

THE PRESIDENT'S  
ADVISORY COMMISSION ON  
**ASIAN AMERICANS  
& PACIFIC ISLANDERS**

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ADVANCING ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT  
FOR ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

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**A CALL TO ACTION**

2020





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and more fully participate in our economy. The PAC-AAPI and WHIAAPI Office is located in the U.S. Department of Commerce and the Minority Business Development Agency provides financial and administrative support for Commission activities. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the Department of Commerce or the Department of Transportation. No official endorsement by any federal agency of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise mentioned or linked to in this Report is intended or should be inferred.

## WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS (WHIAAPI)

**Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.**, *Co-Chair*  
U.S. Secretary of Commerce

**Elaine L. Chao**, *Co-Chair*  
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**Tina Wei Smith**, *Executive Director*

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**Paul S. Hsu**, *Chair*  
**Doris Flores Brooks**  
**Eddie Calvo**  
**Jennifer Carnahan**  
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# TRANSMITTAL LETTER

DECEMBER 15, 2020

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Dear Mr. President:

On May 19, 2019, you signed Executive Order 13872, thereby establishing the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Initiative) and the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Commission), to empower Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) to improve the quality of their lives, raise the standard of living of their families and communities, and more fully participate in our economy.

We are honored to transmit to you the Commission's Report, which includes four specific areas of recommendations for executive action: collect and report better data on the AAPI experience to better inform decision makers on how to better support the underserved; expand AAPI workforce development opportunities; enhance access to economic resources and opportunities for AAPI-owned enterprises; and improve the economic condition of U.S. Pacific Islanders. A common theme throughout the past year has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the AAPI business community and the AAPI workforce, including unique challenges faced by the AAPI community in accessing disaster relief funds, overcoming language barriers, and overcoming bias or hate crimes. Nevertheless, the pandemic has provided an opportunity to showcase the many heroic contributions of AAPIs on the frontlines of biomedical research and health care services.

Under your watch, AAPIs have experienced historically low unemployment rates; they are the fastest growing immigrant community in the Nation; and their contributions in the sciences, technology innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit continue to strengthen the Nation. We have witnessed first-hand the concerted efforts of the Commission to interact with a diversity of stakeholders, assemble available data, and articulate this set of recommendations to help fully realize the untapped potential of AAPIs. As you have appreciated, the success of AAPIs and other minority groups is vital to the overall success of the U.S. economy.

We thank you for your continued support for the AAPI communities across the Nation and for your foresight to make this Initiative and Commission a priority in the federal government.

Sincerely,



**Wilbur L. Ross, Jr.**  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Commerce



**Elaine L. Chao**  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation

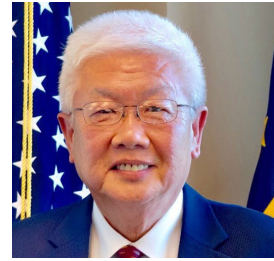
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# FROM THE COMMISSION CHAIR

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Dear Mr. President:

Your Executive Order of May 13, 2019, established the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in the Department of Commerce to "broaden access by AAPI employers and communities to economic resources and opportunities, thus empowering AAPIs to improve the quality of their lives, raise the standard of living of their families and communities, and more fully participate in our economy."

Upon sworn appointment on January 27, 2020, the Commission began its fact-finding missions, research initiatives, and agency inquiry. As a Commission, we identified priorities that would shape the development of this Report, which provides concrete, actionable recommendations to help better the lives of AAPIs—the fastest-growing minority group in the United States.

As Chair, it has been an honor to work with this team of dedicated, conscientious AAPI public servants from across the country, representing the community from New York to Guam. I commend their leadership and steadfast commitment to their duties in pursuit of this important endeavor.

Cultural differences, language barriers, and unequal access to economic opportunities and federal resources have created challenges for AAPIs seeking to fulfill their economic potential in the United States. Such challenges were amplified in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic, which affected AAPIs in specific, far-reaching ways. In light of all these issues, and in accordance with the nine priorities articulated in your Executive Order, our recommendations seek **to report better data on the AAPI experience, expand AAPI workforce development opportunities, enhance access to economic resources and opportunities for AAPI-owned enterprises, and improve the economic condition of U.S. Pacific Islanders.** This Report is intended to provide a roadmap for implementing transformational solutions that benefit not only AAPIs but also all Americans seeking to succeed and pursue their American dream.

We thank you for your attentiveness to AAPI issues, and for your commitment to full AAPI participation in both the U.S. and global economies. We collectively benefit when we empower all Americans with equal access to resources and opportunities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul S. Hsu". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "P" and "S".

**Paul S. Hsu, Ph.D.**

Chairman

President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders



**VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE ADMINISTERS THE OATH OF OFFICE TO THE COMMISSIONERS  
OF THE PRESIDENT'S ADVISORY COMMISSION ON ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS  
WITH CABINET MEMBERS SERVING AS OFFICIAL WITNESSES**

JANUARY 27, 2020

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(Left to Right) U.S. Secretary Eugene Scalia (Labor), U.S. Secretary Wilbur Ross (Commerce), U.S. Secretary Elaine L. Chao (Transportation), Vice President Michael Pence, Chairman Paul S. Hsu, George Leing, Amata C. Radewagen, Prem Parameswaran, Eddie Calvo, Jennifer Carnahan, Herman Martir, Jan-le Low, Keiko Matsudo Orrall, Grace Y. Lee, Chiling Tong, Michelle P. Steel, Doris Flores Brooks, WHIAAPI Executive Director Tina Wei Smith.

Not pictured: Helen Van Etten.

(Official White House Photo by D. Myles Cullen)



# PREFACE

The Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community has for centuries contributed its ambition and entrepreneurial spirit to American communities, helping to create jobs, drive innovation, and grow the economy.<sup>1</sup> AAPIs represent a diversity of ethnicities and experiences, and it is the fastest growing minority group in the United States. From the 12,000 or more workers of Chinese ancestry who played a key role in building the first transcontinental railroad more than 150 years ago, to the Japanese American, Filipino American, and Chinese American WWII veterans who fought valiantly despite discrimination by their fellow countrymen, to the many AAPIs, both American-born and first-generation immigrants, who live in the United States today—we are an integral part of not only the American economy, but also all aspects of American life and culture. Their contributions, both past and present, are a part of what makes our Nation great.

On May 13, 2019, the President signed Executive Order (EO) 13872 to help advance the economic empowerment of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. This EO established the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI), co-chaired by the Secretaries of Commerce and Transportation, as well as the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders ("the Commission"). The Commission is charged with advising the President, through the Secretaries of Commerce and Transportation, "on how to broaden access by AAPI employers and communities to economic resources and opportunities" (see Appendix A for full text

of EO 13872). The Commission established four subcommittees to help advance its mission:<sup>2</sup>

- Passing the Torch
- Breaking the Glass Ceiling
- AAPI Women in Leadership
- Bridging the Income Gap

An overarching principle that permeated the Commission's conversations about multiple issues was advocacy for equal treatment, as well as philosophical consistency in how AAPI candidates are evaluated and how standards are applied—whether for college admissions, job offers, or promotions. Core American values such as meritocracy, individual achievement, and equality of opportunity are instrumental in sustaining the growth and strength of our country. These values resonate with AAPIs who have sacrificed for a better future for the next generation, perpetuating the belief that strong families and communities, a good education, and hard work nurture success.

This Report presents a compelling picture of the many challenges faced by diverse subgroups of AAPIs as they work to secure their economic footing in the United States. It also describes how, in 2020, many of these challenges were intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, which continues to have unique and profound effects on AAPI individuals, enterprises, and communities.

“ Core American values such as meritocracy, individual achievement, and equality of opportunity are instrumental in sustaining the growth and strength of our country.



**May 19, 2020:** President Donald J. Trump signs Executive Order 13872 in the West Wing Oval Office. He is joined by (from left to right), U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross, Chairman Paul S. Hsu, Deputy Director of the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Derek Kan, Commissioner Amata Radewagen, Attorney General of Utah Sean Reyes, U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao, and Commissioner George Leing. (White House Photo Office)

This global pandemic has devastated business sectors, including many in the AAPI business community where a disproportionate share of AAPI entrepreneurs are in the service industry (e.g., hospitality, restaurant, and service sectors). Although CARES Act funds have provided \$376 billion in relief for American workers and small businesses, AAPIs have unique difficulties in accessing these resources and opportunities. Furthermore, federal law enforcements have seen an increase in anti-AAPI bias and hate crimes, which endangers Asian American communities, places of worship, and businesses. Nevertheless, the pandemic has also highlighted the many contributions of AAPIs on the frontlines of biomedical research and health care services, waging the heroic fight against COVID-19. AAPI-owned companies, organizations, and places of worship have also activated their personal and business networks around the world to secure and donate personal protective equipment (PPE) to help communities and hospitals across the Nation.

Despite COVID-19 disruptions, the Commission was able to engage meaningfully, albeit mostly virtually, with diverse internal stakeholders from across the federal government, as well as with AAPI business leaders, employers, associations, and community leaders. At the very onset of the first wave of the pandemic and the subsequent stay-at-home orders, the Commission found it necessary to establish an

ad hoc subcommittee focused on the challenges faced by AAPI small business owners and communities at-large. It held virtual roundtables and town halls to hear directly from AAPI stakeholders and community leaders and to share resources from the federal government. After the Commissioners were sworn in on January 27, 2020, the Commission hosted three open meetings and numerous subcommittee meetings. They also participated virtually in four major conferences: the AAPI Heritage Month webinars, AAPI Business Summit, AAPI Young Leaders Summit, and the Future of Business series in fall 2020. Each of these community engagements provided helpful insights into the experience of the AAPI community, the challenges of the pandemic, and the opportunities and the resources needed from the Federal government.

