

SOLIDARITY IMPACT HEALING JUSTICE EQUITY  
EQUITY COLLECTIVE TRANSFORMATIVE DIVERSITY  
GRASSROOTS RESILLIENCE IMPACT RESISTANCE

**CACF**

# **ADVOCACY**

***1ST EDITION***

# **GLOSSARY**

**WORDS TOO**

**POWERFUL TO IGNORE**

# INTRODUCTION

As the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) works to unite our diverse communities to become more engaged advocates, it is to the utmost importance to emphasize that language matters.

Words hold the power to amplify feelings, thoughts, and emotions. Words hold the power break down doors and barriers. Words hold the power to create and mobilize collectives under a shared cause and struggle. **Words Are Too Powerful To Ignore.**

With this asset, we outline basic terminology and concepts that centers AAPI communities and is rooted in empowering our diaspora to voice an elevated and united vernacular. Please note that this is an everchanging and fluid asset that will evolve to reflect the continuous growth of our advocacy, terminology, issues, and concepts.

As we work to unite and ground our diaspora in solidarity, we work to build a powerful collective of engaged advocates that will be rooted in intergenerational, transformative, liberational, and intersectional progress.

# PURPOSE

To provide individuals, communities, and community based organizations the knowledge to effectively communicate and message the issues and concerns of their community by cultivating a deeper understanding of concepts that are normalized and often used in spaces of advocacy and organizing.

**The primary intent of this resource and asset is to support an avenue of education for our communities by breaking down terminology and concepts so that informed advocacy is strengthened and unified under collective messaging across the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) diaspora.**

We hope that as we continue the fight to ensure our communities our heard through AAPI centered policy, advocacy, capacity building, and leadership, we lay foundations and build pathways to collectively shift power to the people.

# KEY WORDS

At CACF, we endeavor to support educating individuals, communities, and community based organizations with **"Words Too Powerful To Ignore."**

**The following section is comprised of key words and terminology that will better equip AAPI communities in transformative advocacy.**

## AANHPI (N)

- An acronym that stands for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander. Asian American means those that have origins from East Asia, South Asia (Including and Indo-Caribbean communities), Southeast Asia, Centra, Asia, or West Asia. Native Hawaiian does not refer broadly to anyone born in Hawaii or living in Hawaii, but refers to people that are ethnically indigenous Hawaiian, also referred to as Kānaka Maoli or Kānaka 'Ōiwi. A Pacific Islander is someone who has ethnic origins from the South Pacific regions of Melanesia, Micronesia, and Polynesia. AANHPI is the fastest growing racial category in New York City, and in the US as a whole.

### **Example Sentence:**

*The AANHPI community encompasses a diverse set of nationalities, ethnicities, linguistic backgrounds, and religions, each of which face their own set of struggles. Despite the diversity of the community, showing solidarity with one another, and uniting under the larger AANHPI umbrella is important within an activist space, as a collective larger voice is more powerful.*

## Ally (N)

- An individual actively supporting a marginalized group despite not being a member of that group. Actively supporting means more than just saying you support a group, but it also means calling out prejudice against that group when you see it, learning about causes the group is in favor of or affected by, and making sure the voices of that group are amplified within policy and activist spaces.

### **Example Sentence:**

Despite not being LGBTQ+ himself, the Congressman became an ally by consistently voting in favor of LGBTQ+ rights and sponsoring legislation that promotes equality.



## **Birddog (V)**

- The act of interrupting a public space or forum in order to question a public figure, such as an elected official, candidate, or community leader. The purpose of this is to acquire an on the record, public commitment or position from the public figure for the sake of accountability, and for the purpose of setting a clear expectation on the end of activists.

### **Example Sentences:**

1. *Recently the mayor was eating dinner at a restaurant, when a group of activists entered and began birddogging them, specifically requesting to hear their position on recent calls for a policy change.*
2. *As the senator walked out of the Capitol Building in Albany, members of the press began birddogging to record a response on the member's stance on the healthcare crisis.*

## **Campaign (N)**

- Organized social movements linked to specific goals that through the use of set strategies and partnerships aim to influence policy change or create awareness.

