Approach Toward Equity, Justice, and Opportunities for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

Ambassador Susan Rice, Director, Domestic Policy Council (DPC), The White House

In prerecorded remarks, Ambassador Rice underscored the administration's commitment to advancing equity, justice, and opportunity for AANHPI communities. As director of the DPC, she asserted her responsibility for driving the President's domestic policy agenda and ensuring that administration policies are carried out on behalf of the American people. She described the government's responsibility to meet the current moment and respond to the fear and discrimination experienced by so many AANHPI families. To this end, the administration is

directing efforts across government to lift up AANHPI communities, spearheaded by WHIAANHPI and carried out by an administration within which 15% of appointees identify as AANHPI. She underscored the administration's efforts in its first year, starting with the President's executive order advancing equity and racial justice across government on his first day in office, COVID-19 outreach in multiple languages, and efforts to provide resources to prevent and address anti-Asian harassment in schools. The American Rescue Plan (ARP) included \$36 billion in funds for colleges, including those primarily serving AANHPI students, and funds for AANHPI small businesses. The administration's efforts have reduced poverty in AANHPI communities, reduced or eliminated health insurance premiums for consumers, expanded federal contracting opportunities for small businesses, and increased access to high-speed internet in Native Hawaiian communities. President Biden signed the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act into law, and the administration has taken steps to build a fairer immigration system and to diversify the judiciary by selecting more than 1 in 5 nominees from the AANHPI community. Despite all that has been done in the administration's first year, there is much more to do. The administration will look to the Commission to help harness the public, private, and nonprofit sectors to further uplift communities and move toward a more just and equal America for everyone.

Historic Inflection Point

Erika L. Moritsugu, Deputy Assistant to the President and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Senior Liaison, The White House

Ms. Moritsugu reviewed the history of the Commission, which President Clinton established by [Executive Order 13125](#) in 1999, "in order to improve the quality of life of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders through increased participation in Federal programs where they may be underserved (e.g., health, human services, education, housing, labor, transportation, and economic and community development)." President Clinton's was the first executive order related to AANHPI since the 1942 incarceration of Japanese Americans. The Commission's 2001 report, which included an accounting of how each federal agency was and was not meeting the needs of the AANHPI community, laid the groundwork for future commissions. The issues it documented remain government priorities today. Commissions under subsequent administrations have supported the original recommendations while highlighting specific areas of focus. The lack of proper recognition for some communities has been rectified in part by the explicit inclusion of Native Hawaiians in President Biden's Executive Order 14031. Work is still needed on topics such as data disaggregation and language access.

The pandemic has highlighted inequities that members of the AANHPI community have faced for decades and shows how much work remains to be done. One in seven AA deaths in 2020 was attributable to COVID-19, and disaggregated data showed case rates in the NH and PI communities exceeding those for every other race and ethnicity. The pandemic has also

disproportionately burdened AANHPI communities, with AANHPI employees losing 39% of their jobs across sectors, on average, and experiencing the largest and sharpest rise in long-term unemployment of any racial group. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) reported a 73% increase in reports of anti-Asian hate crimes in 2021, and a U.S. Census survey released the same year found that Asian households were twice as likely as white households to report not having enough food during the pandemic; the reason was because they were afraid to leave their homes. In 2021, AANHPI women reported hate incidents at 2.2 times the rate as AANHPI men.

These statistics show why the Commission's work is so important. It embodies the vision of the Biden administration, which from the beginning has supported the AANHPI community through acts such as issuing a presidential memorandum combatting racism, xenophobia, and intolerance against AANHPIs; signing the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act and the Jabara-Heyer NO HATE (National Opposition to Hate, Assault, and Threats to Equality) Act; issuing executive orders to advance equity throughout the federal government; and executing on the ARP and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. This Commission will deliver on the administration's dedication to the AANHPI community.

Commission's Goals, Overview of the Inaugural Meeting, and Charge for Day 1

Sonal Shah, Chief Commissioner

Chief Commissioner Shah reviewed the Commission's seven priorities and asked commissioners to consider how they can build on previous efforts to make sure AANHPI communities get resources and timely access to information, given that previous Commissions have tackled the same issues. She said that over the two days of the meeting, the commissioners would hear from senior government officials, former commissioners, and subject matter experts on federal efforts to advance equity, justice, and opportunity for AA and NHPI communities; the WHIAANHPI Federal Agency Working Group; the WHIAANHPI Regional Network (RN); opportunities and lessons learned from the work of previous Commissions; and both immediate and systemic challenges faced by the community.

In addition to learning from these presentations, goals for the meeting include mapping out the Commission's work for the next 12 to 20 months, determining its approach to its priority areas, and looking to develop recommendations in subcommittees. Commissioners can also identify topics on which they would like additional information; staff can help schedule briefings for subcommittees or the Commission as a whole. Finally, Chief Commissioner Shah reviewed the Commission's charge for Day 1: to secure an understanding of the federal infrastructure and efforts to support AA and NHPI communities and to learn about the immediate challenges of the pandemic's health and economic impacts; xenophobia, racism, and anti-Asian hate; and climate change and equity.

Federal Interagency Working Group

Sonal Shah, Chief Commissioner

Krystal Ka'ai, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

Chief Commissioner Shah thanked the government staff supporting the work of the Commission and reintroduced Executive Director Ka'ai. The Commission's subcommittee meetings will be commissioners' opportunity to talk to others in government and elsewhere about how best to develop their recommendations. She urged the commissioners to think about who else they would like to hear from and what additional information they will need to inform their decisions while listening to the day's presentations.

Executive Director Ka'ai explained the elements of Executive Order 14031, which established both the WHIAANHPI and the PACAANHPI. As executive director, she oversees both the initiative and the Commission, which are separate but complementary and which have the same co-chairs. The initiative also works closely with the Deputy Assistant to the President and Ms. Moritsugu, AANHPI senior liaison. Both the Commission and the initiative were first created in 1999, and historically they have worked together closely to make sure that government resources are available and accessible. Executive Order 14031 reinvigorated and expanded these entities in new ways. For example, this is the first time that Native Hawaiians have explicitly been named in a presidential initiative and commission.

Two components of the initiative are the federal Interagency Working Group (IWG) and the RN. As outlined in the executive order, the IWG has 14 specific mandates and members from 34 agencies, including White House offices, regulatory agencies, and Cabinet agencies. Areas of immediate concern are addressing anti-Asian hate and xenophobia, data disaggregation, language access, capacity building, COVID-19 response and recovery, and federal workforce diversity.

Deliverables for the IWG are also defined in the order. Each IWG member agency must submit a plan defining its goals for advancing equity, justice, and opportunity for AANHPI individuals and report annually on its progress. Based on the information in these reports, the Initiative informs the White House on how government is addressing the policies outlined in the executive order. In addition, the IWG can give the Commission technical assistance—for example, by identifying existing government activities or where gaps exist—and will help implement the Commission's recommendations. The Initiative and the Commission have slightly different charges but are designed to work in tandem to carry out Executive Order 14031. Information about the initiative is available at the [WHIAANHPI website](#), and staff can be contacted at the [WHIAANHPI](#) email address.

Questions and Answers

In response to a question from Commissioner Robert A. Underwood about the IWG's makeup, Executive Director Ka'ai explained that the President has the authority to expand the IWG's membership and has already invited 4 more agencies to join the 34 agencies listed in the executive order. Membership is limited to federal agencies, so external stakeholders are not eligible to join; however, nonprofit organizations and the general public can engage with the IWG. WHIAANHPI staff direct queries to the relevant member agency. Mr. Underwood noted that there are situations in Guam (similar to Red Hill in Hawai'i) where it would be valuable to invite comment from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Defense (DoD). Executive Director Ka'ai confirmed that both agencies are members of the IWG.

Commissioner Luisa Blue asked whether commissioners have access to the agencies' progress reports and whether subcommittees can meet with the IWG to foster a closer working relationship. Executive Director Ka'ai said these reports are available to commissioners and that, in addition to presentations from IWG members at this inaugural meeting, staff can arrange briefings to subcommittees or future meetings of the whole Commission.

Commissioner Kerry Doi asked Executive Director Ka'ai to comment on the feasibility of achieving the Commission's goals, given its extensive agenda. The executive director replied that WHIAANHPI and PACAANHPI are authorized for the duration of the Biden administration; given the focus on equity, the Commission has an opportunity to make meaningful progress within that window to ensure that communities that have not had a voice in government are truly included. Just as government still uses solutions devised by the first Commission, in the next few years, the Commission can generate an impact that lasts for decades to come.

Commissioner Victoria Huynh asked how the Commission can engage with members of the Latinx community and the African diaspora to discover where their efforts intersect. Executive Director Ka'ai explained that WHIAANHPI staff have been in touch with the leaders of sister initiatives focused on Black, Native American, and Latinx communities. Many communities of color have faced long-standing inequities exacerbated by the pandemic, and it is clear there is significant interest in working together.

Commissioner Ai-jen Poo asked what it would mean for the IWG and the Commission to forge an ideal partnership and how that would look. Executive Director Ka'ai said it would mean not having to revisit the same conversations two decades from now. Issues like anti-Asian hate are not new, but they have been spotlighted nationally in a new way, increasing the visibility of the problem and the desire for change. Just as the Clinton administration created language access standards that are followed today (see [Executive Order 13166](#)), this Commission can think creatively about tackling anti-Asian hate and create recommendations that have long-standing impact.

Commissioner Ajay Bhutoria asked how commissioners can best leverage the IWG to get to the right people in government for information on specific topics. Executive Director Ka'ai explained that the IWG is available to brief the Commission on what government is doing already. In addition, the IWG is tasked with implementing Commission recommendations, so there is a mutual interest in ensuring their interactions are robust.

Regional Network

Sonal Shah, Chief Commissioner

Paul Chang, Regional Network Co-Chair, U.S. Department of Labor

Ben Raju, Regional Network Co-Chair, Small Business Administration (SBA)

Mr. Chang and Mr. Raju, representing the Regional Network's (RN) 400 officials in 10 regional offices, gave an overview of the RN's activities. As outlined in the executive order, the [RN](#), first established in 2013, is tasked with building relationships between government and AANHPI communities in the United States and its protected territories. The RN helps implement Initiative and Commission recommendations, solicit community feedback and share best practices and challenges, assess the capacity of community organizations, and provide recommendations and guidance in annual reports to the President. The response from the community has been overwhelmingly positive, especially where communities are engaging with federal officials for the first time. Each region has a career federal employee who is the regional lead; these leads meet monthly, which facilitates rapid problem solving. The RN is a model of effective community outreach for the federal government. Mr. Chang and Mr. Raju shared images from previous engagement activities, including listening sessions, grant writing workshops, youth forums, and cultural awareness training for first responders and noted that commissioners have been integral as partners in the field.

Questions and Answers

Commissioner Kamal Kalsi asked about creating an incubator as a pipeline for developing activities like those of the RN and other ideas from the Commission. Mr. Raju said that nothing is off the table regarding future engagement. The RN has built extensive infrastructure through its relationships with community partners, leading to a consistent level of service for the community across administrations. Now, for the first time, the RN is explicitly mentioned in the executive order and is supported by the resources of HHS, giving the network the opportunity to continue engaging communities into the future.

Commissioner Smita Shah reflected on the value of implementation that generates lasting effect, such as the first responders summit the presenters described. She asked how the Commission can best engage and communicate regarding its recommendations in an inclusive way across a diverse constituency. Mr. Chang described the first responders summit as something that arose

organically in the wake of rising anti-Asian hate in 2000. Many people in the community were interested in educating first responders and government officials on the relevant issues, which raised concerns not only in the Chinese community but also among Sikh and Muslim groups and others. RN staff reached out to the FBI and other partners. As the effort grew, federal, state, and local agencies sought out the training. The RN's power to convene groups allows for broad, quick action. Mr. Raju added that the Commission's leadership is a key element of the process. The impact of the RN, which is staffed by federal employees, is greater when the Commission identifies gaps or connects it with communities that have not been reached before.

Commissioner Huynh praised the Region 4 re-engagement work going on under WHIAANHPI. Noting that a directory used in that region was a sought-after tool that promoted connection between individuals, she asked generally about the RN's goals for re-engagement with the community and specifically how tools like the directory could be used. Mr. Raju said that ensuring local communities have access to information, government employees, and resources has been a consistent priority for the RN. Interest in the RN's work is now at an all-time high; with the engagement of the Commission, the RN can make a sustainable impact. Chief Commissioner Shah emphasized the RN's importance to the Commission's work of connecting local communities to the federal government.

Commissioner KaYing Yang noted that despite the volume of federal funding distributed to address COVID-19's impact on business, funding was not distributed equitably at the local level. Community businesses had problems accessing federal funding. The information was difficult to understand or came so quickly that it was difficult for small businesses to take advantage, even when it was translated into major languages. Local nonprofit organizations had to work with local government to facilitate the exchange of information. Building strategies to improve communication and access will be key to ensuring that local networks are not burdened like this in the future. Mr. Raju confirmed that language access is a priority for the Initiative going forward.