This Report proposes concrete, actionable recommendations to help better the lives of AAPIs – specifically, and in accordance with the President’s Executive Order on Economic Empowerment of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, to report better data on the AAPI experience, expand AAPI workforce development opportunities, enhance access to economic resources and opportunities for AAPI-owned enterprises, and improve the economic condition of U.S. Pacific Islanders. This report is intended to provide a roadmap for the Executive Branch to implement transformational solutions that ensure full AAPI participation in the U.S. economy.





# PREVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS FOR **EXECUTIVE ACTION**

## **REPORT BETTER DATA ON THE AAPI EXPERIENCE**

- Address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the AAPI community
- Commit to meaningfully measure the experience of the AAPI population in national surveys and to identify the underserved

## **EXPAND AAPI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**

- Implement pipeline-building programs that identify and cultivate AAPI leaders
- Incentivize AAPIs to pursue new skills for the digital/virtual economy that enhance their ability to serve the broader U.S. community
- Ensure equal opportunities for AAPIs to pursue their dreams through higher education
- Increase AAPI representation in federal service, particularly in senior management, as well as in federal internships and in federal pipeline and mentorship programs
- Include AAPIs in diversity initiatives, particularly in workforce development programs and initiatives for entrepreneurs and businesses
- Encourage top 500 U.S. companies to embrace AAPI advancement as a corporate responsibility or priority
- Establish innovative mentorship programs for AAPI entrepreneurs and professionals
- Continue to recognize and celebrate the many positive contributions of AAPIs
- Recognize the extraordinary challenges currently being faced by AAPI health care workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including from anti-AAPI biases and hate crimes

## **ENHANCE ACCESS TO ECONOMIC RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR AAPI-OWNED ENTERPRISES**

- Improve AAPI access to federal resources, opportunities, and business tools
- Deliver additional small business relief measures to economic sectors that have been and continue to be severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and in which AAPIs are overrepresented, such as the hospitality and service industries
- Overcome AAPI barriers to accessing Federal government procurement opportunities
- Collaborate with and recognize private organizations that provide assistance to AAPI businesses

## **IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF U.S. PACIFIC ISLANDERS**

- Increase economic outreach to and investment in U.S. Pacific Island territories
- Ensure the economic sufficiency and security of U.S. Pacific territories and their peoples
- Ease assimilation of U.S. Pacific Islanders into the mainland U.S. economy

# INTRODUCTION

The AAPI community is the fastest-growing racial group in the United States. Currently greater than 7 percent of the U.S. population and speaking more than 100 languages, the AAPI population of 24 million today is expected to number more than 40 million and represent greater than 9 percent of the population by 2060.<sup>3,4</sup> With higher average household incomes, and higher average rates of college attainment and marriage than other minority groups, AAPIs are often described as a “model minority.” This designation masks the tremendous heterogeneity, including nationality, income inequality, and English language proficiency, within the AAPI population, and the precariousness of recent AAPI gains in the labor force. For example, the seasonally-adjusted third-quarter unemployment rate for AAPIs was 2.7 percent in 2019 (better than the 3.6 percent for the total population), but reached 10.5 percent in 2020 (greater than the 8.8 percent for the total population).<sup>5</sup> Advancing economic empowerment for AAPIs—a culturally and economically diverse population—will require greater understanding about AAPI experiences, successes, and challenges, and greater appreciation about differences within the AAPI population that preclude a one-size-fits-all approach.

Of the more than 2 million AAPI-owned businesses in the United States, about one-third of them are employer-owned. In 2020, the U.S. Census Bureau released new estimates based on its 2018 Annual Business Survey (covering year 2017), revealing that more than 562,000 Asian, Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander employer-owned businesses, representing nearly 13 percent of all employer businesses (and greater than 40 percent of all minority-owned employer businesses) in the United

States, contributed more than \$822 billion in revenues and more than 4.6 million jobs in 2017 to the U.S. economy.<sup>6</sup> AAPI-owned employer businesses have outperformed non-minority-owned businesses in terms of growth in number of businesses and employees, as well as in growth of gross receipts.<sup>7</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the first wave of stay-at-home orders and restrictions in March 2020, has remained a health threat throughout 2020, and its ensuing restrictions continue to challenge many sectors of the Nation’s economy. Unfortunately, AAPI-owned businesses are overrepresented in some of the sectors hardest hit by the 2020 pandemic—accommodation and food service, retail, health care, and social assistance—and AAPI unemployment numbers have skyrocketed as a result.<sup>8</sup> From February to April 2020, the number of active business owners in the United States fell by 22 percent or 3.3 million. And among those businesses, AAPI business ownership declined by approximately 26 percent, with even higher losses among immigrant AAPI business owners.<sup>9</sup>

According to the Census Bureau’s Small Business Pulse Survey, which was fielded over 9 weeks from April to June 2020, approximately 73 percent of small businesses received the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) assistance. Yet a May 27, 2020, report from the Center for Responsible Lending concluded that roughly 75 percent of AAPI-owned businesses were highly unlikely to receive a PPP loan.

Many AAPI businesses are likely to face protracted recoveries because they lack existing relationships with a mainstream bank or credit union (a prerequisite to

“ *As America reopens its economy, it is clear that our community’s contributions to the economic vitality of our country are needed now more than ever.*

— U.S. SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION ELAINE L. CHAO, AUGUST 7, 2020

be approved for a PPP loan) or cannot access support programs because of language barriers. At the same time, approximately 2 million AAPIs are essential workers—a higher proportion than their share of the U.S. population—serving on the front lines of the pandemic as physicians, surgeons, therapists, registered nurses, health care technicians, physician assistants, cooks, and food servers and supervisors.<sup>10</sup>

COVID-19 justifiably dominated the world’s attention in 2020 and created new economic challenges for the United States and the rest of the world. Against this unprecedented backdrop, the Commission made it a priority to focus on the immediate economic recovery needs of the AAPI business community as well as the health and mental health impacts as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The Commissioners formed an ad hoc subcommittee focused solely on the impact of COVID-19 on the AAPI business community and co-hosted several Town Hall and Roundtable events to share information about accessing federal disaster relief funds and other resources available to small businesses as well as to provide the public with the opportunity to share their concerns with the Commission. Throughout the year, the Commission and WHIAAPI

have commended the community’s ability to leverage business and personal connections around the world to help source personal protective equipment (PPE) and other resources for U.S. hospitals, frontline workers, and vulnerable communities.

Despite pivoting to focus on the immediate concerns and needs of the AAPI community as it relates to the extraordinary challenges of 2020, the Commission simultaneously continued its broader, pre-pandemic focus on advancing AAPI economic empowerment and addressing how the federal government can better support the AAPI community. The Commission established four subcommittees with the following focus areas:

**Passing the Torch:** This subcommittee sought to encourage members in the AAPI community, who have succeeded themselves, to mentor the next generation. Mentorship is such an important part of upward mobility in this country; it opens doors and access to opportunities in mainstream America. This subcommittee has also looked at ways to develop, foster, and encourage growth in professional and entrepreneurial skills and knowledge for the ever changing global economy; transfer experience and

**December 3, 2020:** PAC-AAPI and WHIAAPI visited the White House Rose Garden to view the new art installation by the celebrated Japanese American artist, Isamu Noguchi (1904-88). First Lady Melania Trump has sought to diversify the White House’s collection of artwork. Noguchi is the first Asian American artist to be represented in the White House collection. (From left to right:) Commissioner Prem Parameswaran, WHIAAPI Associate Director Amy Cheng Tarnoviski, Commissioner George Leing, WHIAAPI Executive Director Tina Wei Smith, White House Office of Public Liaison Associate Director Alex Flemister, and Commissioner Herman Martir (Photo Credit: Melanee Kate Thomas)



expertise to the next generation of leaders; and prepare AAPI youth for the workforce.

**Breaking the Glass Ceiling:** This subcommittee focused on ensuring increased AAPI representation in leadership and management roles, in both private and public sectors. Studies have shown that although AAPIs may be well represented in the workplace in several sectors, including the government, they continue to lack representation in leadership roles and senior executive positions. More AAPI future leaders need to be mentored and promoted for these leadership opportunities.

**Bridging the Income Gap:** Access to the right resources, information, and education remains critical to economic success. This subcommittee affirmed the basic principle that access to higher education must respect merit, and not diminish those who have sacrificed and invested in themselves and achieved academic excellence. Federal resources and opportunities, such as mentorship programs, loan assistance, and disaster relief funds, should be identifiable and accessible to the AAPI community to ensure that they have the skills and resources to compete. Prior to COVID-19, AAPIs as a whole experienced lower unemployment rates and higher household income levels than other minority groups. But when data are disaggregated by ethnic groups and education attainment, the disparities are significant.

**AAPI Women in Leadership:** Simply put, we need more AAPI women in leadership. AAPI women fare even worse than AAPI men when it comes to representation in leadership roles across different sectors. This subcommittee focused on developing the careers of AAPI women; supporting AAPI women in the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM); increasing the proportion of minority- and women-owned patent-holders; empowering AAPI women entrepreneurs; and promoting mentorship and recruitment of more AAPI women in leadership roles across all sectors.

