

# NAPAWF

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

---

## PLATFORM PAPERS PREFACE

These Platform Papers describe the six issue areas that form the basis for the National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum's work. The Platform Papers are not meant to provide a complete list of issues and concerns in these areas. Nor does the format of this collection assume that the issues discussed can be neatly separated into six areas. Rather, the Platform Papers are intended to be works-in-progress that serve as companions to the organization's grassroots work.

NAPAWF works for the empowerment of all Asian and Pacific Islander American women and girls. We seek especially to gain a voice for those who are most marginalized within our communities. Therefore, we are committed to re-thinking our work and vision by continually increasing the diversity of our membership. Each of the Platform Papers will be transformed by the increasingly complex analyses that will result from the expanded voices of Asian and Pacific Islander women and girls.

\*Note: These documents use the terms "Asian Pacific American" and "Asian and Pacific American" to signify persons of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage in the U.S. NAPAWF recognizes the problems inherent in any terms used to "represent" the complexities of our communities and welcome suggestions for alternate terminology.

## PLATFORM PAPERS INDEX

---

**Co-Editors:** Sharon Tomiko-Santos and Donna Maeda  
Last revised: Summer 1998

1. [Civil Rights](#)
2. [Economic Justice](#)
3. [Educational Access](#)
4. [Ending Violence against Women](#)
5. [Health](#)
6. [Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#)

## ABOUT NAPAWF

---

Founded in 1996, The National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) is dedicated to forging a grassroots progressive movement for social and economic justice and the political empowerment of Asian and Pacific American\* women and girls. NAPAWF unites our diverse communities through organizing, education, and advocacy, and works to connect state and local programs with a national vision of change.

**National mailing address:**  
310 Eighth St. Suite 100  
Oakland, CA 94607 USA

1.323.270.8998 tel | 1.323.906.0149 fax  
[napawf@otherwise.net](mailto:napawf@otherwise.net)  
[www.napawf.org](http://www.napawf.org)

COPYRIGHT © 1999 by NAPAWF. All rights reserved.

# NAPAWF

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

---

## PLATFORM PAPERS

---

1. Civil Rights | 2. [Economic Justice](#) | 3. [Educational Access](#)
4. [Ending Violence against Women](#) | 5. [Health](#)
6. [Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#)

This collection of Platform Papers describe the six issue areas that form the basis for NAPAWF's work. The Platform Papers are not meant to provide a complete list of issues and concerns in these areas. Nor does the format of this collection assume that the issues discussed can be neatly separated into six areas. Rather, the Platform Papers are intended to be works-in-progress that serve as companions to the organization's grassroots work.

---

## PLATFORM PAPER ON

### CIVIL RIGHTS

**Platform Paper Working Group:** Kathy Imahara, Aileen Almeria, Kathay Feng, Doreena Wong, Bonnie Tang

**Civil Rights Committee:** Cindy Choi, Kathay Feng (Contact person), Alice Y. Hom, Kathy Imahara, Karen Kimura, Elaine Kwei, Nguyet Lam, Donna Maeda, Masami Suga, Doreena Wong, Jenny Yang, Nou Yongvang

## PHILOSOPHICAL STATEMENT

Through the use of a variety of creative strategies, our civil rights struggle includes advancing the expression of our identities, access to basic human resources and necessities, and justice for Asian Pacific Islander American women and girls. Beyond the U.S. context, NAPAWF asserts the importance of linking our issues with international human rights movements, recognizing that domestic and global struggles shape and inform each other.

## ISSUE AREAS

- Political empowerment
- Enforcing and expanding civil rights
- Bias and discrimination based on gender, racial and/or sexual identity
- Same-sex marriage
- Bilingual education
- Affirmative action
- Hate speech and hate crimes
- Other issues that do not fit neatly into other Platform Areas

## PROBLEM STATEMENTS

API women and girls are systematically marginalized from the decision-making processes and structures that impact their daily lives. As a result, API women and girls are left vulnerable to misinformed, misguided or misanthropic legislation and

policies that not only violate their civil and human rights, but also perpetuate their inability to fully participate in effecting meaningful social, economic and political change. This is illustrated by the blatant targeting of immigrant communities in recent "reform" policies (e. g., immigration reform, welfare reform, English-only) which disproportionately disaffect women and by the failure of current employment discrimination laws to include sexual orientation or to address the intersection of race and gender in the categories of protected classes.

Gender, race, class, age, and sexual biases within as well as beyond the API community play a prominent role in undermining the rights and limiting the opportunities of API women and girls. This is complicated by biases in the dominant American culture about immigration status and English-speaking ability. Stereotypes about API women and girls (e. g., "exotic and erotic dragon women" and "dutiful daughters and wives") lead to accepted and institutionalized forms of oppression, exploitation, and/or victimization. A lack of understanding and dialogue about the intersecting gender, racial and sexual identities of API women and girls exacerbates and reinforces discrimination against them in their families, communities, and society at large. This is exemplified by the ongoing invisibility of API issues in mainstream feminist organizations and of lesbian/bisexual/transgendered issues in API organizations.

