

California's Asian Pacific Islander Organizations Celebrate Day of Inclusion by Launching Campaign to Promote Participation in 2010 Census

CONTACT: Christen Marquez, APALC, (213) 241-0233
An Le, APALC, (213) 241-0292

APALC Online: www.apalc.org

California's Asian Pacific Islander Organizations Celebrate Day of Inclusion by Launching Campaign to Promote Participation in 2010 Census

Network aims to educate one million hard-to-count Californians and ensure vital funds for government programs

LOS ANGELES, CA – As the State of California celebrates the Day of Inclusion marking the 1943 repeal of the Chinese Exclusion Act, seven Asian and Pacific Islander (API) organizations across the state have come together to form the API Census Network, in an effort to promote the API community's participation in the 2010 Census.

"The Chinese Exclusion Act was among one of the many discriminatory laws that existed in U.S. history," said California State Assemblymember Mike Eng (D-Monterey Park), who authored legislation in the California State Legislature to recognize the day when the act was repealed. "However, there are minority groups that are still struggling with fairness and equality today. Luckily, a simple way that underrepresented populations can ensure that their voices are heard is by participating in the 2010 Census."

Over the last decade, California has suffered a \$2.1 billion loss in federal funding due to the undercount of API populations during the 2000 Census. This affects all California residents, and in our current economic climate the state cannot afford to be undercounted again. An accurate 2010 Census can help correct errors in determining political districts and allocation of federal funds to state and local governments.

"We have to be creative about the strategies we use to outreach to everyone in the Asian and Pacific Islander community," said An Le, the API Census Network statewide network manager. "We need our communities to understand an accurate census means more federal funding, greater access to governmental services and more resources directed to our communities. Our goal is to have everyone fill out their census questionnaires in April 2010."

One of the obstacles in conducting an accurate count of API populations is language proficiency: Nearly 36% of Asian Americans and 10% of Pacific Islanders have limited English proficiency. Further compounding the undercount is the immense cultural and linguistic diversity, making it challenging to educate this population about the importance to participate in the census.

As a part of their outreach and media campaign, the API Census Network will redistribute culturally specific materials in all major Asian languages produced by the Census Bureau. Additionally, the API Census Network recognizes specific communities in South East, South Asian, and Pacific Islander sub-groups have disproportionately low rates of participation in the census.

In an effort to equalize this under-representation, the API Census Network is producing culturally specific, public service announcements in six languages, - Thai, Samoan, Khmer, Hindi, Lao and Tongan – languages not targeted in the official Census 2010 media campaign. Independent filmmakers and community organizations are partnering to produce the public service announcements, which will begin airing in February 2010 on a variety of in-language subscription cable channels, radio programs, and internet portals.

In January, the API Census Network plans to launch a census materials website for community based organizations. The site will provide access to in-language and ethnic specific materials on the subject of Census 2010; designed to augment the impact of statewide partner outreach and training efforts. Additionally each regional partner is responsible for regional census outreach trainings. These trainings will produce an educated base of local community organizations positioned to custom tailor Census 2010 messages for their communities, which will encourage higher numbers of individual participation among hard-to-count communities.

The API Census Network, coordinated by the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, covers California from Sacramento to San Diego and includes the Asian Law Caucus in the Bay Area, the Asian Law Alliance in the South Bay, the Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council in Los Angeles, Fresno Center for New Americans in the Central Valley, Orange County Asian Pacific Islander Community Alliance in Orange County, and Union of Pan Asian Communities in San Diego. In the upcoming months, the API Census Network will focus on outreach and education to the API community about the impact of participation in the 2010 Census, emphasizing on political representation, social services, and government funding.