The COVID-19 pandemic has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives globally to date and has disproportionately affected diverse segments of the American population. At Ascend, we recognize that the challenges brought on by the outbreak are unique for every community, with some groups more adversely impacted than others.

With this perspective, we have curated a resource guide for members, business leaders and our supporters tailored to raising awareness about the specific needs of the Pan-Asian community in the United States (U.S.). Our goal is to highlight issues that are important to the Pan-Asian community, noting the distinct disparities even within our community, with the objective of centralizing and providing one repository for the range of available resources.*

*If there are resources you would like to add that are not listed and/or feedback you would like to provide, please fill out this Google Form.
About Ascend & Ascend Foundation

Ascend (@AscendLeader) is the largest, non-profit Pan-Asian membership organization for professionals and executives in North America focused on developing and advancing leaders for positive societal impact. Established in 2005, Ascend, a career lifecycle organization, reaches 60,000+ corporate board directors, senior executives, professionals and MBA/undergraduate students in the United States and Canada.

The Ascend Foundation is a 501(c)(3) non-profit Pan-Asian organization primarily engaged in research and fundraising for scholarships and community initiatives with a mission to advocate, enable and assist Pan-Asians in North America to become the leaders of today and tomorrow. Visit www.ascendleadership.org or www.ascendleadershipfoundation.org for more information.
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Ascend Insights

For many Pan-Asians in the workforce, the transition to new work habits and home life can lead to mental and physical health problems or exacerbate existing conditions. Remote working orders, social isolation, economic insecurity and complications possibly posed by the dramatic rise of anti-Asian bias, multi-generational households, cultural expectations, pending immigration status, language differences and domestic violence are added stress-inducers. These new norms can create a confluence of unforeseen challenges with the weight of caregiving and financial responsibilities disproportionately carried along the lines of gender, cultural, generational and economic biases.

Some insights unique to Pan-Asians include the following:

- AAPIs make up 17% of U.S. doctors, 9% of physician assistants, and 10% of nurses in the U.S. (Association of American Medical Colleges) (Minority Nurse)
- AAPIs represent 5% of all COVID-19 deaths with a known race/ethnicity in the U.S. (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention)
- Pan-Asians represent the highest percentage (29%) of multi-generational households. (Pew Research)
- For working age Pan-Asians, the pressure to maintain job security is magnified because this group financially supports extended family. (Prudential Financial Report)
- Over two million AAPIs work in healthcare, transportation and service industries and are subjected to xenophobia in the workplace in addition to increased exposure to communicable diseases. (Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance)

1 The term “Pan-Asians” is used interchangeably with Pan-Asian Americans, AAPI, Asian Americans and Asians in this document. These terms describe people of Asian descent in the U.S.
► Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Asian Americans aged 15-34, which is consistent with the national data. (American Psychological Association)

► First generation Pan-Asian Americans are typically not as accustomed to or prepared for harassment in and outside the workplace and place high value in the “American dream.”

► In the South Asian community, the incidence of domestic violence is rising as people have been forced to quarantine. (Sakhi)

► Pan-Asians are at greater risk of being laid off in a downturn due to bias in talent decisions that negatively impact AAPI individual contributor and middle management talent. (Ascend)

► For Pan-Asians, cultural and other barriers are likely to limit access to mental health support and services. (Asian American Psychological Association)
Health & Wellness Matters

Many companies offer resources and programs that focus on health and wellness for their employees. We encourage leaders to know what their companies are offering and to be prepared to extend a range of resources to support employees in handling stress related to the pandemic. We also want to draw attention to how different diversity segments can intersect with race/ethnicity, including gender, disability and LGBTQ status, to show how needs and concerns can be more complex due to overlapping identities. The following resources provide guidelines and best practices for leaders to share with Pan-Asian employees to help them protect their well-being and health and overcome the socio-cultural stigma of seeking mental health treatment.
Caring for Self

Asian American Psychological Association (AAPA) has a list of COVID-19 resources on managing mental health, racism and links to family and spiritual care. AAPA also offers fact sheets and tools to help health practitioners practice medicine safely during the health crisis.

