

Asian and Pacific Islander Healthy Marriage and Family Strengthening Initiative (APIHMFSI)

What is the Asian and Pacific Islander Healthy Marriage and Family Strengthening Initiative (APIHMFSI)?

The purpose of the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) Healthy Marriage Initiative is to improve child well-being by providing those who choose marriage for themselves with increased access to marriage education. Recognizing the research that indicates that two-parent, married families represent the ideal environment for raising children, Congress included marriage, family formation, and fatherhood as key elements in the welfare reform legislation, Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA).

The APIHMFSI is a focused strategy within the Healthy Marriage Initiative. The goal of the APIHMFSI is to address the unique cultural, linguistic, demographic, and socio-economic needs of children and families in the Asian and Pacific Islander community in order to promote strong families and healthy marriages.

Why is a focused strategy necessary for the Asian and Pacific Islander (API) community?

- **The API community includes diverse populations that differ in languages and cultures.**

The term "Asian" refers to any individual living in America with Asian heritage. Asians are defined as people whose origins are from the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent. Asians represent approximately 25 different Asian ethnicities,¹ and sometimes Asian individuals have more than one national heritage. The six largest Asian groups in the United States are Asian Indian, Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Korean, and Vietnamese, which cumulatively account for nearly 90 percent of the total Asian population.²

The term "Pacific Islander" refers to people having origins in any of the original peoples of the Pacific Islands (for example, Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or Tonga).³ Like Asians, Pacific Islanders are not a homogenous group. Pacific Islanders represent approximately 20 ethnic groups with Polynesian,

Micronesian, and Melanesian cultural backgrounds.⁴ According to the 2000 Census, Native Hawaiians were the largest Pacific Islander group in the U.S., followed by Samoan, Guamanian or Chamorro, Tongan, and Fijian.⁵

- **APIs are the fastest growing racial/ethnic group in the U.S.**

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the “Asian alone” population (individuals who report Asian as their only race) increased by 3.3 million, or 48 percent, between 1990 and 2000. If using both the “Asian alone” and “in combination” populations (those who report Asian along with another race), there was an increase of five million, or 72 percent, between 1990 and 2000.⁶ There are 14.9 million Asians, which is five percent of the total U.S. population.⁷

According to Census, the “Pacific Islander alone” population increased by 34,000, or 9.3 percent, between 1990 and 2000. The “Pacific Islander alone” and “in combination” populations increased by 509,000, or 140 percent between 1990 and 2000 while the total U.S. population grew by 13 percent.⁸ There are one million Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders living in the United States, which is 0.3 percent of the total U.S. population.⁹

- **APIs have language and cultural differences that contribute to barriers to social service access.** About 77 percent of Asians and 26 percent of Pacific Islanders spoke a language other than English at home, compared with about six percent of non-Hispanic Whites.¹⁰ Emerging data show significant disparities and barriers to social service access.¹¹
- **APIs may experience stress in their relationships due to cultural changes associated with immigration.** More than 60 percent of the Asian population in most states is a foreign born immigrant.¹²
- **APIs are more likely to live in poverty than non-Hispanic Whites.** About 12 percent of Asians and 18 percent of Pacific Islanders were living below the poverty level in comparison to 9 percent of non-Hispanic Whites.¹³

- **API households are more likely to be “family households¹⁴”**. About 74 percent of Asian households and 78 percent of Pacific Islander households were family households.¹⁵

What are the goals of the APIHMFSI?

1. Increase knowledge in the API community on the importance of healthy marriages, healthy relationships, and family strengthening efforts.
2. Create awareness and foster understanding of the cultural and linguistic differences within the Asian and Pacific Islander ethnicities with regards to healthy marriage, healthy relationships, and family strengthening efforts.
3. Develop a forum dedicated to the exchange of information related to healthy marriage, healthy relationships, and family strengthening for researchers and practitioners serving the API communities.

What are the values of the APIHMFSI?

- Support families and child well-being within the API community
- Recognize the diverse family structures within the API community with regards to extended, mixed heritage, and adoptive parents
- Promote safe and healthy marriages and relationships.
- Create cultural awareness and respect the cultural and linguistic differences in the API community

ACF recognizes that the API community is large and diverse with approximately 25 Asian and 20 Pacific Islander ethnicities. It is not ACF’s intention to exclude any group within the API community, but to build a platform through which an APIHMFSI represents the unique and diverse groups within the API community.

As we move forward, we will be posting new information as it relates to APIHMFSI.

Additional information on Asian and Pacific Islanders includes:

Census:

The American Community: Asians 2004

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/acs-05.pdf>

The American Community: Pacific Islanders 2004

<http://www.census.gov/prod/2007pubs/acs-06.pdf>

Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations U.S. and State Fact Sheets on AAPIs

<http://www.aapcho.org/site/aapcho/content.php?type=1&id=9708>

Asian and Pacific Islander Institute on Domestic Violence

<http://www.apiahf.org/apidvinstitute/default.htm>

¹ Asians represent the following categories: Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indochinese, Indonesian, Iwo Jiman, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Madagascar, Malaysian, Maldivian, Nepalese, Okinawan, Pakistani, Singaporean, Sri Lankan, Taiwanese, Thai, and Vietnamese. The American Community –Asians: 2004, U.S. Census Bureau, February 2007

² The American Community – Asians: 2004, U.S. Census Bureau, February 2007

³ The American Community – Pacific Islanders: 2004, U.S. Census Bureau, May 2007

⁴ Pacific Islanders represent the following categories: Polynesian - Native Hawaiian, Samoan, Tongan, Tahitian, Tokelauan, and Polynesian; Micronesian – Guamanian or Chamorro, Mariana Islander, Saipanese, Palauan, Carolinian, Kosraean, Pohnpeian, Chuukese, Yapese, Marshallese, I-Kiribati, and Micronesian; Melanesian – Fijian, Papua New Guinean, Solomon Islander, Ni-Vanuatu, and Melanesian. The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Population: 2000, U.S. Census Bureau, December 2001.

⁵ The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Population: 2000, U.S. Census Bureau, December 2001.

⁶ <http://www.census.gov/prod/2002pubs/c2kbr01-16.pdf>

⁷ <http://www.census.gov/Press->

[Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/011602.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/011602.html)

⁸ The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Population: 2000, U.S. Census Bureau, December 2001.

⁹ <http://www.census.gov/Press->

[Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/011602.html](http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/011602.html)

¹⁰ The American Community –Asians: 2004, U.S. Census Bureau, February 2007 and The American Community – Pacific Islanders: 2004, U.S. Census Bureau, May 2007

¹¹ The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Fact Sheet, 2005

¹² The American Community –Asians: 2004, U.S. Census Bureau, February 2007

¹³ The American Community –Asians: 2004, U.S. Census Bureau, February 2007 and The American Community – Pacific Islanders: 2004, U.S. Census Bureau, May 2007

¹⁴ A family household is a household maintained by a householder who is in a family, and includes any unrelated people (unrelated subfamily members and/or secondary individuals) who may be residing there. The number of family households is equal to the number of families. The count of family household members differs from the count of family members, however, in that the family household members include all people living in the household, whereas family members include only the householder and his/her relatives. (U.S. Census Bureau)

¹⁵ The American Community –Asians: 2004, U.S. Census Bureau, February 2007 and The American Community – Pacific Islanders: 2004, U.S. Census Bureau, May 2007