

WHAT ASIAN AMERICAN, NATIVE HAWAIIAN, AND PACIFIC ISLANDER COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS NEED IN THE FACE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In April, 2020, three weeks after the novel COVID-19 pandemic was declared, the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum surveyed 45 community partners to assess their needs in responding to the national crisis.

The respondents are located across 23 different states that cover all regions of the U.S. Ten of the organizations focus on Southeast Asian populations, 9 focus on Native Hawaiian and/or Pacific Islander populations, 3 focus on East Asian populations, and the rest serve multiple Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AA and NHPI) populations.

The Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum is a national health justice organization that has informal partnerships with 100+ community-based organizations that serve AA and NHPI populations and provide some level of health information or services.



Stories from Partners Show that Language Access and Immigrant Supports are Missing

*[One family we serve is an] “undocumented family. An individual has symptoms of COVID-19 but they **fear going to get tested and also don’t have access to masks or other protective equipment.** They live with and around many people and they speak a language that isn’t always available via translation.”*

*“Many community members have **difficulty receiving in-language information to maintain or apply for their public benefits** to meet their basic needs... Parents would give up their ESL/Citizenship virtual classes so that their children can take their virtual classes at home.”*

*“A family of seven who have recently moved to the United States is left with no benefits and no support. The father was working at a local grocery store, he was earning cash and therefore is not able [to] file for unemployment. **The family does not speak English and is not able to seek out other benefits.**”*

*“Uncertainty about the future, job loss, loss of pay, unable to navigate the complex government programs that are supposed to provide relief. [There is] **difficulty because of immigration status, such as asylum seekers afraid of public charge and not applying for any assistance or relief.**”*

*“There’s huge need in unemployment benefits. There’s also a lack of in-language information as the systems are very slow in making changes and provide language access. We are working with [state] Dept of Workforce Solution and they identify Vietnamese as the 2nd language need based on the unemployment application and inquiries. However, **they keep using ‘lack of funding’ as an excuse for not translating the application or updates/announcements.**”*

[Full survey results can be found here.](#)