Asian American Suicide Prevention & Education offers a 24-hour Asian LifeNet Hotline (Call 1-877-990-8585) (Cantonese, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean and Fijian are offered).

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA) has a comprehensive compilation of health guidelines to protect AAPI workers.

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO) provides cultural resources that help guide health providers to adopt respectful approaches to treating culturally diverse populations and also relevant tips, including links to health posters from government agencies to combat COVID-19 stigma in various languages.

Her Money offers COVID-19 resources and financial advice and planning that alleviate anxiety due to economic insecurity.


National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association (NAAPIMHA): promotes the mental health and well-being of AAPIs and has a comprehensive list of COVID-19 resources.

National Organization on Disability (NOD) has public resources to help employers address mental health in their workplaces, including: “How Is Your Company Addressing the Trillion Dollar Mental Health Issue?” and Key Tactics to Promote Inclusion of Invisible Diversity Traits and offers in-depth webcasts, peer conference calls and learning events.

Sakhi for South Asian Women focuses on domestic violence and gender-based violence issues and has a resource guide dedicated to COVID-19.

SAMHSA provides tips for maintaining mental health during social distancing, quarantine and isolation during COVID-19.

Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC) has a Rapid Response Resource Page catered to the AAPI and SEAA community with COVID-19 topics ranging from mental health support to victim support and mutual aid networks.
Caring for Children

- **Child Mind Institute** provides a guide that helps children manage anxiety and stress related to COVID-19.
- **National Association of School Psychologists** offers guidelines in Helping Children Cope With Changes Resulting From COVID-19 in multiple Asian languages.
- **National Child Traumatic Stress Network** offers a guide in English/Chinese to help parents/caregivers cope with COVID-19.
- **National Public Radio** has a comic Just For Kids: A Comic Exploring the New Coronavirus Comic available in Chinese.
- **Trevor Project** has a research paper Implications of COVID-19 for LGBTQ Youth Mental Health and Suicide Prevention that lists all the concerns facing LGBTQ youths.
- **UNICEF** has an extensive guide on how to parent and help children during COVID-19.

Caring for the Elderly

- **AAPIs For Civic Empowerment-Education Fund (AAPIFORCE- EF)** has guidelines for community and self-care practices in multiple languages.
- **American Association of Retired Persons (AARP)** has FAQ on COVID-19 and older adults.
- **Diverse Elders** has a long resource list to guide elders in divers communities, including links to find community-based resources near them for daily living during lockdown.
- **National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA)** offers automated in-language helplines and updated COVID-19 resource guides that are available in Cantonese, Mandarin, Korean and Vietnamese.

The **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, **World Health Organization (WHO)**, **American Psychiatric Association** and **the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health** also provide reliable, well-researched, and up-to-date tips on how to manage stress, health, nutrition and wellness during a pandemic.
Harassment Hurts
Managing Incidents of Anti-Asian Bias

With the notable rise of anti-Asian sentiments related to COVID-19, we encourage leaders and individuals to combat bias, discrimination and harassment by proactively addressing misinformation in the workplace and to speak up to protect employees of Pan-Asian descent and all vulnerable employees. It is also important for leaders to urge employees to know and follow company rules and protocols to redress workplace grievances based on bias. We found these guides useful in helping to understand, contextualize and communicate these issues:

- **Anti-Defamation League** has resources and toolkits for educators and parents on [Teaching Anti-Bias](#).
- **Asia Society** offers a recorded special event aimed to raise awareness and combat the anti-Asian bias and has ongoing programs that examine the social, political and economic implications of COVID-19 from a global perspective.
- **Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA)** includes fact sheets, posters and guidelines to protect AAPI workers during COVID-19 with a compilation of resource links.
- **CDC** has a guide [Reducing Stigma](#) for communicators that help counter stigma during the COVID-19 response.
- **Center for Health Security** has FAQ on Blame and Discrimination Attached to COVID-19.
- **National Council of Asian Pacific Americans** offers a [COVID-19 Toolkit](#) on response to racism and xenophobia with clear communications guidance and sample templates for messaging and talking points.
- **Urban Institute** has a checklist with action items on how to address anti-Asian racism/xenophobia: Confronting Racism and Supporting Asian American Communities in the Wake of COVID-19.
- **YWCA Silicon Valley** offers a [Podcast Playlist](#) about COVID-19 and the rising anti-Asian sentiment.
Responding to Harassment: Individuals & Bystanders

