Connecting the Dots

IMPROVING NEIGHBORHOOD-BASED CHILD WELFARE SERVICES FOR ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FAMILIES

CACF
THE COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES
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The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF), the nation’s only pan-Asian children’s advocacy organization, seeks to improve the quality of life for the New York City Asian Pacific American community by facilitating access to health and human services that are sensitive to all Asian Pacific American children and families. CACF promotes awareness of cultural values, linguistic differences, and immigration issues and advocates for improved policies, funding, and services to ensure that all children grow up healthy and safe.

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FUNDING

Funding for this report was generously provided by the Citigroup Employee Community Fund, CW11 Care for Kids Fund (a fund of the McCormick Tribune Foundation), The Hite Foundation, and Ira W. DeCamp Foundation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CACF is deeply thankful for the many contributions of the Community Advisory Board consisting of Judy Ah-Yune, Katherine Chen, Agnelo Dias, Chris Kam, Billy Wong, and Caroline Woo as well as the Research Advisory Board consisting of Wen-Jui Han, Edward Pauly, Tazuko Shibusawa and Marianne Yoshioka.


CACF is also grateful to the following ACS staff and Neighborhood Networks for their assistance in participating in the surveys and interviews: Katrina Canady, Zeinab Chahine, Tracey Eason, Boniface Eze, Bryan Hayes, Elizabeth Jackson, Mark Lewis, Paula Moore, Nigel Nathaniel, Heudriss Turenne, BLUM Neighborhood Network Collaborative, Bridging the Gaps Community Network Coalition, Central Queens Community Network, Northeast Queens Community Partnership, Northwest Queens Community Connections, South Central Queens Community Service Network, Southern Brooklyn Family Network and Sunset Park Human Services Cabinet.

CACF would like to give special thanks to those individuals who provided their input and guidance: Anita Gundanna, Jessica Lee, Larry Lee, and Wendy Mengqian.

This report was written by Rena Tucker with assistance from Rasmia Kirmani, Angelie Singla, Kim To and CACF staff. Opinions and recommendations expressed are those of CACF and do not necessarily represent the views of agencies, families or funders.

March 2007
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The Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), New York City’s child welfare agency, has experienced major reform over the last decade. During this time ACS moved towards a system of neighborhood-based services, “Neighborhood Networks”, placing greater emphasis on strengthening families and preventing foster care placements. This system has led to a steady decline in the number of children in foster care. While this is indeed a positive outcome, the percentage of Asian Pacific American children in the system remains the same. The needs of the Asian Pacific American community are not being met.

In order to respond to the unmet needs of Asian Pacific American children and families, the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) presents the following report, “Connecting the Dots: Improving Neighborhood-Based Child Welfare Services for Asian Pacific American Children and Families”. The purpose of this report is to ensure the safety and well-being of Asian Pacific American children and families in New York City by:

- evaluating the effectiveness of these networks of neighborhood-based services.
- analyzing the child welfare efforts of community based organizations (CBOs) serving Asian Pacific Americans, and
- providing recommendations to improve the city’s child welfare system and its related institutions and agencies.

During the course of this research, CACF found that ACS lacks the capacity to adequately meet the unique needs of Asian Pacific American children and families. There is a lack of trained, culturally competent, bilingual staff in ACS. Additionally, ACS has not adequately outreached to the Asian Pacific American community. Due to negative experiences with ACS and a general lack of understanding of its processes, Asian Pacific American families continue to fear and mistrust the child welfare system. Asian Pacific American families are not accessing preventive services and other resources, such as parenting classes and written materials that have the potential to greatly benefit their children, because they are not readily available in their communities.

By adopting the recommendations CACF presents in this report, the ACS Neighborhood Networks have the potential to strengthen community supports for Asian Pacific American children and families. Neighborhood Networks can provide the infrastructure in which to build connections and foster collaboration between ACS, contracted child welfare agencies, and CBOs serving Asian Pacific Americans.

- Neighborhood Networks can bring together service providers to share their perspectives on child welfare issues.
- Neighborhood Networks can identify major barriers and emerging child welfare issues facing Asian Pacific American families, and most importantly, increase access to much needed services and resources.
- Neighborhood Networks can reinforce the safety net for children and families.

