



# HOPE AGAINST HATE

## Immediate Safety for Asian New Yorkers

Asian Americans are the fastest-growing population in New York City, and at 1.3 million people, are 16% of the city's overall population. However, despite being on the frontlines of the fight against COVID-19, with many risking their lives as healthcare and essential workers, Asian New Yorkers are now being subjected to heinous and violent racial attacks, scapegoated for the very pandemic they have helped to fight. Even as we acknowledge that these cited figures are a fraction of the actual number of incidents — capturing only 10-30% of all incidents (due to drastic under-reporting as a result of multiple barriers), **the surge in anti-Asian violence has led to 3,800 incidents nationally, and over 1,100 incidents in New York City alone — the city with the greatest number of assaults in the U.S.**

The Asian American Federation (AAF) is fighting Asian hate by launching an immediate response to safeguard Asian New Yorkers — the **Hope Against Hate Campaign**. As a landmark and progressive solution to respond to and stop attacks on vulnerable Asian New Yorkers, the campaign will:

- **Centralize the reporting of bias incidents through an in-language reporting tool in order to connect victims to the services they need.**

This reporting tool would be available through a web-based portal, texting platform, and/or an app to facilitate the ease of reporting. Information about the reporting tool and the necessity of reporting would be disseminated through ethnic media and texting platforms widely used by Asian communities, such as WeChat, KakaoTalk, and WhatsApp.

- **Establish safety ambassador programs in Asian-majority neighborhoods** in Manhattan, Brooklyn, and Queens. AAF will partner with a number of Asian-led, Asian-serving community-based organizations to create a safety ambassador program, where safety ambassadors will be trained in de-escalation strategies, self-defense techniques, and Mental Health First Aid so that they can serve as a safe, deterring presence in these neighborhoods, escort vulnerable community members in public places, and provide additional safety resources.
- **Establish safe zones in communities throughout New York City** to serve as safe havens for targeted Asian Americans. Partner with local small businesses and faith centers to establish safe zones, where individuals can go to seek help and support if they are being targeted. Safe zones would be clearly marked with an identifiable poster in the window, and owners and workers would be trained to call one of our partnering Asian organizations to support the person being targeted.
- **Set up in-language victim support services**, including an **assistance fund** to help with assault-related expenses and connecting victims

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to **mental health support**. We aim to set up a victim assistance fund to support those who need financial support for medical bills, living expenses, and other assault-related expenses. Our efforts will also include advocating for increased access to victim compensation through the Office of Victims Services and ensuring the fund is also dedicated to restorative justice processes.

Working in partnership with our mental health partners, we will connect victims to culturally competent mental health services and increase the capacity of these providers to address the growth in demand for mental health services due to the stresses caused by anti-Asian racism.

As part of our mental health program, we will continue to push for increased access to mental health services for all communities since perpetrators are sometimes mentally ill and need services so as not to further harm others and themselves.

- **Provide upstander, verbal de-escalation, and physical self-defense trainings in multiple languages.** We will continue to partner with safety experts to provide upstander, verbal de-escalation, and physical self-defense trainings in English, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese to ensure all community members are equipped to watch out for themselves and each other. Our relationships with schools and other impacted stakeholders will help us ensure greater reach and widespread acceptance of the need for community-centered interventions.