Panel: Former Commissioners—Lessons Learned and Opportunities

Sonal Shah, Chief Commissioner

Daphne Kwok, Former Commissioner, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Obama Commission)

Tung Nguyen, Former Commissioner, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Obama Commission)

Chiling Tong, Former Commissioner, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Trump Commission and George W. Bush Commission)

Tessie Guillermo, Former Commissioner, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and

Pacific Islanders (Clinton Commission)

Chief Commissioner Shah introduced four former commissioners and invited them to share their insights and advice. She first asked each to share their thoughts on how the Commission can be most effective. Ms. Guillermo noted that times have changed since the Commission was first established; likewise, the way to be most effective changes. Efforts at the local level have considerable impact. Since ongoing solutions are driven by constituents, building the power base from the ground up provides the strongest foundation. Ms. Kwok agreed that local engagement is key; in addition to working at the national level, it is important for commissioners to connect with communities and with career staff at the regional and local levels to understand concerns and carry out the Commission's work. The Commission acts as the administration's eyes and ears and serves as a conduit in both directions. Being a commissioner is an opportunity to engage and empower the community so they can be part of the process. Dr. Nguyen had four pieces of advice:

- Problems cannot be addressed without collaboration, and commissioners are mediators connecting the community, the White House, and federal agencies.
- Commissioners should choose their key issues of focus but also consider where else—including on structural issues—they can have influence.
- It is important to work closely with staff; meetings with commissioners and staff is where a lot of work gets done. Because they are the ones who carry influence with department/agency leaders, commissioners need to be there for staff.
- Commissioners should work closely with RN leaders where they live. The RN is a brilliant innovation and allows commissioners who are not in Washington, D.C., to engage with government and feel the impact of the work.

Ms. Tong emphasized the credibility the Commission has established and underscored the importance of strong support and resources from the White House and HHS to the Commission's effectiveness. She also noted how important it is for commissioners to maintain strong lines of communication with agencies across government. The Commission plays an important role in engaging the community, including by listening to local voices across sectors and AANHPI subgroups. Research, data, and survey results from the community will also be important tools for commissioners. It is not too early to start developing the Commission's report to the President. Finally, she urged the President and the Commission to continue advancing AANHPI leaders and to set an example for the private sector to do the same. The Commission's work would also benefit from reaching out to young leaders and taking advantage of social media.

Noting that anti-Asian hate has been a long-standing concern, Chief Commissioner Shah asked what the commission should do to respond to increases in hate activity since 2020. Ms. Kwok responded that PACAANHPI has a strong mandate to address this issue and should use its “bully pulpit” to raise awareness about the issue’s persistence. Pushing for mandated collection of data about hate crimes is especially important. March 16 will be the first anniversary of the Atlanta spa attack, and June 19 will mark 40 years since the killing of Vincent Chin, a seminal event in Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history. These unfortunate anniversaries are valuable opportunities to inform and educate the public. The Commission also would be wise to think carefully about the concept of belonging and what can be done as a nation to ensure everyone feels they truly belong. States like Illinois, Connecticut, New Jersey, and California that have mandated AA studies lessons in the K–12 curriculum are providing an example to follow, and this is an area where PACAANHPI can work with other communities of color and the LGBTQ+ community.

Chief Commissioner Shah asked about priorities for making progress on data disaggregation. In response, Dr. Nguyen said racism comes in many forms, including both individual acts and structural issues, and responses to racism must address both aspects. He characterized expressions of racism with the structural equivalents of individual behaviors:

- If individuals hear, “You all look alike,” the structural equivalent is, “We don’t have any disaggregated data for you.”
- For “learn to speak English,” the structural equivalent is, “We don’t give you language access if you don’t speak English.”
- For “you are all not good enough,” the structural equivalent is, “We don’t have workforce diversity,” particularly at the leadership level.

Commissioners have the opportunity to look at the issues from all angles, fixing both individual and foundational issues. Although anti-Asian racism is the topmost concern, commissioners can take on workforce diversity, disaggregated data, and language in that context. To address these issues, advocates must be loud, clear, and repetitive. They must hold department heads and other senior officials accountable in small meetings and ask difficult questions in public meetings. Long-standing problems will not be resolved without pressure. One example during Dr. Nguyen’s tenure was working with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), as both a commissioner and an NIH-funded researcher, to revisit NIH’s decision to remove Asian Americans from consideration for certain diversity efforts because they were considered overrepresented in research. But disaggregated data showed that not all Asian groups were overrepresented. NIH reconsidered and addressed that concern. Commissioners can use their titles to wield influence in ways they might not be able to in their other roles. Finally, working

creatively with technological partners on issues of data disaggregation and language access may generate ways to work around cost barriers.

The Chief Commissioner asked Ms. Guillermo to comment on the persistence of barriers the Commission faced in the 1990s. Ms. Guillermo said that the issues the Clinton-era Commission identified were generated over decades, rooted in a lack of social power and racism; they were not issues that could be solved in a single administration. In many ways, now those issues are more complex. At the time, the process was important: For the first time, the Commission brought attention to injustices and concerns that the communities themselves prioritized and got these issues formally recognized at the federal level. The context of the pandemic has exacerbated health disparities and heightened the visibility of anti-Asian incidents. Internally, within the AANHPI community, there are more barriers than in 2001, given greater ethnic diversity, generational differences, divides due to technology, geographical divides, fragmentation within communities, and pressure for faster results. There is less need now to spend time building consensus about the priority issues. Instead, the focus should be on finding a balance between process and swift action. The Commission can take advantage of its visibility and the time it has available to press its priorities. It can leverage the community's economic power as consumers and business and civic leaders. The first Commission did not understand the role the private sector could play in moving policy attention and dollars. There are also opportunities to take advantage of popular culture, including the rising popularity of Asian food, movies, and media. In addition, young community leaders should have a seat at the table. This Commission should take advantage of the rising generation's knowledge of social media and digital technologies, which represent new opportunities. There are opportunities for progress that did not exist 20 years ago.

In response to Chief Commissioner Shah's question about what the Commission should do to address economic equity, Ms. Tong noted the significant impact of COVID-19 and anti-Asian hate on the AANHPI small business community. In collaboration with U.S. Black Chambers, Inc., and the United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Asian/Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce and Entrepreneurship conducted two surveys on how COVID-19 had affected minority-owned small businesses. The results showed that one in three female AA and NHPI business owners had experienced direct bias and discrimination; 84% of businesses owners said COVID-19 had had a negative impact on their business; and 36% of incidents had happened at a place of business, with a disproportionate percentage aimed at women. NBC has also reported that anti-Asian hate crimes increased 339% in 2021. To combat anti-Asian hate, anti-bias training programs should be integrated into training programs in both private and government (federal) workplaces. In the surveys, 61% of business owners reported that they did not have access to federal relief programs because of language barriers. Many did not think they qualified for federal programs, found the application process too complicated, or were not aware that aid was available to them. For the AANHPI business community, challenges of access to capital, contracting opportunities, and technology remain. The community is also

facing supply-chain issues. The reach of the Commission and other business organizations is essential to informing the community about sources of relief and other government resources.

Questions and Answers

Commissioner Kevin Kim thanked Dr. Nguyen for his outstanding framing of what structural racism looks like to the AANHPI community.

Noting the Commission’s extensive mandate, the urgency of its priorities, and divisions within the United States, Commissioner Teresita Batayola asked which issues each panelist would prioritize. Ms. Kwok highlighted the double pandemic of COVID-19 and anti-Asian hate, especially in terms of the impact on the mental health of older members of the community. Addressing misinformation and disinformation among Asian Americans was Dr. Nguyen’s recommendation, reaching people who do or do not speak English. It is important to educate the community, especially recent immigrants, about the history of racism in America and why the myth of Asians as the “model minority” is so toxic to both Asian Americans and other people of color. Ms. Tong agreed that in addition to access to capital and opportunities, education tops the list of priorities and plays a key role in combatting anti-Asian hate and promoting inclusion. Education about the significant contributions Asian Americans make to this country should extend beyond Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. Ms. Guillermo prioritized channeling the energy and ability of this generation of activists and advocates to advance the Commission’s recommendations. She noted that young people may not know the history of the AANHPI community; they also define what it means to be AANHPI differently than previous generations do. Finding ways to connect with the community’s young leaders and how they define issues and solutions will be important.

Commissioner Grace Huang asked the commissioners to comment on solutions for repairing the immigration system, given that immigration intersects with all of the issues raised so far, and asked which aspect the Commission should tackle first. Dr. Nguyen said that the most important thing is to first identify the barrier and then work through the solutions. He recalled thinking it would be possible to solve many problems as a commissioner, but some are intractable even working with government agency heads. Government can solve some problems, but others require going back to the community.

Commissioner Kalsi asked about the judicious use of the weight that the White House Commissioner title carries, including what the right way to balance the need to move forward with the burden on staff of coordinating requests is. Dr. Nguyen said that, as a commissioner, it was difficult to know with whom to arrange meetings. When commissioners can identify their priority topic, staff are very helpful in identifying the right partners in government. Then the commissioner lends their name to the request, which in essence is coming from the White House.

Priorities: Immediate Challenges Affecting Communities

Chief Commissioner Shah announced that sessions for the remainder of the day would focus on key priorities and the health and economic impacts of the pandemic. She noted that the effects of the pandemic are well known to AANHPI communities, but the public is not well informed.

Chief Commissioner Shah moderated the next section. She introduced B. Cameron Webb, who works at the University of Virginia School of Medicine and has been at the forefront of the university's work on COVID-19.

Health and Economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic

B. Cameron Webb, Senior Policy Advisor for Equity, White House COVID-19 Response Team

Bharat Ramamurti, Deputy Director, National Economic Council, The White House

COVID-19 Equity: Understanding and Addressing Pandemic Dynamics in AANHPI Communities

Dr. Webb noted that the pandemic has had an outsized impact on AANHPI populations, affecting many domains and dimensions of their lives and widening gaps in health equity.

A glance at the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's \(CDC\) age-adjusted COVID-19 data](#) would lead people to believe that Asian Americans as a whole are weathering the pandemic quite well: Rates of cases, deaths, and hospitalizations in Asian Americans are 70% to 80% of the rates in whites. [Kaiser Family Foundation data](#) show that 83% of Asian Americans had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine as of February 2022, whereas other groups are in the range of 60%. The picture for children is similar, with Asian American children having much higher rates of vaccination than children in other demographic groups. The aggregated data would seem to suggest that groups other than Asian Americans merit more attention when it comes to encouraging vaccination.

However, Dr. Webb said that aggregate data reinforce stereotypical thinking and do not tell the full story of the pandemic. Many ethnicities—East Asians, Southeast Asians, South Asians, and Pacific Islanders—are included in the AA demographic. Asian Americans also speak many different languages and have a broad range of experiences. In short, Asian Americans are not a monolithic population.

For example, Dr. Webb noted that in the first couple of weeks in December 2021, weekly case rates among Asian Americans were lower than in other populations, but since January 2022, rates among Asian Americans have been higher than those for whites, American Indians/Alaska Natives, and Blacks. Also, since early January, rates of emergency department visits have been highest for Asian Americans. Hospitalization rates for Asian Americans were second only to

those for Blacks. In the same time frame, death rates due to COVID-19 have been lowest among Asian American and Hispanic people.

Research data also contribute to a more accurate picture of COVID-19's impact on AA communities. [One study](#) revealed that testing rates are lower and case fatality rates higher among Asian Americans, even though they make up only a small proportion of COVID-19 deaths in the United States. Asian Americans' all-cause mortality rate is three times higher than that of non-Hispanic whites.

[Another paper](#) showed that disaggregating data reveals different experiences among different groups. Of nearly 10,000 Asian patients, 48% were South Asian, 22% were Chinese, and 30% belonged to other Asian ethnic groups. South Asians had the highest rates of COVID-19 positivity (31%) and hospitalization (52%) among Asian patients, second only to Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black communities. Chinese patients had a mortality rate of 36%, the highest of all racial and ethnic groups. After demographic characteristics and comorbidities were taken into account, only Chinese patients had a higher risk of mortality than non-Hispanic white patients.

Dr. Webb pointed out that without data, there is no equity. Health data on Asian Americans were deficient even before the pandemic. Less than 0.2% of clinical research funded by NIH focused on AANHPI participants between 1992 and 2018; this gap has only grown during the pandemic. The scarcity of COVID-19 data in Asian Americans and specific Asian ethnic groups has allowed the misconception that Asian Americans represent a small proportion of deaths and cases to continue. In reality, Asian Americans have higher case fatality rates than other racial/ethnic groups and had the second highest increase (37%) in excess mortality in 2020.

Some data collection is more careful. For example, between March 2020 and January 2022, [Hawai'i's Department of Health reported 109,000 COVID-19 cases](#). The state's data are disaggregated along racial/ethnic lines, allowing for comparisons of Native Hawaiian, Filipino, Japanese, Chinese, and other populations. The state's data provide a more robust, complete story of the pandemic's effects on different groups. Of the 1,128 deaths among patients with COVID-19 in the state in 2021, most deaths have occurred among Filipinos in Hawaii, although they represent only 16% of cases. In comparison, the death rate in the white population was 10%, although they represent around 25% of cases. By disaggregating the data, it is possible to figure out who is affected by which outcomes.

Dr. Webb presented data on health equity on a more local basis. Between November 28, 2021, and January 14, 2022, 99% of 136 U.S. counties with large Asian populations had a high recent burden of COVID-19 cases. Similarly, among 173 counties with large populations of Pacific Islanders specifically, 96% had a high recent case burden.

What steps are needed to obtain more granular data to get a more accurate idea of COVID-19 impacts on AA communities? President Biden underscored the importance of considering equity in terms of the effects of COVID-19 and interventions to fight the pandemic. An executive order established the COVID-19 Health Equity Task Force, which is charged with making recommendations on optimizing COVID-19 resource allocation and remedying longer-term data shortfalls.

The task force was bolstered by an additional [executive memorandum](#) condemning and combating racism, xenophobia, and intolerance against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the United States. Section 2 specifically addresses the HHS response, which focuses on best practices for “advancing cultural competency, language access, and sensitivity toward Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders” in the context of the federal government’s COVID-19 response.

Dr. Webb explained the task force’s priorities, including the need to develop interventions that reflect cultural and linguistic differences among Asians/Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and other populations facing pandemic-fueled xenophobia and discrimination.