Employees expect their leaders to help guide them on how to deal with harassment. Some organizations stress that reporting workplace incidents helps protect others so that concerns can be addressed, thereby increasing safety and improving the work environment for all. Others focus on preparing individuals and bystanders to be resilient and resourceful in a potential harassment situation both inside and outside the workplace. There is no “one way” to respond to harassment but being calm is more likely to yield safer outcomes. Below are resources that include best practice examples and tips that can be used to modify and improve existing practices:

- **American Friends Service Committee** has tips for bystanders on what to do as a witness and includes an infographic flyer: The Four D’s of Bystander Intervention.
- **Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY)** has a webinar and blog that focuses on anti-Asian violence and what to do to address it. These “Know-Your-Rights” presentations are available in Mandarin and Korean.
- **Catalyst** has workplace communication tools created for navigating “tough” conversations on bias and discrimination: Overcoming Conversation Roadblocks, Conversation Ground Rules, Flip the Script: Create Connections, Not Conflict, in Tough Conversations, 5 Communication Skills Everyone Needs. They also have a blog that gives specific advice on how to address COVID racism in the workplace.
- **The Conference Board** has a podcast Addressing Stigma and Discrimination during Times of Crisis that provides tips on how to deal with this topic.
- **Creative Spirits** offers techniques and tips on how to react to racist behavior both in person and online.
- **Hollaback!** offers general guidelines for responding to verbal harassment and addressing the emotional repercussions; training on bystander intervention; and identifying and responding to workplace harassment.
- **Tanenbaum** has resources on combating extremism with religious inclusion awareness resources: Combatting Extremism.
Preparing Children to Understand Racism & Bias

In many Pan-Asian households, parents instinctively want to shield their children from complex situations that may cause undue concern and anxiety, and the cultural norm is for them to avoid having uncomfortable discussions about race and discrimination with their children. But with near-constant exposure to news and social media, children are increasingly more exposed to scenes of conflict and understand that they or their family members could be targets of bias based on their appearance. For families intent on stepping out of their comfort zones to educate their children about stereotypes and race-related issues in schools, neighborhoods and communities, the following resources are recommended. The goal is for each child to build a positive self image and social identity, develop caring human connections and be prepared to act against prejudice and discrimination. It is also important to instill in younger generations a respect for diversity and to help them be conversant on race-related topics.

- **A Cup of Joe** has [informative articles and resources on how to raise race-conscious children](#).

- **American Psychological Association** has [articles and guidelines to help parents speak with kids about discrimination](#), including those who feel the weight of discrimination.

- **Center for Racial Justice in Education** offers a [resource list, articles and expert advice about talking to children about race and racialized violence](#).

- **Child Mind Institute** has [guidelines on how to help children handle race and violence](#).

- **Common Sense Media** offers advice in a [video on how to help children absorb disturbing news](#) and a webinar by child development and trauma-care experts called [Conversations with Common Sense: Helping Kids Process Violence, Trauma, and Race in a World of Nonstop News](#).
National Public Radio (NPR) and Sesame Street Workshop offer an informative 20-minute podcast Talking Race with Young Children.

New York Times (NYT) has an article with a recommended reading list that can help parents explain racism and protest to their children.

Parent Toolkit has a toolkit on how to talk to kids about race and racism.

Penn GSE has a good Q&A about how to talk to children after racial incidents.

Raising Race-Conscious Kids has a site dedicated to speaking about race with children and includes up-to-date information and resources for this topic.

