



THE COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2007 ADVOCACY AGENDA

According to the 2000 Census, Asian Pacific Americans are by percentage the fastest growing group in New York City, doubling every decade since 1970 and constituting 11% of the City. The Asian Pacific American community is diverse in ethnicities, national origins, languages/dialects, religions, socioeconomic status, and immigration history. In this community, 78% are foreign-born, 28% live in linguistically isolated homes, and 53% are born into poverty.

In New York City, the Asian Pacific American community is being denied vital services due to the inability of the education, child welfare and health care systems to meet their complex needs. Accessing public services is even more daunting for the APA community because of additional barriers related to immigration status, limited English proficiency, poverty, cultural stigmas, and lack of culturally appropriate services.

The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF), the nation's only pan-Asian children's advocacy organization, aims to improve the quality of life for Asian Pacific American children and families by advocating for better policies, funding, and services. CACF works with East Asian, South Asian, Southeast Asian, and Pacific Islander communities through policy advocacy, community education, research, and capacity building. To address the Asian Pacific American community's needs, CACF advocates for the following:

◆ CHILD WELFARE

ENHANCE PREVENTIVE SERVICES

- ◆ **Expand preventive services and child care programs.** Limited slots in preventive services and child care programs make accessing culturally and linguistically appropriate services that much more difficult. ACS must expand the number of slots of existing contracted agencies that can serve the Asian Pacific American (APA) community and/or recruit additional contracted agencies, especially in neighborhoods seeing large growths in their APA population.
- ◆ **Reduce caseloads of contracted preventive service agencies by restoring the \$6.75 million Child Safety Initiative into the city budget.** To keep caseloads down and to keep children safe, the City Council should restore funding for contracted agencies to hire one more staff person.

PROMOTE LANGUAGE ACCESS

- ◆ **Improve language access and cultural competence for APA families.** All services must be language accessible at all points of contact with families. ACS and contracted agency staff must be trained on protocols to utilize translation and interpretation services. Funding must be made available for staff to use language assistance services when needed.

PROVIDE COMMUNITY EDUCATION

- ◆ **Educate the community on services and programs available through ACS.** ACS should develop a public education campaign utilizing multiple strategies, including using Asian ethnic media, participating in community events, and providing public information in multiple languages on how to access child welfare and child care services.

INCREASE COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

- ◆ **Increase capacity and partnerships with APA community based organizations.** ACS should not only build meaningful partnerships with APA CBOs but also commit financial resources for these CBOs to increase their staff capacity. These organizations guide families through a variety of systems, but are often understaffed and underfunded.

◆ HEALTH

EXPAND ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

- ◆ **Expand eligibility for Child Health Plus to 400% of the federal poverty level.** Expanding coverage will allow an additional 72,000 children to have health insurance and can receive essential physical and mental health services.
- ◆ **Increase funding for additional community-based facilitated enrollment centers.** By investing in community-based facilitated enrollment centers in APA communities, limited English proficient individuals are able to apply for public health insurance within their community in a setting that is able to meet their linguistic needs.

PROMOTE LANGUAGE ACCESS

- ◆ **Develop a systematic plan to ensure prompt and efficient translation and interpretation services.** State and city agencies and their contracted providers must create a systematic means, including the timely dissemination of translated materials and the availability of interpreters. Decisionmakers will also be encouraged to explore alternative funding and reimbursement options for translation and interpretation services.
- ◆ **Implement a monitoring system to ensure that prompt and efficient translation and interpretation services are being offered in all health care settings.** State and city agencies and their contracted providers must create a monitoring system of their policies and procedures to ensure that existing policies provide access to vital public services which are linguistically appropriate to meet the needs of the Asian Pacific American community

PROVIDE CULTURALLY-COMPETENT AND LINGUISTICALLY-APPROPRIATE MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- ◆ **Improve affordability and availability of mental health programs.** Outreach must be implemented in multiple languages and dialects to explain the cost of services, languages in which services are available, and rights of immigrants to access services. A reimbursement program to provide services for uninsured, undocumented patients must be created. The APA community must be educated on the availability of the means to access translation and interpretation services.
- ◆ **Increase funding to community based organizations (CBOs) that provide mental health programs.** Increased funding will help CBOs hire bilingual and bicultural staff to match the demographics of the neighborhoods they serve, allowing individuals to receive appropriate care in their communities.