Dr. Webb presented the task force’s interim recommendations:

- Set up collaborations with other federal agencies and stakeholders to collect and disaggregate COVID-19 data from AANHPI communities.
- Improve collection of data on AANHPI communities, including disaggregated data where feasible, to ensure a more accurate understanding of behavior health in communities.
- Strengthen anti-discrimination protections for AANHPI communities and support investigation and prosecution of hate crimes.
- Promote inclusion of histories, cultures, and experiences of diverse AANHPI communities in elementary and secondary school curricula and develop ethnic studies programs in tertiary education levels.
- Lead a multipronged public education campaign to educate and raise public consciousness about anti-Asian hate and ensure transparent, accurate communications to AANHPI communities to support access to vaccines and other related supports and services.

Dr. Webb concluded his remarks by highlighting a New York law that is changing how AA populations are counted. The pandemic has shown the country how important it is to better appreciate and support AANHPI populations.

Economic Impact and Effects of the Subsequent Recession on AANHPI Communities

Mr. Ramamurti provided an overview of the pandemic's economic impact on the labor market, small businesses, and poverty over the past 18 months.

Mr. Ramamurti noted that data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Current Employment Statistics program suggest that AA employment levels overall have recovered since the pandemic began. However, the percentage of Asian Americans who have been unemployed for more than six months is higher than that of any other group. Specific harms come from being unemployed for a long time. The economic consequences of short-term unemployment are not as significant in terms of future and lifetime earnings.

Also, Asian Americans have experienced the largest increases in workers employed part-time despite a preference for full-time work. But because of hours reductions or an inability to find full-time work, they have been relegated to part-time work, facing lower pay and more uncertain work schedules.

Mr. Ramamurti explained the pandemic's impact on small business, an area where the AANHPI population is highly involved. He noted that AA small businesses are [more likely to operate in the sectors hardest hit by the pandemic](#), including food and accommodation services, retail, healthcare and social assistance, wholesale trade, and educational services. In addition, he said, small businesses owned by Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are showing fewer signs of recovery.

The pandemic has been particularly harmful for AA small business owners. Anti-Asian hate and discrimination have exacerbated the challenges this group faces. Eight out of 10 Asian small business owners report more incidents of violence, and a third fear threats and physical attacks. New York City's Chinatown suffered an 82% drop in consumer spending, compared with a 65% drop across the rest of the city, likely due to anti-Asian bias and concerns about COVID-19.

Mr. Ramamurti said that with the help of the child tax credit and COVID-19 relief, 212,000 AA children were moved out of poverty—a 29% reduction. Together, these two programs moved more than 5 million children of all races and ethnicities out of poverty.

Mr. Ramamurti presented four recommendations based on the data:

- Continue to focus on helping the long-term unemployed find good jobs, which will particularly benefit unemployed Asian Americans.
- Build on the Biden administration's work on helping small business. The SBA and the Department of the Treasury are rolling out programs to assist small businesses, but many owners do not understand how to access the relief available to them. More sophisticated

business owners know how to apply, but owners of nail salons or corner stores may not have that kind of access. The [Community Navigator Pilot Program](#), an ARP initiative aimed at reducing barriers that underrepresented and underserved entrepreneurs often face in accessing the programs they need to recover, grow, or start their businesses, will help AANHPI communities access ARP relief.

- On the poverty front, Mr. Ramamurti recommended extending the child tax credit to continue progress in reducing child poverty, including among AANHPI communities. The credit has expired, but the Biden administration intends to continue it.
- Disaggregate data to better capture the experience of AANHPI communities.

Questions and Answers

Dr. Webb was not available for the discussion session.

Chief Commissioner Shah spoke about a potential role for the Commission in disseminating information about federal programs and opportunities to small businesses. She asked what assistance is available to help business owners apply for programs they may be eligible for, other than the Community Navigator Pilot Program.

Mr. Ramamurti commented on the need for language translation services to help business owners take advantage of programs. AA communities use dozens of languages. The Community Navigator Pilot Program aims to find people who are well known in their communities and know how to reach individuals. The federal government does not have contacts and resources in communities in certain areas. Communities need people they can trust to help them apply for programs, because people are making representations under penalty of perjury and are subject to audit. For many people, signing documents that include such language is frightening. Community organizations are better suited to this role than the federal government is. The challenge is complex, but the National Economic Council is taking it on.

Mr. Ramamurti clarified that the community navigators are linked to the SBA. The SBA is active within communities, but the navigators (who are funded through the ARP) provide another way to reach out to communities.

Commissioner Bhutoria asked about activities aimed at demystifying the process of applying for grants and federal contracts. Displaced small business owners are often unaware of such opportunities. He suggested using AA media to reach communities. Mr. Ramamurti said that the President issued an executive order to level the playing field for small businesses. Each agency has a goal in terms of contracting dollars dedicated for small businesses. By increasing the minimum small business set-aside, it is possible to expand contract opportunities.

Commissioner Raynald Samoa noted that the data on Asian Americans that Dr. Webb presented were aggregated. However, COVID-19 infections among Pacific Islanders continue to drive the pandemic. Many Pacific Islander business owners do not identify as Asians. He asked how the Commission can support efforts to collect data specific to Pacific Islanders.

Mr. Ramamurti acknowledged the need for disaggregated data and mentioned efforts to encourage faster progress in those areas. He noted that the government can control some data sources, but private-sector data are also important. The Commission could take a role in encouraging private companies to disaggregate their data, which the federal government depends on.

Commissioner Huynh commented on uneven access and differences in business owners' ability to connect with SBA grants and resources. The Community Navigator Pilot Program is exciting, but federal grants' compliance requirements are so daunting that they deter local nonprofits and trusted leaders from accessing those opportunities. One possible solution might be more funding through other agencies to reduce discriminatory practices. Funding available for nonprofits and local leaders is not sufficient to support activities related to direct consultation and language access.

Mr. Ramamurti said that 2020 data show that federal funds have been going primarily to larger and better-connected small businesses; very few resources have gone to smaller businesses in ethnic neighborhoods. Congress wrote the rules for the Paycheck Protection Program, and the National Economic Council is taking steps to better target the money. In one example, for a time, an exclusivity period favored companies with fewer than 20 employees. In 2021, under President Biden, the distribution of relief was targeted to lower-income minority communities. The government should keep in mind is that many relief programs are "first come, first serve," but such an approach for relief programs helps better-connected companies. Later programs were tailored by setting aside funds for companies located in minority communities or for companies with fewer than 10 employees.

An attendee asked about activities to address misinformation spreading through AANHPI communication streams, particularly around public health.

Xenophobia, Racism, and Hate

Erika L. Moritsugu, Deputy Assistant to the President and Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Senior Liaison

Chiraag Bains, Deputy Assistant to the President for Racial Justice and Equity and Deputy

Director, Domestic Policy Council, The White House

Rachel Rossi, Deputy Associate Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ)

Shilpa Phadke, Deputy Director, Gender Policy Council, The White House

John C. Yang, President and Executive Director, Asian Americans Advancing Justice

Manjusha Kulkarni, Co-Founder, STOP AAPI Hate (SAH)

Ms. Moritsugu moderated the session. She introduced Deputy Associate Attorney General Rachel Rossi, who was appointed as the hate crime coordinator for DOJ. Ms. Rossi extended greetings on behalf of Associate Attorney General Vanita Gupta, who was unable to attend the meeting.

DOJ Actions to Combat Hate Crimes

Ms. Rossi said that the FBI's 2020 statistics confirm what AANHPI communities experienced: the highest levels of anti-Asian hate crime in more than a decade. The data document a sharp rise in attacks on people of Asian backgrounds, but the statistics do not fully reflect the scope of hate experienced by Asians in this country.

According to Ms. Rossi, Attorney General Merrick Garland is committed to deploying every tool at DOJ's disposal to combat anti-Asian hate crimes across the country. In May 2021, President Biden signed the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act into law. In response, Attorney General Garland issued a memorandum outlining a series of actions to combat hate and hate crimes. Ms. Rossi highlighted some key actions:

- **Restore the role and priority of DOJ's community relations service (CRS).** The CRS works with communities experiencing conflict to help rebuild relationships, facilitate mutual understanding, and encourage the development of local solutions. CRS staff work with state and local officials, community-based organizations, community and civil rights advocates, faith-based groups, and law enforcement. The CRS supports communities working to prevent and respond to COVID-19–related bias incidents and hate crimes.
- **Increase resources and coordination to combat hate crimes and incidents.** Ms. Rossi was charged with creating an online toolkit that provides civil rights coordinators with community outreach materials, information on DOJ's grant opportunities and technical assistance programs, and other materials to improve local reporting of possible hate crimes and incidents.
- **Improve data collection and reporting.** Ms. Rossi noted that a lack of accurate data hinders efforts to prevent, track, and counter hate incidents. In 2020, for the third year, the number of police departments reporting hate crimes to the FBI has fallen, with many

jurisdictions not reporting at all or reporting zero incidents even in areas with AA populations exceeding 100,000 people. This lack of data makes it difficult to combat hate crimes. People may come to believe that reporting hate crimes is not useful, leaving communities feeling unheard.

- **Pass new laws and fund new grants.** Ms. Rossi touched on new crime reduction programs and grants to improve reporting systems and transparency. In addition, new grant funding is available to support state and local partners' efforts to investigate and prosecute hate crimes and to aid victims of such crimes. The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act confers authorities to federal entities to support state and local partners.
- **Raise awareness of hate crimes.** DOJ has enlisted 10 speakers from prominent anti-hate groups to call attention to hate crimes and is conducting additional outreach and engagement.

Ms. Rossi reiterated DOJ's commitment to fighting increases in hate directed against AANHPI communities.

Federal Efforts to Empower and Uplift AANHPI Communities

Mr. Bains remarked on the excitement of this inaugural meeting, which is bringing to life the vision for the Commission and the reinvigorated WHIAANHPI to leverage the federal government's power to combat hate crimes and xenophobia directed toward AANHPI communities. Ms. Rossi cited a 70% increase in hate crimes, but some data suggest that the numbers are even higher. In addition, the statistics do not show the full effects on AANHPI communities. People have lost family members, and some are afraid to go to school or take public transport.

Many AA communities say that their demands have gone unheard, but Mr. Bains said that this administration is hearing them and taking action. He cited examples of increased resources available to combat hate crimes. The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) conducts investigations to identify trends and predict where communities may be affected by these crimes. Communities are being connected with violence prevention efforts that are deploying volunteers and training local leaders to ensure they know about resources available to residents. Other efforts are setting up community patrols and helping people understand their rights.

Mr. Bains reported that some threats have been directed at children. Schools are supposed to foster curiosity and growth, but AANHPI children have been bullied, threatened, and harmed. The Department of Education is training school administrators and educators on their duties to act when things happen. Families can share information online in 11 different languages. Other federal government efforts aim to dismantle barriers to accessing available resources.

Mr. Bains discussed empowering AANHPI communities to combat everyday racism and discrimination. Boycotts of AA-owned businesses have compounded financial challenges. The Biden administration has earmarked funds to help business owners, and the ARP has increased nutrition, subsistence, and housing benefits to support AANHPI communities hurt by job losses.

Supporting communities requires more than just responding to incidents of violence. Mr. Bains underscored the importance of disaggregating data to better understand impacts on particular populations and in certain areas. The National Science Foundation is providing grants for innovative studies aimed at finding new and better ways to deliver safety and justice to communities. Mr. Bains also pointed out the need to create opportunities and expand language access.

Mr. Bains welcomed suggestions and recommendations from the Commission to empower and uplift AANHPI communities.

Gender-Based Disparities at the Intersection of Race and Gender

Ms. Phadke said that AANHPI women are too often the targets of hate crimes and violence based on gender and immigration status. Much of the conversation really is about power. Ms. Phadke discussed the work of the [White House Gender Policy Council](#), which serves as a resource and a partner.

There are now nearly 13 million AANHPI women, a figure that is growing. These women face challenges with health care, occupational segregation, and wage gaps. More than 1.4 million AANHPI women work in jobs paying less than \$15 per hour. Again, looking at disaggregated data sharpens the focus on disparities: Indian women in the United States working full time have median annual earnings of \$70,000, but their Vietnamese peers earn just \$36,500 yearly. More than 15% of nonelderly AANHPI women receive Medicaid, and well over half of Bhutanese and Burmese women in the United States rely on Medicaid.

STOP AAPI Hate collected more than 10,370 reports of hate incidents between March 2020 and September 30, 2021. AANHPI women and girls report hate incidents twice as often as their male counterparts; AANHPI nonbinary people have also reported experiencing more hate incidents.

Ms. Phadke explained that the Gender Policy Council was created by executive order after a robust consultation process with 250 leaders and 270 young women and youth leaders. The effort involved every White House component and nearly all executive agencies. The first-ever U.S. strategy on gender demonstrates U.S. leadership on gender equity, becoming one of only a handful of nations to have a national strategy on gender.

Three sections comprise the [National Strategy on Gender Equity and Equality](#):

- I. **Guiding principles.** This section describes the whole-of-government implementation effort, the intersectional approach, and interconnected priorities (e.g., closing gender gaps in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics).
- II. **Strategic priorities.** Priorities range from eliminating gender-based violence to ensuring equal opportunity in education to promoting gender equity in mitigating climate change.
- III. **Implementation.** The strategy is being implemented across the whole of government. The Gender Policy Council is working closely with every government agency and integrating with other equity efforts. Methods include strategic planning, policy and program development, and training.

Ms. Phadke mentioned requiring agencies to demonstrate how they are implementing action plans to curb gender-based violence. Efforts are also underway to reauthorize the Violence Against Women Act. The ARP includes \$447.4 million in supplemental funding, including \$49.5 million to fund culture-specific community-based organizations to improve access to services and safety for survivors. The U.S. National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence addresses gender-based violence at the intersection with other forms of discrimination, including racism.

Anti-Asian Hate and the COVID-19 Pandemic

Mr. Yang said that the commissioners have great partners in Ms. Moritsugu and others in the administration. He suggested that the Commission use this opportunity to capitalize on intersections among agencies.