We Need Diverse Books has a list of books and other educational resources on Race, Equity, Anti-Racism, and Inclusion.
Recourse Against Discrimination

Legal

In the event employees have been a target of assault and/or harassment or feel unfairly discriminated against and penalized as a result of bias, they should first follow company policy and protocol to redress the issue. If such incidents occur outside the workplace, we recommend that individuals seek advice from the following legal, social justice and advocacy organizations:

- **Asian American Bar Association of New York (AABANY)** has compiled a list of resources related to COVID-19 to assist on a range of topics with legal implications.

- **Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF)** protects the civil rights of Asian Americans by organizing legal assistance.

- **National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)** has a COVID-19 community health resource page and links to resources for reporting, prosecuting, and receiving support for victims of hate crimes.

- **US Commission on Civil Rights** refers victims to the proper officials for filing a complaint at the Federal level.
Advocacy & Social Justice

Monitoring reports of incidents against Pan-Asians and other targeted groups is of vital importance for both public and government organizations to understand the severity of the level of discrimination and attacks against vulnerable groups. In addition to seeking guidance from their company, employees may be referred to the following organizations and resources:

- **Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC** has a resource guide for racial justice and immigrant workers, hosts a website called Stand Against Hatred which reports hate stories and provides information on fair housing rights.
- **Asian American Federation** has anti-Asian bias incidents Reporting Forms for the tri-state area available in seven Asian languages and a COVID-19 Resource Guide.
- **Asian Pacific American Advocates (OCA)** records incidents of anti-AAPI hate incidents/crimes and has a comprehensive Hate Incident Community Action Guide.
- **Asian Pacific Policy and Planning Council (A3PCON)** collects incident reports: Stop AAPI Hate in English, Chinese, Korean, Thai and Japanese.
- **#IAMNOTAVIRUS campaign** is a photography and storytelling series which challenges negative perceptions of AAPI individuals surrounding the COVID-19 crisis.
- **Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC)** collects and reports hate incidents and crimes.
- **US Department of Justice** encourages filing complaints against hate violence to local police and to the FBI through their local field offices.
- **US Department of Justice Community Relations Service (CRS)** as “America’s Peacemaker” provides facilitation, mediation, training and consultation services to community groups to prevent and respond to hate crimes and bias incidents, including COVID-related incidents.
- **Victim Connect Resource Center** is a place for victims of crime to share their stories with specialists and learn about their rights and options confidentially and compassionately.

Leaders must stress that standing up to bias and discrimination means we are defending the civil, human and constitutional rights of all Americans.
Leading in Crisis

In a crisis, Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) efforts are often pushed to the background in favor of more urgent matters when the more judicious thing to do is to place an organization's values at the forefront. At this time, it is vital for leaders to act with courage, conviction and confidence. COVID-19 is creating significant challenges, as well as opportunities, for leaders to speak firmly against bias and promote inclusion for marginalized groups who may be disproportionately impacted during and in the aftermath of the pandemic.
Checklist for Business Leaders

In addressing COVID-related D&I concerns, we recommend that leaders consider this checklist:

- Recognize COVID-19 has potentially spawned diversity, bias and harassment issues
- Reaffirm the company values and code of conduct policies
- Consult with leaders and the D&I team to understand the issues broadly and as they relate to the specific needs of targeted groups
- Understand and speak out firmly against anti-Asian discrimination and bias on a company-wide and public level
- Leverage CEO messaging, Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) or other internal mechanisms to educate employees about bias and inequity
- Use ERGs to help employees stay connected as they shelter-in-place
- Be prepared to address specific needs of affected employees
- Designate a safe on-site or virtual space for employees to share their concerns
- Create “virtual water coolers” for remote office environments using digital collaboration tools, where employees can feel at ease asking questions and seeking help
- Acknowledge the company’s frontline workers and remote working challenges for those with multi-generational caregiving duties
- Draw up an action plan to mitigate the risks and address the problem
Recommended Readings

For more resources on how to effectively lead during a crisis, please review the following:

- **The Conference Board** has a comprehensive COVID-19 resource hub that provides a 360° view of the crisis and insights to equip leaders with information and tools to support sound decision-making. Two noteworthy articles that are most relevant during this time are as follows:
  - Human Capital Management during COVID-19: Addressing Stigma and Discrimination during Times of Crisis introduces a multi-pronged approach for organizations, leaders and individuals to follow in order to address the increased “emotional tax” that Asians and Asian Americans experience during the pandemic due to stigma and discrimination.
  - Human Capital Management during COVID-19: Leading Virtual Teams in a Crisis lists 12 behaviors of highly engaging leaders that are needed to lead successful virtual teams.

- **Gallup** has meta-analytics that reveal the four universal needs that followers have of leaders: Trust, Compassion, Stability, Hope, “COVID-19: What Employees Need From Leadership Right Now.”

- **Gartner** lists Four Actions to Be a Strong Leader During COVID-19 Disruption, which includes 1) creating a central and clear list of priorities 2) pursuing a non-binary approach to problem-solving 3) being honest, empathetic, clear and simple 4) writing down stories.

- **Harvard Business Publishing** has a list of resources on how to lead effectively amid COVID-19.

- **Out and Equal** has a dedicated resource page that serves as a roadmap for leaders to protect at-risk employees during the COVID-19 pandemic and a slide presentation What Your Company Needs to Know LGBTQ Employees and the COVID-19 Pandemic that leaders could use to extract lessons to support their vulnerable Pan-Asian employees.
Advocate for Diversity & Inclusion

Corporate culture is an important part of our work life. D&I in the workplace is imperative irrespective of the economy and has demonstrated better business returns, more innovation and effective problem-solving. ERGs and other internal mechanisms should be leveraged in multiple and creative ways to educate employees about bias and inequity. In addition to the resources identified in the Managing Incidents of Anti-Asian Bias section, the following list provides leaders with the tools to be effective D&I Advocates:

- **Asian Americans Advancing Justice - AAJC** has a well-researched tool kit [A Guide to Responding to Microaggressions](#).
- **Greater Good** has an article [How to Fight Racism Through Inner Work](#) that explains how mindfulness-based awareness and compassion is key to racial justice work.
- **Harvard’s Project Implicit** offers an [implicit association test](#) to understand attitudes and beliefs.
- **Teaching Tolerance** recommends a four-step process for speaking up against bias: Interrupt, Question, Educate, Echo in [How to Respond to Coronavirus Racism](#).

Leaders who advocate for D&I also act to support vulnerable employees. In capably creating a culture that makes all people feel welcomed, supported, included and valued, these leaders contribute to their company’s success.
With regard to Pan-Asians, leaders are highly encouraged to review their employee engagement surveys to look at data and feedback from their Pan-Asian population, and to consider hosting focus groups to address what will be needed to retain and advance Pan-Asian talent. They should follow this advice not only during the COVID-19 quarantine, but also on an on-going basis. Rewarding and recognizing talent and asserting boldly that the company stands strongly against discrimination are among the key tools in retaining talent during and after the pandemic. For more information about this topic, please check [Ascend Research](#).

Overall, for all employee population segments, employers need to start looking at their remote working and flexibility policies now and commit to investing continually in career development, leadership, mentoring and coaching programs to retain their top talent. All employees look for support, inspiration and leadership from their companies, especially during a crisis, and how their leaders react can truly define the company’s core value and ensure its longer-term success.
Other Ascend COVID-19 Links

- Ascend [COVID-19 Joint Public Announcement](#) and 5-Point Action Agenda to advocate for inclusion and denounce bias
- Ascend [national/regional/chapter programs](#) has support leadership development needs and the multifaceted issues associated with the pandemic
- Ascend Initiatives to Help the Frontline and Local Pan-Asian Businesses
  - [Ascend Foundation/Feed Your Hospital Initiative](#)
  - [Ascend Foundation Feeding America](#)
  - [Ascend Foundation COVID-19 Needs-Based Scholarship](#)

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