## **PLATFORM GOALS**

- To promote the leadership and visibility of API women and girls in the political process and legal system.
- To enforce and expand civil rights laws and protections for API women and girls.
- To provide a safe and supportive forum space for open discourse and political support for all API women and girls.
- To be the leading organization representing the issues of importance to API women and girls.

## **ISSUE AREA OBJECTIVES**

- Expand civil rights protections for all API women and girls to include unprotected classes of people (e. g., sexual minorities) and additional categories of prohibited activities (e. g, hate crimes).
- Address bias and discrimination that limit the rights and opportunities of API women and girls.
- Serve as the primary resource on issues pertaining to API women and girls.
- Involve API women in redefining "civil rights" and in reframing a progressive civil rights agenda.

## **ISSUE AREA STRATEGIES**

- Develop a Political Empowerment program to promote voter education and participation; to groom progressive API women candidates and community leaders; and to educate, lobby and hold policymakers accountable to the issues affecting API women and girls.
- Develop a national resource and information network to promote a progressive civil rights agenda that benefits API women and girls [protect affirmative action, restore welfare benefits to immigrants, expand protected classes (sexual minorities) and prohibited activities (hate crimes), protect immigrant labor rights, legalize same-sex marriage].
- Provide political leadership on specific legislation or policies that protect,

enforce and expand civil rights for API women and girls by testifying before legislative and policy-making bodies, engaging in letter-writing campaigns, and developing position papers.

- Work with Identity Forum Committee to develop and implement programs that address the intersecting gender, race, and sexual identities of API women and girls to continually inform and refresh NAPAWF's Platform.

## **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

- Seattle/Northwest Chapter is an active member of Washington State APACE (Asian Pacific American Coalition for Equality), which aims to defeat an anti-affirmative action initiative that will be placed on a statewide ballot in the general election.
- Support California in fight to restore welfare benefits to immigrants.
- Recruit underrepresented groups of API women and girls (lesbian/bisexual/transgendered and immigrant) for NAPAWF membership and leadership; integrate their issues into Platform positions.

## **NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL**

### **Objective**

Protect affirmative action.

### Strategies

- Join existing affirmative action preservation efforts.
- Proactively begin dialogues within API communities to ensure that APIs are not used as the "wedge" group between African-American and white communities.

### **Objective**

Train API women to become more politicized.

### Strategies

- Provide Leadership Development opportunities.
- Teach API women and girls how to write an opinion letter (either to the editor of a paper or to an elected official).
- Teach API women and girls how to identify issues of concern.
- Share strategies on how to involve other people in an issue of concern.

# NAPAWF

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

---

## PLATFORM PAPERS

---

1. [Civil Rights](#) | 2. Economic Justice | 3. [Educational Access](#)
4. [Ending Violence against Women](#) | 5. [Health](#)
6. [Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#)

This collection of Platform Papers describe the six issue areas that form the basis for NAPAWF's work. The Platform Papers are not meant to provide a complete list of issues and concerns in these areas. Nor does the format of this collection assume that the issues discussed can be neatly separated into six areas. Rather, the Platform Papers are intended to be works-in-progress that serve as companions to the organization's grassroots work.

---

PLATFORM PAPER ON

## ECONOMIC JUSTICE

**Platform Paper Working Group:** Toko Serita, Lora Jo Foo, Stacy Kono, Ai-Jen Poo, Sharon Tomiko Santos, Cuc Vu, Marline Pedregosa

**Economic Justice Committee:** Maisie Chin, Lora Jo Foo, Sharon Im, Stacy Kono, Tracy Lee, Ai-Jen Poo, Sharon Tomiko Santos, Toko Serita, Kuc Vu, Jenny Yang (Contact person)

## ISSUE AREAS

- Discrimination in employment opportunities and conditions
- Deterrents to economic independence
- Support and "safety nets" for the economically poor
- Economic exploitation of immigrant API women and girls in sweatshop industries
- Sexual exploitation of API women and girls

## PROBLEM STATEMENTS

API women and girls encounter a diversity of experiences in the American labor force and workplace. These experiences are largely conditioned by pervasive racism and oppressive patriarchal cultural norms in both API and mainstream communities. Although U.S.-born and English-proficient API women and girls generally hold "white- or pink-collar" jobs, they face ongoing racial and gender discrimination in the workplace: pay inequities, employment typecasting, and limited career mobility. Immigrant and non-English speaking API women and girls are often concentrated in industries characterized by excessively long working hours, labor intensive work, and subsistence wages: garment "sweatshops," restaurants, and domestic service. Economic class, citizenship status and limited English language skills make these workers especially vulnerable to exploitation as exemplified by the global trafficking of primarily API women and girls.

This complex interplay of racism, sexism, and economic exploitation impedes economic independence for API women and girls, which involves the power to

control and define the conditions of their work and their lives. In the long run, the wage inequities experienced by API women at their peak working ages directly contributes to subsequent inequities in their pension benefits, thereby condemning many API women to poverty in their old age. Inadequate protections and lax enforcement of U.S. labor laws as well as legislative policies that weaken the social and economic "safety net" for politically and economically marginalized members of society reinforce the continued subjugation of API women.

