

Attachment
DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETING FISCAL YEAR 2004 AND FISCAL YEAR 2005
PLANS IMPLEMENTING THE WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON
ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

1. In accordance with Executive Order 13216 Increasing Opportunity and Improving Quality of Life of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), the Department of Veterans Affairs is required to prepare a plan for its efforts to meet the goals of the executive order:

- Improve the quality of life for AAPI through increased participation in Federal programs where they may be underserved and through the collection of data related to AAPI populations and sub-populations.
- Increase public-sector, private-sector, and community involvement in improving the health and well-being of AAPI.
- Foster research and data on AAPI, including research and data on public health.

2. The Administrations and Staff Offices are responsible for submitting consolidated plans for their organizations to the Office of Diversity Management and Equal Employment Opportunity (DM&EEO) by Friday, October 10, 2003. Prior to submission, the appropriate management officials will have concurred in and approved their consolidated plans. DM&EEO is responsible for consolidating the organizations' plans into the Departmental submission.

3. The assignment is to produce two annual plans, one for Fiscal Year (FY) 2004 and the other for FY 2005. The format is straight narrative with headers corresponding to appropriate sections in the Integrated Federal Plan. Please disregard the table format used in previous plans and reports that were submitted to the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

4. The Integrated Federal Plan, authorized by the Federal Interagency Working Group on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, is the guide for developing VA's plans of action. Include activities that can be completed by the end of FY 2004 and FY 2005. Those fiscal years shall be the specified timeframe for achieving the objectives and anticipated outcomes in each of the plans.

5. Succinctly describe planned actions and corresponding anticipated outcomes. Use quantitative and qualitative measures, and limit the length of each description to one page. VA's achievements will be reported later in the Department's annual performance reports for FY 2004 and FY 2005. Provide contact information for each

planned action to include the person's name, person's title, facility address, and telephone number.

6. For additional information, contact VA's liaison with the White House Initiative on AAPI, Carolyn Wong, Staff Director, DM&EEO, by telephone at (202) 501-1970 or via e-mail at carolyn.wong@mail.va.gov. Updates and additional information may be found on the DM&EEO Web site at www.va.gov/dmeeo, as available.

Attachment
THE FEDERAL INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON
ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

The Honorable Claude A. Allen, Chair

THE INTEGRATED FEDERAL PLAN
DRAFT
July 21, 2003

I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

With a total population of 13 million, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) now constitute the third largest minority group in the U.S. However, this aggregate number belies the fact that AAPIs are a diverse population comprised of many subpopulations with distinctive languages, cultures and backgrounds. Asian Americans alone represent one fourth of the nation's foreign-born population or approximately 8.2 million. The dynamics of this large constituency provide challenges and opportunities for policy makers in the government, private and community sectors to provide adequate and appropriate services.

Recognizing the needs in these communities and the potential for the federal government to meet them, President George W. Bush signed Executive Order 13216 in June 2001, committing his Administration to increase opportunities and improve the quality of life for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders through greater participation in federal programs where they may be underserved. To carry out the President's mandate, the Executive Order created the President's Advisory Commission (Commission) and the federal Interagency Working Group (IWG) on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

As required under the President's Executive Order, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has initiated a federal-wide effort by forming the federal Interagency Working Group and has designated Deputy Secretary Claude A. Allen of DHHS as its Chair. Specifically, the IWG is tasked to provide leadership in the overall review and development of federal policies addressing the AAPI populations, particularly in the development of programs and services for AAPI underserved populations. There are thirty-four federal agencies participating in the IWG. Opportunities exist for expanding the reach of the White House AAPI Initiative to the many other federal entities.

This integrated Federal Plan will be a blueprint for action, outlining the federal government's priorities, policies and strategies to serve AAPI communities. It is

intended to steer the federal efforts in implementing the Executive Order through its vision and focus on key issues. Therefore, the integrated Federal Plan will be a living document revisited and updated every two to three years to allow adequate time to measure progress and be flexible to adjust to emerging issues. The integrated Federal Plan will address the subject of building capacity within each federal agency to facilitate programming for and interaction with AAPI communities. The capacity building strategies offered apply to all agencies. This Plan concentrates on three priority areas: health disparities, economic and community development, and federal employment. The key sets of issues were recommended by the President's Advisory Commission on AAPIs, AAPI community leaders, and the WHAAPI Interagency Working Group as most important.

In addition to these priorities, it is important that each agency continue to plan and create programs that address its individual mission and goals. While many problems and challenges cross agency lines, others are individual.

II. FEDERAL CAPACITY

The integrated Federal Plan, as required by the Executive Order, provides federal departments and agencies (agencies) the opportunity to examine the capacity of the Executive Branch infrastructure to serve the needs of the fast emerging but underserved AAPI communities.

A key component and responsibility of the Federal agencies is the formulation and implementation of an annual Fiscal Year implementation plan (implementation plan), as required by the Executive Order. In order to ensure effective implementation of such action plans, federal agencies must make their own assessments as to whether a proactive and effective outreach and implementation infrastructure exists to address the unmet needs of the AAPI populations.