### **Example Sentence:**

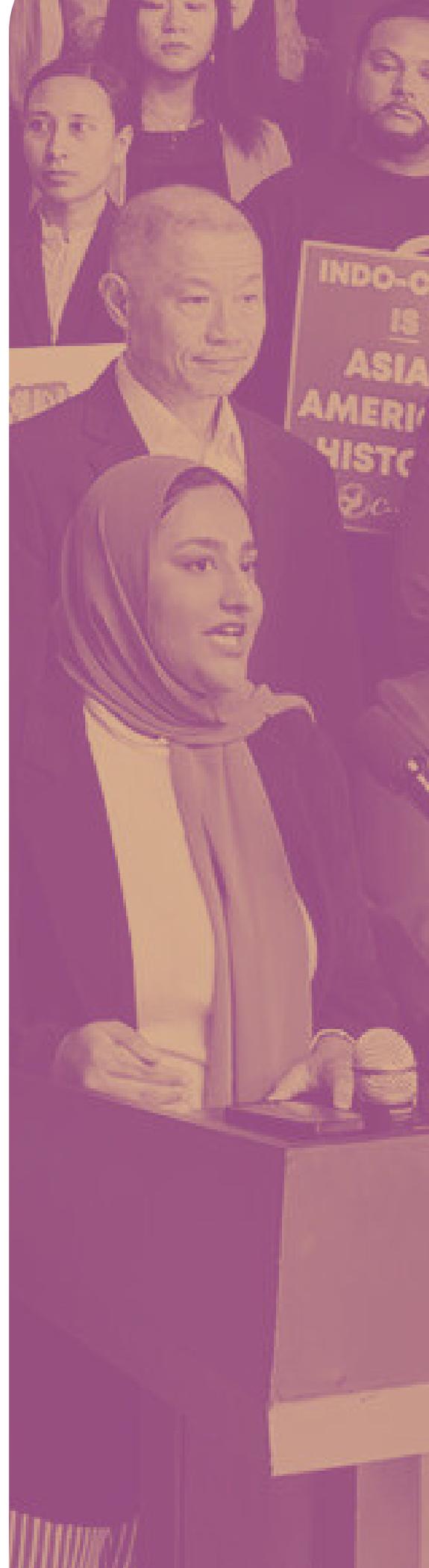
*REACH is an intergenerational, intersectional, state-wide coalition leading a campaign co-led by CACF. REACH is working to pass legislation advocating for AANHPI history to be mandated in NYS public schools.*

## **Capacity Building (N/ADJ)**

- The process in which an organization or community bolsters and develops their skills, comprehension, management, as well as increase their available resources for the purpose of successfully achieving their goals.

### **Example Sentences:**

1. *Capacity building was a key component of the peace agreement, with both sides agreeing to training programs to help integrate former rebels into the political process.*
2. *The school created a training seminar as part of a capacity building initiative for its teachers, allowing them to learn new skills they can use in a classroom setting such as website development, and leadership training.*





## **Civic Engagement (N)**

- The ways that individuals, and organizations interact with both their community or government for the purpose of addressing issues central to the community and creating change.

### **Example Sentence:**

*The New York City Council relies on civic engagement, such as in the form of attendance at community hearings, in order to create legislation that reflects the needs of New Yorkers.*

## **Civic Impact (N)**

- The culmination of civic engagement. The changes made that create a better situation for the communities that organizations and individuals work with, whether that be a local or larger community.

### **Example Sentence:**

*The civic impact from the community food drive was clearly visible, helping those in the community acquire high quality food when they otherwise wouldn't.*

## **Capacity Building (N/ADJ)**

- The process in which an organization or community bolsters and develops their skills, comprehension, management, as well as increase their available resources for the purpose of successfully achieving their goals.

### **Example Sentences:**

1. *Capacity building was a key component of the peace agreement, with both sides agreeing to training programs to help integrate former rebels into the political process.*
2. *The school created a training seminar as part of a capacity building initiative for its teachers, allowing them to learn new skills they can use in a classroom setting such as website development, and leadership training.*

## **Coalition (N)**

- Different organizations that are united by common goals uniting together to achieve said goals. This type of union brings together more resources and perspectives than these organizations would've had individually.

### **Example Sentence:**

CACF acts as a coalition, uniting different AAPI community groups through its membership to enhance the voice of the community at large within the policy space.

## **Community-Based Organization (N)**

- An organization led by community members that focuses on creating positive social change in a community both internally and externally. Internal change being the actions of members in the community and the way they think, while external change being policy that affects the community from local governments.