◆ EDUCATION

INCREASE SUPPORT FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL)

- ◆ **Increase city and state funding to properly support ELL programs and services.** Funding per ELL student should be double the amount of the general per capita student funding. Programs include bilingual, dual language and ESL classrooms taught by certified teachers. Services include sufficient guidance counseling, supplemental educational services, access to small schools and special programs.
- ◆ **Develop new small schools targeting ELLs and ensure that other small schools are not shutting out ELLs.** With the DOE's move to dismantle large, failing schools and open new small schools in their places, it is imperative that ELLs have the ESL and bilingual programs available to them in these schools.
- ◆ **Develop proper assessments for English language acquisition and grammar knowledge, and an alternative assessment for the English Language Arts Regents for recent immigrants.** The NYS Regents need to ensure the development of an assessment that accurately measures the progress of ELLs and an alternative to the Regents exam will give recent immigrant students an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge without having to be compared to native speakers.

PROMOTE LANGUAGE ACCESS

- ◆ **Implement a monitoring system to ensure schools and DOE departments are implementing the Chancellor's Regulations.** The system will provide oversight and an accountability measure to ensure implementation of the regulations at schools and offices.
- ◆ **Develop formal partnerships that include financial support with community based organizations that can assist schools with translation and interpretation needs of families.** Many families often turn to CBOs for assistance in translating school information and acting as interpreters. However, CBO staff has had to stretch their time to assist families in addition to regular staff obligations and responsibilities.

ELIMINATE SCHOOL HARASSMENT

- ◆ **Improve the dissemination of the Discipline Code to students and ensure that students are part of the process, giving them opportunities to give input and making them fully aware of their rights and responsibilities.** Students need to understand what is expected of them. For students to have buy-in on following the code, there needs to be real opportunities to have input.
- ◆ **Implement mandatory staff training on identifying, intervening, and preventing harassment.** When staff is given the tools and the responsibility to address harassment, incidents can be prevented and addressed immediately.
- ◆ **Develop a reporting system to track in-school and out-of-school incidents involving students.** Reports on incidents will help school staff better plan for prevention and intervention strategies.
- ◆ **Increase opportunities for the development of student-led programs that support diversity and cultural understanding.** When students are involved in the process, especially middle and high school students, they also become committed to understand and support diversity.

IMPROVE TEACHER RECRUITMENT

- ◆ **Identify and recruit more educators and administrators from the APA community.** The DOE should include in all traditional and nontraditional recruitment plans a piece targeted to the APA community. The DOE must work with community leaders to design and carry out that plan. The DOE should also create partnerships with universities to recruit candidates and work with state and federal funding to offer financial assistance to bilingual candidates.

INCREASE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN CURRICULAR REPRESENTATION

- ◆ **Convene a taskforce to develop an Asian Pacific American curriculum.** The taskforce could work with the DOE to develop pieces that would be in line with the current high school social studies curriculum. The taskforce can also help identify professional development opportunities for educators to incorporate APA perspectives into existing curriculum.

◆ YOUTH SERVICES

INCREASE COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO PROVIDE CULTURALLY-COMPETENT AND LINGUISTICALLY-APPROPRIATE YOUTH SERVICES

- ◆ **Enhance the capacity of immigrant youth programs to carry out activities in academic, social, and cultural development, in a linguistically and culturally competent manner.** Increased funding will help these CBOs meet the language and cultural needs of immigrant communities and develop programs specific to the demographics of the neighborhoods they serve, allowing youth to receive appropriate care in their communities.

INCREASE ACCESS TO SUPPORTS THAT REDUCE POVERTY AND ECONOMIC AND LEGAL BARRIERS IMMIGRANT FAMILIES EXPERIENCE

- ◆ **Integrate family-focused case management into immigrant-serving youth development programs.** Over 50 percent of immigrants live in low-income households and have difficulty gaining access to the human services needed to thrive in New York City. Immigrant-serving community based organizations are essential to identifying challenges that immigrant families face, and offering the assistance needed to meet their basic needs. Youth development programs currently serving immigrant youth will provide case management services to improve parental access to housing assistance, public health and mental health services, financial literacy services, and ESOL classes for parents.