Recognizing that each agency is unique and that every agency has its own missions, programs, services and responsibilities, there will be varying degrees of infrastructure development. It is expected that all federal agencies can be participants in promoting their unique programs and services to the AAPI underserved populations and to continue to promote their respective priorities and initiatives contained in their own annual implementation plans.

The following represents issue areas that agencies should incorporate into their capacity building processes. Many of these measures are taken from examples provided by various agencies. The ones listed are considered crosscutting items and best practices that may contribute to the capacity of other agencies to better carry out their respective missions.

Institutional Considerations:

Dedicated staff

To coordinate the activities of the agencies with respect to internal and external policy and program functions, identified staff must be given appropriate authority and responsibility, as well as situated at an appropriate and centralized level, reporting to key decision makers. Such positioning signifies the commitment of agency leadership to the fulfillment of the Executive Order. It is recognized that agencies and other federal entities vary in size, and may assigned as collateral duties to an existing staff member the internal coordination of the AAPI Initiative. In such instances, the collateral duties must be formally defined as part of the staff designee's portfolio and again be given the appropriate authority to carry out the functions.

Examples: Due to the assignment of a dedicated staff to coordinate activities internally as well externally, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been responsive and proactive in utilizing its programs, services and resources to reach out to targeted groups that would most benefit from its program services. In addition, reports and implementation plans required as deliverables by the AAPI Initiative have been well- coordinated and submitted on a timely basis. Likewise, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has designated an AAPI program manager to coordinate similar activities and the response has been positive and timely.

Internal working group

The establishment of an internal agency working group to serve as an advisory body to assist management and decision makers on internal and external matters, to promote, coordinate and identify the agency's various strengths to better carry out its missions.

Examples: The Social Security Administration (SSA), the U.S. Postal Service (USPS), EPA, and the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), for example, all have either formal or informal internal working groups to respond to the AAPI Initiative and meet on a regular basis to work on a range of issues, including suggesting policy changes and ways to improve outreach to special populations.

Data collection

There is a need to address the area of data collection in regard to the diverse AAPI populations. Federal agencies need to examine how to be inclusive and complete when addressing diverse and complex populations.

Examples: The Department of Commerce's (Commerce) Census Bureau provided a good example of how to collect data on subpopulations during the 2000 Census. The Department of Labor (DOL) also took another step forward in disaggregating

Asian American populations in its collection and reporting of unemployment data by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. (Recently, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission issued a proposal for employers to collect and provide employee data which does not disaggregate below the level of "Asian." Such a proposal creates challenges for the AAPI community, which generally wants data disaggregated by specific national origin, and for analysis of and action to address the needs of specific sub-groups within the Asian-American/Pacific Islander community.)

Language access/Limited English proficiency

Executive Order 13166 on Limited English Proficiency Services directed federal agencies to be responsive to individuals having limited English proficiency (LEP). Eighty-eight percent of the AAPI populations is either foreign-born or has one parent who was foreign-born. There is a great challenge particularly for the newly arrived and seniors to acquire English proficiency. Lack of skills in English is a major barrier to accessing social, human, and health services as well as finding employment.

Examples: DOL has begun the process of translating most of its materials that relate to the safety and rights of workers into different languages as well as providing information in over 100 languages over the phone via interpretation services. SSA also employs telephone interpreting services to serve individuals with limited English proficiency. Many agencies have issued guidance to their federal financial assistance recipients on provision of services to limited English proficient beneficiaries, and a number of them have issued internal guidance for making their own programs and activities available to people who are LEP. These programs are coordinated within the Executive Branch by the Department of Justice.

Building community partnerships

Identify different community organizations and develop working relationships where information exchange is most helpful in understanding current trends and the needs of the community. It is critically important to identify and establish a working relationship with community-based and faith-based organizations that have direct access to the communities.

Examples: DHHS, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), EPA, and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, to name a few, are agencies that have established direct working relationships with AAPI national organizations. These relationships provide agencies opportunities to communicate with various constituency groups, and especially provide "access" to information that is useful and timely.

AAPI serving organizations/institutions

Similar to the point above, identification and incorporations of AAPI serving organizations/institutions would ensure development of relationships between community and federal agencies. There are currently federal recognitions and

designations of “serving institutions” for most minority groups, namely the Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Hispanic Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities and Native Alaskan and Native Hawaiian serving institutions. However, there is currently no federal designation or recognition of AAPI serving organizations or institutions. Although there may not be a formal federal designation yet for AAPI serving institutions, there are federal agencies which have begun to identify AAPI serving institutions and organizations as part of their minority outreach and programming targets.

Examples: The Department of Interior (Interior) and EPA have maintained a list of AAPI serving institutions, those academic institutions with a sizable number of AAPI students. DHHS has developed a definition for minority serving organizations. This information can be shared among agencies and taken further within each agency on the policy and programming level to acknowledge these organizations and their participation in programs.