## **PLATFORM GOALS**

- To eliminate discrimination against and exploitation of API women and girls in the workplace.
- To achieve economic independence and create economic opportunities for API women.
- To secure stable "safety net" support resources for economically poor API women and girls.
- To combat the international trafficking and exploitation of API women.
- To eliminate sweatshop conditions in industries where immigrant API women are employed.

## **ISSUE AREA OBJECTIVES**

- Secure all API working women's rights to fair liveable wages and benefits, to safe and decent working conditions, and to collectively organize and represent their labor.
- Increase educational and job training opportunities that are sensitive to the social, cultural, and economic realities of API women.
- Advocate for culturally sensitive, affordable child care to enable API women to manage work and family responsibilities.
- Increase API women's economic and social power to control and define the conditions of their work and their lives by combating patriarchal cultural norms in both the API and mainstream communities.
- Increase accessibility to and capacity of safety nets to support economically poor API women and their families in culturally appropriate ways by developing alternative resources and improving community accountability. Safeguard the safety net for older API women in retirement.
- Raise national and international public awareness about the global trafficking of API women and girls by creating linkages and building coalitions with other activists. Develop and implement a strategy that leverages our unique position as API women in the United States to effect national policies addressing this issue.

## **ISSUE AREA STRATEGIES**

- Compile data about API women's labor to inform the development of policies and advocacy strategies that address API women's labor and economic issues and to establish accountability benchmarks for employers, labor organizations, and governments.
- Provide and support a variety of educational, advocacy, organizing, and outreach activities, programs and materials (e. g., position papers, public workshops and events, speakers bureaus, mentoring programs, labor organizing and media campaigns, etc.) that increase knowledge and understanding about the myriad issues affecting API women and girls and that uphold API women's rights to control and define their labor and their

lives. Issues to include: employment discrimination; sexual harassment; self-advocacy and empowerment; trafficking of women and girls; access to education and job-training, including non-traditional occupations; etc.

- Collaborate with other community-based organizations and activists to improve awareness of, access to and advocacy for particular "safety net" support services needed by economically poor API women and their families (culturally competent outreach, language accessibility, etc.). Create community accountability for augmenting publicly supported "safety net" programs with resources available within the API community (e.g. collaborating with API bar associations to provide pro bono services to economically poor API women and their families).
- Develop effective internal organizational structures that enable NAPAWF to implement a variety of strategies (e. g. national media strategy, national legislative strategy, etc.) and to proactively respond to issues affecting API women and girls.
- Engage in and create an information/resource bank about national and international organizing efforts to combat the exploitation of API women and girls and their labor (e. g. global trafficking, sweatshops, etc.)

## **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

None listed.

## **NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL**

Young Chinese women are working as indentured servants of a garment manufacturing business operating in the Mariana Islands, a U. S. territory exempt from U. S. labor and immigration laws. The business, which is owned by a local government of mainland China, contracts these "guest workers" for a period of two years but can unilaterally extend the contract which prohibits the workers from striking, asking for higher wages, dating or marrying, engaging in local politics or in religious activities, or returning to their homes. These women work 18-hour days (8 a. m. to 2 a. m.) six days a week and live 8 to a room. In addition, some women work for 6 months before receiving their pay and, at the end of two years, may take home only \$300.00.

This exploitation of Asian women has domestic and international dimensions since the business is sited on U. S. territory, involves foreign nationals working for a business owned by their home government, and potentially affects API immigrants in the United States who may lose job opportunities if businesses operating in the U. S. relocate their manufacturing facilities offshore.

NAPAWF could co-sponsor a national educational and advocacy campaign with Sweatshop Watch, a sister organization currently investigating the situation, as well as Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA). While the details of such a campaign can be developed at a later date, NAPAWF should target API women and consumers as a particular audience for future mobilization and action (e. g., boycotts).

# NAPAWF

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

---

## PLATFORM PAPERS

---

1. [Civil Rights](#) | 2. [Economic Justice](#) | 3. Educational Access
4. [Ending Violence against Women](#) | 5. [Health](#)
6. [Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#)

This collection of Platform Papers describe the six issue areas that form the basis for NAPAWF's work. The Platform Papers are not meant to provide a complete list of issues and concerns in these areas. Nor does the format of this collection assume that the issues discussed can be neatly separated into six areas. Rather, the Platform Papers are intended to be works-in-progress that serve as companions to the organization's grassroots work.

---

PLATFORM PAPER ON

## Educational Access

**Platform Paper Working Group:** Donna Maeda

**Educational Access Committee:** Emily Chen, Maisie Chin, Donna Maeda (Contact person), Kim Nakahara, Diep Tran, Nou Yongvang

## ISSUE AREAS

- Data and information on the status and needs of API women and girls
- Access to education
- Relevant curricula, programs, and services for students
- Employment opportunities
- Parental involvement in schools

## PROBLEM STATEMENTS

The educational issues and needs of API women and girls are often invisible due to gaps in collecting and analyzing relevant information. Educational status and progress are typically tracked along lines of race or gender, but statistics involving the intersection of race and gender are lacking. Consequently, the basic information needed to assess the particular situations of API women and girls is hidden. In addition, lost within the general category of "Asian and Pacific Islander" are women of specific ethnic classifications, sexual identities, economic classes, and other differing characteristics. Thus, the needs and status of some API women and girls remain hidden even more deeply than others.

