

Asian American and Pacific Islander Action Plan

Administration on Aging

Introduction

The Administration on Aging (AoA) serves as the primary federal focal point and advocacy agency for older Americans. Through a Statewide services delivery infrastructure, AoA-funded programs deliver comprehensive in-home and community services and make legal services, counseling, and ombudsmen programs available to elderly Americans. AoA accomplishes this mission in concert with its partners — the State, tribal and area agencies on aging, and the providers of services — that comprise the aging network.

The AoA has a long history of service system development in collaboration with Asian American groups. The On-Lok model for delivering home and community-based long term care, was developed more than twenty years ago, mainly in the Chinatown neighborhood of San Francisco. Discretionary funding from AoA supported the original model and its early testing and replication for the first six years of its existence. Later promoted by the Health Care Financing Administration, On-Lok has emerged as a standard in delivering managed long-term care services at capitated cost and is being replicated nationally under the P.A.C.E. model.

Another major service area for which AoA provides support is congregate and home-delivered meals. In discussions with groups representing Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, we are already aware that improvements can be made by making available traditional meals. Food is obviously an important way in which people celebrate their cultures. Decisions, however, are made at the local level to determine which service provider is awarded a contract to deliver meals in a given community. We can and will encourage AAPI groups to form service delivery organizations and bid on local contracts, and inform State and area agencies on aging about the advantages of culturally-relevant services delivery.

The aging services program under the Older Americans Act (the Act) operates in Guam, American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Agencies in these localities serve as both State Unit on Aging and Area Agency on Aging, and in some cases also deliver services directly. The program of services under Title VI-B of the Act is one of the few instances in which a Federal program is specifically designed to meet the needs of Native Hawaiians.

Implementation Infrastructure

The Administration on Aging intends to implement this action plan — with and through the aging network — in coordination with its strategic plan, and especially in coordination with related minority initiatives of the Department. The aging network is not limited to State and area agencies on aging and service providers, but also includes many groups that represent particular communities as well as academic organizations.

Our overall approach to the minority initiatives must, of course, involve coordinated planning and implementation with the National Association of State Units on Aging and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. To implement this initiative we must also involve and form partnerships with such groups as the Gerontological Association of America, the National Council on Aging, the National Council of Senior Citizens, the American Society on Aging, the American Association of Retired Persons and others, including especially groups within those organizations that represent minority interests.

Academic organizations are also involved in resolving questions about how best to overcome barriers to service delivery related to ethnicity. In the case of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, we are aware of pioneering work at such institutions as the University of California, Los Angeles, Brandeis University, the University of Southern California and the University of Hawaii.

The Administration on Aging provides funding for a resource center on Asian American and Pacific Islanders to help the aging network in its efforts to meet the mandates of the Act to target services on those in greatest social and economic need. This organization is known as the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging.

We intend to draw on the cooperation and resources of all of these organizations to implement this initiative. Within the framework of the Department's overall initiative, we will concentrate our efforts in one area, under the heading of "Access to and Utilization of Health and Human Services," Objective 1.4, "Develop strategies for increasing AAPI community participation in selected human service programs."

Specific efforts include a series of "town meetings" in areas with large AAPI communities; special coordination between area agencies on aging and the Department's Office of Refugee Resettlement to meet the needs of localities with a large number of AAPI refugees; and an effort to increase the number of food service delivery providers with culinary and language skills compatible with the AAPI community.

Framework

Objective 1.4: Develop strategies for increasing AAPI community participation in selected human service programs.

Activity 1: Town Meetings

Last year, AoA funded “Community Based Capacity Building for Asian and Pacific Islander Elders.” The project will enable the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA) to organize a series of meetings over three years in ten metropolitan communities with significant numbers of and diverse AAPI older adult populations.

The meetings:

- (a) provide information about the diversity of AAPI communities;
- (b) inventory the availability and responsiveness of health, employment and supportive social services and the extent to which the needs of AAPI elders are being met;
- (c) move toward consensus on critical actions that better meet the needs of AAPI elders; and
- (d) provide technical assistance to leverage local community resources and efforts to implement action plans that are site-specific.

The meetings are opportunities for AAPI elders, their caregivers, and the aging network to identify and begin resolving issues and concerns. The project has already successfully reached over 500 AAPI elders and aging network service providers in Los Angeles County, almost 500 AAPI elders and providers in Seattle/King County, and over 200 AAPI elders and providers in Philadelphia.