Regional offices/Federal Executive Boards

The AAPI populations are spread across the country, therefore active participation from federal representatives at the regional and local levels in community activities is the surest way to improve direct service and communications with the AAPI populations at local levels. Federal representatives in the regional offices work and live in the same communities as many of the underserved AAPI populations. Therefore, active engagement by federal regional offices, federal executive boards and the formal federal executive councils would be a way to combine and bring federal resources to where the needs are locally.

Examples: Region IX’s Federal Executive Board has formed various subcommittees to address regional needs - amongst which is a subcommittee on Insular Affairs that addresses health, education, employment and other needs in the outer Pacific region. Region VI also established a joint effort under the name “Team Houston” where federal leadership was provided by EPA, DOL and other counterparts at the state and local levels to target specific needs in AAPI communities. Team Houston was able to raise the level of awareness of hazardous chemicals used in the nail salon industries through utilization of community outreach and ethnic media to disseminate information and communicate with the community. The team approach exhibited in Team Houston is a major success thanks to EPA’s lead. Similar joint efforts could and should be considered in other parts of the country.

Communications Infrastructure:

Website development

A convenient way to access federal information is for one to visit an agency’s Website. Every federal agency should be able to post their respective federal inventories, implementation plans, as well as agency’s programs and services on the

Internet. In addition, translated materials should also be made available for accessibility and convenience.

Examples: SSA, DHHS, and DOL have provided various translated materials as well as their Inventory and Implementation Plan at their respective agency's Website. EPA is one of the first agencies to develop a comprehensive Website devoted to AAPIs (www.epa.gov/aapi).

Media training and database development

There is a need to develop a media database so agencies have the capacity to reach out to different subpopulations in different regions. The White House Initiative's Office will work with respective agencies on establishing an AAPI media database. There are several hundreds publications and broadcast radio and TV programs that serve AAPI subpopulations. Utilizing culturally specific media outlets can be a direct and effective way to communicate and disseminate information to AAPI communities. The White House Initiative's Office can help to coordinate media training sessions for federal agencies on ways to establish and capitalize AAPI communities' media infrastructure.

Translation service sources

Language access is often the common denominator in service delivery. Some good progress has been made by different federal agencies to translate materials into mainly the Spanish language. However, there are limited materials available in many of the Asian languages. More efforts should be made to translate critical materials into languages serving limited English proficient populations. It would be beneficial for the IWG on the AAPI Initiative to work closely with the IWG on LEP headed by the Department of Justice (DOJ).

Examples: The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), SSA and DOL have translated many of their materials into Asian languages. . The USPS developed and distributed materials in multiple languages to explain different postal services to non-English proficient AAPI consumers. An example of the demand in such information on postal services was apparent for the Chinese brochure which was produced and translated during FY 02. Ten thousand copies were initially printed, but in April of 2002, an additional 10,000 copies were added due to demand.

III. CORE ISSUES

A. Health

Often viewed as a "model minority," AAPIs with their low utilization of the U.S. health care system regardless of the availability of health insurance, are generally

perceived as a relatively “healthy” community. When AAPIs are looked upon as a homogenous group, many of its problems, including health status, are masked by aggregated statistics that project a highly successful, well-adapted group. In fact, in addition to great diversity in language, culture and ethnicity, there are also great variations in socio-economic background and educational attainment.

Many factors contribute to the overall health and wellbeing of a community. For AAPI communities, the building blocks to better health outcomes are access to health care, quality of care, healthy living environment, affordable housing, and gainful employment. These factors may not differ from those faced by other communities, however, they can be more difficult to overcome when language and culture are added into the mix. Approximately 75% of Asian Americans speak a language other than English at home. Many rely on Asian language media outlets as their major source of information and would more readily respond to outreach activities conducted in their native languages.

Although AAPIs have had the fastest population growth rate among all racial groups in the last two decades and have made substantial contributions to American society as a whole, very little attention or recognition has been given to this group. Sometimes described as the “silent minority,” issues confronting the AAPI communities are often overlooked by decision makers.

There have been more recent sporadic efforts in including AAPIs in government or privately funded studies, activities and programs. The implementation of the Integrated Federal Plan can facilitate the federal government in taking a more concerted and comprehensive approach to making the health of AAPI communities a public health priority.

Translation of findings into programs

There is growing evidence in the form of research findings, from both government and private studies, that some AAPI subpopulations are disproportionately at risk for certain preventable diseases, and that these subgroups do not adequately utilize preventative screening and regular checkups to lower their risks. The federal government should have a mechanism to efficiently follow through with these research findings by translating them into real programs.

Examples: DHHS’ REACH 2010 Program funded a number of pilot projects, such as the development of a coalition that links the Cambodian community in Lowell, Massachusetts to local health care providers to jointly work on a community action plan to reduce diabetes and cardio-vascular diseases among Cambodians. If the evaluation of this is positive, DHHS should look at the sustainability of this and other comparable community-based projects beyond the pilot federal funding cycle and design requests for proposals to encourage similar efforts in other parts of the country.