In his presentation, Mr. Yang focused on some nuanced, below-the-surface aspects of anti-Asian hate. Since the 2016 election cycle in particular, the nation has seen a surge in hate speech, hate rhetoric, and hate incidents against Muslims, Jews, immigrants, refugees, the LGBTQ+ community, and people of color.

Hate is pervasive in America. Hate incidents touch every demographic and can occur everywhere, from city streets to places of worship to the workplace. Acts of hate not only devastate individuals, they also target, divide, and destabilize entire communities, sending a message that some people are not welcome.

Mr. Yang laid out the definition of hate crime: a crime against a person or property that is motivated by bias, prejudice, or hatred toward the personal or perceived personal characteristics of a victim, including race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or gender identity. In contrast, a hate incident is based on the same behaviors and motivations as a hate crime but does not rise to the level of a crime. (A crime involves a criminal statute.)

Mr. Yang cautioned the AANHPI community to be aware of the risk of over-criminalization of behaviors. If communities resort to criminal enforcement, they must be careful about potential consequences in terms of interracial tension and other problems. Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC) has debated the topic and advocates caution about using terminology related to crimes. Drawing a distinction between hate crimes and hate incidents allows nuanced discussions of how to achieve safety.

Mr. Yang said that anti-Asian hate crimes and incidents are underreported; [survey data from April 2020](#) show that 32% of Americans have witnessed someone blaming Asian people for the COVID-19 pandemic, and up to 60% of Asians have witnessed the same thing. Thirty percent of Asians have experienced hate crimes or incidents. These data translate into 22 million people having witnessed hate crimes or incidents and 6.6 million people who have experienced them firsthand, not to mention the relatives and friends who experience the trauma along with them.

The AANHPI community has been enduring high levels of hate for more than two years. The first act of pandemic-fueled violence occurred in January 2020 at a Sam's Club in Texas and involved a father and his two young children.

The activities of AAJC fall into several categories:

- **Education and awareness.** The organization is very involved with the media and has participated in more than 100 interviews and press conferences on anti-Asian hate. In February and March 2020, AAJC pushed the media to stop using “Chinese virus” and “Wuhan flu” terminology. The organization also testified before congressional committees. More than 125 presentations to corporate and community groups informed a total audience of more than 70,000 people about anti-Asian hate. A key message is that anti-Asian hate and discrimination are not new. Mr. Yang cited the Chinese Exclusion Act and other exclusionary immigration laws, the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, and attacks after 9/11 as examples. Three-fourths of attacks are committed by white males; a small minority of attacks are by Blacks and other groups. It is dangerously inaccurate to say that Blacks are committing these acts, a narrative promoted by white supremacists.
- **Reporting and response.** The [Stand Against Hatred website](#) was created in January 2017 to accept reports of hate crimes and incidents from across the country. The site can accept reports in Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.
- **Intervention.** The organization provides resources and trainings to support bystander interventions to stop anti-Asian and xenophobic harassment, including [Stand Up: Your Guide to Bystander Intervention](#). Information about [upcoming trainings](#) includes simple tips to help ensure that people are in a safe place where they can access help.

- **Policy change.** The AAJC asked commissioners to help make its work actionable.
- **Prevention.** The AAJC aims to improve data collection and reporting of hate crimes; build and strengthen competent, linguistically accessible response systems; improve enforcement of nondiscrimination laws; and engage in proactive outreach to and invest in AANHPI communities, including federal grants for community-based organizations and communities affected by anti-Asian hate.

Mr. Yang said he looks forward to working in partnership with the Commission.

Understanding Hate Against Asian Americans

Ms. Kulkarni, co-founder of the Stop AAPI Hate (SAH) coalition, gave three examples of what the surge in COVID-19–related racism looks like nationally and said that such incidents inspired the formation of SAH on March 19, 2020. With more than 150 years of collective service, SAH’s founding organizations are trusted by AAPI communities. SAH advances equity, justice, and power by dismantling systemic racism and building a multiracial movement to end anti-AAPI hate.

Immediately after SAH formed, reports of racist acts started to come in. To aid with reporting, information is available in several Asian languages. SAH serves as the leading aggregator of data on anti-AAPI hate incidents and offers multilingual resources for affected community members. In addition, the coalition provides technical assistance, ranging from rapid response to preventive measures. Support for community-based safety measures and restorative justice efforts is also available. SAH advocates for policies to reinforce human rights and civil rights protections.

SAH has received more than 10,370 reports of discrimination, 41% in public parks and streets and 27% in businesses. Hate incidents reported by women comprise 62% of all reports.

Verbal harassment (63%) and shunning (16%) are the most frequently reported incidents. Most events are not crimes but incidents of hate, although 16% of reports involve physical assault. Most incidents happen to people of Chinese origin, but other groups, including Southeast Asians, South Asians, and Pacific Islanders, also experience hate. Almost half of all incident reports involve anti-Chinese and/or anti-immigrant rhetoric. Incidents commonly involve scapegoating

of China, racial slurs, and anti-immigration/nativist statements. Most perpetrators are white males.^{1,2}

Victims and survivors often face significant mental health challenges. Seventy-two percent of Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders report discrimination as their greatest source of stress, more so than COVID-19.

Ms. Kulkarni said that most hate incidents are not hate crimes, so no one-size-fits-all solutions are available. Racism is expressed not only as interpersonal attacks but also as structural decisions and policies. Ms. Kulkarni underscored the importance of ensuring that people and communities who experience hate incidents and hate crimes get the support they need.

Ms. Kulkarni said that SAH declares its solidarity with other communities of color in the search for solutions.

Questions and Answers

Ms. Moritsugu said that the panelists have quantified some important issues facing AANHPI communities. The commissioners are interested in diving in deeper and continuing this work.

Ms. Kulkarni said that many local and state authorities say that people in AANHPI communities are not reporting crimes because of fear of deportation, local police working with ICE, and the targeting of South Asians after the September 11 attacks. She asked the commissioners and all present who are representing the White House to encourage the administration to eliminate programs such as DOJ's China Initiative and to ensure that hate crime bills are implemented in such a way to help AANHPI communities.

Mr. Bains said that the Biden administration is dedicated to rebuilding trust in government. Steps like ending the Muslim ban demonstrate key differences from the prior administration. A presidential memorandum directed all agencies to ensure that they are mitigating bias and not extending and entrenching it. There is a role for the Commission in identifying barriers and pointing out programs that may need to change practices. The DPC can help in that regard.

Commissioner Naheed Qureshi thanked the panelists for informing the Commission about what is happening in their communities. Advocacy groups face an uphill climb when it comes to overcoming the challenge of getting law enforcement to report data on hate crimes. She asked

¹ Borja, M., & Gibson, J. (2021). Anti-Asian Racism in 2020. Virulent Hate Project, University of Michigan. *Virulent Hate Reports*. Accessed February 14, 2022, from <https://virulenthate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Virulent-Hate-Anti-Asian-Racism-In-2020-5.17.21.pdf>

² Wong, J. (2021). Beyond the Headlines: Review of National Anti-Asian Hate Incident Reporting/Data Collection Published over 2019–2021. Accessed February 14, 2022, from <https://docs.google.com/document/d/19IIMUCDHX-hLKru-cnDCq0BirIpNgF07W3f-q0J0ko4/edit>.

whether DOJ has considered ways to require police departments to report. Ms. Rossi said that DOJ is always looking for ways to improve reporting and that specific grant funding is going to that purpose. But DOJ also recognizes that even with fulsome reporting, other barriers are apparent, such as victims being able to report to law enforcement. The majority of incidents fall short of being crimes, so new methods are needed to track crimes and incidents and report data. One possibility is to set up hotlines that are run by the states, not law enforcement. It is up to DOJ to promote alternative reporting systems.

Commissioner Huang asked about the administration's investment in culture change, tied to toxic masculinity. Commissioner Mia Ives-Ruble commented on the influence of top leadership in China and North Korea and structural reasons behind the tensions between those countries and the United States. Continuing rhetoric affects people in AANHPI and Muslim and Sikh communities. She recommended that the administration carefully consider language about all the factors that may continue to instigate and sustain hate toward AANHPI people.

Ms. Phadke said that prevention of hate crimes and incidents has been under discussion for a long time, but research is needed to back it up. The ARP is unprecedented and is supporting collaboration and coordination across agencies and teams.

Mr. Yang observed that current anti-Asian hate is an example of white nationalism. He said that there was little, if any, backlash against the U.S. Russian community during the Cold War. He recommended being more direct in communicating the role of white nationalism. He also suggested being nuanced in discussions, because it is important to avoid penalizing people when taking issue with their government's actions.

Ms. Moritsugu thanked the panelists for their strength and courage in speaking out and taking concrete actions to counter hate crimes. Chief Commissioner Shah thanked the presenters and said that the Commission has work to do.

Extreme Weather, Climate Change, and Equity

John Balbus, Interim Director, Office of Climate Change and Health Equity (OCCHE), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Chief Commissioner Shah introduced the presentation on the effects of climate change on AANHPI communities. Climate change is a priority for the administration.

Dr. Balbus said that climate change is punctuating the threat posed by racism and hate. His presentation focused on how climate change threatens health—an HHS priority under Secretary Becerra's leadership—and that the time to act is now.

One example of climate injustice is the disproportionate impact of Hurricane Ida: Nearly all the deaths that occurred due to basement flooding were among Asian residents. The deaths were the result of housing issues and the forces of racism and segregation that created the conditions that in which communities of color live. For example, many people of Vietnamese background live in coastal Louisiana.

Multiple hurricanes have struck the Gulf region, and many of the storms have occurred outside of normal time frames. Although 2021 was a particularly bad year, and the past five years have been the most devastating in history in terms of billion-dollar events.

Some people are at greater risk due to structural forces that expose them to hazards and because they have fewer resources, such as insurance, to help them recover after severe weather. Many people of Asian descent live in areas of the United States that are often in harm's way. Urban areas put people in a special category of risk.

Disasters are featured in the news, but climate change has many other impacts on public health, including higher pollen counts, more air pollution, and rising sea levels causing salination of water supplies and agricultural lands. Weather events affect people in many areas.

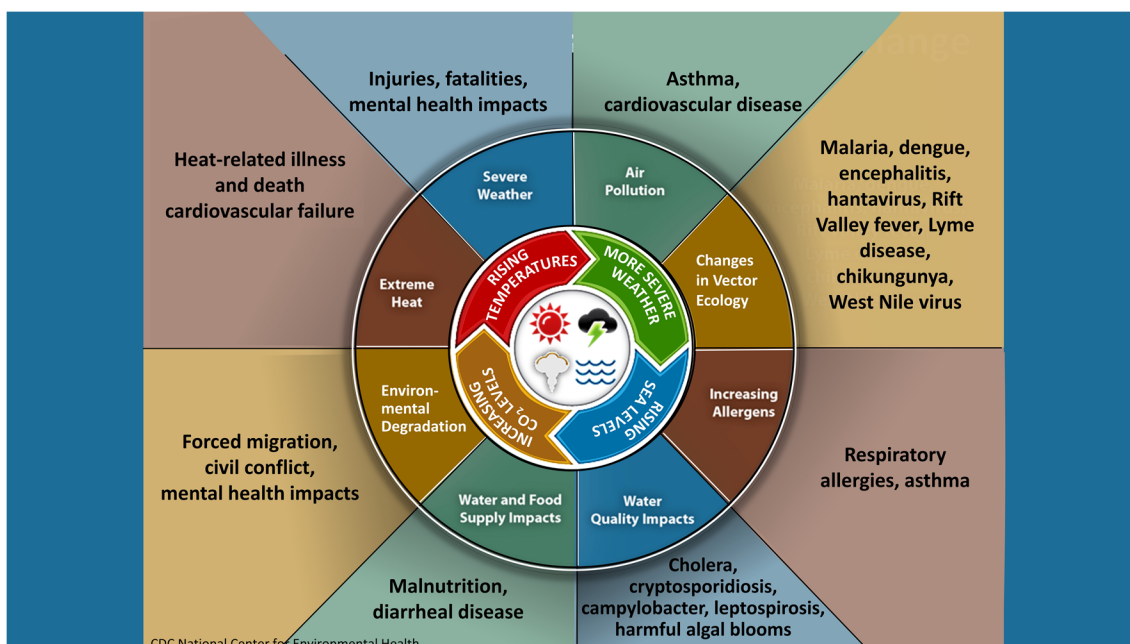


Figure 1. **Impacts of climate change on human health.** The vicious cycle of rising temperatures leads to more extreme weather and detrimental environmental effects that have consequences for health. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed February 21, 2022, from <https://www.cdc.gov/climateandhealth/effects/default.htm>.

Dr. Balbus commented on the intersection of social determinants of health (SDOH) and people's vulnerability to adverse health outcomes. SDOH that make people more vulnerable include exposure (due to poverty, occupation, and/or racial discrimination), sensitivity due to underlying

health disparities, and adaptive capacity (affected by education, poverty, social norms, governance, and policy). SDOH affect people's vulnerability to adverse health outcomes from climate drivers. There are a number of [examples](#):

- Asian Americans are 32% more likely to live in urban heat islands.
- NHPI populations often have higher rates of respiratory and cardiovascular diseases that increase risk.
- Urban (coastal) AANHPI populations have high-risk exposures to rising sea levels, flooding, and food insecurity.
- More than 80% of NHPI neighborhoods in Los Angeles are within a mile of Superfund sites.

Dr. Balbus remarked on the importance of increasing resiliency while chipping away at health disparities and SDOH so people's health is not so affected by heat waves or other extreme weather events.