In collaboration with WHIAAPI, the Commission participated in the May Heritage Month activities, a 4-day series of virtual events with more than 1,200 registrants from across the country, that included high-level speakers from the federal government and presentations on various federal resources and opportunities, such as government procurement and workforce development. The Commission followed this week of events with its inaugural open meeting and a lively Town Hall to hear concerns from the AAPI community. The Commission also hosted a session with the U.S. Department of Justice during the week of WHIAAPI's AAPI Young Leaders Summit, a 4-day series of virtual events in July 2020 with more than 800 registrants from 30 different states. This session included a roundtable discussion with high school and college students, interns, and young professionals. There were also subcommittee-level discussions with community leaders, as well as listening sessions, to discuss concerns about anti-AAPI bias and discrimination due to the pandemic. These are just some of the activities conducted by the Commission over this past year.

These information-gathering activities contributed to the deliberations that underly our specific recommendations to advance economic empowerment of AAPIs. Our recommendations are grouped into four domains:

- Report Better Data About the AAPI Experience
- Expand AAPI Workforce Development Opportunities
- Enhance Access to Economic Resources and Opportunities for AAPI-Owned Enterprises
- Improve the Economic Condition of U.S. Pacific Islanders

In the following pages, we introduce each domain and indicate the EO priority areas that the specific recommendations address.

# REPORT BETTER DATA ON THE **AAPI EXPERIENCE**

Despite the growing influence and contributions of AAPIs, national surveys still tend to include all AAPI respondents in the “Other” race/ethnicity category, which challenges efforts to document and understand the heterogeneous AAPI experience in the United States. Outside of the U.S. Census Bureau, which administers surveys such as the American Community Survey (ACS), Current Population Survey (CPS), and Annual Business Survey (ABS), few national population or business surveys disaggregate AAPIs from the “Other” race/ethnicity designation and even fewer oversample AAPIs to ensure adequate AAPI sample size to draw reliable conclusions from multivariate and comparative analyses. The size and linguistic diversity of the AAPI population, as well as the proportion of AAPIs who are foreign-born, pose serious challenges to reliably documenting the AAPI experience, but data collections must do a better job of overcoming these challenges to adequately characterize this increasingly important demographic in U.S. society and its economy.

A few notable exceptions reflect the impact of executive action. In 2003, under Secretary Elaine L. Chao’s tenure as U.S. Secretary of Labor, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) added a question to the CPS for those who identified as Asian to indicate whether they are Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, or Vietnamese. In November 2011, the BLS published CPS data about these specific Asian groups for the first time.<sup>11</sup>

Also in 2011, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published implementation guidance on data collection standards for race, ethnicity, sex, primary language, and disability status that are to be used—to the extent practicable—in all national population health surveys conducted or sponsored by HHS. The guidance identifies seven race categories (Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Other Asian) that comprise the broader category “Asian,” and four race categories (Native Hawaiian, Guamanian or Chamorro, Samoan, Other Pacific Islander) that comprise the Native

Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander category. These are the same categories listed as checkbox options in the decennial Census and the ACS. HHS appreciated that the additional granularity in data would enhance analyses of racial and ethnic health disparities, “to understand the causes, design effective responses, and evaluate our progress.”<sup>12</sup> Notably, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES) began oversampling Asian Americans beginning in 2011, permitting the first national estimates of numerous health conditions, nutrition, and risk factors for Asian Americans.<sup>13</sup> NHANES materials are translated into Mandarin Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese. However, because of its small sample size and disclosure concerns, analysis of Asian subgroups within NHANES is restricted, but is possible through the National Center for Health Statistics Research Data Center.

The Department of Education also has recognized the need for disaggregated data on AAPIs to help close opportunity gaps. When it posed the question for public comment in 2012, the vast majority (84 percent) of individual and organization comments supported disaggregating AAPI data.<sup>14</sup> More granular data about AAPIs will help direct precious social and economic resources to subgroups in need of temporary support.

Several privately managed online survey panels are considered among the most innovative in the field and include an adequate number of Asian American adults to support reliable reporting of data on Asian Americans as one group. These online surveys include the Pew Research Center’s American Trends Panel, which includes roughly 15,000 U.S. adults, about 400 of whom self-identify as Asian Americans;<sup>15</sup> the University of Southern California’s Understanding America Study (UAS), on which the Coronavirus in America Survey is based, includes approximately 9,000 respondents with approximately 300–400 AAPI adults in any one panel; RAND’s American Life Panel, which includes more than 6,000 participants, but only about 90 active AAPI panelists;<sup>16</sup> and NORC’s AmeriSpeak Panel, which currently contains

48,900 members aged 13 years and older spread across approximately 40,000 households, but only a few hundred AAPIs participate in any one survey.

Analyses based on relatively small numbers of AAPIs in national studies are superficial at best; they can neither discern with confidence the subgroups in need nor control for individual, family, or community context that can help identify opportunities for intervention. The need for more and better data on the AAPI experience became especially acute at the onset of a global health pandemic, when timely information was needed in the face of quickly evolving health concerns and economic challenges. Data that would allow policymakers to better gauge the impact of the economic disruption resulting from shelter-in-place restrictions would allow more targeted interventions that could deliver expedient relief.

Within 7 weeks after the President declared the COVID-19 pandemic to be a national emergency, the U.S. Census Bureau developed a Small Business Pulse Survey (SBPS) to run weekly from April 26 to June 27, 2020. The survey targeted the small employer businesses that responded to the 2017 Economic Census in an effort to quantify large to moderate negative effects of COVID-19 on small businesses. The Census Bureau's Center for Economic Studies plans to link the SBPS data with the ABS at a later date to examine differential outcomes by characteristics of business owners, including sex, race, and veteran status.<sup>17</sup>

Available data indicate that AAPI and other minority communities have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, although the experiences of AAPIs vary widely.<sup>18</sup> The nationally representative UAS COVID-19 Survey has collected data every other week since March 2020 about Americans' experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, and these data provide insights about AAPIs in comparison to other population groups on indicators such as protective behaviors, vaccine confidence, and reported COVID-19-related discrimination.

Underscoring the heterogeneity of behaviors within the AAPI population, the UAS COVID-19 Survey reveals that at the beginning of the pandemic, AAPIs behaved similarly in terms of mask-wearing and socializing, but the groups diverged significantly over time, with Asian Americans being

more likely than Pacific Islanders to report use of a face covering; avoidance of public places, gatherings, crowds, and restaurants; and being more likely to work or study from home (Figure 1). Compared to Pacific Islanders, Asian American respondents are also significantly more likely to express a willingness to obtain a coronavirus vaccine if it were available (Figure 2).

The UAS COVID-19 Survey has also documented an increase in perceived COVID-19-associated discrimination from March (4 percent) to April (10 percent), with Asian Americans more than twice as likely as whites in early March to have reported experiences of discrimination in the last 14 days due to others thinking they might have coronavirus (Figure 3). Comparing to prior data collected between December 21, 2018, and February 28, 2019, from the same panel of respondents about their day-to-day experience with discrimination and mistreatment, the "odds were four times higher for [non-Hispanic] Asians and almost three times higher for non-Hispanic blacks than non-Hispanic whites to have reported perceived discrimination amid the coronavirus pandemic. In contrast, the odds for [non-Hispanic] Asians and non-Hispanic blacks to experience day-to-day discrimination and mistreatment were similar to the odds for non-Hispanic whites, after adjusting for the demographic and socioeconomic characteristics."<sup>19</sup>

The American Trends Panel surveyed more than 9,600 U.S. adults in early June 2020 and asked a different question, whether respondents had "been subject to slurs or jokes because of their race or ethnicity since the [coronavirus] outbreak began."<sup>20</sup> Greater than 30 percent of non-Hispanic Asian-only adults reported they had this experience, compared with 21 percent of non-Hispanic Black-only adults, 15 percent of Hispanic adults of any race, and 8 percent of non-Hispanic white-only adults. With only 278 Asian Americans in the sample, it was not possible to analyze Asian American respondents by demographic characteristics such as sex, age, or education.