CACF aims to improve the health and well-being of Asian Pacific American children in New York City. CACF works to ensure Asian Pacific American families have access to culturally competent, linguistically appropriate, and immigrant accessible child welfare services. CACF conducted this study to assess the effectiveness of the ACS Neighborhood Based Services in the Asian Pacific American community. CACF chose to focus on the Neighborhood Networks because they can help improve child welfare outcomes for the Asian Pacific American community and play a key role in the realignment plan of ACS.

**ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY AND AGENCY CONTEXT**

The Asian Pacific American community represents 11 percent of New York City’s population, yet ACS is not equipped to meet the needs of this community. More specifically, ACS is not effective in addressing the multiple factors that place Asian Pacific American families at risk for involvement in the child welfare system. Most of the risk factors in Asian Pacific American families can be attributed to 1) differing child rearing practices, 2) lack of understanding of New York’s child welfare system, 3) lack of knowledge of child abuse and neglect laws, and 4) language, cultural, and immigration barriers to services. The Asian Pacific American community is 78 percent foreign-born. Unfortunately, this
high percentage has not persuaded ACS to train its staff to assess and address differing child rearing practices, which are common among immigrant parents and which may lead to claims of child abuse and neglect. ACS has also not provided adequate, linguistically appropriate information to educate this community on New York’s child welfare system and child abuse and neglect laws.

While the Neighborhood Networks face obstacles, such as language and cultural barriers, to adequately serve the Asian Pacific American community, the Networks also have strengths that can help them meet the specific needs of Asian Pacific American families. The Neighborhood Networks provide opportunities for networking, information and resource sharing, and joint programming. With increased awareness of and improved collaboration with the Asian Pacific American community, the Neighborhood Networks have the potential to play a significant role in enhancing the safety and well-being of Asian Pacific American children.

Community based organizations (CBOs) that serve Asian Pacific American children and families can also play a greater role in child welfare efforts. Because of their ability to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate services, CBOs have gained the trust of the Asian Pacific American community. Given the expertise of these CBOs in serving the Asian Pacific American community, increased collaboration between CBOs and Neighborhood Networks will strengthen the community’s capacity to better serve Asian Pacific American children and families. Neighborhood Networks, and ACS in general, should take advantage of the close relationship between the Asian Pacific American community and the CBOs serving them.

Collaborative efforts between CBOs and Neighborhood Networks will lead to greater support, information sharing, and joint programming to better meet the needs of the Asian Pacific American community. A collaboration of this kind is mutually beneficial. Through cross-cultural trainings, CBOs can educate the Neighborhood Networks on best practices in outreach and service delivery to the Asian Pacific American community, while the Neighborhood Networks can better involve CBOs in child welfare efforts to keep Asian Pacific American children safe and families together.

Policymakers must also play a role in reinforcing efforts to protect children and support families. Policymakers at the local, state and national level must commit to ensuring equal access to services by supporting policies and funding that can meet the unique needs of Asian Pacific American families.

RECOMMENDATIONS

CACF makes the following recommendations to the Neighborhood Networks, CBOs, and policymakers in order to ensure that Asian Pacific American families are safer and stronger.

Neighborhood Networks: Collaborate with the Asian Pacific American community

1. Conduct needs assessments to identify child welfare issues and family challenges facing Asian Pacific American families in collaboration with local Asian Pacific American community based organizations. Use this information to better respond to community concerns.

2. Reach out to Asian Pacific American organizations to educate them on the mission and work of the Neighborhood Networks.

3. Build the capacity of member agencies serving Asian Pacific Americans. Through trainings, presentations, and technical assistance, service providers will learn about the diversity within the Asian Pacific Asian community, models of culturally competent service delivery, public policies impacting immigrants, as well as other issues that will help them serve the community more effectively.
4. Develop a strategic outreach and education plan with input from the Asian Pacific American community. This plan will allow the community to set goals and measure outcomes that prevent child abuse and neglect within this community.

5. Promote language access. Develop a local resource directory on agency language capacity and services offered. This should include a listing, or language bank, of bilingual staff able to provide volunteer translation and/or interpretation services in the community. Through this process, Neighborhood Networks will better recognize and respond to language needs facing the community.

**Community Based Organizations: Build stronger relationships with ACS and policymakers**

1. Request that ACS train and inform the community on the child welfare system, its programs, child abuse and neglect laws, and child rearing practices.

2. Educate ACS and the Neighborhood Networks on issues facing the Asian Pacific American community, including culturally competent methods of outreach and service delivery.