Access to appropriate and relevant educational opportunities, including employment in the field of education, must support and reflect the full diversity of API women and girls. Educational institutions, from K-12 to colleges and universities, must adopt curricula, policies and programs that encourage rather than hinder the full participation and success of API women and girls as students and as employees. To these ends, the gathering and analysis of information about the status and needs of API women and girls is imperative.

## PLATFORM GOALS

- To increase access to appropriate and relevant educational opportunities, including employment in the field of education, for API women and girls.
- To improve the availability of information necessary to analyze the diverse needs and status of API women and girls.

## ISSUE AREA OBJECTIVES

- Increase the number of API women employed and promoted in every field of education and at all levels of education from K-12 through colleges and universities.
- Reform educational programs, services and curricula to address the diverse needs of API students (e. g., bilingual education or support services for lesbian, gay, bisexual students) and to reflect the diversity of their communities and identities (e. g., multicultural and gender sensitive curricula).
- Promote the involvement and leadership of API mothers in school-based and educational activities.
- Promote awareness within and beyond the API community about the issues that affect API girls and women and that hinder their full participation and development in school and in their jobs.

## ISSUE AREA STRATEGIES

- Develop a network and strategies to support and advocate for the mentoring, recruitment, hiring, development and promotion of API women at all levels of education.
- Advocate for multicultural curricula and materials that reflect and address the diversity of API women and girls and their issues, including issues of gender, sexuality, culture, difference and power. Link curriculum to the development of effective pedagogical strategies for all students.
- Advocate for effective bilingual education programs that address the needs of diverse API students and their families and that are gender- and culturally-inclusive. Support pedagogical strategies that attend to issues of gender and culture.
- Advocate for culturally sensitive support services for lesbian, gay, and bisexual API students. Support the development and distribution of appropriate educational materials that address issues of sexual diversity in API communities. Eliminate hostile environments that permit harassment and violence against racially and sexually diverse students. Develop strategies for protecting students from such harassment and violence.
- Monitor the effectiveness of educational programs and policies designed to target "underrepresented" groups to ensure responsiveness to the complexities and intersections of ethnicity, gender, sexuality, and class. Work with civil rights organizations to identify and confront segregationist educational districting as well as biased achievement "tracking" systems.
- Promote the involvement and leadership of API mothers in a variety of school-based and educational activities. Work with parents, teachers, and other community members to develop strategies for keeping API female students engaged and motivated in their own education. Support informal information networks for the transformation of knowledge "from the ground up."
- Develop strategies for enabling parents to integrate their children's

education with family life.

- Develop workshops and materials to educate non-API teachers, educational administrators, and school board members about:
  - 1. The impact of stereotypes in hiring, promotions, workplace environments, and the development of leadership in educational settings.
  - 2. The problems of "tracking" students based on stereotypical assumptions.
  - 3. Cultural, pedagogical, and curricular issues that affect the success of API girls and women.
- Develop educational workshops and strategies to inform and transform API community attitudes toward the participation of women and girls in a broad range of educational and extracurricular activities and opportunities. Develop strategies for educating parents, students and other community members about the benefits of specific educational programs so that they can make informed choices about opportunities.
- Develop workshops and materials to inform API parents and students about the availability of scholarships, fellowships, grants, and other educational opportunities.

## **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

None listed

## **NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL**

Educational institutions are increasingly linked by Internet technologies; NAPAWF should draw from the growing networking opportunities that are opening up. New networks not only allow for increased communications (local and national) but also for organizing opportunities between educational institutions and various local communities. NAPAWF should seize upon funding and programmatic opportunities that are becoming available as the result of growing interest in this area. The various levels of networks could be used for sharing information, organizing, and strategizing on local and national levels.

The networking opportunities and strategies developed by this initiative would not be limited to the area of Educational Access. NAPAWF in general will need to confront the difficult communications issues related to the attempt to organize nationally. Work done in the area of Educational Access could provide the starting point for developing such communications, information-sharing, and organizing possibilities to be gained from the Internet. Because many members working in educational institutions are probably already linked, beginning stages of such a network could begin immediately.

### **Objective:**

- To develop a network that facilitates both national and local strategizing around issues of educational access for API girls and women.

### **Strategies:**

Research grant opportunities for funding technological initiatives. For example, the National Endowment of the Humanities has a special grants program for funding the use of new technologies. The NEH seems to be

particularly interested in funding initiatives that link institutions of higher education to public schools and local communities. NAPAWF's work in obtaining grants would benefit a network of educators in higher education and public schools, as well as communities that may not have sufficient funds to hook up to the Internet on a large scale. NAPAWF would thus be working to fight the troubling gap between those who can benefit from the new information and communications possibilities and those who cannot.

Investigate local models where such networks are in place. NAPAWF ought to learn from initiatives that work well in linking educational institutions to communities.

Investigate and develop national communications networks using the new technologies. Again, because institutions of higher education are increasingly linked, NAPAWF should build from the resources that are already in place. NAPAWF members interested in Educational Access could develop a listserv (specialized email list), a Website that both provides information and facilitates communications, and a method for connecting to existing organizations working on educational access and affirmative action.