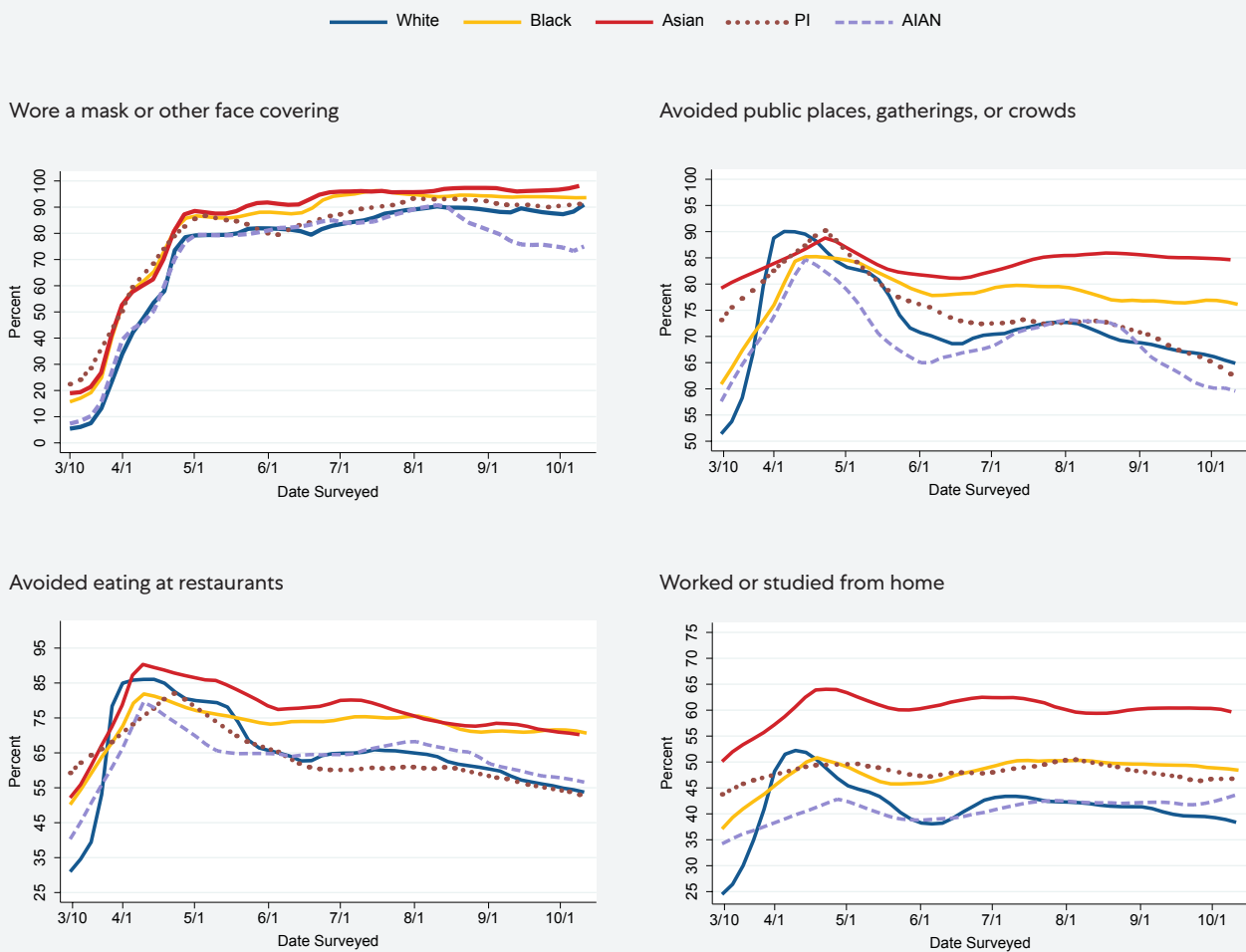
Good policy depends on good research, which requires good data. To advance economic empowerment of AAPIs, we need to learn more about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on AAPI small business owners, households, and the community through rigorously de-

signed and executed national surveys. A national sample of about 1,000 adult AAPI respondents would yield reasonably good precision for major AAPI subgroups defined by sex, age, geography, and ethnicity.<sup>21</sup> Harmonization of questions with those in ongoing nationally representative studies (e.g., the Census Bureau Small Business COVID-19 Pulse Surveys, or the UCA pulse study) is important be-

cause it will allow for more meaningful interpretations of AAPI-only survey findings and comparisons with estimates from other surveys. Costs can be controlled by limiting the length of the survey and by relying on list-based sampling (e.g., from the national voter file) combined with commercial information that improves the likelihood of identifying AAPI small business owners or by leveraging

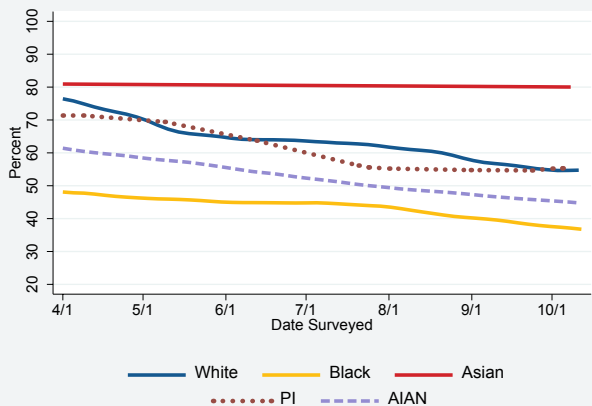
**Figure 1. Protective behaviors by race, March – October 2020**

Which of the following have you done in the last seven days to keep yourself safe from coronavirus?  
Only consider actions that you took or decisions that you made personally.



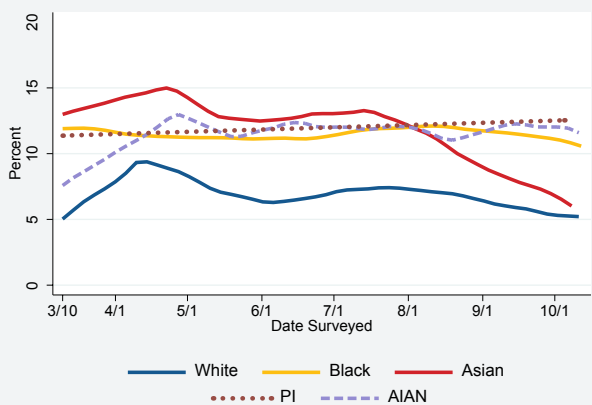
Data Source: Our own tabulations of the UAS COVID-19 Survey national sample (<https://covid19pulse.usc.edu/>) applying a smoothing procedure. Race categories include Hispanic ethnicity and are not mutually exclusive (e.g., a person who reports to be both Black and Asian would be represented in both categories). PI: Pacific Islanders; AIAN: American Indians and Alaska Natives.

**Figure 2. Somewhat/very likely to get coronavirus vaccine, if available, by race, April - October 2020**



Data Source: Our own tabulations of the UAS COVID-19 Survey national sample (<https://covid19pulse.usc.edu/>), applying a smoothing procedure. Race categories include Hispanic ethnicity and are not mutually exclusive.

**Figure 3. Reported COVID-19-related discrimination by race, March - October 2020**



Data Source: Our own tabulations of the UAS COVID-19 Survey national sample (<https://covid19pulse.usc.edu/>), applying a smoothing procedure. Race categories include Hispanic ethnicity and are not mutually exclusive.

ongoing online panel surveys that are nationally representative. Given the proportion of AAPIs that lack English language proficiency, it will be important to translate survey instruments into Mandarin Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Tagalog, and Lao at a minimum.

### Address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the AAPI community

- Commission a nationally representative survey to document the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on AAPI-owned small businesses and the AAPI community-at-large.

### Commit to meaningfully measure the experience of the AAPI population in national surveys and to identify the underserved

- Oversample AAPI populations in national studies to the extent necessary for meaningful analyses of AAPI-specific survey data.
- Disaggregate population information in federal surveys, instead of combining them into broader categories or using an “Other” category or a combined category that masks the heterogeneity of diverse populations.
- Increase tracking by federal law enforcement and civil rights agencies of bias and hate crimes committed against AAPIs.



# EXPAND AAPI WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management reported that AAPI representation in the federal civilian workforce has steadily increased from 5.5 percent in 2010 to 6.6 percent in 2018.<sup>22</sup> Since 2014, AAPIs have consistently represented only between 3 to 4 percent of the Senior Executive Service (SES), or the federal leadership corps,<sup>23</sup> which is similar to the proportion of AAPIs in the 116th Congress (2019–2020),<sup>24</sup> and woefully short of the 7 percent representation of AAPIs in the general population. The percentages of AAPIs in leadership positions at Fortune 500 companies are even more dismal, especially considering their higher average education and income.<sup>25</sup>

According to Ascend reports, AAPIs comprise 12 percent of the professional workforce and are the most likely to be hired (evidenced by the low unemployment rates pre-COVID-19) but the least likely (behind blacks and Hispanics) to be promoted.<sup>26</sup> Focusing on the representation of Asian Americans in executive and managerial positions in Bay Area technology companies, where Asians comprise greater than 47 percent of professionals in Bay Area manufacturing and information sectors, Asian American men and women made progress in attaining executive positions from 2007 to 2015, but remained at 38 percent and 66 percent below executive parity, respectively, and are the only groups below management parity (occupying 32.5 percent of managerial positions).<sup>27</sup>

AAPIs pursuing higher education have also met roadblocks despite the sacrifices, investments, and achievements made by applicants. For example, the U.S. Department of Justice found that “Yale discriminates based on race and national origin in its undergraduate admissions process, and that race is the determinative factor in hundreds of admissions decisions each year. For the great majority of applicants, Asian Americans and whites have only one-tenth to one-fourth of the likelihood of admission as African American applicants with comparable academic credentials.”<sup>28</sup> Access to higher education needs to respect merit as well as recognize that AAPIs are not a homogenous group; some ethnic groups within the community are overwhelmingly underrepresented and have the least access to higher education opportunities.

Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs), including Asian American and Native American Pacific Islander Serving Institutions (AANAPISIs) play an integral role in providing access to college for millions of AAPI students from disadvantaged backgrounds.<sup>29</sup> Until 2007, no federal legislation existed concerning AANAPISIs. As of FY2020, 281 colleges and universities were eligible for designation as an AANAPISI institution, of which 28 received grants from the U.S. Department of Education, averaging about \$350,000 per institution each year.<sup>30</sup> The number of AANAPISI grantees has increased from 6 at the program’s start in FY2008, to 20 in FY2011, and 28 in FY2020.

“ Access to higher education needs to respect merit as well as recognize that AAPIs are not a homogenous group; some ethnic groups within the community are overwhelmingly underrepresented and have the least access to higher education opportunities.