3. Use Neighborhood Networks to meet other service providers in order to share referrals and information that address the needs of the Asian Pacific American community. Partnering with the Neighborhood Networks can lead to improved relationships between agencies and increased coordination and integration of services for families.

4. Play a larger role advocating for services and resources at the policy level. Document and share information with ACS regarding child welfare issues, impacts of policies, and related challenges within the Asian Pacific American community.

**Administration for Children’s Services and Policymakers: Respond to the unique needs of the Asian Pacific American community**

1. Create an Asian Pacific American Unit in ACS. Fundraising should be a central focus of any Asian Pacific American Unit as there is a desperate need to fund services and programs for this community. The Asian Pacific American Unit can also focus on serving the needs of Asian Pacific American families with limited English proficiency, as well as outreaching to and building partnerships with the Asian Pacific American community.

2. Improve child welfare services and outreach to the Asian Pacific American community. ACS should first provide technical assistance and capacity building opportunities for the overworked and understaffed CBOs in the Asian Pacific American community. ACS will then be able to increase the number of contracts with agencies that can provide services to meet the unique needs of diverse Asian ethnic groups across New York City.

3. Ensure availability of culturally competent services. Training curricula for new and existing ACS and child welfare staff must include a cultural competency component to effectively assess and respond to the needs of the growing Asian Pacific American community.

4. Address language barriers. ACS must ensure that all services are language accessible at all points of contact with families, train staff on protocols regarding utilization of language assistance services, and provide funding for child welfare staff to utilize language assistance services when needed.

5. Educate the community about the child welfare system, including child abuse and neglect laws. Develop public education campaigns, use the ethnic media, and participate in community events. This community education campaign should develop literature and messages that use easily understood language that is free from jargon. All materials should be translated into all necessary Asian languages.

6. Recruit and retain more Asian Pacific American and bilingual/bicultural staff. With Asian Pacific American and bilingual/bicultural staff, ACS will increase the effectiveness and trust of their outreach and service delivery to Asian Pacific American children and families.
7. Conduct an assessment of Asian Pacific American families in the child welfare system. Include disaggregated data that reflect how and why Asian Pacific American families enter and leave the system in order to better identify and address child welfare issues in the Asian Pacific American community.

CONCLUSION

The Administration for Children’s Services’ Neighborhood Networks system is a proactive model for addressing community needs by providing a comprehensive framework of supportive services. What is missing for the Asian Pacific American community is collaboration between these Neighborhood Networks and community based organizations. Increased funding, collaboration, and focus on the Asian Pacific American community is needed to develop effective strategies and services to meet the unique needs of this community.

While it is important to improve the capacity of ACS Neighborhood Networks to serve Asian Pacific American families, Neighborhood Networks alone cannot meet the child welfare needs of the Asian Pacific American community. ACS must ensure that there is a centralized system to keep Asian Pacific American children safe and families together. The diversifying and growing Asian Pacific American community is scattered throughout many neighborhoods of New York City, so Neighborhood Networks may not be the most effective strategy to serving Asian Pacific American families. In other words, the concept of a “neighborhood network” does not necessarily hold for the scattered Asian Pacific American community of New York City.

Instead, the ACS Central Office must ultimately be responsible for serving the Asian Pacific American community. Specifically, CACF strongly recommends the creation of an Asian Pacific American Unit in ACS dedicated to addressing the child welfare needs of the Asian Pacific American community of New York City. This Asian Pacific American Unit can be responsible for:

- Holding Neighborhood Networks and other ACS divisions accountable to keeping Asian Pacific American children safe and families together
- Serving as the central point of contact for Neighborhood Networks to more closely work with the Asian Pacific American community
- Providing contact information for CBOs serving Asian Pacific American families
- Keeping updated information on demographic trends in neighborhoods
- Fundraising to increase salaries for bilingual/bicultural staff at ACS and CBOs
- Providing translation for outreach and community education
- Increasing Asian Pacific American CBOs’ knowledge of the child welfare system
- Awarding grants to Asian Pacific American CBOs to build their capacity to address child welfare issues
- Allocating contracts for more Asian Pacific American CBOs to provide preventive and foster care services