COPYRIGHT © 1999 by NAPAWF. All rights reserved.

# NAPAWF

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

---

## PLATFORM PAPERS

---

1. [Civil Rights](#) | 2. [Economic Justice](#) | 3. [Educational Access](#)
4. [Ending Violence against Women](#) | 5. [Health](#)
6. [Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#)

This collection of Platform Papers describe the six issue areas that form the basis for NAPAWF's work. The Platform Papers are not meant to provide a complete list of issues and concerns in these areas. Nor does the format of this collection assume that the issues discussed can be neatly separated into six areas. Rather, the Platform Papers are intended to be works-in-progress that serve as companions to the organization's grassroots work.

---

PLATFORM PAPER ON

## Ending Violence Against Women

Platform Paper Working Group: Leni Marin, Debbie Lee, Josephine Yeh, Jane Bai, Quynh Dang, Dan Nguyen, Lisa Hasegawa

Ending Violence Against Women Committee: Jane Bai, Gloria Bugay, Quynh Dang, Lisa Hasegawa (Contact person), Debbie Lee, Leni Marin, Becky Masaki, Dan-Thanh Nguyen, Ann Webb, Josephine Yeh

## ISSUE AREAS

- Social prevalence and acceptance of violence against women
- Violence at the individual level, including domestic violence, intimate partner violence, elder abuse, rape and sexual assault, and child abuse
- Violence at a global level as it impacts and contributes to the continued cycle of violence among women and families in the U.S.
- Systemic violence perpetrated by the state and authorities
- Workplace violence

## PROBLEM STATEMENTS

While violence against women cuts across boundaries of race, class, sexuality and immigration status, our society's response to the epidemic has not reached all communities. In communities where statistics are available, API women are over-represented in domestic violence homicides. For many API women seeking help, resources are not as readily available as they are for white, U.S. born, and English-speaking women. Additionally, pervasive stereotypes about Asian Pacific Americans as "model minorities" without social problems perpetuate the notion that violence against women does not occur in our communities. At the same time, an opposing yet prevalent notion -- perpetuated both within and outside of our communities -- that violence against women is "just part of Asian cultures" reinforces racist and imperialistic ideas that Asian cultures are intrinsically violent and regressive in comparison to more "enlightened" Western societies. Within the API community, there seems to be less attention to female victims of

anti-API violence and of domestic violence cases. The forms of violence that API women experience -- domestic violence and sexual assault -- never galvanize the kind of community response that hate crimes do.

Violence against API women takes place in many contexts. Legal systems often revictimize the limited English-speaking woman, who may put her immigration status at risk and face deportation if she leaves the batterer or reports a crime, forcing her to appear more frequently in courts to confront the batterer or condoning the violence because it is supposedly part of her culture. Immigrant women may become involved in coercive relationships with their male sponsors, who may have more power and voice in the community. In addition to intimate partner violence, an increasing number of young Asian girls are experiencing police harassment and brutality in public spaces such as parks, malls, etc., where they are easily identified by law enforcement and continually harassed. The vulnerability of API sex workers to exploitation and lack of protection against violence is compounded by difficulties in organizing effectively, as well as the stigma attached to their profession. International trafficking and exploitation, mail order bride industries, and violence against women in situations of armed conflict are sources of problems for women who subsequently become immigrants or refugees to the U.S. or are violated in their countries as the result of U.S. policy or corporate actions. The workplace is another arena where violence against API women occurs. Lack of decent jobs for API women often forces them to tolerate sexual harassment and abusive conditions, including the withholding food and water and dangerous work conditions, for fear of losing their jobs. Law enforcement and justice systems often do not adequately protect API women, particularly those who speak limited English. In addition, there is a lack of culturally and linguistically appropriate programs and services to address the unique needs and barriers faced by API women and girls. There is a need for more trained bicultural interpreters at all levels of the response system as well as more bilingual and bicultural providers. In order for API women to access any point of a response system, extensive outreach and organizing at community levels around issues of violence, rights, and laws pertaining to violence in the U.S. are needed. The lack of research and data about the prevalence of violence-related deaths and violence against API women and girls contributes to the stereotypes that violence doesn't exist in our communities. Research needs to be broken down by API ethnicities in order to design ethnic-specific outreach and intervention strategies.

We need to develop analyses and strategies that takes into account the intersections of race, class, gender, sexuality and immigration status to challenge social norms about violence both within and beyond API communities. We also need to acknowledge the interconnected nature of all forms of violence and clearly articulate the impact on Asian women and girls. The challenge is to hold our communities accountable for violence against its women without colluding with anti-immigrant and racist movements.

## **PLATFORM GOALS**

- To end cycles of violence within API communities.
- To break the silence about violence by raising public and API community awareness and by establishing zero tolerance for all forms of violence against API women and girls, including the international trafficking for labor and sexual exploitation
- To ensure culturally appropriate services for API women who are victims of violence.

- To reframe the issue of violence against women more inclusively to encompass global violence against API women, workplace violence, hate crimes, elder abuse, same-sex intimate partner violence, etc.