EPA effectively used a community-based participatory research approach to identify and understand AAPI issues related to seafood consumption with the goal of customizing outreach and awareness about pollution contaminated seafood. Through an Environmental Justice grant, the Regional Office in Seattle, Washington partnered with the Refugee Federation Service Center and University of Washington to assess the seafood consumption patterns of ten ethnic groups living in the King County area. Three committees were formed, including a community steering committee with representation from each of the ten ethnic groups, as well as two other committees to provide technical assistance and help ensure that the study was relevant and applicable to interested agencies, and local AAPI serving organizations and community groups in King County. This study was a meaningful first step toward engaging the community in an important local health issue and raising awareness of seafood safety and consumption. Since AAPIs consume seafood at a very high rate, this scientific study provided EPA with statistical data to develop effective environmental management approaches to address the potential environmental health risks in AAPI communities.

Employ multidimensional and multilingual approach to public health education and outreach

Traditional beliefs, health practices, geographic locations and socioeconomic backgrounds all play important roles in a community's health status. The federal government should move beyond merely providing translated printed health materials as the only way of outreach to the AAPI communities. Ethnic media outlets, community-based organizations big and small, as well as faith-based groups should all be legitimate and effective partners in the promotion of health messages. Overall, there are opportunities for departments with offices/programs targeting rural communities, outer Pacific, etc. to coordinate their resources to maximize their efficiency. Also, there are missed opportunities to work with ethnic media outlets to promote federal resources and messages. Only one or two examples were cited by agencies that used community media to conduct outreach.

Examples: In terms of use of technology, agencies such as Commerce, through its National Telecommunications Information Administration Office, funds the PEACESAT project which provides satellite service to remote areas of the Pacific regions. Its Public Telecommunications Facilities Program and Technology Opportunities Program offers competitive grants to provide public television and radio again to remote Pacific regions.

DHHS-Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (ODPHP) funded the development of a Web-based health information search site, (healthfinder.gov), with a site devoted to Asian Americans and Native Hawaiians and Other Pacific Islanders. The site also provides links to quality online multilingual materials.

The DHHS-Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), Office of Rural Health Policy provided rural health outreach grants to promote utilization of telemedicine networks to provide mental health care.

With respect to utilizing community media, DHHS-Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) paid for the production of 30-second spots on television in the Korean language to talk about Medicaid and Medicare benefits.

EEOC keeps an updated list of community media outlets and maintains a regular working relationship with them. EEOC's concerted effort to include community media as their major outreach avenue is perhaps a good model for other departments to follow.

DOT's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reaches out to AAPI communities with a message of using safety belts, installing child seats properly, and avoiding driving under the influence.

Emerging AAPI communities need basic information on various government and private resources to help build capacity to meet their own community's needs

Many smaller and mid-sized AAPI organizations in emerging AAPI communities are struggling to provide services to meet their community's needs. These organizations could benefit greatly from technical assistance and training either directly from federal government or entities that receive federal funds to specifically provide technical assistance to help smaller groups build capacity.

Examples: National AAPI organizations such as the Alliance of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO), the National Asian Women's Health Organization (NAWHO), the Asian Pacific American Health Forum (Health Forum), and the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA) were funded by DHHS and other federal agencies to conduct various forms of technical assistance, developed TA supportive materials, etc. Such grant funded opportunities should include language to ensure that there is sufficient outreach to add new groups from emerging communities to the outreach list. Assistance to the emerging groups may differ from those of established communities, and requests for proposals should look at how best to help these groups to access the basic information on entitlement programs for their constituents as well as move organizationally to a level where they can qualify to apply for federal funds.

Forge strategic intra-governmental partnerships to map out action steps to address common concerns

Agencies should take full advantage of existing interagency working groups established on shared agenda, such as the IWG on AAPI, IWG on LEP, IWG on Insular Affairs, and IWG on Environmental Justice to actively look for

opportunities to share information on program activities, model programs, and form strategic partnerships to maximize program reach.

Raise awareness of the needs of AAPI elderly, new immigrants, the disabled, refugees and children

Limited English proficiency is a factor in many immigrant families, members of the disabled community, seniors and refugees living in substandard housing under crowded condition in urban areas.

Many adults face limited job options and their children are enrolled in low performance school systems. Immigrant families with disabled members, either of school age or adults, are often faced with the daunting task of negotiating the system to find out what resources are available for their family members.

Without adequate programs to help with expanding economic opportunities and improving living condition, access to basic services and better educational opportunities cannot be achieved for these segments of the populations.

Examples: DHHS-National Institute of Health/National Institute of Child and Human Development (NIH/NICHHD) had a \$3 million project to conduct The New Immigrant Study, a long term survey of legal immigrants (including AAPIs) to monitor their adaptation to the U.S. and assess changes in health status, economic status, education and well-being over time. It would be helpful to make these findings better known amongst all program decision makers and design corresponding programs.