Although many minority groups face challenges in accessing resources, AAPIs are frequently excluded from diversity initiatives aimed at improving equity for other minority groups such as African Americans and Latino Americans,<sup>31</sup> despite findings that Asian Americans are the least likely of all demographic groups in the United States to be promoted to management positions, and that income inequality in the United States is rising fastest among Asian Americans.<sup>32</sup> In fact, the income gap among members of the Asian American community, between the top 10 percent and the bottom 10 percent in terms of income, is the largest among all racial or ethnic groups in the United States.<sup>33</sup>

The stereotype that AAPIs are a “model minority”—that they only represent higher socioeconomic statuses—has led many to overlook issues faced by the AAPI community and has, in some cases, even led to anti-AAPI discrimination.<sup>34</sup> This oversight is exacerbated by the tendency of AAPIs to focus on their daily lives and work, and to forego involvement in public or civic advocacy. AAPIs are a heterogeneous and diverse group with many internal disparities that deserve further attention.<sup>35</sup>

The pandemic also continues to impact the disproportionate number of AAPIs—approximately 2 million—who are essential workers in health care and other service industries. These include physicians, surgeons, therapists, registered nurses, health care technicians, physician assistants, cooks, and food servers and supervisors.<sup>36</sup> AAPI essential workers comprise a core element of the U.S. effort to cope with and defeat COVID-19, and thus also to safeguard the U.S. economy. All essential workers, including AAPIs, deserve recognition for the ongoing sacrifices they make both for the U.S. economy and for the wider U.S. population.

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*EO priority (vi) opportunities to empower students and families with the freedom to pursue the educational opportunities that best prepare them for success in life and work*

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### **Implement pipeline-building programs that identify and cultivate AAPI leaders**

- Cooperate with AAPI national organizations, such as the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies (APAICS), the OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates (previously known as the Organization of Chinese Americans), the International Leadership Foundation (ILF), WHIAA-PI, and others to create opportunities for student internships in federal agencies, to encourage emerging leaders to consider federal service, and for students to develop soft skills to complement technical skills. Allow for the same collaboration with Asian American Government Executives Network (AAGEN), Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC), and other AAPI affinity groups across the federal government to increase mentorship and leadership training for young professionals.
- Encourage federal government leadership pipeline programs to recruit, select, and help matriculate more AAPIs into their programs, such as the Presidential Management Fellows, White House Fellows, and the AAGEN SES Development Program.
- Identify and partner with organizations that are willing and eager to assist AAPI college students in leadership development and entrepreneurship training.
- Identify and engage accomplished AAPIs who are willing and eager to commit to leadership development and, in return, serve as mentors to help cultivate future leaders.

## **Incentivize AAPIs to pursue new skills for the digital/virtual economy that enhance their ability to serve the broader U.S. community**

- The U.S. Department of Commerce Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA), U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA), U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), and U.S. Department of Education should advance policies that incentivize development of the new skills needed to manage effectively in an information age. As the COVID-19 pandemic has made clear, remote work, learning, and socializing will continue to transform the way we conduct business and educate our students.
- Provide regional grants to improve access to high-speed broadband, other technologies, and training opportunities, especially among Pacific Islanders, to help AAPIs develop the skills they need to succeed and to contribute to diversifying their local economies.
- Provide opportunities and funds for AANAPISI institutions to provide increased training in STEM and innovation.
- Encourage all healthcare sector professionals to be provided with hands-on experiences and appropriate training in how to provide services to diverse and underserved populations, including the AAPI community.

## **Ensure equal opportunities for AAPIs to pursue their dreams through higher education**

- Reaffirm race neutrality in college and university admissions decisions and ensure that race-based quotas are not determinant in college and university admissions.
- Commit to intentional and sustained support for AANAPISIs, urge eligible institutions to apply for AANAPISI designation, and encourage institutions to apply for funding to support programs that benefit disadvantaged AAPI students.

*EO priority (vii) strategies for increasing the diversity of our workforce with greater inclusion of AAPI employees through better recruitment, training, educational workshops, career development, advancement, vocational training, or other appropriate and effective means*

## **Increase AAPI representation in federal service, particularly in senior management, as well as in federal internships and in federal pipeline and mentorship programs**

- Establish goals to increase the number of AAPIs identified, promoted, and/or hired into senior-level positions within the federal government, and in opportunity-opening placements as Presidential Management Fellows and White House Fellows.
- Increase AAPI representation on special initiatives that are focused on economic and workforce development, such as the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council.
- Increase paid internship and fellowship opportunities for AAPIs in all federal agencies to build the pipeline of talent that will ultimately fill senior agency leadership positions.

## **Include AAPIs in diversity initiatives, particularly in workforce development programs and initiatives for entrepreneurs and businesses**

- Encourage private and public sector organizations to be inclusive of AAPIs when extending opportunities to minorities, in order to facilitate better representation of AAPIs in leadership positions (e.g. in C-suite positions at Fortune 500 companies and in senior leadership positions within the federal government).

### **Encourage top 500 U.S. companies to embrace AAPI advancement as a corporate responsibility or priority**

- Review the retention and promotion rates of AAPIs in an analysis of race and gender, to better understand barriers to AAPI progress at different levels of management, and across different parts of organizations (e.g., engineering, marketing, sales).
- Recognize the contributions of executives at the top 500 U.S. companies who push their organizations to shift priorities and budgets to fund and organize new programs to advance AAPIs.
- Incentivize Fortune 500 companies to pilot senior mentorship programs and executive rotation programs to elevate AAPIs, especially AAPI women, within those companies.
- Institutionalize AAPI leadership as one of the goals and sustained priorities of the top 500 companies' leadership development process, not just as a one-time special diversity project.

### **Establish innovative mentorship programs for AAPI entrepreneurs and professionals**

- Establish public-private partnerships to identify successful AAPI entrepreneurs and executives in Fortune 500 companies, including technology and industry leaders as well as senior government officials, and invite them to serve as mentors to promising AAPI candidates, especially women, for leadership positions.
- Identify and partner with AAPI organizations willing and eager to assist AAPIs in leadership development.
- Organize national events to connect young professionals with accomplished AAPI executives (perhaps modeled after the AAPI Young Leaders Summit).

### **Continue to recognize and celebrate the many positive contributions of AAPIs**

- Collect AAPI success stories in a variety of industries that can be shared on websites featured by the MBDA, SBA, and other relevant federal agencies. Partner with these commendable AAPIs to share their experiences and celebrate their successes with the AAPI community through WHIAAPI events and PAC-AAPI meetings.
- Solicit nominations from federal agencies and stakeholders for noteworthy AAPI leaders in business, government, and the community to tell their stories.

### **Recognize the extraordinary challenges currently being faced by AAPI health care workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including from anti-AAPI biases and hate crimes**

- Counter biases and prejudices against AAPI health care workers and patients.
- Ensure that AAPI frontline health care workers receive sufficient PPE and other resources, including mental health services and better support for their families (e.g., childcare), to protect against the risks of health care work, especially during pandemics.
- Provide government compensation (e.g., hazard pay) for health care workers, injured or sickened, due to work-related activities, prioritizing registered nurses who have greater risk of exposure to infectious diseases.
- Issue federal guidelines on nurse-to-patient ratio, to minimize error and stress due to heavy workload, which often results in burnout and rapid turnover among AAPI nurses and other AAPI health care workers.
- Encourage HHS to recognize and celebrate the positive contributions of AAPI health care professionals.
- Identify urban and rural communities with underserved, low-income AAPI populations, and establish health care centers or clinics in these communities to serve them.

# ENHANCE ACCESS TO ECONOMIC RESOURCES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR **AAPI-OWNED ENTERPRISES**

Federal government contracting obligations for FY2019 alone totaled \$586.2 billion, with about 22 percent awarded to small businesses. In addition to contracts, resources such as federal grants and small business loans provide much-needed assistance to American small business enterprises. Yet, AAPIs have not leveraged these resources to the extent that they could. In FY2019, the value of contracts awarded to AAPI small businesses accounted for approximately 5 percent of the total value of small business contracts government-wide.<sup>38</sup>

AAPIs are not always aware of the resources available from the SBA, MBDA, and/or Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs) or suspect that such resources are only available “with strings attached.” Language barriers often prevent AAPIs, especially first-generation immigrants, from completing the forms or obtaining the certifications needed to access these resources.<sup>39</sup> Other cultural factors may reinforce AAPI reticence in accessing available resources, including privacy concerns—which may make AAPIs reluctant to provide the detailed financial information that is often required to access these resources—and a general (and in part cultural) disinclination to seek help.

As of 2018, AAPI-owned employer firms constituted a disproportionate share of American small businesses<sup>40</sup> and outperformed non-minority-owned businesses in terms of growth if measured in number of firms and employees, as well as in gross receipts.<sup>41</sup> However, as measured by the percentage of AAPIs in the adult U.S.

population, AAPIs are still underrepresented as owners of small employer-owned businesses. Together, these facts indicate that the AAPI community harbors enormous untapped potential. Indeed, the MBDA estimates that to achieve “entrepreneurial parity” (i.e., to comprise a proportion of entrepreneurs commensurate with their proportion of the U.S. adults), AAPI-owned small businesses would need to employ 58 percent more employees and produce 150 percent more in annual revenue or closer to \$2.07 trillion, than they currently do. In addition, AAPI-owned businesses are also positioned to enhance America’s competitive advantage because they are better able to conduct business in languages other than English and have strong export capabilities across industries.<sup>42</sup> Minority-owned firms lead the Nation in exporting and are more likely to export compared to non-minority-owned businesses regardless of firm size. To unleash their untapped economic potential, AAPIs must be afforded the resources to overcome the barriers that inhibit business formation and growth.