The number of Asian Pacific American children continues to grow rapidly in New York City, yet the tools to support and protect them are not adequate. The child welfare system and the community need to be proactive in their efforts to protect the physical and emotional health and safety of Asian Pacific American families. All agencies must commit to increasing Asian Pacific American families’ access to linguistically and culturally appropriate services. ACS, CBOs, Neighborhood Networks, policymakers — all are responsible for educating the Asian Pacific American community about child abuse and neglect laws, parents’ and children’s rights, and available resources and services. By connecting the dots between these various constituents, we can build a comprehensive framework of supportive and accessible services for Asian Pacific American children and families.
The Asian Pacific American community continues to grow steadily in New York City, yet its needs remain hidden and unnoticed. Asian Pacific Americans represent a diverse range of ethnic groups, cultures, languages, religions, immigration patterns, and socioeconomic statuses. This diversity has proven to be challenging to New York City’s child welfare system, the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS).

ACS is charged with protecting New York City’s children from child abuse and neglect. ACS has and continues to implement reforms to better execute this charge. Recently, ACS has increased its focus on the importance of providing neighborhood-based child welfare services. ACS developed Neighborhood Based Services to ensure that families can better access child welfare services, such as preventive and foster care services, within their own community. Neighborhood Based Services work to ensure that:

- Families can access preventive services, which aim to reduce the number of children removed from their families and placed in foster care;
- Children who must be removed are placed in foster families within their neighborhoods to remain near friends and family; and
- Neighborhood based services are better coordinated to meet the needs of children and families.ii

The Neighborhood Based Services Unit also oversees the Neighborhood Networks. These networks provide a collaborative forum for community-based ACS staff, preventive and foster care service providers, and other community stakeholders to meet and proactively address local child welfare needs and issues.iii

CACF chose to focus on the Neighborhood Networks in this report because Neighborhood Networks 1) can help improve child welfare outcomes for the Asian Pacific American community and 2) play a key role in the realignment plan of ACS. Therefore, this timely report can help the Neighborhood Network system fulfill its goals while addressing the needs of the Asian Pacific American community.

OVERVIEW OF NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

The goal of the Neighborhood Networks is to prevent and reduce the number of children entering foster care and to improve community access to social services by facilitating collaboration between agencies that work with children and families.iv These networks meet monthly to share best practices, resources and referrals and to develop community-based partnerships and strategies to keep children safe and families together.

The Neighborhood Networks grew out of ACS’ Neighborhood Based Services approach, which "seeks to provide every child and family with culturally, linguistically, and need-driven services within their own communities."v The Neighborhood Based Services plan involves aligning foster care, preventive, and child protective services into Service Planning Areas (SPAs). Each SPA has a Neighborhood Network. There are a total of 25 Neighborhood Networks citywide.vi

OVERVIEW OF COMMUNITY BASED ORGANIZATIONS SERVING THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY

In New York City, there are over 100 health and human service agencies dedicated to serving Asians and Asian Pacific Americans. These community based organizations (CBOs) are often an entry point for Asian Pacific American families seeking support and assistance. These CBOs, which are usually located within ethnic neighborhoods, are likely to pro-
vide linguistically and culturally appropriate services. These CBOs also have gained the trust of the community by providing beneficial and essential services to Asian Pacific American families, such as after school programs, mentoring services, and physical and mental health programs.

Because of their crucial role in the community, these CBOs should be closely involved in child welfare efforts. Their familiarity with cultures and languages reflected by the diverse Asian Pacific American community allows the CBOs to understand the cause of a family’s problems, and consequently, the potential solutions. (Please see Appendix C for a directory of Asian Pacific American serving agencies.)

**CONNECTING NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS WITH CBOS SERVING ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS**

ACS is in the process of implementing new reforms. These reforms are described in two ACS publications: “Protecting Children and Strengthening Families: A Plan to Realign New York City’s Child Welfare System” released in 2005 and the 2006 Action Plan entitled “Safeguarding Our Children”. These plans enable ACS to build upon its successes and deepen its commitment to ensuring child safety by bolstering family support services and family-based foster care. vii

Neighborhood Based Services and the Neighborhood Networks are at the heart of ACS’ plan to improve its protection of all of New York City’s children. ACS’ current process of self-examination and reformation provides CACF with a perfect opportunity to conduct a parallel investigation of the agency’s efforts to address the diverse and urgent needs of Asian Pacific American children and families in New York City.