Critical issues include:

- (1) the impact of welfare reform for legal immigrant elders;
- (2) a critical need for health and long term care in the context of health system reforms and the growth of managed care in AAPI communities; and
- (3) the perceived absence of access to information and assistance, nutrition, transportation, home care, housing, and other services due to language barriers and community isolation. Follow-up to initial community meetings will include technical assistance and education/training events that will respond to these issues.

Over the next two years, the NAPCA will offer its Capacity Building approach to seven additional AAPI communities in Chicago, Boston, New York City, San Francisco, Fairfax (Virginia), Houston, and Orange County, California.

Meetings will continue to be conducted in languages spoken by the communities participating. Several meetings already held have been conducted in as many as four languages in addition to English, and have drawn AAPI older adults as more than half of the participants of each meeting. The approach includes involvement of aging network service providers, and such other organizations as the Social Security Administration, local public and subsidized housing projects, State Medicaid and local Social Services departments, and other as state and local government officials.

Lead Entity: AoA

Time Frame: 1997 to 2000

Measurable Outcome:

Conduct capacity building activities in 10 communities with significant populations of AAPI older persons. Provide technical assistance and education/training programs that increase information about services, expand and improve access to health and social services, and increase the capacity of AAPI communities to develop and address HHS-related issues.

Activity 2: Services to Refugees

Key Agency Activity

Provide assistance to AAAs and AAPI organizations that have received and applied for refugee and mutual assistance grants, made available by the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), to provide services to AAPI refugee elderly.

Additional assistance is needed to assure that there is adequate service capacity and that service systems will be responsive to refugee elders' service needs.

This year, ORR made grants to several AAAs to identify and serve refugee elderly, particularly AAPIs. This activity provides added technical assistance and support of AAA and AAPI organization efforts to develop effective strategies that respond to the particular needs of AAPI refugee elderly and to identify ways to incorporate services and outreach strategies into the Aging Network infrastructure.

AoA will coordinate with ORR to:

- o identify information needs of the Aging Network and AAPI organizations;
- o issue information to the Aging Network concerning strategies to expand access and resources for services needed by AAPI refugee elderly; and
- o negotiate involvement of AAAs in target areas where there is a concentration of AAPI elderly.

Lead Entities: AoA and ORR

Time Frame: 1998 to 2000

Measurable Outcome: Integration of AAPI and other refugee elderly services into Aging Network and allied organization efforts to periodically assess service needs, develop service capacity to respond to needs, and monitor service use and outcomes.

Activity 3: Culturally Sensitive Services

Access to services for minority populations is often a problem. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders represent a broad range of languages and venerable cultures. For organizations involved in service delivery, understanding the nuances of culture can often make the difference in providing an effective service.

One of the most basic institutions that provides an access point to Older Americans Act services is the senior center, which often houses a congregate meal program. People who have lunch at congregate meal sites get more than a meal; they also find out about the other services provided through their local Area Agency on Aging.

For many people adapting to a new life in America, one of the best ways to attract the people who need services to the area agencies is by providing a hot meal in a congenial place among people who speak the same language. A congregate meal, using ethnic foods familiar to Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai or Filipino people — served by people who speak the language — can help link people to other services they may need, from home and community-based long term care services, through legal services, protecting the rights of elder, to specialized counseling about available Federal, State and local benefits.

One barrier may be that relatively small, ethnically-oriented congregate meal providers may have difficulty competing — on a low-bid basis — with larger meal service companies and service providers. In other cases, providers are willing to provide culturally-sensitive meals, but lack the necessary skills or cultural awareness, or lack the staff who speak the language. The challenge is to identify local barriers and provide local solutions.

Key Agency Activity

Based on information for the ten-city town meetings held by the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging (NAPCA), support NAPCA efforts to address barriers to service in the OAA nutrition programs by issuing written documents (information memoranda, background materials, training and technical assistance information) and providing nutrition service technical assistance in State units on aging, area agencies on aging and service providers for the ten selected cities.

Lead Entity: AoA

Time Frame: 1998 to 2000

Measurable Outcome

Information memoranda, background materials, and training and technical assistance.

