



# White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

FALL 2010

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Welcome to the Fall Edition of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Newsletter!

Stay on top of the Initiative's latest activities and events.

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## President's Advisory Commission Inaugural Meeting and Swearing-In Ceremony

September 20-21, 2010

Washington, D.C.

The President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) held its [inaugural meeting](#) on September 20th and 21st. The Commission was established by Presidential Executive Order 13515 to advise the President, through the Secretaries of Education and Commerce, on the development and implementation of strategies designed to improve the quality of life and opportunities for AAPIs through increased access to and participation in federal programs where they remain underserved. [Seventeen commissioners](#), representing a diverse cross-section of the AAPI community, met with Admini-

stration officials and strategized on key issues including economic development, healthy communities, sustainable neighborhoods, civil rights, and educational opportunities. The Initiative also co-hosted a reception with Rep. Mike Honda, Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus, to introduce the Commissioners to community leaders and federal representatives.



Arne Duncan, Initiative Co-Chair and Department of Education Secretary, meets with Commissioners (Image Credit: WHIAAPI)

## White House Gulf Coast Philanthropic Briefing

September 13, 2010

Washington, D.C.

Since deploying Initiative staff to the region, the Initiative has been working with community leaders to address language barriers and promote community and economic development projects.



Philanthropic, community and Administration leaders discuss funding opportunities for the Gulf at the Dept. of Treasury (Image Credit: WHIAAPI)

As part of our efforts, the Initiative and Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP) [convened philanthropic and private sector leaders](#) to address the ongoing needs of Southeast Asian American communities in the Gulf Coast that were disproportionately impacted by the BP oil spill. With participation from the White House Office of Social Innovation and Civic Engagement and the Economic Solutions Team within the National Incident Command, attendees discussed the need to invest in community based organizations that serve as first responders and community-led recovery projects. While federal agencies continue to work with local communities and BP on recovery efforts, participants acknowledged that the devastation of the Gulf Coast necessitates innovative partnerships that connect national resources to local communities.

## Native Hawaiian Outreach - Hawai'i

"It is our job in the federal government to find and promote AAPI community solutions, strengthen them, and replicate them across all of our communities."

- Audrey Buehring  
Advisor on Intergovernmental Affairs, White House Initiative on AAPIs

In October, the Initiative traveled to Oahu, Hawai'i to conduct over 35 site visits and attend the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement's annual convention.

"We are assets," Commissioner Kamuela Enos stressed during the inaugural meeting of the President's Advisory Commission on AAPIs. While in Hawai'i, I came to fully understand just what he meant.

At MA'O Organic Farms, we found **economic assets**. MA'O is located in the most food-insecure region of Hawai'i. It embraces the Native tradition of working the land to provide high-demand healthy foods and aids community through its community college internship program: providing monthly stipends, tuition, and leadership development. While MA'O grows, its community grows too.

At Kokua Kalihi Valley's nature park and Wai'anae Coast Comprehensive Health Center, we found **health assets**. Where invasive plant species and drug abusers once plagued the state park, community gardens sit thick with vegetables and natural medicines. While Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders suffer from high rates of diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, WCCHC provides culturally competent care that ranges from modern preventative care to traditional Native Hawaiian healing practices.

At the Waikalua Loko fish pond, we found **environmental assets**. Overrun by mangrove, the fish pond can no longer be harvested for mullet. Yet youth and at-risk community members have helped rehabilitate the fish pond as they learn *aloha 'aina* (love of the land) and principles of stewardship.

At Wai'anae High School, we found **educational**



Tanya Joshua and Audrey Buehring visit Searider Productions.  
(Image Credit: WHIAAPI)

**assets**. Despite the high drop-out rates, Wai'anae High is home to Searider Productions, a nationally-recognized, award-winning integrated multimedia program, where young people design their own websites, create audio and visual productions, and learn marketing strategies. The Searider program has become so successful that it has spawned Makaha Studios, a highly sought-after local media enterprise formed by Searider graduates.

These programs are just the tip of the iceberg – one-tenth of our experience in Hawai'i. But the same theme persisted throughout our visit: **Native Hawaiians' and Pacific Islanders' heritage, culture and traditions are vibrant assets to the country.**

At the CNHA convention, with over 150 Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander community organizations, the message was clear: Our communities have solutions, and it is our job in the federal government to find and promote these solutions, strengthen them, and replicate them across all of our communities.

Audrey Buehring is Advisor on Intergovernmental Affairs for the White House Initiative on AAPIs

## U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Roundtable

September 16, 2010  
Washington, D.C.