AAPI employees and businesses have been particularly affected by COVID-19, because AAPIs disproportionately own businesses or work in sectors that have struggled from shelter-in-place restrictions associated with the pandemic (e.g., retail, health care, social assistance, food service, and accommodation).<sup>43</sup> Whereas the number of active business owners in the United States declined by approximately 22 percent from February to April 2020, the number of active AAPI business owners declined by

“ *To unleash their untapped economic potential, AAPIs must be afforded the resources to overcome the barriers that inhibit business formation and growth.* ”

approximately 26 percent during those same months.<sup>44</sup> Language barriers<sup>45</sup> and lack of preexisting relationships with local banks or credit unions increased strain on many AAPI business owners by preventing them from accessing much needed federal aid, such as PPP funds.<sup>46</sup> These same factors could lead AAPI business owners to face protracted recoveries even after the pandemic.

Success among AAPI entrepreneurs fosters the economic prosperity of not only the AAPI community, but also the individuals and communities employed by AAPI-owned businesses. Thus, connecting them with federal resources can also help stimulate the U.S. economy.

*EO priority (i) the development, monitoring, and coordination of executive branch efforts to broaden access by AAPI employers and communities to economic resources and opportunities*

### **Improve AAPI access to Federal resources, opportunities, and business tools**

- Increase AAPI outreach, training, and access to federal grant programs, especially for underserved and low-income members of the AAPI community (e.g., Lao, Hmong). These efforts should include translating relevant materials into AAPI languages and enhancing AAPI accessibility to service center representatives who can speak AAPI languages.
- Require agencies to provide AAPI-targeted digital marketing campaigns at least 2 weeks before grant application deadlines to ensure that AAPI communities are aware of these opportunities.
- Provide the AAPI community with regular webinars to disseminate valuable information about federal resources for small businesses. These efforts could involve agencies such as the SBA (including its Office of Women's Business Ownership and Mentorship programs for Minority and Veteran Owned Busi-

nesses), Offices of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBUs) in various Departments, U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, U.S. International Trade Administration, and the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

- Encourage more collaboration between WHIAAPI and the MBDA, such as ensuring that AAPIs are well-represented, active participants and recognized at the annual Minority Enterprise Development (MED) Week Conference.
- Develop short video segments in various AAPI languages to explain the offerings of federal departments and agencies, especially those focused on small business resources and opportunities, as well as workforce development initiatives and grants.

*EO priority (ii) strategies for encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in AAPI communities, empowering the economic growth of AAPI enterprises and communities, and increasing AAPI business diversification, including through general reductions in regulatory and tax burdens*

### **Deliver additional small business relief measures to economic sectors that have been and continue to be severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and in which AAPIs are overrepresented, such as the hospitality and service industries<sup>47</sup>**

- Reserve a portion of the next phase of federal relief for businesses with fewer than 50 or 100 employees, so that these businesses need not compete with larger businesses that may have received preferential treatment from local banks during earlier federal relief phases. Most AAPI businesses probably fit more in this category and are in dire need of cash infusion.

*EO priority (iii) strategies for increasing Federal procurement opportunities for AAPI enterprises*

### **Overcome AAPI barriers to accessing Federal government procurement opportunities**

- Encourage AAPI enterprises to access resources that the federal government offers to small businesses, including loans, contracts, and grant opportunities.
- Share best practices with SBA offices and the OSDDBUs across all federal departments and agencies on how best to engage AAPI-owned enterprises and increase the number of AAPI-owned enterprises that can be suppliers to the federal government.
- Encourage AAPIs to engage with procurement outreach programs in pursuit of federal contracting opportunities, and supplement past studies (e.g., by the MBDA) on contracting barriers for minority-owned enterprises with transparent reports on what actions have been taken to address and overcome the barriers that have been identified.
- Work with and through local and national Chambers of Commerce to provide assistance to AAPI-owned small businesses and share resources from the federal government.

*EO priority (iv) strategies for increasing participation of AAPI enterprises in partnerships between the public and private sectors*

### **Collaborate with and recognize private organizations that provide assistance to AAPI businesses**

- Collaborate with and recognize organizations that work to ensure resources are accessible and information is filtered down to those AAPI communities that need the most assistance (e.g., small, family-owned, or independent businesses; specific neighborhoods or communities; specific industries).
- Strengthen AAPI relationships among banks, financial organizations, and corporations to help ensure that these organizations know better how to work with the AAPI community.

**August 5, 2020:** Commissioners meet with Derek Kan, the first AAPI Deputy Director of the White House OMB at the Eisenhower Executive Office Building during the Second Quarterly Meeting of PAC-AAPI. (Photo Credit: Melanee Kate Thomas)



# IMPROVE THE ECONOMIC CONDITION OF U.S. PACIFIC ISLANDERS

U.S. Pacific Islanders (PIs) face a unique set of interconnected economic, security, and assimilation issues that require increased federal attention to address. Historically, most federal investment in U.S. Pacific territories have been Department of Defense (DOD) investments in military installations.<sup>48</sup> Although these investments have provided valuable resources including jobs to most American territories in the Pacific and serve vital U.S. strategic interests, the largest proportions of these islands' economies are tied to international tourism, and most tourists who visit these islands arrive not from the mainland United States, but from Asian countries (e.g., Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong).

The deep economic interconnections of U.S. Pacific territories and independent island governments throughout the Pacific with major Asian economies poses a potential security threat to the United States. The security of the U.S. Pacific territories is paramount not only for protecting their peoples, but also for safeguarding the strategic interest of controlling territories and waters throughout the Pacific, and of defending the thousands of miles of underwater fiberoptic cabling beneath islands such as Guam, which transmit billions of dollars daily between Australasia and the mainland United States. The U.S. government, by increasing its (nonmilitary) economic investments in these U.S. Pacific territories, could diversify these territories' economies and thereby decrease their economic dependence on foreign countries and help to ensure the safety and security of U.S. Pacific territories and their peoples, as well as of the larger U.S. economy and population.

Investments in the U.S. Pacific territories (e.g., by the Department of Commerce) would help create economic opportunities for PIs on their home islands, decreasing incentives for PIs to move to the mainland United States, where they often experience difficulties assimilating. By creating greater economic opportunities for PIs, the U.S. government could also help address migration and

assimilation issues within U.S. Pacific territories; PIs from independent nations (e.g., the Marshall Islands or Federated States of Micronesia) often migrate to U.S. Pacific territories in search of economic opportunities, but then become impoverished, with little safety net to assist them. Such high rates of migration and poor assimilation from independent Pacific nations places strain on the economies of U.S. Pacific territories, which could be offset by increased federal investment in these territories' local economies.<sup>49</sup>

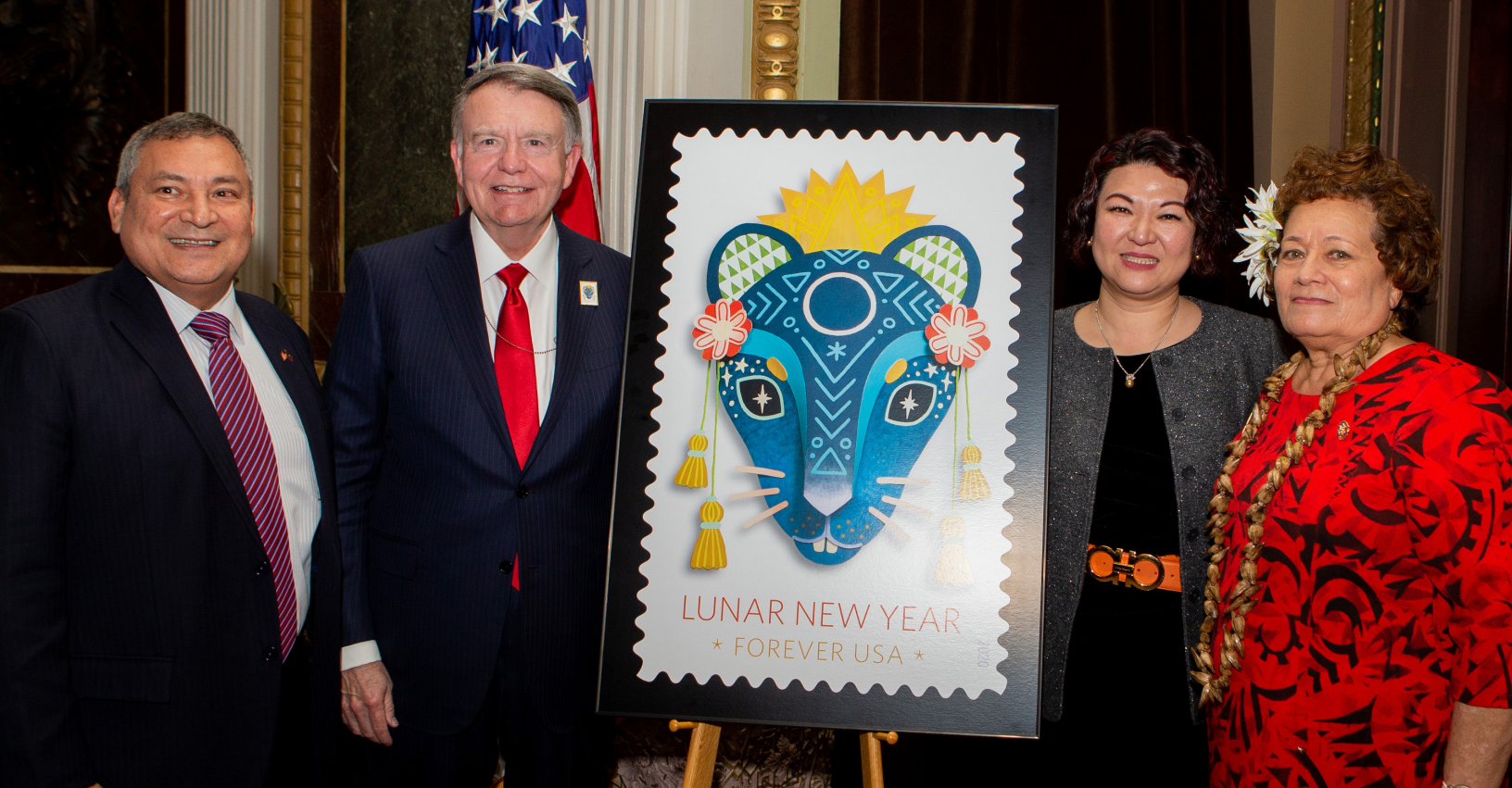
*EO priority (v) economic strategies for AAPI enterprises and communities to employ existing knowledge and relationships in order to pursue trade and investment opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region*