### **Example Sentence:**

*The government is working with community-based organizations, by listening to their insight into needs and problems within the community they work with.*

## **Community Organizing (V)**

- Done by coalitions of organizations or individuals in a community for the purpose of pooling resources and amplifying their voices on specific issues. These collectives coordinate their strategies and efforts for the purpose of achieving goals.

### **Example Sentence:**

*Seeking both short-term and long-term goals for the campaign, Flushing community organizers not only canvassed neighbors about active developments being built on Main Street and upcoming political events, but also discussed their Community Plan which envisions long-term investments in education, economic advancement, and housing affordability.*





## Cultural Humility/Cultural Responsiveness (N/Adj)

- The practice of cultural humility recognizes that healthcare professionals can never be entirely competent about the ever-changing and dynamic nature of their patients' identities. Cultural humility, or cultural responsiveness, recognizes the complex intersections of a person's identities and how systemic oppression deeply impacts their mental and physical wellbeing. It is a more evidence-based way of approaching healthcare that emphasizes a lifelong process of self-reflection to acknowledge one's own biases.

### Example Sentence:

*While working with a Bengali client, a therapist may include the client's concepts of family and community, and use Bengali-language materials for greater cultural relevance in discussing their mental health and care.*

## Disenfranchise (V)

- The deprivation of individuals or communities from certain legal rights that other communities have access to, or the act of excluding select individuals or communities from certain beneficial policies that other communities have access to.

### Example Sentence:

*When the city failed to provide voting information in multiple languages, it inadvertently disenfranchised a significant number of non-native English speakers.*

## Diversity (N)

- The recognition of unique characteristics among individuals and groups, and the respect of these differences. Diversity helps us to understand new perspectives and plights that we would otherwise be unfamiliar with, but also seeing the many shared traits we have with others outside of our own community. Diversity can reflect gender identity, sexuality, race, ethnicity, language, socio-economic backgrounds, physical abilities, and more characteristics.

### Example Sentence:

*CACF's work takes into consideration the diversity within the AAPI community – a diverse group that includes East Asians, Southeast Asians, South Asians, West Asians, Central Asians, and Pacific Islanders.*

## Equality vs Equity (N)

- Equality exists when every individual and community member is treated the same by the government and law. Equity concerns itself with fair treatment given the underlying structural conditions that create or reinforce the secondary status of groups. While an equality approach treats all groups the same, an equitable approach redresses the historical, societal, and structural conditions that create unequal circumstances.

### Example Sentence:

*Initially the teacher went with an equality approach in their classroom, giving all the students the same time to complete the test. After some feedback however, the teacher went with an equity approach that gave some students some more time, as they were English language learners.*

## Grassroots (Adj)

- Otherwise known as bottom-up activism, grass-roots activism that relies on coalitions or groups of local community members and everyday people to take action and create or influence change within their local institutions, or even national and international ones. These types of movements rely on the strength of numbers, large numbers of average people coming together to stand up for a cause.

### Example Sentence:

*During the pandemic, many parents became involved in grassroots efforts to keep schools open/closed, often showing up in larger numbers to virtual and in-person school board forums to make their voice heard.*

## Grasstops (Adj)

- Otherwise called top-down activism, grass-tops activism focuses on a select number of people that have connections or influence over elected officials or prominent individuals. Other prominent individuals could be celebrities, political candidates, businessmen, or people with connections to elected officials. Through the relationships they've built with these individuals of influence, they can mobilize them to take a stance on a cause and create change.

### Example Sentence:

*The organization took a grasstops approach, meeting with a member of the City Council to help push for a piece of legislation.*



## **Inclusion (N)**

- The act of purposefully incorporating historically marginalized groups into institutions, social services, decision making, and discussions that they otherwise didn't have access to previously. Inclusion goes beyond the act of desegregating, which is simply having different groups physically in the same setting. Inclusion focuses on creating both equality and equity in civic participation, and access for marginalized groups.

### **Example Sentence:**

*The new electoral reforms prioritize inclusion by lowering barriers to entry for candidates from marginalized group.*

## **Internalization (N)**

- The process of individuals from marginalized groups start believing, or internalizing, the stereotypes or lies about their group, or that of another marginalized group. This can lead to distrust or fear of other members of the marginalized group you're a part of, distrust or fear of other marginalized groups, and a lack of self confidence due to internalizing stereotypes. As a verb this would be internalize.

