



ASIAN AMERICAN FEDERATION

# 2023 POLICY PRIORITIES

MARCH 2023



ANTI-ASIAN HATE  
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT  
LANGUAGE ACCESS  
MENTAL HEALTH  
NONPROFIT SUPPORT

# ANTI-ASIAN HATE

*Vision: Asian New Yorkers have our sense of safety renewed through coordinated, community-centered solutions.*

The continued wave of anti-Asian hate is leaving permanent scars on Asian New Yorkers, impacting how we connect to our neighborhoods and interact with City and State programs and initiatives. In New York City, there were reports of more than 2,700 incidents collected by the Asian American Federation (AAF), Stop AAPI Hate, New York Police Department (NYPD), and the New York City Commission on Human Rights (CCHR) between March 2020 and March 2022, which represents only a fraction of total incidents due to underreporting. Simply put, many Asian New Yorkers are no longer self-isolating because of the pandemic but because of the fear of being attacked, and we are going to our community organizations for help in ever larger numbers.

## **1. Anti-Asian violence and violence against marginalized communities necessitates State funding for the Hope Against Hate Campaign at \$3.5 million in FY 2024.**

In 2021, AAF launched the Hope Against Hate (HAH) Campaign, a coordinated effort of 33 organizations across the state to address anti-Asian violence through community-centered solutions. More than 10,000 New Yorkers participated in anti-violence trainings and youth initiatives in just the first year of the HAH Campaign, and were connected to various victim support services, reporting assistance, and community safety programs. Surveys conducted with HAH Campaign participants have shown that it is positively reshaping their perceptions about public safety. The HAH Campaign provides Asian New Yorkers with safety services—critical work that needs the State’s renewed support.

New York State:

## **2. Maintain New York City support for AAF’s ongoing Hope Against Hate Campaign, including \$400,000 in FY 2024 Partners Against The Hate (PATH) funding.**

Partners Against The Hate (PATH) funding has provided critical support to our HAH Campaign to coordinate proven, ready-to-go actions to increase street safety and provide wrap-around support for victims of anti-Asian violence. This program distributed 10,000 safety resources to community members; provided training in conflict de-escalation and situational awareness strategies to over 700 small business owners, employees, faith centers, and other community stakeholders; and connected over 190 bias incident victims to case management services. It is clear that PATH funding is critical to support tangible, in-demand services and programming. The support must continue.

New York City:



# ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

*Vision: Asian small businesses are treated as the critical economic anchors that they are through meaningful engagement and equitable access to funds.*

While immigrant small businesses contribute substantially to our state and city's economy, they continue to be left out of most pandemic recovery efforts. To bridge the gap in outreach and engagement, AAF has been providing critical capacity-building and technical assistance services to help small businesses navigate various challenges, including bureaucracies, inconsistent regulatory enforcement, and persistent language and process inaccessibility. These high demand services must be supported alongside coinciding policy reforms that put our immigrant small businesses first.

## **1. To ensure an equitable recovery effort, policymakers must invest in culturally and linguistically appropriate engagement with immigrant small business communities.**

Onerous eligibility requirements, lack of clear and concise information, and inaccessible grant administrators continue to place working capital out of reach for our small business owners. To address these challenges, implementation plans for new programs or policies and uniform inspections as well as follow-up processes must focus on language access for immigrant small businesses.

State & City:

## **2. FY 2024 State Budget should commit at least \$25 million for a State Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Fund to increase access to capital for underserved small business communities.**

Time and again, immigrant small businesses have been unable to access traditional funding streams or build relationships with mainstream lending institutions. And yet, these institutions were tasked to disburse assistance funds. Their limited interactions with our communities further handicapped our small businesses' recovery efforts. CDFIs are critical in addressing these inequities and must be supported with State funding.

New York State:

## **3. The FY 2024 New York City Budget must increase funding for place-based projects such as the Avenue NYC program to support immigrant small businesses through place-based efforts.**

Prioritizing participation by trusted community-based organizations in place-based development efforts can ensure economic recovery efforts are inclusive and equitable. Placemaking programs like NYC Small Business Services' Avenue NYC program have been particularly helpful to immigrant communities disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and the City Council should prioritize CBOs in commercial corridor revitalization efforts.

New York City:



# LANGUAGE ACCESS

*Vision: Asian immigrants are treated as integral community members and provided with accurate and timely in-language information on program support and resources.*

The Asian population has increased by almost 38%, growing from over 1.5 million in 2010 to just over 2.1 million in 2020, making up 11% of our state's total population. In New York City, the Asian population has grown to nearly 18% of the total population. Despite the misperception that we live in just a few major enclaves, Asian Americans make up at least 10% of the population in 34 of the 51 City Council districts. Moreover, many Asian New Yorkers are immigrants, with two out of three being foreign-born. Of those Asian immigrants, 30% arrived in or after 2010.

Additionally, language barriers remain disproportionately high among Asian New Yorkers. Almost 40% of Asians living in New York State have limited English proficiency, compared with a statewide average of 13%. And nearly 50% of Asians living in New York City have limited English proficiency, compared with a citywide average of 23%.

## **1. Amidst rapid growth in Asian communities, the State must pass legislation that would expand existing State language access policy.**

Language access is the most often cited barrier between Asian New Yorkers and the critical services they need. The State must pass legislation that would not only expand the number of languages under the State's language access policy but would also focus access efforts on the community most in-need of these services, immigrants who have arrived within the last five years. Furthermore, legislation must expand the ambit of State language access requirements across State agencies, require biennial evaluations of languages requiring translation based on Census and American Community Survey data, and provide for regional flexibility so different areas of the State can serve the growing languages in their own communities.

