



Asian American Federation
of New York

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 14, 2001

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Asian American Federation Launches Coordinated Relief Initiative for Asian American Community in New York City

Relief efforts, impact study in Chinatown; resources for South Asian, Filipino communities

December 14th, New York – The Asian American Federation launched a comprehensive Relief, Recovery, and Rebuilding Initiative today to focus upon the various needs of the Asian American community resulting from the September 11th tragedy in New York City.

Mr. Cao K. O, Executive Director of the Asian American Federation, stated, “Thousands of Asian Americans have been impacted in the aftermath of September 11th.” The economy of Manhattan’s Chinatown is in danger, while bias, economic hardship, and counseling needs have become the top priorities of other local Asian American communities. Mr. O continued, “This Initiative is the first significant step towards a coordinated response to ensure that the relief and recovery efforts in New York City include the Asian American community.”

The Federation has raised nearly \$800,000 from the McCormick-Tribune Foundation, the September 11th Fund, and through the Federation’s own WTC Fund. The Initiative, which includes a partnership with 4 community-based organizations, will establish a community service center in Manhattan’s Chinatown, and help to coordinate outreach and relief services in the South Asian and Filipino American communities. It also includes an economic impact study of Chinatown and a related documentary. Finally, a significant percentage of the funds have been earmarked for assistance to needy individuals, for which the Federation will announce eligibility criteria early next year.

The press conference was held at the Chung Pak Senior Housing Center, the site of a new multi-service community relief center for Chinese Americans affected by September 11th. David

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Chen, Executive Director of the Chinese–American Planning Council, who will operate the site, explained that caseworkers will help affected individuals to navigate and apply for existing relief programs and will provide access and referrals to other services such as crisis counseling, Emergency Medicaid, and employment–related services. Thousands of residents in Manhattan’s Chinatown suffered significant wage reductions and many have lost their jobs since September 11th. Chinatown Manpower Project (CMP) will conduct employability assessments of community members who have lost jobs or suffered from decreased wages since September 11th. The service center is located on 96 Baxter Street, and will operate on **weekdays from 9 AM - 5 PM**, beginning on **Monday, December 17th**.

The South Asian community has also suffered from September 11th, with economic hardship, fear of backlash and bias, and emotional impact identified as some of the most pressing concerns. The New York Asian Women’s Center will hire a new case worker to conduct outreach and coordinate various community relief efforts and services in the Bangladeshi, Indian, Pakistani, and Indo–Caribbean communities. Similarly, Filipino American Human Services (FAHSI) will help to coordinate outreach and relief efforts for affected Filipino Americans.

The Federation also announced that it is conducting a comprehensive study to document the economic impact of September 11th on Manhattan’s Chinatown. The study will collect quantitative and qualitative evidence from a variety of sources to examine the extent of the impact on the principal industries of Chinatown, which include garment manufacturing, restaurant, retail and tourism. The Federation is currently finalizing the institutional partners and research plan for the study. Discussions have already begun concerning the rebuilding of the World Trade Center site and the new economic direction of New York City. Mr. O stated, “The Asian American Federation will work to ensure that our community is included in all stages of the rebuilding dialogue. The interim report and completed study will be critical in that effort.”

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The Asian American Federation is a not-for-profit leadership organization with 36 member agencies that serve the diverse Asian American communities in the New York Metropolitan area. The Federation’s Relief, Recovery and Rebuilding Initiative was established with support from United Way’s September 11th Fund and the McCormick –Tribune Foundation to coordinate services and address unmet community needs in the aftermath of the events of September 11th. For more information about the Initiative, contact Parag Khandhar at (212) 344-5878, ext. 18 or parag@aafny.org. Visit our website: www.aafny.org.