In terms of the specific impacts on AANHPI communities, the literature is thin, and the data on health and vulnerability are aggregated. Dr. Balbus advocated for stronger international action to keep global temperature rise to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Dr. Balbus discussed the intersection of climate change and environmental justice, citing the example of the toxic legacy of nuclear waste left by U.S. military installations in the Marshall Islands. Another example, based on maps of Oakland and San Francisco, showed the effects of historic discrimination and segregation—going back centuries in some cases—that led to immigrant communities and communities of color being restricted to certain areas, where rates of preterm birth and asthma are higher. Proximity to high-traffic areas and poor wastewater drainage are closely tied to patterns of segregation.

Dr. Balbus explained that the OCCHE is engaged in activity related to executive orders and the current administration's emphases on health and climate change. The OCCHE has three broad priorities:

- Climate and health resilience for the most vulnerable
- Climate actions to reduce health disparities
- Health sector resilience and decarbonization

The OCCHE is linking health equity and climate change by working with partners in CDC and other agencies to identify communities that are highly exposed and addressing health disparities

exacerbated by climate impacts. The OCCHE is also promoting training opportunities, coordinating with and providing expertise to the White House and federal agencies, and exploring partnerships in the philanthropic and private sectors.

Dr. Balbus spoke of the OCCHE's commitment to eliminating health disparities related to climate change in AANHPI communities. Activities include disaggregating demographic data to identify populations at greatest risk, expanding language access in programs and resources, and elevating community voices and solutions.

There is hope. Dr. Balbus spoke about Jo-Jikum, a group in the Marshall Islands that is blending arts and culture with climate and health initiatives. Jo-Jikum, whose name translates to “your home,” is lifting voices, especially the voices of youth, to build resilience in communities.

Dr. Balbus concluded by saying that:

- Climate change is a serious threat to human health, and the risks and burdens are not shared equally.
- The same root causes of health disparities affect who is harmed by climate change, as well as where and when.
- AANHPI populations are highly diverse; many are affected by racism and social injustice.
- Reducing disparities in climate and health risk requires careful use of data, focus on local action, and “moving at the speed of trust.”

Dr. Balbus said that the OCCHE is eager to work with the Commission to find solutions and address the legacy of racism and social injustice in the country to improve the health of all.

Questions and Answers

There was not enough time for a discussion. Chief Commissioner Shah thanked Dr. Balbus for an excellent presentation and said she planned to invite him to subcommittee meetings. Dr. Balbus said that the OCCHE would be interested in hearing from and working with the Commission.

Commission Discussion

The commissioners discussed needs for additional information and suggested future activities. These ideas were posted on a Miro board. (See [appendix](#).)

What additional information does the Commission need?

- Commissioner Doi said that the information about environmental justice demands action. The situation is urgent, as the AANHPI community in Hawaii is facing a groundwater contamination problem similar to the one in Flint, Michigan. He asked whether HHS staff could provide more information about potential health impacts of pollution caused by the DoD and U.S. Navy. He said that an interagency approach might be needed, as the involvement of DOJ and the EPA would be critical.
- Commissioner Huynh suggested creating a directory of community resources.
- Commissioner Kimberly Chang asked about getting input from local community groups about what they are doing. Many groups are interested in these topics. She asked how connections can be made between federal agencies and AANHPI communities. Chief Commissioner Shah suggested that the RN can help, and Commissioner Huang provided a link to a [list of Asian American and organizations](#) that support survivors of domestic violence.
- Commissioner Michelle Ka‘uhane would like to hear from DOJ on Native Hawaiian issues.
- Commissioner Batayola expressed interest in hearing from the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Commissioner Shah asked for data on affirmative action.
- Commissioner Shah mentioned the need to better understand the RN and different agencies and departments to find ways to deploy the Commission and increase its impact.
- Commissioner Bhutoria asked about agencies’ efforts to expand language access and sought more information about how agencies are using media to disseminate messages.
- The Commission was interested in learning more about how immigration and enforcement sectors target Asian communities.
- Commissioner Ives-Ruble said that one challenge with data disaggregation is small sample sizes. The Commission needs to learn how researchers are collecting the data, and the Commission should speak with other AA groups to find out how they are getting data and conducting outreach for data collection.
- Commissioner Simon Pang suggested grouping data by region to address concerns about sample size. The data could be submitted collectively to the Commission.

- Commissioner Yang commented in the chat that every presenter talked about the lack of disaggregated data, but she asked what the federal government can do to issue a specific directive to require such data from key agencies at each state. Also, an investment of dollars would be needed to get this done.

Summary of Day 1 and Charge for Day 2

Sonal Shah, Chief Commissioner

Krystal Ka'ai, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

Executive Director Ka'ai concluded the day's meeting by thanking the co-chairs and commissioners. She thanked her WHIAANHPI colleagues and other members of the team who had brought this inaugural meeting to fruition and acknowledged the remarks of Vice President Harris and Ambassador Rice. The former commissioners shared some best practices and suggested topics that the new commissioners may want to work on.

Immediate challenges include the economic and health impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. Executive Director Ka'ai said that the Commission has a unique and important platform that will enable bold, decisive actions. The President selected the best group to address the formidable challenges facing the AANHPI community.

Chief Commissioner Shah thanked the commissioners and other attendees for taking in a great deal of detailed information and engaging on a host of topics. The second day of the meeting would focus on systemic issues and data disaggregation, as well as establishing subcommittees to carry out the Commission's work. The Chief Commissioner said she looked forward to working with the commissioners through the subcommittees.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:06 p.m. ET.

Day 2: February 4, 2022

Emmeline Ochiai, Senior Advisor, White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders/President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders, and Designated Federal Officer

Ms. Ochiai welcomed the participants. She explained that the Commission is a federal advisory committee that operates under FACA regulations. The advisory committee process ensures independent review in an open and public manner with opportunities for public participation. Although this meeting would not include an opportunity for oral public comments, the public can submit written comments to aanhpicommission@hhs.gov. Written comments will be shared with the full Commission.

Welcome, Recap of Day 1, and Overview of Day 2

Lisa Pino, Director, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Krystal Ka'ai, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

Ms. Pino noted that Secretary Becerra had tasked the HHS Office for Civil Rights with housing both WHIAANHPI and the Commission, and she welcomed the new commissioners to HHS.

Ms. Pino said that with the rise in discrimination and bias against AANHPI communities over the last two years, every tool available will be needed to make these communities safer. Civil rights enforcement is one such tool. OCR enforces federal civil rights laws that protect Americans from discrimination. Housing WHIAANHPI in OCR represents a recognition of the agency's strength and leadership on issues that are critical to advancing racial justice, such as language access, civil rights, and equity. Including the Commission in HHS emphasizes the need to include AANHPI community voices and partnerships in efforts to drive change. Ms. Pino said that HHS stands with AANHPI communities and looks forward to working with the Commission. She hoped that the meeting would lay a strong foundation for innovative and lasting efforts to create meaningful change for AANHPI communities across the country.

Executive Director Ka'ai provided a recap of the first day of the meeting. She said that although the issues affecting AANHPI communities cannot be addressed within a few hours or days, the Commission will be able to take decisive, meaningful action in compiling recommendations to the President that will help advance equity, justice, and opportunity for these communities. On Day 2, speakers would discuss some of the systemic issues facing the communities.

Charge for Day 2

Sonal Shah, Chief Commissioner

Chief Commissioner Shah said that the commissioners' charge for the day was to secure their understanding of federal infrastructure and to learn about systemic challenges, the federal response, and recommendations from experts. The commissioners would also begin mapping out its work for the next 12 to 20 months. The Commission's work should be linked to the seven priorities in the executive order to ensure that the Commission addresses its charge from the President, although it can also work on additional issues. During the meeting, the Commission would also establish subcommittees and identify subcommittee chairs and members. Chief Commissioner Shah suggested that the Commission provide recommendations to the President on a rolling basis.

Priorities: Systemic Issues Affecting Communities

Sonal Shah, Chief Commissioner

Data Disaggregation

Alondra Nelson, Deputy Director for Science and Society, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy; Co-Chair, Equitable Data Working Group

Kimberlyn Leary, Senior Advisor for Racial Equity, Domestic Policy Council, The White House

Karthick Ramakrishnan, Founder and Co-Director, AAPI Data; Professor of Public Policy, Center for Social Innovation, University of California, Riverside

The Equitable Data Working Group

Dr. Nelson described the work of the Equitable Data Working Group (EDWG), which is central to advancing an equity agenda for many communities of color. She said that Executive Order 13985, issued on the first day of the Biden administration, defines equity as “the consistent and systemic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals.” The executive order also notes that a first step toward promoting equity in government action is to gather the data needed to inform the government's efforts. Dr. Nelson said that the necessary data include disaggregated data that can aid in understanding specific demographic characteristics that reflect and influence people's lived experiences.

The EDWG is charged with identifying inadequacies in existing federal data collection programs, policies, and infrastructures, as well as strategies for addressing deficiencies. It is also charged with supporting agencies in implementing actions that expand and refine the data available to the government to measure equity and capture the diversity of the American people.

Data are not always available in disaggregated form, but there are other challenges to equitable data. Data may be underutilized, not well known, or inaccessible. There may be barriers to using data, such as organizational culture. Data have been geared toward agency statisticians and academic researchers, but the government has a responsibility to share data with the public, in a privacy-preserving manner, using means such as visualizations and dashboards.

Dr. Nelson presented a vision of equitable data, which is part of the EDWG's work. Equitable data would allow the government to characterize the experiences of groups that are currently concealed in the data, a significant problem for parts of the AANHPI communities. Equitable data also would enable assessments of equity in government benefits and services and provision of access to the data in useful formats to a range of communities.

Principles of equitable data also require that members of the public not be harmed or made more vulnerable and that data be intersectional. There must be enough demographic variables at the scale and level of granularity needed to ensure both statistical robustness and detail.

The EDWG began meeting in March 2021. Its approach has four elements:

- **Agency and department consultation.** The executive order required agencies and departments to spend 200 days assessing their programs and policies for systemic barriers to accessing benefits for underserved communities. The EDWG obtained feedback about barriers to accessing data for equity assessment and held discussions with the Chief Data Officers Council, the Interagency Council on Statistical Policy, and the Evaluation Officers Council. The EDWG also consults and collaborates with other working groups within the Executive Office of the President.
- **Public engagement.** The EDWG has collected input from a wide range of AANHPI community, research, and nonprofit organizations. It has also regularly held office hours.
- **Review of relevant work to date.** The January 2021 executive order was not the first to point out the challenge of data disaggregation, so the EDWG did not have to start from scratch. Existing work has helped the group consider how to obtain statistically robust estimates for small samples while protecting confidentiality.
- **Case studies.** EDWG members are leading case studies that offer opportunities for agencies to consider important equity questions and what data, relationships, and networks across agencies would be required to answer them. Questions involve disparities and inequities (including by race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity, disability, and other variables) in participation in economic stimulus programs, broadband access in rural areas, disaster relief and assistance, unemployment insurance, and COVID-19 outcomes. Ultimately, the EDWG hopes to use the case study models and resulting relationships to facilitate institutional change.

Dr. Nelson presented lessons learned:

- Presidential prioritization of equitable data is important.
- Working with community experts and the nonfederal research community is essential to understanding communities' and researchers' data needs and ensuring that data systems are equitable.
- Achieving equitable data will require building infrastructure for collaboration.

The EDWG's next steps will include delivering initial recommendations to Ambassador Rice, continuing work on the case studies, and working on special projects. These projects will include building a catalog of currently available disaggregated AANHPI data, improving demographic variables for the collection of sexual orientation and gender identity on benefit forms, implementing a rural data collaborative, and mapping and assessing equitable access to services in flood-prone areas.

Equity Action Plans in the Federal Government

Dr. Leary said that Executive Order 13985 affirms the government's duty to serve the public effectively and equitably. The order has multiple components, including requirements for agencies to engage in equity assessments and to identify actions for addressing barriers to participation for underserved communities. Agencies' plans must include metrics and accountability systems to ensure that agencies develop equitable outcomes in communities.

As AANHPI communities know, disaggregated data and data strategies are critical to this work. Aggregated data have often erased disparities, and data are essential for determining whether mitigating actions that agencies plan to implement will reduce barriers to equity.

Systemic forms of injustice are often anchored within systems in which exclusionary regulations are embedded in administrative procedures and protocols. Policymaking can have unintended consequences, but systemic injustice can also reflect intentional choices to use policies and regulations to discount or harm others. Executive Order 13985 recognizes that systemic inequities can flourish in practices that might appear neutral on the surface. For example, programs that perform services for people in underserved communities may involve higher levels of administrative burden—such as complex, confusing, or repetitive requirements—than programs that serve a broader group. These burdens affect AANHPI communities, especially for families with limited English proficiency (LEP), those experiencing poverty, and first-generation Americans. Such barriers can be so deeply embedded in systems as to be nearly invisible. Through equity assessments, the executive order aims to make the barriers more visible. It also invites agencies to work with stakeholder communities to learn about barriers to equity and

design mitigating actions. Although systems contribute to systemic injustice, they also can be uniquely positioned to drive scaled change.

Agencies have mobilized swiftly to meet the timelines laid out in the executive order, creating agency equity teams and, in many cases, implementing stakeholder engagement initiatives. They also began thinking about actions to reduce barriers over time. The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) launched a learning community for members of equity teams that included executive education–style sessions and programs, including one training session specifically on addressing the needs of AANHPI communities.

On January 20, the project reached a major milestone: More than 90 federal agencies have now submitted equity action plans. Dr. Leary shared examples of changes in how the executive branch and its agencies operate:

- Nearly 5 million Americans gained health insurance with subsidies provided by the ARP.
- The ARP lowered or eliminated health insurance premiums for millions of lower- and middle-income families enrolled in health insurance marketplaces, including 197,000 uninsured AANHPI community members.
- The ARP was projected to reduce poverty in AANHPI communities by nearly 22% through increases in the value of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, direct relief payments, and unemployment insurance extensions.
- Expansion of the child tax credit cut the poverty rate by 22% in Black children, 28.9% in Hispanic and Latino children, and 23.4% in Asian American and Pacific Islander children.