B. Economic and Community Development

Also critical in addressing the subject of increasing opportunities and improving the quality of life of a community is the area of economic and community development. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders exhibit great diversity in this area as well with a bimodal distribution of those who are doing well and those who are struggling on a daily basis. Poverty rates in some AAPI subpopulations, such as Native Hawaiians, other Pacific Islanders and Southeast Asians are above that of national average. The federal government has tremendous resources at its disposal. Included below are areas of programs and services where federal agencies should place emphasis to include the AAPI communities.

Economic Development

The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in the AAPI community. According to statistics from the Small Business Administration (SBA), of all minority owned businesses, 30% are owned by AAPIs. Approximately 1/3 of Asian owned firms employed over 2.2 million people generating \$46.1 billion in payroll. Many of these businesses would benefit greatly from the wide range of federal programs and services

that would help them grow their businesses, gain access to capital, and strengthen their business network.

The following represents areas where the AAPI communities could receive additional attention:

Financial education programs

Many in the refugee and new immigrant communities may not possess the knowledge to fully utilize the U.S. financial system. Things as simple as building up one's credit history in order to apply for personal loans, and saving for children's college education and retirement can be difficult for immigrants to grasp. To teach new immigrants basic financial literacy is a direct way of helping the community to move toward self-sufficiency.

Examples: The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) Money Smart program developed a train-the-trainer curriculum in Chinese and Korean to teach basic financial literacy and is being actively promoted in the Chinese and Korean communities.

Partner with CBOs to assist small business development

Businesses in general are going through an economic slowdown. Small business owners in the immigrant and refugee communities, in particular, who are still adjusting to life in America, are having an even tougher time to rebound. By partnering with CBOs to overcome language and cultural barriers, critical technical assistance can be offered to these communities to help pull them through tough times, or help immigrants start business ventures to build a stronger economic base.

Examples: SBA's district offices have been very proactive in the local level where its staff conduct seminars and training to promote SBA programs and services, such as 8(a) certifications, loan guarantee programs, capital access and such. FDIC is also noted for its active role in engaging with AAPI organizations to gain a better understanding of the credit needs of various communities.

Another good example of partnership with national CBOs was Commerce's award to the National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (CAPACD) to study the challenges and needs of distressed communities. The report was completed and released in 2002. It would be logical for Commerce to take the lead in reviewing the findings in a timely manner and working with CBOs to determine the best strategies to address issues identified in the report. Best strategies oftentimes involved more than one agency. Other agencies that have programs that directly help with economic development are Department of Treasury (Treasury), Interior- Office of Insular Affairs, and Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Procurement and contracting opportunities

Outreach efforts of all offices for small and disadvantaged businesses at each federal agency should be broadened to include AAPI businesses. To make the outreach effort more effective, agencies can send bilingual staff to conduct such outreach or provide translated handouts to supplement an English-only training. In particular, agencies such as the General Services Administration (GSA) should be very proactive in expanding their roster of federal qualified contractors by reaching out to small businesses to educate them on how to obtain federal certification. Data needs to be kept showing which small and disadvantaged businesses with which the agencies have relationships are owned by AAPIs.

Examples: EPA and Department of Transportation's (DOT) respective Offices of Small and Disable Business Utilization (OSDBU) provide technical assistance, one-on-one counseling, and training seminars specifically targeting the AAPI communities who wanted to do businesses with their agencies.

The USPS Supply Management met with the U.S. Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce to discuss and set goals for increasing access to business/contract opportunities for Asian own businesses.

Promotion and assistance on export and import development

Similarly, programs designed to help the import or export sides of businesses will greatly benefit AAPI business owners who may not know such federal resources are available.

Examples: USDA's sponsored program, the Processed Food Institute at San Jose State University provides technical assistance to and prepare small and medium-sized Hispanic-owned processed food companies to sell their products to domestic/overseas markets. The same program can be adapted to help the AAPI businesses.

English Language Acquisition/Employment training/vocational training

Immigrants and refugees with limited English proficiency often times found themselves stuck in low end jobs with very few prospects for advancement. Better paying jobs such as those found in the construction field are beginning to open up to minority groups. There needs to be more federal funded programs on workforce development type programs to diversify employment opportunities for the AAPI communities so they are not stuck in for example, service industries where the pay is lower.

Examples: (DOT's Federal Highway Administration has such programs to reach out to the minority community.)

One of the major goals of the Department of Education and the No Child Left Behind Act is to increase the English Language Proficiency of all students. To meet

that goal, the department is providing states with new tools to increase oral and written language proficiency in English, ensuring higher academic standards, highly qualified teachers and annual assessments for Limited English Proficient students, including AAPI students. Under *No Child Left Behind*, the academic progress of every child will be tested in reading and math, including those learning English. Test results will be disaggregated by several categories, including limited English proficiency. The Department is also involved in research to identify and implement in the classroom the best ways for students whose first language is not English to learn to speak, read, and write English in a fluent manner. OELA has begun three studies on the reading skills process associated with AAPI languages and alphabets, including a study on the "The Transfer of Literacy Skills from Languages with Non-Roman Script to English" (these languages include Chinese, Korean, Arabic, Khmer and Lao). The Pacific Resources for Education and Learning also has a Reading and Language Mastery Research Program, as a part of its effort to improve teaching of reading to Pacific Islander students.