### **Example Sentence:**

Media that often portrays people of color in a negative, overly stereotypical way can make members of that group internalize those negative stereotypes and create a sense of inferiority, or that they don't belong.

## **Intersectionality (N)**

- The interaction between various identities that an individual has, whether that be nationality, ethnicity, sexuality, physical ability, or others. The way these interact is unique among individuals and informs the way in which they view the world and the experiences they may face.

### **Example Sentence:**

An Asian woman learning English as a second language experiences life based on the intersection of those three identities: her gender, race, and language ability. This makes for a unique perspective based on her life experiences, and illustrates the different ways discrimination and disadvantages can be experienced.





### **Liberation (N)**

- To breakaway from an institutional structure or conformity that hinders the advancement of social justice for the people.

#### **Example Sentence:**

*The feminist movement has been at the forefront of the fight for women’s liberation, challenging patriarchal norms and advocating for equal rights.*

### **Marginalization (N)**

- The systematic exclusion of a community from opportunities, necessary resources, and the silencing of community voices, and history. In extreme cases, marginalized groups also face systemic oppression, in which the institutions and systems of governments through law necessitate prejudice.

#### **Example Sentence:**

*Students protested over the marginalization of AAPI voices in their US History course, as there was no discussion of the role of the community in the course’s textbook.*

### **Microaggression (N)**

- Discrimination against individuals from marginalized backgrounds that takes the form of subtle remarks or actions. The person that makes a statement or does an action that could be labeled as a microaggression is usually doing so unintentionally and isn’t aware that their actions are discriminatory. An example of this would be telling someone with an ethnic background from a non-English speaking country that they “speak English well” even if English is their first language.

#### **Example Sentence:**

*The councilman’s comment about the congresswoman’s “surprising knowledge of finance” was seen by many as a microaggression, suggesting that women aren’t typically financially literate.*



## Monolith (N)

- Monolith in this context refers to a community of people, whether that be religious, ethnic, sexual orientation, or some other identifier, and ignoring the diversity in experiences, viewpoints, and socioeconomic backgrounds of that community, essentializing the community down to a select type of people. Through understanding the diversity, policy makers can make more informed policy decisions on that community and understand issues that the community seemingly is unaffected by.

### Example Sentence:

The advocates at the 18% and Growing rally were spreading the message that the AAPI community was not a monolith. Frequently, policymakers essentialize the AAPI community simply in terms of Chinese and Indian New Yorkers, ignoring other South Asians and East Asians, as well as Southeast Asian, Central Asian, West Asian, Pacific Islander, and Indo-Caribbean communities.

## Privilege (N)

- Advantages rewarded to certain groups and individuals over others due to systemic factors and unconscious biases. Usually privileged status is acquired due to being born into a group or status, such as being born into wealth.

### Example Sentence:

*Having English as one's first language is a form of linguistic privilege in many political arenas, as non-native speakers often face challenges to fully participating in the discourse.*

## Progressive (N) (ADJ)

- A person who is advocating for political changes informed by ideas of social justice and equity. Progressive ideas are linked to a specific viewpoint of how the government should act in terms of improving social conditions through regulation on powerful industries and corporations, and strong welfare systems.

### Example Sentence:

*1. The organization was considered progressive as it uplifted communities of colors and other marginalized groups through their reform campaigns.*

*2. There were calls for progressive labor policies in the city; such as minimum wage, and better safety conditions for workers.*

## Resilience (N)

- The ability for a community to recover from, or adapt to anticipated changes and adversity without much disturbance. Furthermore, within this process a community could also create the necessary changes to overcome or stop similar issues in the future.

### Example Sentence:

*The climate legislation being enacted was primarily concerned with resilience to storms, seeking to help coastal communities adapt to rougher storms and floods through building flood barriers.*

## Restorative Justice (N)

- An understanding of criminal justice which emphasizes addressing the root cause of why criminal acts occur, and the harm it causes, and how relationships and trust can be rebuilt. Restorative justice approaches look at the victim, offender, the community, and the relationship between the 3 to create justice and improve the social situation for all in the community. This is done through repairing harm to the victim, creating a sense of obligation on the offender for the harm they caused and to never do it again, but also reintegrating them into the community and the community using the resources they have to rehabilitate and reintegrate offenders.

### Example Sentence:

*Community service is often used in restorative justice, in order to help offenders understand the harm their actions caused the community, and for them to make up for their actions at the community level.*

## Social Ecosystem (N)

- The manner in which individuals in a community interact with each other and the influence that their environment, such as access to resources and socio-economic conditions, may have on that interaction.