These achievements are not the end of the work; rather, they position the federal government to drive toward equity in the future. The goal is for equitable policymaking practices to become embedded in federal government work. Also, building capacity for equity work will enable equity in the implementation of the recent infrastructure law, including through equitable spending and addressing harmful infrastructure projects that have cut neighborhoods off from opportunities.

The DPC is reading and analyzing the federal agencies' equity action plans. Dr. Leary said that she looked forward to sharing key lessons learned.

Data, Narrative, and Action for Equity

Dr. Ramakrishnan said that data disaggregation and data equity have been priorities for advancing AANHPI community needs for decades. Without detailed, accurate, and timely data,

these communities are rendered invisible and misunderstood. Misleading narratives harm AANHPI communities in many ways, including through insufficient attention, lack of public resources, and lack of philanthropic investments. Data disaggregation is a civil rights issue for these communities.

Recognizing that data interpretation and narrative matter, AAPI Data has adopted an approach called DNA: data, narrative, and action. Without systematic data, stakeholders and decision makers do not take communities seriously. Without narrative, communities' needs and interests are not remembered. Ultimately, data are important not for their own sake but for informing and inspiring action by government, philanthropic, and community organizations.

Dr. Ramakrishnan described AAPI Data's upcoming projects, noting that the organization is interested in having the Commission engaged in the projects:

- AAPI Data conducts monthly data equity strategy calls that include leaders in community organizations, government agencies, philanthropy, and researchers.
- In March, AAPI Data will conduct its one-year anniversary survey on American experiences with discrimination. It will include not only AANHPI communities but also comparison samples of white, Black, and Latino communities.
- The organization is planning a refresh of its state electorate fact sheets with APIAVote.
- In May, AAPI Data will publish a data equity report that will include interviews with leaders in federal government agencies.
- In collaboration with the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, AAPI Data will hold a National Data Equity Summit in late May. It hopes to release a State of AAPIs report at the event.
- In July, AAPI Data will release an AA voter survey.

The organization's approach to data includes making data access as easy as possible. It has worked with community partners to determine the key indicators they look for when filling out grant applications or talking to reporters, and it provides sortable tables that help users quickly access statistics. The group is beta-testing a new tool that will allow users to select the appropriate level of geography and communities for comparisons. To join the beta-testing group, attendees can email Ryan Vinh (ryan@aapidata.com).

Visuals are also important, because they help communities and stakeholders understand issues. For example, AAPI Data created a graphic showing that one in seven Asian immigrants is undocumented, although the number has since changed.

AAPI Data believes that data can be beautiful as well as accessible. Community partners used [data points from its work with Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy \(AAPIP\)](#) to do more effective targeting for census outreach.

Disaggregating data is important for several reasons, including the following:

- The AA community is changing dramatically with respect to detailed origin. For example, the South Asian population is growing rapidly. People may have inaccurate perceptions of who Asian Americans are.
- It is important to look at variation in outcomes across communities. For example, Southeast Asian refugee populations have worse outcomes on multiple measures than those of the most prosperous AA groups and on par with or worse than those of other communities of color in the United States.
- Data must be disaggregated within NH and PI categories as well. In the census and according to the OMB, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders are a separate racial category from Asian Americans.
- Language varies across communities.

Dr. Ramakrishnan provided additional key facts about AANHPI populations:

- These groups are an important part of the immigrant vote but are often ignored in news stories. Survey research with detailed disaggregated data collection shows areas of agreement among AA, NH, and PI groups despite their diversity. Areas of commonality can be grouped into themes: inclusion, protection, opportunity, and education.
- Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are among the fastest growing populations in the United States. Communities are eagerly awaiting data to see how particular groups are faring.

Dr. Ramakrishnan presented findings on hate crimes and hate incidents:

- In 2021, AAPI Data found that about 18% of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders reported experiencing hate crimes or incidents since the beginning of the pandemic. About 25% said they had experienced hate crimes or incidents at some time.
- It is important to acknowledge the high rates of hate crimes and incidents experienced by multiracial and Black people in the United States.

- Asian Americans, followed by Pacific Islanders and Latinos, are most likely to encounter people asking where they are from. Other stereotypes hurt other communities of color even more. For example, Black and PI people report the highest rates of others acting afraid of them. Black and PI people also have higher rates of being unfairly stopped by police than Asian Americans do.
- Data can help correct selective inferences. For example, hate crimes do not affect only elderly Asian immigrant women, as some social media content suggests.

AAPI Data has developed recommendations regarding data equity in collaboration with the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans:

- Define data equity as the inclusion and incorporation of community expertise and research expertise.
- Ensure equity in all stages and aspects of data and research, including design and development; collection, compilation, and processing; and analysis, dissemination, and preservation of data.

Dr. Ramakrishnan said that AANHPI communities, including researchers and community leaders, are ready to partner with the EDWG. For example, communities are very interested in making sure disaggregated data repositories are user- and community-friendly. Dr. Ramakrishnan hoped that communities could also partner on pilot projects to expand their scope, with a goal of improving the lived experiences of AANHPI populations. He suggested not only including community leaders and scientific experts but also institutionalizing communities' roles. The Census Scientific Advisory Committee and National Advisory Committee would be good models for other federal agencies.

Language Access

Lisa Pino, Director, Office for Civil Rights, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

Kristen Clarke, Assistant Attorney General, U.S. Department of Justice

Overview of the HHS Office for Civil Rights

Ms. Pino said that OCR investigates civil rights complaints from the public, conducts compliance reviews, secures voluntary corrective actions, provides technical assistance to resolve civil rights complaints, conducts public outreach, and issues regulations and guidance.

The Census Bureau defines people with LEP as those who speak a language other than English at home and who speak English “less than very well.” According to the American Community Survey in 2012, 35% of the AANHPI population in the United States falls into this category. Language barriers are associated with lower quality of health care, worse outcomes, longer hospitalizations, and more hospital readmissions. Eroding language barriers is essential for achieving quality healthcare for all.

Ms. Pino provided examples demonstrating that AANHPI communities are being targeted and treated unfairly under civil rights laws. A CDC study released in 2021 found significant disparities in COVID-19 incidence among these communities. For example, incidence in Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders is more than twice the rate in white people. In addition, health care workers of Asian descent have faced discrimination and harassment.

No one should receive different or delayed treatment or be denied treatment because they have LEP. Failure of a recipient of HHS funds to provide language assistance to people with LEP may constitute national origin discrimination. OCR works to remove unlawful barriers to HHS-conducted and -funded programs and to protect recipients of HHS federal financial assistance from discrimination on any basis. OCR’s legal authorities lie within Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Section 1557 of the Affordable Care Act.

Ms. Pino offered some examples of OCR’s language access work. At the beginning of the pandemic, a hospital in New York allowed only certified interpreters to help medical professionals triage and treat patients with LEP, making it impossible for staff to keep up with the flow of patients. After a physician contacted OCR, the office informed the hospital that interpreters need only be qualified, allowing the hospital to engage many bilingual medical students as interpreters. OCR also worked with a medical center in California to expand language access through staff training, updated signage, and connecting with interpreter services.

OCR also makes an impact in other ways:

- Working with sister agencies within HHS, such as the Office of Minority Health, and as part of the Interdepartmental Health Equity Collaborative
- Issuing guidance to emergency officials and emergency responders to address the needs of at-risk populations, such as people with LEP
- Engaging with communities through public education
- Participating in civil rights outreach events, including more than 30 events in the past two years, and engaging with key stakeholder organizations. OCR recognizes the importance of listening, especially now as the AANHPI communities are being targeted.

- Issuing policy guidance; most recently, OCR released “Guidance on Federal Legal Standards Prohibiting Race, Color, and National Origin Discrimination in COVID-19 Vaccination Programs”
- Conducting Title VI trainings on civil rights, including trainings on language access and national origin discrimination, for medical students

OCR is also heavily involved in implementing Executive Order 13166 to improve access to services for people with LEP.

[OCR’s website](#) includes success stories and tools for developing a language access plan.

LEP Activities at the DOJ

Ms. Clarke said that DOJ’s Civil Rights Division is committed to ensuring language barriers do not prevent people from fully participating in public life. When public entities communicate only in English, they miss opportunities to hear from victims and to inform people with LEP about federal efforts to address bias and hate, advance equity, and promote environmental justice. Access tools such as oral interpretation, written translation, and direct in-language communication are essential for the division’s work.

Executive Order 13166, signed in 2000, aimed to improve access to federally conducted and assisted programs for people with LEP. Failure to provide language access to LEP communities can be a form of national origin discrimination, which is prohibited by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. DOJ is responsible for working with federal agencies to ensure that they are equipped to do business in critical languages and for ensuring that recipients of federal funds know their obligations under Title VI.

Since the signing of Executive Order 13166, many federal agencies have developed language access programs and plans, which have been critical through disasters such as the September 11 attacks, Hurricane Katrina, wildfires, and the COVID-19 pandemic. DOJ works with federal and local partners to review, prepare, and issue language access policies to make sure essential information is available to all members of the public.

The Civil Rights Division has created tools that help the federal government communicate and maintain a multilingual online presence, including a [federal language access clearinghouse](#). The division’s Language Map App allows users to determine whether there are people with LEP in a given county or state and what languages they speak. This type of data helps government identify and dismantle language barriers.

DOJ is working to make sure everyone has access to its services. Last year, the Attorney General committed DOJ to establishing a full-time language access coordinator. Providing resources and services in all languages is a critical step in combating hate crimes by building community partnerships and trust, increasing reporting of hate crimes and incidents, and ensuring that resources are centered on the community. For example, it is now possible to report hate crimes on DOJ's website in 14 languages, with more to come.

The Civil Rights Division is now able to field civil rights complaints in non-English languages by phone, mail, and email and in person. Its [civil rights reporting portal](#) is available in five non-English languages. The division has prioritized training staff to respond to and investigate allegations by victims or witnesses with LEP.

The division also works to ensure that schools, polling locations, police departments, jails and prisons, juvenile justice programs, court systems, and other state and local agencies that receive federal funding help them meet their obligation to comply with Title VI. For example, the division's resolutions in state court matters in numerous states helped millions of people with LEP gain meaningful access to state judicial systems.

The Civil Rights Division monitors elections to ensure that all voters have equal access to the electoral process. This work includes enforcing the minority language provisions of the Voting Rights Act, which requires certain communities to provide bilingual written voting materials and assistance for covered languages, based on a list issued by the U.S. Census Bureau. The latest list included more than 330 jurisdictions in 30 states.

Access to schools is another important focus area. The Civil Rights Division works to ensure that students can attend schools free from discrimination, that schools provide language services for parents with LEP, and that students have the language services and support that they are entitled to under the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974. Also, many students who are English learners experienced disproportionate setbacks during the pandemic. In 2021, the division and the Department of Education released resources in 12 languages on COVID-19-related harassment, as well as a resource that provides advice for families on addressing discrimination based on national origin and immigration status.

The Civil Rights Division's pandemic-related work highlights its critical role in working with sister agencies on language access. The division convened meetings of more than a dozen agencies to discuss civil rights concerns, monitored harassment of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, sought to better understand the health outcomes for vulnerable communities, and issued a statement about the need to protect the rights of vulnerable people, including people with LEP. The statement was translated into five AA and PI languages and reminded federal, state, and local agencies of their obligations to combat hate crimes, harassment, and discrimination; ensure equal access for people with disabilities; reduce learning loss for

vulnerable students; protect correctional staff, incarcerated people, and people held in detention; protect people facing housing instability; provide critical public health information in multiple languages; and collect data to monitor, track, and ensure equitable outcomes.

Although much progress has been made in the field of language access, work remains to be done. Nonprofit and community-based organizations are unfairly burdened with the responsibility of serving as interpreters and translating materials. Some federal agencies have not updated or posted their language access plans. DOJ continues to work to overcome language barriers, and everyone has a role to play to ensure that the voices of people with LEP are heard. Ms. Clarke encouraged attendees to contact federal agencies to let them know how they could better serve LEP communities.

Questions and Answers

Chief Commissioner Shah asked Ms. Pino how federal agencies ensure meaningful access to federal programs for AANHPI communities. Ms. Pino said that the work involves multiple layers. One aspect at the local level is making sure that hospitals or health care systems have a language access plan on file and that it reflects current times and diversity. At the federal level, the work toward meaningful access involves considering how to exhaust legal authorities under Title VI to create meaning in new ways that are more inclusive and equitable. Racial justice and bridging the health divide that the pandemic has exacerbated are principal tenets of the Biden administration. Federal agencies are responsible for making sure that guidance they have provided is followed and is respectful and inclusive for communities. The government can address civil rights complaints and conduct compliance reviews. More than ever, language access plays a critical role in ensuring that people receive the health care they deserve and are treated with respect and dignity.

A commissioner asked about the difference between language access and discrimination. Ms. Clarke said that language access is about making sure that all services an entity provides are accessible to people, regardless of their language ability. This is especially important for people who are entangled in the justice system and seeking to exercise important rights. Discrimination refers to the need for enforcement and addressing the ways in which entities may run afoul of the law. Language discrimination is a form of discrimination on the basis of national origin.

Commissioner Bhutoria asked whether DOJ has considered translating its website, as well as key announcements, notifications, and rule changes, into multiple languages. Ms. Clarke said that translation is an ongoing project for many agencies. DOJ has worked to ensure that critically important parts of its site, such as the complaint portal, information on hate crimes, and data, are available in multiple languages, and it must continue that work. Ms. Clarke encouraged the commissioners to contact the Civil Rights Division through the [federal language access clearinghouse](#) to help make sure that enforcement resources are directed to the right places.