## **ISSUE AREA OBJECTIVES**

- Improve access to culturally competent services to API women and children who are victims of violence; increase awareness of the cultural and language needs of API women and children who are victims of violence.
- Organize against all international trafficking of API women and girls for labor and sexual exploitation.
- Educate and organize to end exploitation and violence against API sex workers.
- Organize, educate and advocate on both local community and national levels to impact policies that support the end of violence against women and girls; work for full community involvement in this area.
- Research and data collection broken down by API ethnicities.
- Increase awareness of mainstream and API communities about violence against API women.
- Increase funding for programs that address violence against API women & girls.

## **ISSUE AREA STRATEGIES**

- Establish regional and national political advocacy networks and service collaborations among API domestic violence and sexual assault activists.
- Organize a national summit to promote freedom from domestic violence and sexual assault in all API communities.
- Advocate for, provide technical assistance to, and give support to the development of local shelters to provide API victims of violence with culturally and linguistically appropriate services (e.g. counseling, crisis intervention, self-sufficiency and empowerment), as well as multicultural and multilingual materials.
- Evaluate local domestic violence and sexual assault services to assess their ability to competently help API clients. Identify language needs and barriers to effective services.
- Develop a national clearinghouse to disseminate linguistically diverse resource materials. As part of the above strategies, develop informational packets on cultural competency and domestic violence for distribution to agency providers who serve API clients; develop a national directory of programs serving API survivors of violence; develop a Website.
- Advocate for more research, specifically on the prevalence of violence-related deaths and violence against API women and girls.
- Initiate a forum discussion about the international trafficking of women and examine its impact on different API communities in different regions of the U.S.
- Work with and encourage the formation of networks to disseminate information about rights and resources to all immigrant women (about laws in the U.S. regarding abuse, conditional permanent residency status, etc.)
- Develop protocols on violence against women for all professions -- police, schools, workplaces, etc.
- Organize strategically as U.S.-based API women with a specific response to the regulation (or lack of regulation) of international trafficking of women and girls.

- Create policy and advocacy strategies that address the issues and needs of "mail order brides."
- Develop primary prevention strategies for API girls, e.g. mentorship. Empower girls by involving them at all levels of program development and advocacy.

## **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

- Support and coordinate the formation of a national network of programs and activists who are working to end domestic violence in Asian American and Pacific Islander communities. A planning group will be convened in the Summer of 1998 to begin setting the foundations for this national network.
- Support and coordinate with the national network of shelters working with refugee women.
- Sponsor and co-sponsor workshops and dialogues at the community level on issues of domestic violence.
- Network with and support local shelters and projects that are working to end domestic violence and anti-Asian violence and hate crimes.

## **NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL**

A national campaign related to ending violence against women will be developed in collaboration with existing API and refugee networks.

# NAPAWF

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

---

## PLATFORM PAPERS

---

1. [Civil Rights](#) | 2. [Economic Justice](#) | 3. [Educational Access](#)
4. [Ending Violence against Women](#) | 5. [Health](#)
6. [Immigrant and Refugee Rights](#)

This collection of Platform Papers describe the six issue areas that form the basis for NAPAWF's work. The Platform Papers are not meant to provide a complete list of issues and concerns in these areas. Nor does the format of this collection assume that the issues discussed can be neatly separated into six areas. Rather, the Platform Papers are intended to be works-in-progress that serve as companions to the organization's grassroots work.

---

PLATFORM PAPER ON

## HEALTH

**Platform Paper Working Group:** Yin Ling Leung

**Health Committee:** Milyoung Cho, Cindy Choi, Que Dang, Kaying Hang, Lisa Hasegawa, Yin Ling Leung, Luella Penserga (Contact person)

## ISSUE AREAS

- Access to appropriate primary and reproductive health care, including a full-range of family planning options
- Knowledge and information about diverse health issues
- Protection of reproductive rights and freedom
- Promotion of traditional health methods

## PROBLEM STATEMENTS

The health status of Asian and Pacific Islander women and girls is as diverse as their immigration histories, their socioeconomic and physical characteristics, and their ethnic and sexual identities. But this diversity is obscured by poor data collection and inadequate research which does not recognize the particular health issues of distinct groups of API women and girls. For example, most national health data has been limited to Chinese, Japanese, Filipinos, and in some cases, Native Hawaiians and Vietnamese. Until 1992, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) separated vital statistics for Asians and Pacific Islanders into only 5 groups: Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Hawaiian and "Other API." In 1992, NCHS broke down the data in the "Other API" group to Asian Indian, Korean, Vietnamese, Guamanian (Chamorro), Samoan and "Remaining API." This latter category is assumed to be comprised primarily of persons of Cambodian, Laotian, Thai, Hmong and Pakistani descent.

Consequently, the health care needs of many API women and girls -- notably, those who are immigrant, indigenous, non-English speaking, lesbian/bisexual/transgendered, disabled, or poor -- remain largely

unknown and unaddressed by existing health care systems and, in the cases of sexual identity and disability, marginalized by the API community. In addition, the absence of accurate data and representation in the media perpetuates the stereotype that Asians and Pacific Islanders are a healthy minority that needs no services.