**CONTEXT: ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS IN NEW YORK CITY**

The Asian Pacific American population is nearly 11 percent of New York City’s total population. viii Asian Pacific Americans include, but are not limited to, people whose origins are:

- East Asian: China, Japan, Taiwan and Korea;
- South Asian: India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan;
- Southeast Asian: Vietnam, Indonesia, the Philippines, Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Malaysia, Singapore;
- Pacific Islander: Guam and the Samoas

In addition to this geographical diversity, Asian Pacific Americans in New York City speak over 50 dialects and languages (e.g., Bengali, Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese, Korean and Vietnamese), practice many different religions (e.g., Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism), and vary in socioeconomic status and immigration history. ix

Asian Pacific Americans in New York City are largely an immigrant population, as 78 percent are foreign born. In addition, 28 percent of Asian Pacific Americans live in linguistically isolated households. x In these households, no one over the age of 14 speaks English “well” or “very well”. Under these conditions, simple activities like buying groceries and paying bills are challenging and difficult tasks. Navigating New York City’s overwhelming bureaucracy, like the child welfare system, is extremely daunting and often seemingly impossible.

Adding to an already overwhelming situation,

- 20 percent of Asian Pacific Americans in New York City are living in poverty.
- Approximately 25 percent of Asian Pacific American children live below the poverty line.
- The percentage of Asian Pacific American children born into poverty grew from 22 to 54 percent from 1990 to 2000. This is a greater percent increase than any other racial/ethnic group in New York City during that time period. xi

**CONTEXT: ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS AND THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM**

There are a number of contributing factors placing Asian Pacific American families at risk for involvement with the child welfare system. As a largely immigrant population, Asian Pacific American families often struggle with the
process of acculturation. This struggle occurs because immigrants must often negotiate between their native, minority culture and the foreign, dominant culture of the United States.\textsuperscript{xii}

Without knowledge of American norms on child rearing practices, laws on child disciplining, and the way that reporting systems operate in the United States, Asian Pacific American families may inadvertently become implicated in child abuse and neglect cases. And unfortunately, Asian Pacific American families face multiple barriers to accessing supportive services and resources that might prevent involvement in the child welfare system. It is often a doubled-edged sword for these families: no knowledge of laws and no access to information explaining these laws.

Below are some of the major risk factors facing Asian Pacific American families. More information on these and other issues can be found in CACF’s \textit{Crossing the Divide: Asian American Families and the Child Welfare System}.

**CHILD REARING PRACTICES**

Asian Pacific Americans often have different child rearing practices, which are generally accepted in their native countries but may be perceived as abusive or neglectful by New York State laws. Cultural misunderstanding can lead to involvement in the child welfare system, as ACS workers interpret these child rearing and disciplinary measures as abusive. Asian Pacific American families are often reported for child abuse and neglect for the following reasons:

- **Excessive Corporal Punishment.** What is regarded as excessive corporal punishment in the United States, such as hitting with a belt or stick, may be considered appropriate disciplinary measures in the country of origin.\textsuperscript{xiii}

- **Medical Neglect.** The use of certain traditional medicinal practices (going to a traditional healer rather than an emergency room) may be construed as medical neglect. Certain medicinal practices like “coining” or “spooning”, which involve rubbing a coin or spoon firmly on the skin to relieve illnesses, may leave marks on children. These marks may lead to reports of abuse.\textsuperscript{xiv}

- **Lack of Supervision.** There may be differences regarding the appropriate age to leave children unattended at home. Many parents work long hours and cannot afford quality child care. They may leave their children at home unattended, with an older sibling, or with unlicensed childcare workers.\textsuperscript{xv}

- **Educational Neglect.** Asian Pacific American parents may be unfamiliar with school attendance laws. Children might stay home to help care for siblings, facilitate translation for parents, or assist with other daily tasks. Older Asian Pacific American children, especially those who are recent immigrants and face academic and language barriers, are also at risk for truancy.