### Example Sentence:

*The members of the neighborhood created more civic engagement through weekly discussions on different issues facing the community, which overall benefitted the social ecosystem by creating a more aware community.*





### **Social Safety Net (N)**

- Social programs that seek to provide protection against risks and upkeep a certain standard of living. Social safety nets are often available to everyone, but a specific emphasis is put on vulnerable communities such as those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, children, and the elderly.

#### **Example Sentence:**

*The US government has many social safety net programs that specifically address public health such as: Medicaid, Medicare, and the health insurance marketplace.*

### **Solidarity (N)**

- Rooting your organization in a way that progresses equity without sacrificing the welfare of other communities.

#### **Example Sentence:**

*The various labor unions expressed solidarity with the striking workers, advocating for their rights and better working conditions.*

### **Storytelling (N)**

- A specific anecdote or series of events that connect others to your cause at an emotional level. Stories told should be based in a personal anecdote, which makes them compelling and emotional to others, as it appeals to empathy.

#### **Example Sentence:**

*Oftentimes, elected officials use storytelling in the form of testimonials from community members to show how people support their policy proposal.*

### **Systemic Problem (N)**

- Structural issues seen within institutions, representation, laws, and unconscious or conscious behaviors that create discrimination and disadvantages for certain groups and communities. Systemic problems require changes from the top level within institutions, as opposed to bottom level individual change.

#### **Example Sentence:**

*A systemic problem that plagues law enforcement nationwide is a lack of accountability with body cameras, which is often mentioned in discussions regarding police reform. This is greater than individual responsibility, as even if a few individual police officers have body cameras and don't turn them off, it doesn't make up for the broader systemic issue which would require institutional change.*

## Unlearn (V)

- To get rid of ideas that you were conditioned into believing through your upbringing, environment, and social norms at the societal level that may be considered outdated or offensive.

### Example Sentence:

*The history curriculum overhaul aims to help students unlearn colonial narratives by appreciating and learning about Indigenous cultures and contributions. Through this, negative stereotypes about indigenous cultures, often rooted in colonial narratives, can be unlearned.*



# KEY ISSUES

At CACF, we advocate and fight to address key issues that have perpetuated an obstructive stagnancy to social justice and progress.

**The following section is comprised of key issues that will better equip AAPI communities in disrupting the status quo.**

## **Affirmative Action (N)**

- One of many processes in the college admissions process that is only used in selective schools, this is not used by the majority of schools. Affirmative action doesn't necessarily privilege some students over others, it takes into account different aspects of marginalization, not solely race but also socioeconomic background, native language, disabilities, etc. It shows the admissions council capable students that would've otherwise been ignored due to internal biases, and also gives context to a student's experiences. All these factors are taken into account to create an applicant profile based on many factors, as such it doesn't dis-privilege students in comparison to others due to the many factors being analyzed. Within affirmative action, no particular racial or ethnic group is limited to x number of spots, which makes it different from quotas, which are banned.

## **Austerity (N)**

- Economic policy directed towards decreasing public debt and budget deficits, done mainly through policies of decreased government spending, and deflation. The adverse aspect of austerity is that frequently social service spending is targeted through austerity measures as a means of cutting down on spending.

## **Fiscal Conformity (N)**

- Adhering to the status quo of a fiscal policy that divests and may negatively impact communities.





### **Holistic Admissions (N)**

- An admissions process that takes into account multiple metrics when admitting students, beyond numeric values such as test scores. Metrics can include values unique to students such as their background, whether English is their first language, etc. This puts less of an emphasis on testing and allows for a more diverse pool of students with different learning styles.

### **Holistic Mental Health (N)**

- Conventional mental health services do not always meet the needs of our community. Conventional mental health care is defined here as the standard form of mental health services in Western society, which includes psychotherapy and pharmaceutical medication. A holistic approach to mental health acknowledges that a “one size fits all” attitude towards mental health care does not address the diverse AAPI community’s mental health needs. Recognizing that non-conventional forms of mental health care, such as reiki, healing circles and acupuncture, should be uplifted and readily available to community members allows for a more culturally responsive and culturally accessible mental health system. The inclusion of both conventional and non-conventional mental health care creates a holistic mental health system.