As part of our effort to build strong relationships between AAPI community leaders and senior agency officials, the Initiative convened its sixth agency roundtable with the EPA. Assistant Administrator and Initiative IWG member Mathy Stanislaus presided over a lively and thought-provoking discussion on a range of environmental justice issues: support for rural Hmong farmers; protections against health and work-related environmental risks for nail salon workers; Southeast Asian American fishing communities in the Gulf Coast; and urban farming projects in AAPI communities. Following the [roundtable](#), the community participants produced a set of recommendations that EPA will utilize to inform its Initiative agency plan and other efforts.



(Image Credit: WHIAAPI)

# Interagency Implementation Team (IIT) Meetings for the Interagency Working Group

**August 4, 2010 and September 23, 2010  
Washington, D.C.**

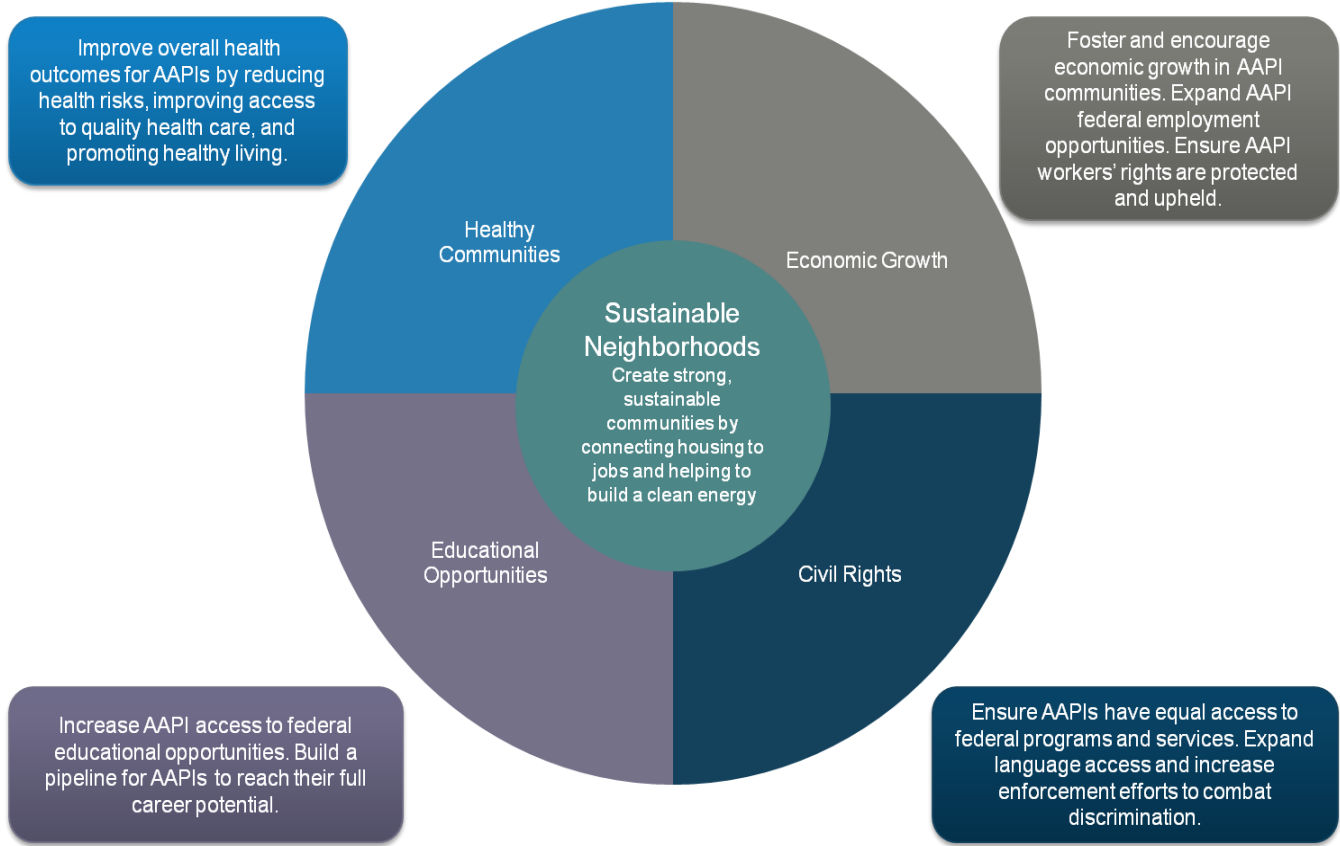
The Initiative prioritizes five major areas (see chart below): **Civil Rights, Economic Growth, Educational Opportunities, Healthy Communities, and Sustainable Neighborhoods**. Each issue area has its own strategic priorities and goals. During the meetings (of the Implementation Team for the [Interagency Working Group](#) of the White House Initiative on AAPIs), federal agency officials work together to align agency goals with Initiative priorities and community recommendations. Data collection and disaggregation of AAPI subgroups and increasing opportunities and pipeline programs for AAPIs in federal government careers are examples of issues tackled during these meetings. Currently, agencies are drafting their plans, which will be utilized to fulfill the Initiative’s man-



(Image Credit: Teng Yang)

date of improving access to and participation by AAPIs in federal programs where they may remain underserved. The Initiative anticipates publishing agency plans online for public comment in the coming months.