Passing legislation to these effects would show that the State is committed to ensuring immigrants have access to support and services they need to succeed in New York State.

# MENTAL HEALTH

***Vision: The pan-Asian community and other communities of color are fully empowered to deal with the mental health crisis that the COVID-19 pandemic and anti-Asian attacks have intensified.***

As Asian New Yorkers grapple with the effects of a historic increase in anti-Asian violence, the fallout from continued economic insecurity, and the accompanying stress and anxiety, demand for mental health services is far outstripping the capacity of our community-based mental health providers.

Since 2017, the Asian American Federation (AAF) has been advocating for increased linguistically- and culturally competent services for Asian New Yorkers. In partnership with our member organizations in 2021, our mental health programming resulted in 13,000 Asian New Yorkers gaining access to mental health services from providers who speak their language and understand their unique cultural needs. In 2022, AAF released the first-ever online mental health provider database that prioritizes providers who speak Asian languages and understand Asian cultures, with over 100 providers currently in the database. This work, and the work of our community mental health providers, needs support more than ever before.

## ***1. Increase funding for the Immigrant Health Initiative and the Mental Health for Vulnerable Populations Initiative to support mental health across Asian and other marginalized communities.***

In FY 2023, six AAF member organizations received funding from either the Immigrant Health Initiative or the Mental Health for Vulnerable Populations Initiative, but the public requests for mental health programs are growing exponentially. Funding must increase to not only support existing clinical and non-clinical mental health services, but to also expand dedicated mental health staffing with a focus on bilingual staff retention and increased case management services that require significant staff capacity.

New York City:

## ***2. Introduce legislation requiring City mental health programming to report outcomes to increase transparency regarding program efficacy and community access.***

Trusted service providers cannot meet increasing mental health service demands if they are constrained by single-year funding that prevents long-term planning and fails to address the increased costs of culturally competent and bilingual staff retention. There is also little data reporting on the efficacy of ongoing City mental health efforts aimed at Asian New Yorkers. While our mental health providers continue to adapt to meet the rising demand for their services, the City Council must pass legislation aimed at collecting data on the outcomes of existing City mental health efforts. This information will provide critical transparency and inform how City resources should be better spent to focus on providing equitable access in Asian and other marginalized communities.

New York City:



# NONPROFIT SUPPORT

*Vision: The gap between the demand for services from AAPI community-based organizations (CBOs) and the lack of capacity is reduced substantially with State and City capacity-building support.*

The Asian American Federation (AAF) represents more than 70 Asian-led, Asian-serving member nonprofits who serve 1.5 million Asian New Yorkers and their multitude of direct service needs. While these organizations cope with increased demand for services across sectors, they lack continuous financial support from the State and City for organizational capacity and programmatic services. The median total allocation from FY 2023 City Council Initiatives was less than \$260,000 for thirty-four member organizations, barely enough to maintain operations, and State funding was no better. Policymakers must invest in long-term capacity building initiatives for our community organizations that serve the fastest-growing community in our City and State.

## **1. As a part of the \$66.5 million NY State AAPI Equity Budget Proposal, the FY 2024 State Budget must increase social service funding from \$20 million to \$40 million for AAPI organizations.**

With FY 2023 State AAPI- social service funding, AAF will be supporting more than 100 Asian-led, Asian-serving organizations across the State. Key upstate cities and Long Island have seen significant growth of Asian Americans. While having grown by 34% in New York City from 2010 to 2020, our community also grew by more than 30% in Rochester and by more than 140% in Buffalo. The FY 2024 State Budget must increase this funding to not only reinforce these critical capacity investments, but also to identify and support new organizations.

New York State:

New York City:

New York City:

## **2. Protect City Council Initiative funding aimed at supporting AAPI direct service providers.**

AAF member organizations received allocations from more than 40 City Council initiatives in the FY 2023 City Budget. For many organizations, City Council discretionary support is often the only funding for their work. Amidst potential budget cuts, the City Council must protect funding streams under its discretion that support critical language-accessible and culturally competent programming and services that serve the poorest New Yorkers across all service sectors.

## **3. Maintain the Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund (CCNSF) at the FY 2023 level, \$3.7 million.**

The CCNSF has proved instrumental in prioritizing the CBOs that have been most impacted by inequitable funding systems to build critical infrastructure. As a technical assistance partner in FY 2023, AAF has provided leadership development programs for staff at organizations serving marginalized communities. The City Council must continue to support this critical funding.





**Asian American Federation**

**For more information, please contact:**

**Jo-Ann Yoo**

Executive Director  
joann.yoo@aafederation.org  
(212) 344-5878 | ext 217

**Joo Han**

Deputy Director  
joo.han@aafederation.org  
(212) 344-5878 | ext 226

**Ahyoung Kim**

Director of Economic Empowerment  
ahyoung.kim@aafederation.org  
(212) 344-5878 | ext 220

**Ravi Reddi**

Associate Director of Advocacy and Policy  
ravi.reddi@aafederation.org  
(212) 344-5878 | ext 220

**Daphne Thammasila**

Associate Director of Programs  
daphne.thammasila@aafederation.org  
(212) 344-5878 | ext 200

**Lisha Luo Cai**

Advocacy Coordinator  
lisha.luocai@aafederation.org  
(315) 512-5471 | ext 349

Cover Photo: Sheng Lin