### **Integration (N)**

- Policies that create diverse environments within schools in regards to, but not limited to, racial, socioeconomic, linguistic, and religious dimensions.

### **Interpretation (V)**

- The act of translating spoken language orally in real time. An interpreter (defined as someone who repeats the message but in a different language), deals with live conversation, which includes translating for both the patient and provider in a healthcare setting. An interpreter can translate both in person or remotely through phone or video conferencing.

## **Linguistic Isolation (N)**

- Households of individuals with limited English proficiency. Adults that are linguistically isolated have difficulty obtaining social services that they would otherwise receive. Children raised within linguistically isolated environments tend to underperform in school compared to their peers that aren't.

## **Model Minority Myth (N)**

- The stereotype that all Asian Americans are well off financially, successful educationally, and don't suffer from inequalities that affect other ethnic minorities. The stereotype ignores the large number of Asian Americans suffering from homelessness, poverty, lack of English language proficiency, and other issues. This stereotype has an influence on how policy makers think of Asian Americans, leading to less negative outcomes such as decreased or lack of funding for Asian American social services.

## **Over-Crowded Housing (N)**

- A living situation in which the number of people living in a space exceeds the space's capacity. In other words, more people living in an apartment or house, than the apartment or house has room for.

## **Segregation (N)**

- The systemic process by which institutions such as housing, schools, and neighborhoods, are divided by race and ethnicity.

## **Social Justice (N)**

- A political movement that focuses on addressing structural inequalities and creating equitable situations for everyone.

## **Translation (V)**

- Similar to interpretation, but deals with written materials being put into other languages for individuals to read. There is nobody physically present or over the phone making any real time translations. This is a longer process.



# KEY CAMPAIGNS AND INITIATIVES

At the CACF, we advocate and fight to address key issues that have perpetuated an obstructive stagnancy to social justice and progress.

**The following section is comprised of key issues that will better equip AAPI communities in disrupting the status quo.**

## **Asian American Student Advocacy Project (ASAP)**

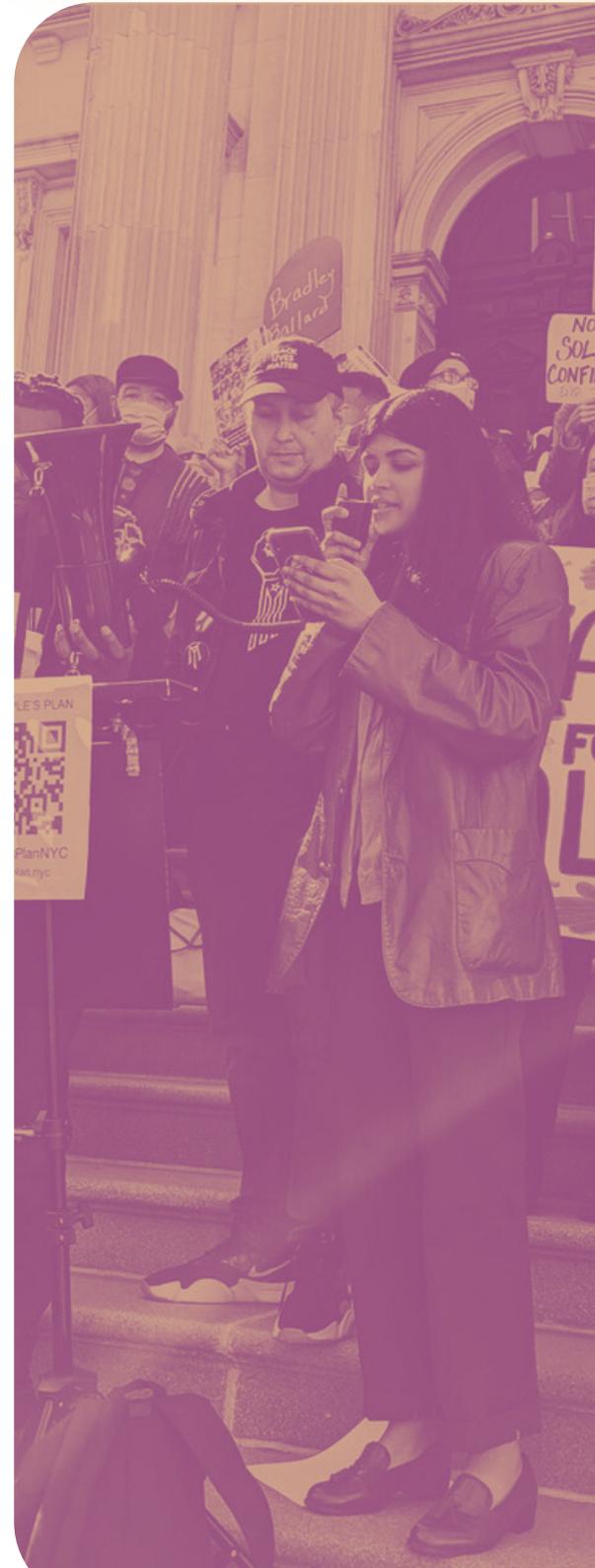
Founded in 2004, ASAP is CACF's AAPI youth development. ASAP trains AAPI youth on how to become more involved within policy spaces and to become future community leaders and active citizens. Skills developed through ASAP include communication, critical thinking, and professional development. ASAP focuses on helping students feel a sense of community to AAPI spaces, and connecting the AAPI community to other minority communities.