Develop community cultural heritage to diversify economic base

Help AAPI communities in preserving and promoting valuable cultural heritage as resources to attract tourism dollars to the community.

Examples: The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), and the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) have programs to help community preserve and promote their heritage. NEH funded the University of Wyoming to use the site of WWII Heart Mountain Relocation Camp as means of teaching about the history of Japanese American internment during that period of the U.S. history. The NEA supported a Cambodian American non-profit in Maryland to organize workshops and a festival of Khmer arts to strengthen a coalition of traditional artists to sustain the development of their communities.

Interior's National Park Service provides annual financial assistance to Territories and Freely Associated States of Micronesia to survey, inventory and develop nominations to the National Register and to develop preservation programs.

The USPS continues to develop products that will appeal to AAPI cultural heritage. This year, 2003, is the 11th year that the Postal Service issues a commemorative Lunar New year stamp.

Community Development

Many new immigrants and elderly, especially those who do not possess the language skills or a reliable form of transportation, tend to congregate in urban ethnic enclaves. Some of these urban neighborhoods do not have the most desirable living environment. They either suffer from the extremes of urban blight or development pressure. Both scenarios indicated a lack of urban planning to address community

development in a comprehensive manner by looking at public safety, affordable housing, support services, and environmental concerns.

Work with key private sector entities to develop senior housing and affordable housing

In the federal level, HUD has the most programs that award funds to either build new housing or rehab existing housing stocks for low income senior as well as low and moderate income families. However, agencies such as the Federal Housing and Finance Board (FHFB) and FDIC through their community reinvestment programs and other mechanisms either requires or encourages the banking system to make low interest loans available for development of affordable housing. As the pre-eminent housing expert for the federal government, HUD can take a leadership role in coordinating federal agencies and striking up key partnerships with Freddie Mac, Fannie Mae, CAPACD, the National Realtors Association, and such, to work on the common goal of providing safe and affordable housing for the community.

Examples: Programs within HUD that hold great potential to expand community development are the Economic Development Initiative Special Purpose Grant (EDI), Section 8 Rental Certificate Program, the Section 202 program, and Section 811.

Senior services and public transportations

AAPIs' needs in housing and other supportive services are increasing tremendously. In many communities, the waiting list for affordable senior housing is inordinately long. Older adults who reside with their grown children in the suburbs are often isolated and have no reliable way of getting around especially to health care facility. Senior housing development with language and cultural consideration will greatly alleviate this pressure.

Examples: Some very successful examples of HUD-funded senior housing developments that are occupied by predominantly AAPI seniors with linguistically and culturally appropriate supporting services can be found in Houston (Rainbow Village), Seattle (Kawabe Memorial House and Legacy House), Boston (Quincy Tower).

Rural development and housing

Although not too many AAPIs on the mainland reside in rural areas, there is a great need of assistance for rural developments and other infrastructure needs for Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders in rural areas.

Technical assistance and community capacity building initiatives

Agencies such as HUD, Commerce, Treasury, Interior, USDA, should look into ensuring technical assistance and capacity building programs are reaching organizations serving AAPIs. One way to assure more effective outreach is to work closely with CBOs via a more formal avenue by entering Memorandums of

Agreement with the individual national groups. As mentioned in the Federal Capacity section, agencies should begin to identify institutions and organizations providing services to AAPIs, and include them in programs that target minority serving institutions, such as HUD's Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPC) which funds institutions of higher education to collaborate with community partners to conduct business development, cultural programs, etc.

Examples: DOL Women's Bureau and SBA are respectively working toward identifying AAPI organizations to develop formal cooperative agreements and broadening outreach efforts to AAPI communities.

C. Federal Employment

The federal government is about to enter into a unique period with regard to the federal workforce. It is expected that during the next five to ten years, a massive number of current federal employees, particularly those in senior positions, will qualify for retirement and/or will be taking their retirement. This scenario presents an unprecedented opportunity to plan for the future makeup of the federal workforce.

Of the approximately 2.45 million civilian federal employees, there are approximately 134,000 who are AAPIs, which represent about 5.4 % of the overall federal workforce. AAPIs hold 4.5% of white-collar positions, 7.5% of all professional positions, and approximately 3.2% of administrative positions government wide. Broken down further by grade level, 26.87% are at Grade levels 1-8, 36.53% are at Grade levels 9-12, and 25.32% at Grade levels 13-15.

While these aggregate numbers appear on the surface to be fairly positive, they are quite misleading when one conducts a deeper analysis of the statistics, since representation varies considerably by agency and level. For instance, one agency, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), accounts for half of the total AAPI federal employees. AAPIs make up of 4.43% at the GS-14 level and 5.92% at the GS-15 level, however only 2.3% of AAPIs are at the senior pay levels.