Commissioner Huang said that there are communities in small pockets across the country that speak different languages. Members of these communities have the least access to critical services. She asked about efforts that could be built upon to pool resources or encourage more action to assist people in those communities who are struggling because their languages are not commonly spoken. Ms. Pino said that listening and outreach are critical. Having multiple vehicles for receiving information, such as the LEP interagency commission/committee, listening sessions, and commissioner input, is important. Systemic inequities should be addressed as quickly and easily as possible; solutions may be simple and should not take years. Listening and finding solutions quickly will help bring relief and reassurance that the federal government is here to address issues. Ms. Pino said that she would look into ways for OCR to do more outreach and make it easier for people to share what they are seeing, because not everyone is comfortable with writing a civil rights complaint.

Commission Discussion and Approach for Developing Recommendations

Chief Commissioner Shah said that the Commission has opportunities to be involved in the administration's work on equity in the early stages. Since the work is already in progress, she recommended that the Commission provide recommendations on a rolling basis.

Commissioner Underwood said that recommendations could be different for different communities. He suggested that commissioners could educate each other about the diversity of their communities. The chief commissioner agreed and suggested that the Commission could state its intentions up front when making a recommendation that may not affect all communities.

Using a Miro board, the commissioners discussed items on which they would like more information to inform their recommendations.

Commissioner Bhutoria said that he would like to know about how federal agencies collect data on AANHPI communities, which agencies collect data, how they use the data, and what additional data collection methods are being explored for implementation across agencies.

Commissioner Huang said that she would like to know whether data are collected in accessible ways; for example, many people are not surveyed in their own language.

Commissioner Underwood said that he wanted to clarify the intersectionality of the data. The administration has specific objectives for rural areas and for racial and ethnic minority groups, for example; he asked whether agencies are collecting data on how those groups intersect.

Commissioner Daniel Dae Kim said that he would like access to the tool that Dr. Ramakrishnan mentioned, which is in beta-testing. He added that the slides from Dr. Ramakrishnan's presentation would be helpful for creating talking points. Chief Commissioner Shah said that the commissioners would receive all of the slide presentations and suggested that the subcommittee working on data disaggregation consider inviting Dr. Ramakrishnan to participate or present.

Commissioner Yang asked whether the Commission could see the equity plans and data disaggregation plan that the federal government is working on. The Commission could help the government prioritize its recommendations rather than starting from scratch. She also said that it will be important to consider geography; the makeup of AANHPI groups is different in different areas of the country. Commissioner also suggested thinking strategically about how to include grassroots groups in reviewing or contributing to the Commission's recommendations.

Chief Commissioner Shah said that she believed the equity plans still need to be reviewed, so perhaps a government representative could speak to a subcommittee about them, and the Commission could help inform the plans. She also suggested that subcommittees consider holding regional forums to make sure they receive community input.

Commissioner Samoa said that data disaggregation is not a new topic. He worried about the size of the task if it involves all agencies and their different data collection methods. If the goal is having usable data for local groups, the Commission could focus on how to integrate the IWG and regional teams to work on that. AAPI Data and many other investigators have shown that AANHPI communities are not too small to sample. Models for working with the data exist. The issue will be how to bring the models to the table.

Commissioner Poo said that she was interested in the overlap between the labor market data from the first day of the meeting and the AAPI Data work. Perhaps the Commission could learn more about where communities are concentrated in wage sectors, as well as access to benefits and a safety net, through disaggregated data. Commissioner Poo was also interested in how the government or others in the field use the data for forecasting and understanding emerging trends. Chief Commissioner Shah suggested inviting a speaker from the Urban Institute, which conducts forecasting.

Commissioner Blue said that she was interested in accountability to ensure that states and counties are gathering the data needed to pinpoint issues to address. She also said that commissioners can be influential and should help federal agencies hold local governments accountable, as well as connect with community groups. Commissioner Blue asked whether the Commission could obtain a list of community groups, by region, that presenters' organizations have met with. Chief Commissioner Shah said that the RN meets with community groups and could help with that. She added that clarifying the federal government's jurisdiction and state governments' responsibilities will be important.

Commissioner Kalsi suggested compiling a list of resources for nonprofit and local-level community organizations that could access data. The Commission will exist for a limited time, and empowering local communities and organizations could have lasting impact.

Commissioner Doi said that gathering data is important, but the Commission needs to act on some issues right away, because lives are in jeopardy in Hawaii. The Commission does not know whether a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, geological survey, or public health survey has been conducted or what multipronged, multiagency approach is being taken to address the issue. Commissioner Doi asked what action the Commission could take immediately. He suggested asking the EPA and other agencies to report on what has been done. Chief Commissioner Shah said that a subcommittee should reach out to those agencies and ask for information. She said that just asking questions can prompt agencies to focus on issues. Commissioner Ives-Ruble added that subcommittees will need to identify their short- and long-term goals.

Commissioner Ives-Ruble said that the Commission should consider transracial and transnational adoptees within AANHPI communities; those adoptees are often left out of conversations about these communities' issues. Conversations about data disaggregation as well as health and other topics could include some disaggregation around adoptees. Issues surrounding trafficking and migration affect adoptees, and transnational adoption can harm communities' countries of origin or ancestry by moving children away from their cultural ancestry. Commissioner Ives-Ruble added that this population is often seen as children, but most now are adults, because adoption is becoming less common.

Commissioner Qureshi suggested obtaining more information on how members of AANHPI communities are attacked based on multiple communities that they belong to, such as Sikh or Muslim communities. The Commission heard from Ms. Clarke about DOJ's work, but perhaps it could hear more about the White House's work on these issues.

Commissioner Amy Agbayani said that she agreed with Commissioner Doi and others who had mentioned the contamination of water in Red Hill, Hawaii. She said that Hawaii's congressional delegation is engaged, hearings are taking place, and efforts are underway to address the issue. She suggested meeting offline to identify the best way to communicate the Commission's concerns to the agencies involved, such as the Department of Defense and the Navy.

Commissioner Agbayani also said that language access and data collection issues overlap. For example, data on primary language use should be collected. She suggested that the subcommittees working on language access and data disaggregation collaborate. The issue of less commonly spoken languages could be an area of special focus for the language access subcommittee.

Commissioner Agbayani said that the Commission should address the Compact of Freely Associated States (COFA) community in some way. COFA is an international agreement; citizens of three other countries (the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, and the Republic of Palau) are allowed to migrate to the United States but have

few benefits and face discrimination. In Hawaii, the COFA community is currently the most vulnerable community.

Commissioner Agbayani added that lack of implementation of state and federal laws is a problem for language access. For example, Hawaii passed the Language Access Law in 2006 but has barely implemented it.

Commissioner Batayola said that a huge array of issues is in front of the Commission. She would like to know more about commissioners' latitude to act, either under the broad umbrella of issues that the Commission will take on or in ways more focused on specific stakeholder groups or regions. Chief Commissioner Shah suggested identifying issues that are already moving, which the Commission could weigh in on and help to move faster, as well as other issues the Commission wants to address. The Commission does not need to address everything at once. Ms. Ochiai added that the Commission should focus on its charge from the executive order, but the subcommittees can determine how to approach the charge. If they need additional information to inform decisions, they can address how to find that information.

Commissioner Ka'uhane said that rules for Native Hawaiians under the Federal Housing Administration program within the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) limit these people's ability to refinance and access capital. She would like to hear from HUD about its equity plan. This issue is a critical part of economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Commissioner Shah asked whether the Commission could answer questions or make recommendations to help generate consistency in how agencies disaggregate data or disseminate information. Chief Commissioner Shah said that the IWG could be helpful in promoting consistency.

Commissioner Shah also noted that hate crimes include cybercrimes as well as physical crimes, and both should be on the Commission's radar. Targeting of vulnerable individuals can begin earlier with cybercrime and lead to physical crimes. Chief Commissioner Shah suggested that the subcommittee working on hate crimes could invite someone from DOJ's cyber team to speak.

Commissioner Poo said that one of the most important things the commissioners could do is leverage the Commission to communicate to their communities that the government is interested in working for them. A lot of government work is underway, and the more communities engage, the stronger the work will be. The Commission could help strengthen the relationship between communities and government and help establish trust.

Commissioner Huang added that many of the previous administration's actions drove fear in immigrant communities. She said that it would help to hear from the DHS about efforts to undo or provide redress to some of the harms to AANHPI communities over the past five years. Chief

Commissioner Shah suggested that the Commission’s next meeting and the subcommittee on hate, belonging, and inclusion address that topic.

Commissioner Sarah Min said that she was interested in the distribution plans for the information discussed. Several presenters had mentioned resources on their websites, but disseminating information that way requires that people know that the website exists and be able to access it. She was interested in how to push information out rather than putting the onus on communities to find it. Commissioner Ives-Ruble said that a lot of communication in immigrant and other marginalized communities takes place through word of mouth. It is important to consider how to tap into systems already in place to make sure communities are receiving the right information.

Commissioner Ives-Ruble also said that when materials are translated, there is always a delay, and that must be taken into account when delivering resources. She believes that the translation delay is a major reason why small business owners who do not speak English as a first language may have missed out on some of the resources available during the pandemic. The administration must understand that materials should be translated before funds are released so that everyone has equal opportunity to access resources.

Subcommittee Discussion

Chief Commissioner Shah listed the subcommittees the Commission had identified: Language Access, Data Disaggregation, Anti-Asian Hate/Belonging, Economic Equity, and COVID-19 and Health and Well-Being. She said that the Commission had discussed adding subcommittees on immigration, AANHPI diversity in the military, health equity and chronic diseases, disinformation and misinformation, and human trafficking. She suggested combining ideas to limit the number of subcommittees. For example, immigration could be part of the Anti-Asian Hate/Belonging Subcommittee. Limiting the number of subcommittees would help maximize the efforts of both the Commission’s staff and the commissioners, and each subcommittee could prioritize the issues it will work on.

Commissioner Doi asked whether the Commission should form a task force to take immediate action on the groundwater contamination issue. Chief Commissioner Shah recommended including the issue in a subcommittee and creating a subgroup to address it.

Commissioner Qureshi urged the Commission to keep immigration separate from the anti-Asian hate subcommittee, because immigration is a specialized area. Commissioner Agbayani said that immigration could be its own subcommittee, but if it needed to be combined with another, she would recommend adding it to the Language Access Subcommittee. Commissioner Underwood suggested expanding the immigration category to include citizenship status. Commissioner Bhutoria said that the Commission could consider including immigration in the Economic Equity

Subcommittee. Commissioner Huynh said that there was likely enough interest to support a subcommittee on immigration.

Commissioner Blue suggested including environmental justice in a health-related subcommittee.

Commissioner Chang said that the issues of human trafficking and exploitation and gender-based violence cross all sectors, including health, anti-Asian hate, and economic equity, so they could be included in any appropriate subcommittee.

Commissioner Yang said that AANHPI communities can work with Hispanic and African communities on immigration and citizenship status issues. AANHPI communities often feel that they are not at the table for immigration issues, and if the Commission does not address immigration, that choice will send a message. Chief Commissioner Shah clarified that she was suggesting combining immigration and citizenship status with another subcommittee but was not suggesting that the Commission not take up these issues. Past Commissions have typically had five subcommittees.

Commissioner Kevin Kim suggested adjusting subcommittee names as needed. For example, if immigration were included in the Language Access Subcommittee, the subcommittee could be renamed Immigration and Language Access.

Commissioner Ives-Ruble suggested broadening the subcommittee on anti-Asian hate to include racism and discrimination, including ableism. Chief Commissioner Shah suggested keeping “hate” in the name, because the Commission will want to inform government actions to address anti-Asian hate.

The Commission established six subcommittees, and commissioners volunteered to chair or serve on each:

- Belonging, Inclusion, and Anti-Asian Hate/Racism
 - **Chairs:** Ms. Blue, Dr. Kalsi
 - **Members:** Ms. Chen, Ms. Huang, Ms. Ives-Ruble, Mr. Daniel Dae Kim, Mr. Kevin Kim, Ms. Qureshi, Ms. Smita Shah, Dr. Underwood
- Data Disaggregation
 - **Chairs:** Ms. Min, Dr. Samoa, Dr. Underwood
 - **Members:** Ms. Chen, Ms. Yang
- Economic Equity

- **Chairs:** Mr. Bhutoria, Mr. Pang, Ms. Smita Shah
- **Members:** Ms. Blue, Dr. Chang, Mr. Doi, Ms. Ka‘uhane, Mr. Kevin Kim, Ms. Poo
- Health Equity
 - **Chairs:** Ms. Batayola, Mr. Doi, Ms. Ives-Ruble
 - **Members:** Dr. Chang, Ms. Huynh, Dr. Kalsi, Ms. Ka‘uhane
- Immigration and Citizenship Status
 - **Chairs:** Ms. Huang, Ms. Yang
 - **Members:** Dr. Agbayani, Mr. Bhutoria, Mr. Pang, Dr. Underwood
- Language Access
 - **Chairs:** Dr. Agbayani, Dr. Chang, Ms. Huynh
 - **Members:** Mr. Bhutoria, Mr. Doi, Ms. Huang, Dr. Kalsi, Mr. Pang

Chief Commissioner Shah said that co-chairs for each subcommittee should prioritize key issues for the subcommittee to address. She recommended considering what is already in progress in government that the subcommittee could inform and what issues are medium or long term.

Ms. Ochiai said that if they wish to bring in outside experts, subcommittees will need to establish criteria for choosing the experts. The chief commissioner recommended that at least one co-chair for each subcommittee work with Ms. Ochiai to make sure they understand the rules.

Topics for Future Meetings

Chief Commissioner Shah said that she had heard interest in presentations from DHS, the EPA, and HUD. She asked about other potential topics for the next Commission meeting.

Commissioner Yang suggested hearing from the Department of State or an agency that deals with immigration policies. Chief Commissioner Shah said that the subcommittee on immigration would be the right avenue for that.