## Increase economic outreach to and investment in U.S. Pacific Island territories

- Highlight trade and investment opportunities in the federal government, such as the U.S. International Trade Administration (ITA)'s SelectUSA program and provide incentives for far-reaching territories to be able to attend matchmaking sessions.
- Showcase other initiatives, such as U.S. Housing and Urban Development (HUD)'s Opportunity Zones and leverage these opportunities to reinvest in distressed and underserved communities.

“ *The vibrancy and dynamism of the AAPI community has played a key role in shaping American society and its economy.* ”





**January 27, 2020:** Lunar New Year Celebration at the White House Unveiling the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) Year of the Rat Stamp. (from left to right) Commissioner Eddie Calvo, Chair of the Board of Governors of USPS Robert “Mike” Duncan, Hannah Chan of North Carolina, and Commissioner Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen. (USPS Photo Office)

*EO priority (ix) an analysis of the economic condition of the United States Pacific Island territories and freely associated states in an effort to devise strategies for helping each island develop and maintain a strong and diversified economy that supports its residents*

### **Ensure the economic sufficiency and security of U.S. Pacific territories and their peoples**

- Increase federal (nonmilitary) investments in U.S. Pacific territories to diversify their economies and decrease their economic dependence on foreign countries.
- Establish a regional micro loan strategy for Pacific Island and freely associated states (e.g., by distributing micro loans to small businesses, providing U.S. Agency for International Development eligibility to the whole region, and setting low interest and forgivable term conditions on loans to spur small business growth) with additional support from the U.S. Depart-

ments of Treasury, State, and Interior, and from the SBA, to infuse small businesses and grow and diversify these economies. Similar efforts could be modeled on the emergency relief PPP, which was successful in the U.S. Pacific territories.

- Increase DOD support for the Coast Guard and other security measures that help to ensure economic security across U.S. Pacific territories.
- Improve public health outreach to communicate proper workplace safety measures to counter the spread of COVID-19 and ensure access to PPEs. These actions will also help accelerate revival of the tourism industry.

### **Ease assimilation of U.S. Pacific Islanders into the mainland U.S. economy**

- Increase efforts to ease assimilation of PIs into the mainland United States and its economy by providing orientation programs, including workforce training by the U.S. DOL.

# CONCLUSION

Efforts to economically empower AAPIs should be based on principles of equal opportunity and should aim to safeguard the promise of the American Dream for everyone in the United States. Effective advocacy on behalf of AAPIs requires ongoing data collection that can provide a more nuanced picture of the AAPI economic and social experience over time, document income inequalities within the AAPI population, identify the needs of low-income AAPI communities that do not fit the “model minority” narrative, and celebrate progress and successes to inspire Americans everywhere. Data on AAPIs also need to be disaggregated by education, language proficiency, employment, geography, and other household characteristics to understand how best to promote wealth-building and sustainable futures for all AAPIs.

The impact of COVID-19 on the health, employment, and economic wellbeing of AAPIs is unprecedented and deserves the attention of policymakers and community leaders. As 2020 comes to a close, the Nation continues to see a rise in the number of people infected and hospitalized across the country because of this terrible virus. While we await the distribution of vaccines, the COVID-19 restrictions may very likely

affect the business community and the economy through 2021, which means more AAPI-owned businesses and AAPI workers will continue to face challenges and losses in the new year.

AAPIs would benefit from forming coalitions with other minority groups that have also suffered disproportionate impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic; potential partners include members of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and leaders from Black and other minority groups who are in search of greater economic empowerment and equal opportunity. Ultimately, the success of AAPIs and of every other minority group contributes to the overall success of the United States, and it is therefore vital to American interests that the untapped potential of AAPIs be fully realized. The vibrancy and dynamism of the AAPI community has played a key role in shaping American society and its economy.

By supporting the AAPI community and facilitating AAPI access to key resources, the federal government can “empower Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to improve the quality of their lives, raise the standard of living of their families and communities, and more fully participate in our economy.”<sup>50</sup>

“*We thank all of the Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who are on the front lines of the battle with COVID. Every day, they are taking personal risks to save lives and keep our country safe, healthy, and whole.*”

— U.S. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE WILBUR L. ROSS, JR., AUGUST 7, 2020

# APPENDICES

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## APPENDIX A.

# EXECUTIVE ORDER ON ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

MAY 13, 2019

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By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to empower Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to improve the quality of their lives, raise the standard of living of their families and communities, and more fully participate in our economy, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Policy.** There are presently more than 20 million people of Asian American or Pacific Islander (AAPI) descent residing in the United States, which amounts to more than 6 percent of the population. The AAPI population is the most rapidly growing ethnic group in the country and is expected to increase to over 40 million individuals by 2060. At that time, people of AAPI descent are projected to be more than 9 percent of the Nation's population. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have helped build a strong and vibrant America. Generations of AAPI individuals, families, and communities are composed of diverse and varied ethnicities, languages, and cultures, and include residents of United States Pacific Island territories and freely associated states. They play an important economic role, having started businesses and generated jobs that pay billions of dollars in wages and taxes, including founding some of our Nation's most successful and innovative enterprises. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have made important contributions to science and technology, culture and the arts, and the professions, such as business, law, medicine, education, politics, and economics. Their shared accomplishments and legacies are an inspirational, significant, and celebrated part of the American experience.

While we celebrate the many contributions of the AAPI communities to our Nation, we also recognize that AAPI communities and enterprises encounter challenges accessing economic resources and opportunities. Many of the more than 1.9 million AAPI-owned enterprises are small sole-proprietorships that need assistance to access available resources such as business development counseling, small-business loans, and government procurement opportunities.

Today's AAPI workforce is the largest it has been in American history, and we will continue striving toward furthering AAPI advancement in employment and workforce development as well as increasing AAPI participation and representation in the upper levels of leadership in the public and private sectors.

The purpose of this order is to establish the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. Each will work to broaden access by AAPI employers and communities to economic resources and opportunities, thus empowering AAPIs to improve the quality of their lives, raise the standard of living of their families and communities, and more fully participate in our economy. Additionally, each will work to advance relevant evidence-based research, data collection, and analysis for AAPI populations, subpopulations, and businesses.

**Sec. 2. President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.** The President’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (the “Commission”) is established in the Department of Commerce.

(a) Mission and Function of the Commission. The Commission shall provide advice to the President, through the Secretary of Commerce and the Secretary of Transportation, who shall serve as Co-Chairs of the Initiative described in section 3 of this order, on:

- (i) the development, monitoring, and coordination of executive branch efforts to broaden access by AAPI employers and communities to economic resources and opportunities;
- (ii) strategies for encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in AAPI communities, empowering the economic growth of AAPI enterprises and communities, and increasing AAPI business diversification, including through general reductions in regulatory and tax burdens;
- (iii) strategies for increasing Federal procurement opportunities for AAPI enterprises;
- (iv) strategies for increasing participation of AAPI enterprises in partnerships between the public and private sectors;
- (v) economic strategies for AAPI enterprises and communities to employ existing knowledge and relationships in order to pursue trade and investment opportunities in the Asia-Pacific region;
- (vi) opportunities to empower students and families with the freedom to pursue the educational opportunities that best prepare them for success in life and work;
- (vii) strategies for increasing the diversity of our workforce with greater inclusion of AAPI employees through better recruitment, training, educational workshops, career development, advancement, vocational training, or other appropriate and effective means;
- (viii) the compilation and analysis of research and data related to AAPI populations, subpopulations, and businesses; and
- (ix) an analysis of the economic condition of the United States Pacific Island territories and freely associated states in an effort to devise strategies for helping each island develop and maintain a strong and diversified economy that supports its residents.

(b) Membership of the Commission. The Commission shall consist of members appointed by the President who are United States citizens or nationals, or who are citizens of the Republic of Palau, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Federated States of Micronesia who are subject to an applicable compact of free association with the United States, and shall include individuals having a history of engagement and involvement with AAPI communities and enterprises. The President shall designate one member of the Commission to serve as Chair.

(c) Administration of the Commission.