In order to provide for a greater talented federal workforce and one that is diverse, federal agencies should take into consideration of the unique contributions, AAPIs can provide. Perhaps, it's most fitting to address the President's mandate to "increase opportunities" is to have AAPIs in direct employment in the federal workforce.

Following are several suggested themes, which, when implemented by the respective federal agencies, would provide greater attention and opportunities in recruitment as

well as upward mobility for AAPIs. (However, it should be noted that, under OMB guidance, an increasing percentage of federal jobs will be contracted out. Thus, the number of federal employees may actually decrease in future years. Employment opportunities in work for the federal government may be primarily as contractors and contractor employees.)

Create a uniform standard for collecting and reporting employment data to ensure relevant analysis can be made on the federal workforce

At the present time, employment data is collected by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and is registered in their Central Personnel Data File (CPDF) database. Agencies are also required to submit additional reports dealing with Federal employment issues to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). There is no uniform reporting standard in place, which makes it difficult to generate fair and accurate comparisons among agencies. OPM and EEOC should work together to review the data that is being gathered for the CPDF and to revise or add other data fields as necessary to have useable information.

Succession planning

With a large number of employees reaching retirement age over the next 5-10 years, it is crucial that each agency have a plan in place to ensure that the needs for a diverse workforce are met. Several factors that should be taken into consideration when devising these plans are deficiencies that will result within each grade level, under- representation, or lack of representation in certain occupational categories.

Examples: One innovative approach currently being implemented is the diversity data system that was developed at VA to monitor and analyze human capital needs. Under their system, employment data is extracted from the CPDF and then sorted to generate a series of reports broken down by different criteria. The vast number of different reports allows VA to look at all different arrays of employment data.

Develop a pipeline of qualified AAPI employees for upward mobility

Current federal employment numbers on AAPIs are stagnant in the middle grade levels. Largely, they are within the professional or white-collar levels, and often times, do not rise into the ranks of managerial positions. This is due to various reasons, some of which may include cultural differences and other institutional causes. To maximize training and enhance skill sets, agencies should consider allowing various opportunities for AAPIs to be involved in different assignments and special projects, as well as rotation programs, and special assistant positions for exposure to diverse working experiences.

In addition, other formal training should include recruitment and development of AAPIs into special management training programs, including the Federal Executive Institute and OPM's management development seminars.

Examples: DOL, in partnership with OPM and the Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) conducts an annual Asian Pacific American Federal Career Advancement Summit. This conference focuses on the need to attract, select, and advance Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in the public service. Specific workshops target developing new skills that are needed in higher-level positions, as well as preparing individuals for senior executive positions.

The USPS AAPI Steering Committee sponsored three Leadership Conferences respectively in Flushing, NY, the San Francisco Bay Area, and Los Angeles. These conferences were meant to showcase AAPI leadership within USPS and to encourage AAPI postal employees to actively seek opportunities to move up the career ladder.

Develop mentoring opportunities

Agencies should develop mentoring opportunities where AAPI employees in lower grade levels can be matched up with those in higher-grade levels. It is important that an aggressive outreach effort be made to ensure AAPI employees are made aware of the benefits of mentorship programs. Federal AAPI employee organizations such as FAPAC and the Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN) can provide that partnership opportunity for agencies to pool mentors and mentees.

Examples: USDA is about to launch its new USDA Mentoring Program. This program will last for one year and official time of up to five hours per month will be allowed for mentoring relationships. The broad objectives of the program address three categories: development, diversity and improving morale. Specifically, the program seek to promote diversity within the Department to assist mission areas in meeting their goals of improving employment and advancement opportunities for all employees; supporting cultural changes that are occurring with the implementation of new programs and other major changes within the Department; assisting employees in becoming more knowledgeable and better equipped to advance within the Department or within their mission area; improving present job skills and abilities of employees in managerial, supervisory, and non-supervisory positions; improving morale of all participants by providing satisfying experiences through participation in the program; supporting career enhancement by providing employees with resources, guidance and networking; supporting the orientation of new employees; and improving communication among the diverse workforce at different grade levels and in different mission areas within the Department.

Develop recruitment and hiring strategies to reach the AAPI market

When recruiting for potential AAPI federal employees, it is important to consider multiple avenues to disseminate job postings that reach the broadest audience. Agencies can accomplish this by 1) developing a database of AAPI organizations that can receive postings and then further distribute them among their various

contacts; 2) posting all employment opportunities in ethnic media outlets; and/or 3) creating partnerships with AAPI professional organizations where openings can be circulated among their members. Also helpful in college recruitment efforts is targeting of institutions with a large concentration of AAPI students. As noted above, federal recognition of AAPI serving higher education institutions would allow a natural focus for college recruitment efforts.

Examples: Interior maintains an updated list of AAPI serving institutions to facilitate targeted recruitment among students in schools with a high AAPI population. In addition, several operating divisions within Commerce have partnered with AAPI organizations like the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) to attend career fairs held during their annual conferences. DOT's Federal Transit Administration disseminates job postings to many AAPI organizations and attends various AAPI job fairs and conferences. As a result, six AAPIs were hired.