Commissioner Doi said that he would like to hear from the DoD about why it is impeding the Hawaii Department of Health’s efforts at Red Hill. Chief Commissioner Shah suggested holding that discussion through a subcommittee. Ms. Moritsugu added that the subcommittee could likely have the discussion sooner, since the next Commission meeting is not until May.

Commissioner Blue said that she would like to hear from the EPA about efforts to rebuild the agency and its regulations after the previous administration dismantled many of them. She would also like to hear from DHS about addressing issues at the border. Chief Commissioner Shah suggested that DHS could present to both the Commission and the Immigration and Citizenship Status Subcommittee.

Commissioner Chang suggested having the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and NIH discuss reimbursements, funding, and LEP issues.

Commissioner Yang suggested reaching out to White House initiatives on Native Americans or Black communities to combine efforts to dismantle white supremacy.

Commissioner Bhutoria suggested inviting someone like Mr. Ramamurti, someone from the SBA, and someone who could talk about federal grants and contracts. Chief Commissioner Shah said that a subcommittee could engage Mr. Ramamurti and an SBA representative. She suggested adding access to federal grants and contracts to the Commission's broader conversation. Ms. Moritsugu suggested talking to the DPC about access to contracting and equitable grant opportunities across departments.

Commissioner Poo suggested asking the DPC and the Office of Legislative Affairs to talk about White House policy priorities that affect AANHPI communities. Ms. Moritsugu said that a lot of her work centers on ensuring that national priorities are inclusive of AANHPI communities. She liked the idea of including an overview in the next meeting.

Commissioner Kalsi asked whether the Commission could ask members of the AANHPI communities in government, such as the Surgeon General and Representative Andy Kim [D-NJ], to speak. Ms. Moritsugu said that her team can help arrange conversations with administration and congressional leaders.

Commissioner Agbayani suggested talking to the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus about work they are doing related to the Commission's priorities or issues on which the Commission could provide input. Executive Director Ka'ai said that her team would look into how the Commission can engage with elected officials.

Chief Commissioner Shah said that the Commission should remember to engage the RN.

Summary of Day 2 and Next Steps

Sonal Shah, Chief Commissioner

Krystal Ka'ai, Executive Director, White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native

Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders

Chief Commissioner Shah thanked the commissioners for their commitment and engagement. She also thanked the White House team, especially Executive Director Ka'ai, for all of their work and for the consideration that went into ensuring that AANHPI communities were central to each presentation.

Executive Director Ka'ai thanked Chief Commissioner Shah for her leadership and the commissioners for their engagement and their work to narrow down subcommittees. Next steps will include identifying short-, medium-, and long-term goals for the Commission over the next two years. It is important to move quickly on urgent issues but also to address long-term challenges and make change on systemic issues that have long been barriers for AANHPI communities.

The date for the next full Commission meeting has not yet been set, but it will likely be in May, during Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Staff will reach out to subcommittee chairs to schedule meetings. Executive Director Ka'ai said that subcommittee meetings will likely be monthly, although the frequency can vary as needed. Staff will invite speakers and reach out to the IWG and RN. Commissioners can suggest community leaders or experts to participate or speak to subcommittees. The Executive Director thanked Ms. Ochiai for her work to launch the Commission.

Ms. Ochiai said that the team would convene a group of subcommittee chairs.

Adjournment

Ms. Ochiai adjourned the meeting at 5:05 p.m.

In Attendance

Amy Agbayani	Kamal Kalsi
Chiraag Bains	Michelle Ka‘uhane
John Balbus	Daniel Dae Kim
Teresita Batayola	Hannah Kim
Secretary Xavier Becerra	Kevin D. Kim
Ajay Bhutoria	Manjusha Kulkarni
Luisa Blue	Daphne Kwok
Libbie Buchele	Kimberlyn Leary
Phoebe Canagarajah	Rebecca Lee
Kimberly Chang	Morgan Mills
Paul Chang	Sarah Min
Victoria Chau	Erika L. Moritsugu
Emily Chen	Alondra Nelson
Kristen Clarke	Tung Nguyen
Kerry Doi	Elijah Nishiura
Melanie Fontes Rainer	Emmeline Ochiai
Tessie Guillermo	Esmeralda Orozco
Vice President Kamala D. Harris	Jacqlene Palmer
Grace Huang	Simon Pang
Victoria Huynh	Shilpa Phadke
Mia Ives-Rublee	Lisa Pino
Krystal Ka‘ai	Ai-jen Poo
	Naheed Qureshi

Ben Raju

Karthick Ramakrishnan

Bharat Ramamurti

Rachel Rossi

Raynald Samoa

Smita N. Shah

Sonal Shah

Ambassador Katherine Tai

Chiling Tong

Robert A. Underwood

B. Cameron Webb

Adrienne Wiley

Lanlan Xu

John C. Yang

KaYing Yang

Appendix: Miro Board Highlights

Details of Commission discussions on Day 1 and Day 2 were captured on [Miro boards](#).

Frame #1: Items on which the commissioners would like additional information to inform the development of recommendations:

- A list of culturally specific organizations to address domestic and sexual violence
 - <https://www.api-gbv.org/resources/directory-api-services/>
- Studies from Asian Americans Advancing Justice slides on hate crime perpetrator statistics
 - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7790522/>
 - https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.nafcm.org/resource/resmgr/images/anti_asian_racism.pdf
 - <https://stopaapihate.org/national-report-through-september-2021/>
- Slides from Dr. B. Cameron Webb presentation on COVID-19 pandemic
- Invite Dr. John Balbus and Office of Climate Change and Health Equity to a future subcommittee
- Data on government agency knowledge of groundwater contamination in Hawaii
- How to create an interagency group to look at groundwater in Hawaii
- List of resources or a directory of community funds for specific projects
- Immigration policy enforcement as a way to target Asian communities
- How to gain local community input on the Commission's topics and connect community groups with federal resources
- Information on affirmative action and the Supreme Court case that impacts our communities (multiple requests)
- Department of Interior input on Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) issues
- Data sample sizes and methods for data collection on disaggregated data

- More knowledge of government agencies and their agendas
- Contacts for data disaggregation across government agencies
- Interagency Working Group (IWG) departments of agencies for websites for languages
- Dissemination of language resources and use of budgets

Frame #2: Issues that need to be flagged for further inquiry:

- Deportation (H-1B visas, etc.)
- Whether data collection/health impacts research addresses injury prevention (anti-Asian hate)
- Rebuilding trust on immigration issues and informing local law enforcement policies on immigration
- Whether language or rhetoric used by administration contributes to increases in anti-Asian hate incidents and crimes
- Whether there are connections between surges in white nationalism and international political events
- Groundwater contamination in Hawaii
- Regional concerns to submit to Commission

Frame #3: Establishment of subcommittees to develop recommendations for the full Commission's consideration:

- Language Access
- Data Disaggregation
- COVID-19 and Health
- Healthcare Access
- Health Equity and Chronic Diseases
- Anti-Asian Hate
- *Economic and Small Business*

- Immigration
- Human Trafficking and Other Forms of Exploitation (labor, gender-based violence, others)
- Disinformation and Misinformation in AANHPI Communication Streams
- Environmental Justice
- AANHPI Diversity and Equity in the Military

Frame #4: Selection of subcommittee chairs and commissioners who will serve on the subcommittees

This topic was not discussed on February 3.

Discussion #1: Additional information needed to inform recommendations (continuation from Day 1)

Conversation on Day 2 expanded the list of information requests and topics of concern or consideration raised by the commissioners:

- What is the purview or range of influence of commissioners?
- Request from the Regional Network a list of community groups by region.
- Request catalog of agencies collecting disaggregated data from the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy.
- Briefings from agencies about their outreach plans
- DHS efforts to provide redress to the fear and other harms that communities experienced during the previous administration
- Information from the Department of Housing and Urban Development on its equity plan, specifically with regard to the Federal Housing Administration program
- A briefing from the Department of Justice (DOJ) on cybercrime (including as a precursor to physical hate crimes)
- Information on religion and other intersections with anti-Asian hate (i.e., attacks on Sikh and Muslim communities)

- Briefings from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Department of Health and Human Services, and other agencies to understand what information is currently being gathered on groundwater contamination.
- Data disaggregation relevant to transracial and transnational adoptees (including the aspect of trafficking)
- How are data being collected on primary language use?
- Implementation of language access mandates
- Where in government is forecasting and future trends modeling happening? Consider requesting input from the Urban Institute.
- Commissioners would like to explore how to find better disaggregated data on access to benefits for low-wage workers.
- Intersectionality of data collection (i.e., How is the intersection of factors tracked, for example, race/ethnicity, veteran status, living in a rural area, etc.?)
- How does the federal government hold state and local entities accountable regarding the implementation of data disaggregation? Request input from local government.
- Additional information on the diversity of AANHPI communities is requested.
- What are federal agencies doing to expand the collection of diversity data? (Census, Internal Revenue Service, etc.)
- What are the different ways in which federal agencies are collecting data (what forms, etc.)?
- Existing agency equity plans and data disaggregation plans would serve as a good baseline for making recommendations and setting priorities. (Subcommittees can request a briefing.)
- Consider the impact of geographical differences when making recommendations. (Consider holding regional forums to better understand this aspect.)
- Involve organizations already working in this area when developing recommendations.
- Usable government data for local groups (IWG).

- Compiling a list of resources to help community organizations access government data and understand data collection is a priority.
- Less-frequently spoken languages as special focus of language access
- Include the Compact of Free Association states in the Commission's recommendations.

Discussion #2: Issues for further inquiry (cont.)

Commissioners expressed interest in the following topics, questions, and potential collaborators for subcommittee work:

- Invite the Department of the Treasury's Community Development Financial Institutions Fund to discuss the lack of data collection from AANHPI communities.
- Invite Dr. Ramakrishnan to work with the Data Disaggregation Subcommittee to develop recommendations.
- Given the vast scope of the federal government, how can the Commission promote consistency in data collection across agencies?
- Are there data on whether or how often federal agencies collect data in-language?
- How can language access be expanded when the bar for providing translation is legally tied to the number of speakers?
- Breadth of medical school training on limited English proficiency issues
- What requirements does DOJ place on its own grantees regarding language access plans and training?
- Federal approach to English-as-official-language state laws
- Can DOJ/OCR make recommendations for community organizations to get reimbursement for language access services (i.e., in healthcare settings)?
- How are federal and state/local language access requirements and approaches aligned?
- Invite DoD to brief the Health Equity Subcommittee regarding groundwater contamination and explore how to best communicate concerns to DoD and the Navy.
- Invite the Department of State.

Discussion #3: Establishment of subcommittees (cont.)

Commissioners debated which topics belonged in the purview of each subcommittee. Ultimately, they determined that each subcommittee would determine the scope of its mandate through further discussion. Commissioners made the following suggestions:

- Include human trafficking and exploitation, COVID-19, environmental justice, healthcare access, and health equity in the context of chronic disease in Health Equity Subcommittee discussions.
- Include AANHPI diversity and equity in the military in Belonging, Inclusion, and Anti-Asian Hate/Racism Subcommittee discussions.
- Disinformation and misinformation in AANHPI communication streams was not explicitly placed in any subcommittee's mandate.

Discussion #4: Selection of subcommittee chairs

- **Belonging, Inclusion, and Anti-Asian Hate/Racism Subcommittee:** (Co-chairs) Luisa Blue, Kamal Kalsi; (Members) Emily Chen, Grace Huang, Mia Ives-Ruble, Daniel Dae Kim, Kevin Kim, Naheed Qureshi, Smita Shah, Robert Underwood
- **Data Disaggregation Subcommittee:** (Co-chairs) Sarah Min, Raynald Samoa, Robert Underwood; (Members) Emily Chen, KaYing Yang
- **Economic Equity Subcommittee:** (Co-chairs) Ajay Bhutoria, Simon Pang, Smita Shah; (Members) Luisa Blue, Kimberly Chang, Kerry Doi, Michelle Ka'uhane, Kevin Kim, Ai-jen Poo
- **Health Equity Subcommittee:** (Co-chairs) Teresita Batayola, Kerry Doi, Mia Ives-Ruble; (Members) Victoria Huynh, Kimberly Chang, Kamal Kalsi, Michelle Ka'uhane
- **Immigration and Citizenship Status Subcommittee:** (Co-chairs) Grace Huang, KaYing Yang; (Members) Amy Agbayani, Ajay Bhutoria, Simon Pang, Robert Underwood
- **Language Access Subcommittee:** (Co-chairs) Amy Agbayani, Victoria Huynh, Kimberly Chang; (Members) Kerry Doi, Grace Huang, Kamal Kalsi, Ajay Bhutoria, Simon Pang

Commission Discussion and Approach for Developing Recommendations

Other topics for consideration:

- Dissemination of information:
 - Given the Commission’s goal of strengthening relationships between government and AANHPI communities, the Commission should consider how to communicate the importance of this moment and convey the message that this administration is working to help AANHPI communities.
 - The Commission would be wise to give thoughtful consideration to how it disseminates information, not simply requiring individuals and organizations to go to certain websites but also tapping word-of-mouth networks and otherwise pushing information out to communities.
- Access to government resources can be rendered unequal because of the time required to translate announcements and other materials, including forms and other information about grant and aid programs. The Commission should consider ways to educate and make recommendations to agencies about eliminating this disparity.

Future Topics

Commissioners expressed interest in hearing from the following agencies or groups on the following topics at a future meeting of the full Commission:

- EPA regarding the current status of environmental protection activities deprioritized during the Trump Administration
- DHS regarding the current handling of issues at the border and other immigration concerns
- Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the National Institutes of Health regarding reimbursements, funding, and services for individuals with limited English proficiency
- Sister White House initiatives/commissions regarding their priorities in advancing racial/ethnic equity, justice, and opportunity
- Small Business Administration regarding grants and contracts
- Elected officials, including members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus

- Domestic Policy Council and White House Office of Legislative Affairs regarding White House priorities