Barriers that most commonly limit access to primary and reproductive health care services for many Asian and Pacific Islander women and girls are: lack of insurance; lack of quality interpretation services, bilingual providers, and translated materials about health plans and health education; lack of bicultural providers; patients' unfamiliarity with western health care systems, particularly managed care; providers' unfamiliarity or insensitivity to Asian and Pacific Islander health belief systems; transportation difficulties; and lack of affordable childcare services.

The passage of "welfare reform" law in 1996 eliminated Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) as a federal entitlement and replaced it with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grants to states. The new block grants come with a host of new restrictions which attempt to regulate women's private lives, including a state option to place a "family cap" on women receiving TANF benefits. In other words, women who have additional children while on welfare may not receive an increase in assistance. Under these circumstances, the idea of "choice" takes on new meaning for all Asian and Pacific Islander women and girls, not just the expectant undocumented mother who wrestles to "choose" between abortion or giving up her child for adoption in order to retain adequate financial assistance. In addition, stricter eligibility requirements for other cash assistance and nutrition programs, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and Food Stamps, were instituted. Citizenship status is increasingly being used by federal and state policymakers as a requirement to receive public benefits, including Medicaid benefits.

For Asian and Pacific Islander women, particularly low-income, the quality and accessibility of health care are further eroded by the trend to privatize health systems as well as by cuts in public funding. Because of its relatively low cost, managed care has become one of the most popular forms of health care. Increasingly, state governments are contracting with managed care organizations to serve Medicaid populations. As managed care organizations begin to serve low-income populations, such as women and children on Medicaid, the availability of the full range of health care services, including family planning services (and safe abortions in particular), becomes more uncertain.

## **PLATFORM GOALS**

- To improve the general and reproductive health and well-being of all API women and girls.
- To protect and strengthen the right of API women and girls to take control of their health.

## **ISSUE AREA OBJECTIVES**

- Promote culturally competent and linguistically accessible health and human services for API women and girls, including traditional methods of healing and better-educated providers.
- Increase public and private funding for research and data collection that disaggregates for various ethnic groups; promote research on specific

health issues that affect API women and girls (such as breast and cervical cancer, reproductive tract infections, HIV/AIDS, STDs, adolescent pregnancy prevention).

- Promote a holistic view of health that includes both mental and physical health and also recognizes that there are other determinants of health, such as socioeconomic status and degree of linguistic isolation.
- Advocate and organize for universal health care for all people and for increased public health care spending that especially addresses the needs of those who are not covered by private health insurance.
- Organize and advocate to protect the reproductive freedom of all women and girls. All women should have a full range of family options available to them and have full understanding of the risks and advantages of various forms of contraception. These should be made available to them in the language and manner they can understand best. Undocumented women should be given adequate prenatal care and women on welfare should have the freedom to choose whether to have another child without punitive or coercive government policies.

## **ISSUE AREA STRATEGIES**

- Promote culturally and linguistically competent, gender-sensitive health care as well as increased research on women's health through formal relationships and coalitions with other national women's health organizations, especially women of color organizations (e.g. Black Women's Health Project, National Women's Health Network, Healthy Mothers-Healthy Babies, etc.)
- Advocate for improved health care access and disaggregated health data collection on API women through formal relationships and coalitions with other national, statewide, and local Asian and Pacific Islander health advocacy organizations (e.g. APIAHF, AAPCHO, APIRH, NAWHO, NAPAFASA).
- Develop and strengthen strategic relationships with the federal Offices for Women's Health and for Minority Health as well as with the Regional Directors of Women's Health to improve public health funding for API women and to promote educational forums on API women's health issues.
- Develop and implement a legislative education and advocacy campaign aimed at local government bodies and legislative health committees to ensure that API women's health needs are adequately addressed.
- Protect abortion access and broaden the definition of reproductive choice to include API women's perspectives through coalition work with national, statewide and local reproductive freedom groups (e.g. Planned Parenthood and National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League).

## **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

- Bay Area California NAPAWF members attended APIAHF conference and met with other Asian and Pacific Islander women interested in health issues.
- NAPAWF's temporary office space is being subsidized by Asians and Pacific Islanders for Reproductive Health.
- NAPAWF members in Southern California attended 25th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade gathering.

## **NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL**

### **Objective**

To educate the public and build publicity for NAPAWF and its Platform Issues and Goals

## Strategies

- Develop and distribute a survey that will be used by each chapter to create a "scorecard" that measures local and regional government strengths and weaknesses in addressing the unique issues and needs of API women and girls as defined in the NAPAWF Platform.
- Organize an Education Tour and Government and Community Accountability campaign whereby NAPAWF representatives travel to various chapter locales to assist in highlighting the local community and government response to the unique issues and needs of API women and girls.
- Build the media advocacy skills of host chapters by launching local media campaigns to publicize the tours and the "scorecard" results.
- Culminate campaign with a national NAPAWF fundraising, education, and relationship-building tour of New York-based foundations and Washington, D. C. organizations and government agencies that work in areas related to our Platform areas. (e.g. NY: Ford Foundation, Ms. Foundation, Sister Fund; Washington, D.C.: the Office of Women's Health, U.S. Department of Labor, Interagency Working Group [doing follow-up work on the Beijing Platform for Action], First Lady Hillary Clinton, Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala, Office of Civil Rights).