Create a centralized AAPI Job Bank

Create a centralized job bank where AAPI individuals can submit and update their resumes to federal agencies. This would act as a one-stop location for hiring managers who are looking for qualified AAPI candidates. The job bank would include both federal employees as well as individuals from the private sector who may be looking to join the federal government. OPM should consider developing such a project or provide partnership opportunities with an AAPI federal employee organization to manage that process.

Internship program

Many agencies provide paid and unpaid internship opportunities as a recruitment effort as well as to expose students to different experiences at the federal level. As an additional tool in the recruitment of AAPIs into the federal workforce, efforts should be made to recruit AAPI student directly from academic institutions and community-based organizations that coordinate the different internship programs.

Examples: Several agencies like Commerce, the Transportation Security Administration, DOL, VA, and DOT are doing an excellent job of implementing internship programs. For example, Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao started a student internship program at DOL to provide students with the opportunity to learn about how federal government agencies operate and to interact with the leaders of various agencies within DOL. Students participate in weekly brown bag lunch discussions, attend agency presentations, and work on projects assigned to them by their agency. Previous interns have had opportunities to work in a variety of areas, including public affairs, speechwriting, and outreach programs.

Address AAPI concerns among the SES ranks

AAPIs are most underrepresented at the Senior Executive Service (SES) ranks. Out of the over 6,000 SES positions in the federal workforce, 2.3% are AAPIs. OPM is in the process of re-designing the SES Candidacy Development Program. It is

important during this re-designing process, that AAPIs are included in the discussions and development of such programs, helping to ensure diverse representation. In addition, SES selection panels should be as inclusive as possible. AAPIs who are already at the SES level should be encouraged to participate on these panels.

Develop and utilize bilingual position descriptions, especially for individuals that fill front line positions dealing directly with the AAPI population

All agencies should be encouraged to hire bilingual staff in order to ensure culturally competent services can be delivered, where necessary. This is especially true for agencies that provide direct services to the public. Staff who are capable of providing services in more than one language are an asset. In addition, qualified bilingual staff can also serve as translators for written materials that should be produced in AAPI languages. It should be noted that classification difficulties may arise when performance of programmatic tasks are mixed with translation and interpretation tasks.

Examples: EEOC has included language skills as a qualification for positions where these skills are required, most notably for the critical enforcement positions in field locations. Also, DOL's Occupational Safety and Health Administration has hired employees in their regional office with language proficiency in many Asian languages. Furthermore, SSA has hired a large number of headquarters and field staff with bi-lingual skills to assist in outreach, translation services, and interpreter services for claimants.

IV. EVALUATION/PROGRESS

Many indicators need to be taken into consideration for a comprehensive assessment of the integrated Federal Plan. Since the Federal Plan is intended to give guidance to the agencies in the development of their individual Fiscal Year Plan, one reliable way to measure progress is to evaluate the agencies' individual Fiscal Year Implementation Plans. The WHIAAPI Office intends to modify the set of instructions for the preparation of individual Implementation Plans to correlate with the goals laid out in the Integrated Federal Plan. It is important to agree on baseline information that will be used to measure progress. It is recommended that the agencies' 2001 Federal Inventories be used as the baseline data for evaluation purposes. Quantitative indicators such as the change in level of participation in federal programs, contracting opportunities, and federal employment statistics should be evaluated over time. Activities undertaken to generate long term impacts such as policy changes and expansion of agency capacity to reach out to AAPI communities should be described and monitored. (In the long term, it would be desirable for the Federal Integrated Plan to be written in the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA) Format, so that it is consistent with agencies' performance and strategic plans, which must be

written in that format. The GPRA format includes identification of strategies, objectives, and measurable outcomes.)

V. CONCLUSION

This integrated Federal Plan attempts to highlight the subject areas most deserving of federal attention when addressing the fast growing Asian American and Pacific Islander populations. It outlines practical approaches to addressing many of these issues - ranging from how federal agencies are able to communicate with this constituency group to actual programs and services that should be emphasized to ensure increased participation of AAPIs.

Overall, the integrated Federal Plan provides the basis that each agency should incorporate into its Fiscal Year Implementation Plan. These subject areas should be key focuses wherever they are applicable to programs and services at each respective agency. However, given the unique mission of each federal agency, other agency-specific priorities should not be excluded from the Implementation Plans.

To effectively implement these efforts requires the participation of all federal agencies involved. As noted earlier, substantial opportunities exist for the involvement of the many other federal entities not currently involved with the WHAAPI. This commitment will ensure that we address the President's mandate to serve those who are most in need and hardly reached, so that no one is left behind.

APPENDIX

Attached is a listing of sample programs and services taken from the federal inventories submitted by the 32 federal agencies that reflect the four key points contained in this Federal Plan: federal capacity & infrastructure; health & health disparities; economic and community development; and federal employment.