## **Access Health NYC**

An initiative from the New York City Council that funds community-based organizations educating, and creating awareness of healthcare access and coverage to communities in ways that are linguistically accessible and culturally responsive. The initiative builds on work already done by the community, and community based organizations, to break any barriers present in health equity in the city.

## **Data Disaggregation—Invisible No More**

Invisible No More is CACF's decade-and-counting campaign advocating for AA and NHPI data disaggregation in NYC and NYS. Data collected by government agencies on Asian Americans and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islanders are currently not disaggregated by ethnicity or language spoken, rendering our communities' disparities invisible to policymakers. We need government agency data disaggregated by ethnicity and language spoken so that policymakers, media, businesses, advocates, and communities can accurately understand the needs of AA and NHPI communities—especially those most marginalized—and ultimately, develop policy solutions to fully address such needs.





### **Found In Language Access–New York (FILA–NY) (Previously known as Lost in Translation)**

A CACF campaign that started in 2020 and focuses on improving access, quality, and oversight of language services in the healthcare system through intentional community collaboration. Language barriers are a huge obstacle faced by many folks in immigrant communities and can prevent folks from accessing vital services like healthcare. Despite there being 76 language access policies targeting healthcare settings in New York, we have found that many LEP patients still report facing difficulties like being unable to find an interpreter that speaks their dialect or being unable to fill out paperwork because a translated version in their language does not exist. This campaign aims to ensure that New Yorkers have equitable access to linguistically and culturally responsive healthcare services.

### **Patient Navigator Program**

A city–wide program in which CACF serves as an AAPI community lead, working with 10 AAPI community–based organizations to provide patient navigator services. The Patient Navigator program helps fill in gaps within the healthcare system, specifically in language accessibility and cultural responsiveness. Through a grant, CACF distributes funds to subcontracted community organizations that have an interest, and the capacity to, work with individuals, families, and small–businesses in their communities for enrollment in healthcare. Patient Navigators administer enrollment assistance and relay information on the healthcare system in a culturally responsive manner, and provide interpretation and translation services during the process. CACF coordinates Patient Navigator staff from among 10 of our member organizations providing services in 18 non English languages and 4 of the 5 boroughs (Staten Island being excluded). This is part of CACF’s goal of creating greater healthcare access and language accessible services in New York.

### **Project CHARGE**

A CACF led coalition consisting of 17 AAPI led and/or serving organizational partners, including social service providers, community health centers, research centers, and a settlement house that is currently focusing on advocating for holistic mental health for the AAPI community.

## **REACH Coalition**

CACF co-leads the Representing and Empowering AANHPI Community History (REACH) Coalition to bring Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander history (AANHPI) to New York State schools. The growing coalition, which was created in 2022, is composed of over 170 community leaders, parents, students, educators, and 70+ organizations that are committed to promoting inclusive and diverse curricula in schools. We are proud to be an intersectional, intergenerational, state-wide coalition fighting for our future.

## **18% and Growing Campaign**

A CACF campaign centered around budget equity, specifically in increasing investment in and equitable funding for the AAPI community to counter issues related to poverty, social service access, education, and more. The 18% part of the initiative comes from the percentage of AAPI people within the population of New York City. The initiative's aims are done within a broader goal of racial justice and solidarity with other minority communities, aiming not to achieve its goals through taking funding from other groups, but raising funding for all.