## White House Initiative on AAPIs: Priority Issue Areas



# Southern California AAPI Community Roundtables

**October 20-21, 2010**

**Los Angeles and Long Beach, California**

Initiative Executive Director Kiran Ahuja and Commissioner Sefa Aina convened four community roundtables. These were the first in a series of regional roundtables across the country that the Initiative will launch in January 2011. Approximately 100 community leaders from 60 organizations, along with regional federal agency officials discussed issues facing AAPIs in Southern California. These types of roundtables serve as the Initiative's primary community outreach vehicle to inform federal agencies on issues affecting AAPI communities, encourage AAPI participation in federal programs and services, and ensure that the federal government is effectively addressing the needs of AAPI communities.

Community leaders provided a broad range of [recommendations](#): from improving civil rights enforcement and addressing

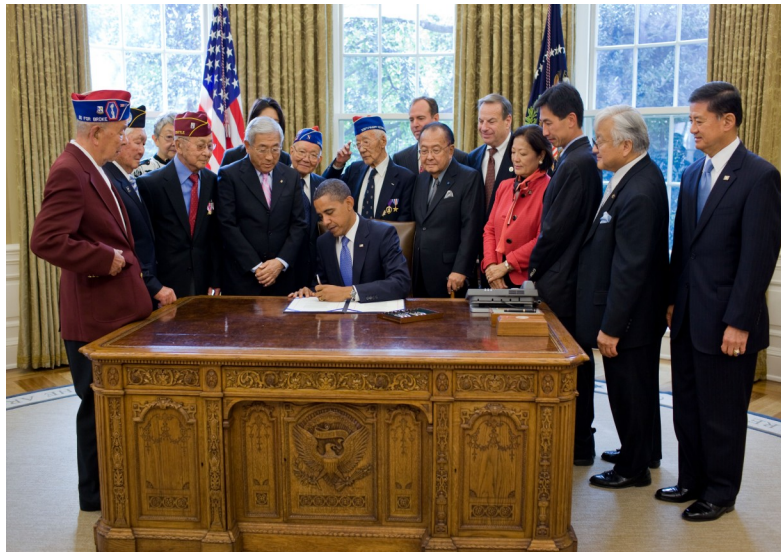
health disparities and the lack of culturally competent health services, to fostering greater engagement in education and reducing the number of Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander youth in the criminal justice system. The Departments of Education, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security and Labor joined the roundtables.

A cornerstone of the Initiative and Commission is promoting access and engagement between the AAPI communities and federal agencies. The Initiative will launch its community engagement tour in January 2011. **Next stop: San Francisco/Oakland Bay Area, California, January 2011.**

From Left: Miya Saika Chen, Kiran Ahuja, and Commissioner Sefa Aina engage with AAPI leaders. (Image Credit: Search to Involve Pilipino Americans)



## Spotlight on the Oval Office: Congressional Gold Medal Awarded



President Obama signed S.1055 in the Oval Office on Oct. 5, 2010. The bill awarded the Congressional Gold Medal to the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team for their dedicated service during World War II. Read about the [Awe-Inspiring Chapter in America's History](#). (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)

# Gulf Coast Community Leader Workshop

**August 23, 2010**

**New Orleans, Louisiana**

As President Obama stated, his Administration will do everything we can to “support the community and everybody whose livelihoods have been imperiled down in the region.” The Initiative is committed to ensuring communities in the Gulf region have the resources they need to rebuild their lives after the BP oil spill. In partnership with Congressman Anh “Joseph” Cao, the Initiative hosted a day-long Gulf Coast Community Leader Workshop with 40 community leaders and federal agency officials in the Gulf region. Focusing on the Southeast Asian American

and other limited-English proficient communities, participants identified ongoing challenges: community capacity, economic and workforce development, behavioral health, and financial literacy. Additionally, federal agencies helped demystify the process of accessing federal resources and agency relief efforts. Following the workshop, the Initiative and federal agency officials went on a community-led bus tour through the historic New Orleans East neighborhood where thousands of Vietnamese Americans have lived since arriving in the U.S. as refugees in the 1970s and 80s.

