



June 16, 2006

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The Honorable John Kerry
Ranking Member, Committee on
Small Business and Entrepreneurship
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510-6350

Dear Senator Kerry:

Thank you for your letter requesting information on the progress of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI). I am pleased to provide you with the following summary of major activities and steps being taken by the WHIAAPI to help ensure equal access to Federal programs for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI).

Major Activities

- The Commission has held community meetings and/or conducted technical assistance workshops in seven localities: Chicago (IL), Los Angeles (CA), Oakland (CA), Fairfax (VA), Raleigh (NC), San Francisco (CA), and Honolulu (HI). Technical assistance workshops provide capacity training and outreach to local community organizations and individuals regarding services available through federal agencies. Eight additional workshops are planned in Philadelphia (PA), Tampa Bay (FL), Cleveland (OH), Las Vegas (NV), Minneapolis (MN), Phoenix (AZ), New York City (NY), and Boston (MA).
- The Commission has also conducted 14 community site visits across the country. During these visits, Commissioners make detailed observations and collect testimonies from local community members and organizations. These findings help identify community priorities and steps that can be taken to help improve conditions for that community. The final report to the President will be based on themes highlighted during these visits. Site visits have been conducted in New York City – both Manhattan and Queens (NY), Chicago (IL), Los Angeles (CA), Tampa Bay (FL), Philadelphia (PA), Las Vegas (NV), Phoenix (AZ), Oakland (CA), Baltimore (MD), Houston (TX), Honolulu (HI), Boston (MA), and Raleigh (NC). Future site visits are planned to Seattle (WA) and Minneapolis (MN).
- WHIAAPI Commissioners have conducted three assessment visits to the Gulf Coast, and have sent to the White House a report of how Federal services can be improved for the region's AAPI communities.

Select Findings and Steps Being Taken to Ensure Equal Access for AAPIs

- In FY 2005, the number of Small Business Administration (SBA) loans to AAPI communities in the United States increased by 33.7 percent, a record level.

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- The Census Bureau recently reported that the number of Asian-owned businesses grew at more than twice the national average for all businesses between 1997 and 2002, and totaled more than 1.1 million firms. These Asian-owned firms generated over \$326 billion in revenue and employed more than 2.3 million people.
- Working with SBA and SCORE, the WHIAAPI signed a Memorandum of Understanding to bring more resources and counselors to assist AAPI-owned firms in the United States. In coordination with a small business development center funded by SBA in Chicago, IL, the WHIAAPI has committed resources to translate SBA materials into various Asian languages so they are accessible to AAPIs with limited English proficiency.
- Through the Interagency Working Group (IWG), the WHIAAPI has begun developing a Web-based federal reporting tool so federal agencies can compile and submit their three-year plans for outreach, programs, and services for the AAPI community. These reports will be available to the WHIAAPI, other federal agencies, and community organizations to hold each federal agency accountable to their plans.
- IWG partnerships have been an asset to the WHIAAPI as it develops projects and events. Through these partnerships, the WHIAAPI has established a White House Youth Initiative, sponsored three Opportunity Conferences, and met with researchers at the University of Michigan to work on establishing health baselines for Pacific Islanders.

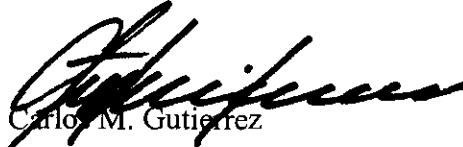
Final Report from the WHIAAPI to the President

The Commission will submit two reports to the President by the end of July 2006. We will be reporting on: progress of federal agencies in relation to the recommendations submitted by the previously appointed Commission; and economic and community development in AAPI communities.

We are also actively working on two additional reports; one on federal services to the AAPI community in the Gulf Coast; and the other on accessibility of Federal programs for Pacific Islanders.

If you like more information on any of these activities, please contact me or Nat Wienecke, Acting Assistant Secretary for Legislative and Intergovernmental Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,



Carlos M. Gutierrez