- (i) The Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, shall designate an Executive Director for the Commission. The Department of Commerce shall provide funding and administrative support

for the Commission to the extent permitted by law and within existing appropriations, and shall, as necessary and appropriate under section 1535 of title 31, United States Code, enter into one or more agreements to obtain goods or services from the Department of Transportation in support of the Commission. The heads of other executive departments and agencies shall assist and provide information to the Commission, consistent with applicable law, as may be necessary to carry out its functions. Each executive department and agency shall bear its own expenses of assisting the Commission.

(ii) Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation, but shall be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in the Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701–5707). Insofar as the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.) (the “Act”), may apply to the administration of the Commission, any functions of the President under the Act, except that of reporting to the Congress, shall be performed by the Secretary of Commerce, in consultation with the Secretary of Transportation, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Administrator of General Services.

(d) Termination Date. The Commission shall terminate 2 years from the date of this order, unless renewed by the President prior to that date.

**Sec. 3. White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.** There is established the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (Initiative), a Federal interagency working group whose members shall be selected by their respective agencies. The Secretaries of Commerce and Transportation shall serve as the Co-Chairs of the Initiative and shall convene regular meetings of the Initiative, determine its agenda, and direct its work pursuant to the guidance and direction of the President. The Executive Director established in section 2(c) of this order shall serve in the same role for the Initiative and shall report to the Co Chairs, or their designees, on Initiative matters.

(a) Mission and Function of the Initiative. The Initiative shall work to broaden AAPI access to economic resources and opportunities and thus empower AAPIs to improve the quality of their lives, raise the standard of living of their families and communities, and more fully participate in our economy. The Initiative shall advise the Co-Chairs on the implementation and coordination of Federal programs as they relate to AAPI access to economic resources and opportunities.

(b) Membership of the Initiative. In addition to the Co Chairs, the Initiative shall consist of senior officials from the following executive branch departments, agencies, and offices:

- (i) the Department of State;
- (ii) the Department of the Treasury;
- (iii) the Department of Defense;
- (iv) the Department of Justice;
- (v) the Department of the Interior;
- (vi) the Department of Agriculture;
- (vii) the Department of Labor;
- (viii) the Department of Health and Human Services;

- (ix) the Department of Housing and Urban Development;
- (x) the Department of Energy;
- (xi) the Department of Education;
- (xii) the Department of Veterans Affairs;
- (xiii) the Department of Homeland Security;
- (xiv) the Office of Management and Budget;
- (xv) the Environmental Protection Agency;
- (xvi) the Small Business Administration;
- (xvii) the Office of Personnel Management;
- (xviii) the Social Security Administration;
- (xix) the White House Office of Cabinet Affairs;
- (xx) the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs;
- (xxi) the White House Office of Public Liaison;
- (xxii) the National Economic Council;
- (xxiii) the Domestic Policy Council;
- (xxiv) the Office of Science and Technology Policy;
- (xxv) the Office of the U.S. Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator; and
- (xxvi) other executive branch departments, agencies, and offices as the President may, from time to time, designate.

The heads of each of the foregoing executive branch departments, agencies, and offices shall designate the senior Federal officials who will serve as their respective representatives on the Initiative. At the direction of the Co Chairs, the Initiative may establish subgroups consisting exclusively of Initiative members or their designees under this section, as appropriate. To the extent permitted by law, members of the Initiative, or their designees, shall devote the time, skill, and resources necessary and adequate to carry out the functions of the Initiative. Each executive department, agency, and office shall bear its own expenses for participating in the Initiative.



THE WHITE HOUSE,  
May 13, 2019.

[FR Doc. 2019-10398  
Filed 5-15-19; 11:15 am]  
Billing code 3295-F9-P



**May 19, 2020:** Signing of Executive Order 13872 Advancing the Economic Empowerment of AAPIs. President Donald J. Trump with AAPI appointees in the White House and the Nominees to the President's Advisory Commission on AAPIs. (White House Photo Office)



## APPENDIX B. MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

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**Paul S. Hsu, MS, PhD**, of Florida, *Chairman*

Founding President, HSU Educational Foundation  
Founder, Manufacturing Technology, Inc., Crestview Technology Air Park, ActiGraph, and Total Parts Plus, Inc.  
Former Associate Administrator for the Office of Government Contracting and Business Development,  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
National Chairman, International Leadership Foundation  
Presidential Appointee, President's Export Council (PEC)  
Senior Research Fellow on Energy Efficiency, Harvard University Asia Center  
Presidential Appointee, United States Air Force Chief of Staff Civic Leaders Advisory Group

**Doris Flores Brooks, CPA, MBA**, of Guam

Member, Guam Public Utilities Commission  
Former Public Auditor, Guam (2001-2018)  
Former State Senator, Guam (1989-1994)

**Eddie Calvo**, of Guam

President and CEO, PMC investments, Inc.  
President, Trans Pacific Insurance Brokers, Inc.  
Director and Vice President, Calvo Enterprises, Inc.  
Former Governor, Guam (2011-2019)

**Jennifer Carnahan, MBA**, of Minnesota

Founder and General Manager, Primrose Park  
Member, Board of Directors, Big Brothers Big Sisters of the Twin Cities

**Grace Y. Lee, MBA**, of Michigan

Founding President and CEO, Ashford Connex, LLC  
Vice Chair, Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission  
Member, Board of Directors, Asian & Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce & Entrepreneurship  
Chair Emeritus, Asian Pacific American Chamber of Commerce (APACC)

**George Leing, JD, MA**, of Florida

Senior Counsel, U.S. Department of Commerce

**Jan-le Low** of Nevada

CEO, Golden Catalyst, LLC  
Executive Producer, Chinese New Year in the Desert™ / Las Vegas Spring Festival  
Managing Partner, SATAY Thai Bistro & Bar  
Founding Board Member, Nevada Small Business Council

## APPENDIX B. MEMBERS OF THE COMMISSION

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### **Herman Martir** of Texas

Founding President, Asian Action Network  
Founding President, Emerging Leaders International  
Advisor, United States Global Leadership Coalition

### **Keiko Matsudo Orrall** of Massachusetts

Executive Director, Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism  
Chairperson, Massachusetts Marketing Partnership  
Chairperson, Restaurant Promotion Commission  
Member, Brand USA Advisory Council  
Former Member, Massachusetts State House of Representatives (2011-2018)

### **Prem Parameswaran** of New York

Executive Director and the Group CFO and President of North America, Eros International  
Member, Boards of the Columbia University Alumni Trustee Nominating Committee, and the Program for Financial Studies at Columbia Business School

### **Amata Coleman Radewagen** of American Samoa

Member, U.S. House of Representatives (since 2015)  
Vice Ranking Member, House Veterans' Affairs Committee and Member, Subcommittees on Health and on Oversight and Investigations  
Vice Ranking Member, House Committee on Small Business, and Member, Subcommittees on Rural Development, Agriculture, Trade, and Entrepreneurship, and on Economic Growth, Tax, and Capital Access  
Member, House Natural Resources Committee, and Member, Subcommittees on Water, Oceans and Wildlife, and on Indigenous Peoples of the United States

### **Michelle P. Steel** of California

Member-elect, U.S. House of Representatives (2021-2023)  
Elected Member, Orange County Board of Supervisors, 2nd District (2015-2021); Chair (2017-2018, 2020-2021)  
Elected Member, California State Board of Equalization, 3rd District (2009-2015); Vice Chair (2011 - 2015)

### **Chiling Tong, MBA**, of Maryland

President & CEO, Asian & Pacific Islander American Chamber of Commerce & Entrepreneurship  
Founding President, International Leadership Foundation  
Former Deputy Assistant Secretary, Department of Commerce  
Senior Fellow, Ash Center at Harvard Kennedy School  
Congressional Awards Board Member

### **Helen Van Etten, AuD**, of Kansas

Member, Kansas Board of Regents (2013-2021)  
Member, Washburn University Board of Regents (since 2016)  
Commissioner, Midwestern Higher Education Compact (since 2014)  
Member, National Advisory Committee on Foreign Medical Education and Accreditation (NCFMEA)  
Former Chief Audiologist, Topeka School District

# ENDNOTES

- 1 The first documented presence of Filipinos in what is now the United States dates back to October 1587 around Morro Bay, California. In 1763 Filipinos permanently settled in Louisiana. Starting in the 1850s, the first major wave of Asian immigration to the continental United States occurred primarily on the West Coast during the California Gold Rush. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders include all people of Asian, Asian American, or Pacific Islander ancestry who trace their origins to those countries, states, jurisdictions, and/or communities of these geographic regions.
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- 41 Growth between 2012 and 2017 based on the U.S. Census Bureau Survey of Business Owners, 2012, and the U.S. Census Bureau Annual Business Survey, AB1700CSA01, 2018, as cited by MBDA Fact Sheets on Asian-American Owned Employer Firms, and Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander-Owned Employer Firms.
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**January 27, 2020:** White House Lunar New Year Celebration with Vice President Mike Pence and U.S. Secretary Elaine L. Chao, Co-Chair of WHIAAPI.



**January 27, 2020:** White House Lunar New Year Celebration with U.S. Secretary Wilbur Ross, Co-Chair of WHIAAPI.



**March 9, 2020:** Roundtable with Houston Community and Business Leaders



**March 9, 2020:** U.S. Secretary Elaine L. Chao speaking at WHIAAPI Roundtable with Houston Community and Business Leaders.



**August 5, 2020:** Commissioners at the PAC-AAPI Second Quarterly Meeting.



**August 5, 2020:** PAC-AAPI Second Quarterly Meeting.