**“Contrary to the model minority myth, segments of the AAPI workforce still experience workplace abuses.”**  
**- Rozita Lee**  
**President’s Advisory Commission on AAPIs**

# AAPI Worker Rights Hearing with Labor Secretary Hilda Solis

**September 25, 2010**

**Las Vegas, Nevada**

The Initiative, Commissioner Rozita Lee, and the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) co-sponsored the first Las Vegas Area AAPI Workers’ Rights Hearing. The program was part of APALA’s national effort to increase opportunities for AAPI workers in accessing government resources and programs, and strengthening workers’ rights locally and nationally.

one of the fastest growing AAPI populations in the country.



(Image Credit: APALA)

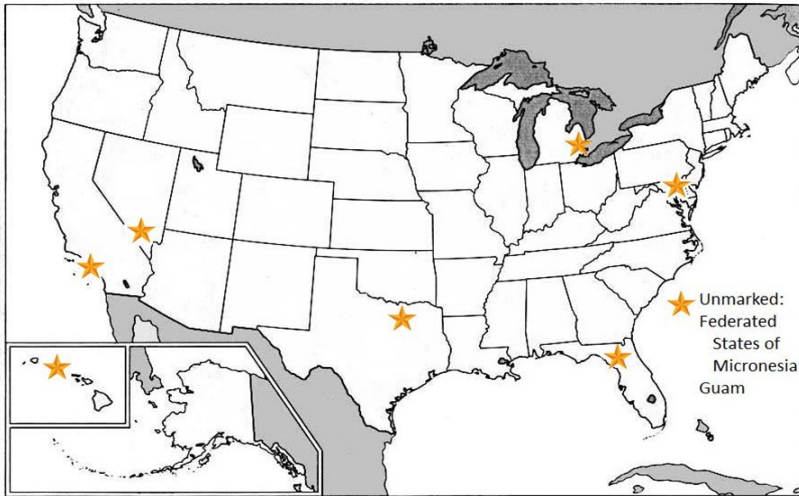
Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis addressed the 300 attendees and confirmed her commitment to advocate on behalf of AAPI workers, and all workers. Workers testified before a diverse panel of labor and community leaders. AAPIs represent one of the fastest growing segments of the U.S. workforce, and Nevada is home to

## \*\*\* Upcoming Events \*\*\*

**Conference on Research and Data** on **December 10th and 11th, 2010** in Washington, DC. Leading researchers, institutions and federal officials will discuss innovative research methodology, data collection, and disaggregation of racial and ethnic data. For more information, email [todd.culliton@ed.gov](mailto:todd.culliton@ed.gov).

**Summit on Entrepreneurship and Small Business Growth** kick-off on **January 7, 2011** in Mountain View, CA. The Initiative and President’s Advisory Commission, in partnership with the White House Council of Economic Advisors, Department of Commerce, and Small Business Administration, will host a series of convenings to educate AAPIs on federal resources available to small businesses and entrepreneurs and the Administration’s economic recovery efforts. For more information, email [miya.chen@ed.gov](mailto:miya.chen@ed.gov).

# Some Places We've Been...



Asian Pacific American Legal Center, Los Angeles, CA

Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement Convention, Honolulu, HI:

AAPL Violence Community Network  
Alu Like  
Dept. of Housing and Urban Development and Dept. of Agriculture  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Youth Office  
Hawaii'i JobCorps  
Hawaii'i State Supreme Court  
Hawaiian Civic Clubs  
Hawaiian Fish Festival  
Hawaiian Leadership Reception

Hawai'inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge

Hawaii'i Relations  
Ka'ala Farms, Waianae  
Kimo Kaloi, Interior Office of Kōkua Foundation  
Kokua Kalihi Valley, Ko'oulu 'Aina  
Kuhio Park Terrace  
Leeward Community Colleges,  
Pearl City and Waianae  
Ma'O Organic Farms  
Office of Hawaiian Affairs  
SeaRider Productions, Waianae  
H.S.  
University of Hawaii'i, Manoa  
Waianae Coast Comprehensive

Health Care Center  
Waikalua Loko Fishpond  
Western Pacific Regional Fisheries Council and other fisheries

Filipina Women's Network - 7th Filipina Leadership Summit, Las Vegas, NV

Guam Communications Network, Long Beach, CA

Michigan Council of Asian Pacific Americans: 2010 Statewide Leadership Summit Novi, MI

Minority Institutions Technical Assistance Conference, Dallas, TX

National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development Washington, DC

Payuta Inc. Non-Profit Congress, Guam

Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, Island Food Community of Pohnpei, the College of Micronesia, the Micronesia Conservation Trust, the Conservation Society of Pohnpei, and the USDA Rural Development

Search to Involve Pilipino Americans, Los Angeles, CA

SERCAAL Southeast Regional Conference of Asian American Leaders, Gainesville, FL

South Asian Network's 20th Anniversary Dinner - Journey to Justice Continues, Los Angeles, CA

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