COPYRIGHT © 1999 by NAPAWF. All rights reserved.

# NAPAWF

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

---

## PLATFORM PAPERS

---

1. [Civil Rights](#) | 2. [Economic Justice](#) | 3. [Educational Access](#)
4. [Ending Violence against Women](#) | 5. [Health](#)
6. Immigrant and Refugee Rights

This collection of Platform Papers describe the six issue areas that form the basis for NAPAWF's work. The Platform Papers are not meant to provide a complete list of issues and concerns in these areas. Nor does the format of this collection assume that the issues discussed can be neatly separated into six areas. Rather, the Platform Papers are intended to be works-in-progress that serve as companions to the organization's grassroots work.

---

PLATFORM PAPER ON

## IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS

Working Group: Immigrant and Refugee Rights Committee: Claire Guyu Johnson, Xuan Nguyen-Sutter, Masami Suga (Contact person), Ann Webb

### ISSUE AREAS

- Limited political empowerment
- Limited and unstable economic and legal protection

### PROBLEM STATEMENTS

The United States continues to receive refugees and immigrants from around the world who struggle to find a safe and permanent home in our communities. Asian and Pacific Islander women and girls account for a substantial number among the new Americans. Many face unique social, economic, legal, and political challenges because of their ethnicity, gender, language barriers, educational circumstances, economic conditions, citizenship status, country of origin, and so on. As a result, the civic and political participation of refugee/immigrant API women and girls has been minimal, thus necessitating their reliance on others to advocate for their rights and well-being.

Although welfare myths portray refugees and immigrants as America's economic liability, the majority achieve self-sufficiency in a relatively short period of time. However, public criticism has been particularly severe against refugee/immigrant API women and girls, who tend to require a longer adjustment time due to social and cultural factors, including low literacy rates, family responsibilities, and expected women's roles. Such factors also contribute to difficulties in acquiring U.S. citizenship. As a result, welfare and immigration reform significantly affects the lives of refugee/immigrant API women, especially those without U.S. citizenship, by limiting their access to the economic safety net and legal protection.

### PLATFORM GOALS

- To increase visibility and political empowerment of refugee/immigrant API women and girls.
- To ensure and enhance economic and legal protection regardless of citizenship status.

## **ISSUE AREA OBJECTIVES**

- Promote participation of refugee/immigrant API women and girls in public and political affairs.
- Increase the number of refugee/immigrant API women in public policy-making positions.
- Monitor public policy affecting refugee/immigrant API women and girls and disseminate such information in an easily comprehensible format in multiple languages on a regular basis.
- Advocate for the preservation and expansion of economic and legal protection for refugee/immigrant API women and girls regardless of citizenship status.

## **ISSUE AREA STRATEGIES**

- Promote and assist coalition-building among refugee/immigrant API women and girls of all backgrounds to achieve stronger and more unified political representation.
- Organize community forums that are participant-friendly and accessible to refugee/immigrant API women and girls (provide on-site interpreters, transportation, a women-friendly atmosphere) to come to voice their unique concerns.
- Provide education and training opportunities for refugee/immigrant API women and girls interested in a career and/or service in public affairs (e.g. scholarships for a training workshop on how to run for local elected positions).
- Compile a list of qualified refugee/immigrant API women interested in community board service and make such a list widely available to educational institutions, community organizations, businesses, governmental agencies, etc.
- Advocate and organize a system (e.g. peer-teaching) through which public policy affecting refugee/immigrant API women and girls is monitored; translate into an easily comprehensible format in multiple API languages to increase awareness and participation.
- Disseminate accurate information to eliminate welfare myths about refugee/immigrant API women and girls as America's economic liability (i.e., stories and facts about constraints and opportunities must be balanced).
- Work in collaboration with other API and non-API agencies to assist refugee and immigrant women to become U.S. citizens (or to pass the citizenship test).
- Work in collaboration with other API and non-API advocacy groups, mutual assistance agencies, resettlement agencies, etc., to develop and implement a campaign aimed at local government bodies to ensure economic and legal protection for refugee/immigrant API women and girls regardless of citizenship status.

## **CURRENT ACTIVITIES**

None listed

## **NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL**

### **Objective:**

To increase public awareness of issues and needs unique to refugee/immigrant API women and girls.

### ● **Strategies:**

- Develop an information packet that addresses: 1) experiences common to refugee and immigrant women and girls across ethnic boundaries and 2) issues and needs unique to specific groups of women and girls (by age, country of origin, language skills, etc.) in each of the NAPAWF regions.
- Provide education and leadership training to prepare and produce refugee/immigrant API women and girls for service in public policy-making positions at local, regional, and national levels.
- Build media relations skills among refugee/immigrant API women and girls to effectively address and publicize their concerns, activities, campaigns, etc.
- (Co)sponsor programs and events about issues concerning refugee/immigrant API women and girls.
- Organize fundraising efforts for the items listed above aimed at correcting current injustices to refugee/immigrant API women and girls.