**LACK OF INFORMATION ON THE CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM AND CHILD WELFARE LAWS**

Immigrant Asian Pacific Americans are often unfamiliar with the concept of a child welfare system, as a similar government entity might not exist in their native countries. Those who have heard of New York City’s child welfare system, the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS), believe it to be an agency that takes children away from parents. Families fear and distrust ACS. Asian Pacific American immigrants may harbor a deep fear and mistrust of government in general because of experiences back home and/or current immigration status.\textsuperscript{xvi}

ACS has not taken measures to adequately educate the Asian Pacific American community about the child welfare system or about child abuse and neglect laws. For example, ACS parent education materials, such as \textit{The Parents’ Guidebook to New York State Child Welfare Laws} and \textit{The Parents’ Handbook: A Guidebook for Parents with Children in Foster Care}, have not been translated into enough Asian languages.\textsuperscript{xvii}

Without adequate information on child abuse and neglect laws, available supportive services, and parental rights within the system, Asian Pacific American families are at greater risk of becoming involved in the child welfare system. And once involved, it is likely that their stay in the system will be long because of language, cultural, and immigration barriers.
Language, cultural, and immigration barriers contribute to the reporting of Asian Pacific American parents for child abuse and/or neglect. Language barriers prevent teachers, social workers, and other mandated reporters from discussing concerns with parents prior to making a report to the New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment. In addition, ACS’ Child Protective Services often conducts home investigations without an interpreter. In these cases, children and other family members act as interpreters. This practice is inappropriate and in violation of professional standards. It is especially unsuitable for children to play the role of interpreter, as children may sometimes lie to get their parents in trouble or lie to protect their families. Language and cultural barriers place an undue burden on children by shifting the family power dynamics; parents are now dependent on their children to interact with an agency that will make decisions about the family unit.

Language and cultural barriers also prevent Asian Pacific American families from accessing needed services. ACS and its contracted agencies offer a vast array of preventive services designed to support families and prevent foster care placement. These services include, but are not limited to, individual and family counseling, parenting classes, substance abuse services, and housing subsidies.

Unfortunately, there are only five agencies contracted by ACS that provide linguistically and culturally appropriate preventive services to the Asian Pacific American community. These agencies mainly serve the Chinese population, leaving a major gap in services for limited English proficient families who speak other Asian languages. There is an acute need for services in Asian languages such as Bengali, Korean, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Given the high demand for services and limited access, Asian Pacific American families experience long waiting periods for appointments and travel long distances to obtain services. Often these services, like parenting skills classes, are mandated by ACS. If parents cannot access linguistically appropriate services to comply with a mandate, they must attend these classes in English – a language they do not understand.

Immigration status also affects Asian Pacific American families’ access to services. Some families are not eligible for certain services or for public health insurance because of their immigration status. Families are also concerned about issues of confidentiality, as it pertains to immigration status. Families also believe that using particular services may affect their residency and citizenship applications.

The bottom line is that fear and misunderstanding not only criminalize many families but also prevent Asian Pacific American families from accessing services. Providing culturally sensitive and linguistically appropriate services will help eliminate this fear and misunderstanding.

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**ONE FAMILY’S STORY**

ACS made home visits to a Chinese family under investigation for educational neglect because a teenage child was often truant. However, each time the caseworker went to the home, which was during working hours, the parents were not at home. At each visit, the ACS worker left a letter, written in English, addressed to the parents with the child in question. The daughter, who could read the English letters, purposefully never gave the letter to the parents. Even if the parents had received the letter, they would not have been able to read it. ACS never followed up to see if the parents received the letter, and the case was reported to the New York State Central Register for non-compliance. The parents called upon the Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC) for assistance. CPC intervened and advocated on behalf of the parents and was eventually successful in helping to clear their record.

An ACS Child Protective Services (CPS) worker and an interpreter visited a home, and the grandmother answered the door. The CPS interpreter announced that they were there “to take away your children”. The grandmother would not let them through the door. The case was substantiated for abuse due to resistance.
Neighborhood Networks place emphasis on strengthening families and preventing foster care placements. This system has led to a steady decline in the number of children in foster care. While this is indeed a positive outcome, the percentage of Asian Pacific American children in the system remains the same. The needs of the Asian Pacific American community are not being adequately met.

During the summer of 2005, CACF administered 71 surveys to members of eight ACS Neighborhood Networks based in Service Planning Areas (SPAs) with at least a 15 percent Asian Pacific American population. There was an exception of one Neighborhood Network which was included because of a large emerging South Asian population. The survey data captured:

- Providers’ understanding of major child welfare issues and family challenges facing Asian Pacific Americans in the community they serve;
- Providers’ obstacles in serving the Asian Pacific American community; and
- The role that the Neighborhood Networks can play in addressing the needs of the Asian Pacific American community. For neighborhood-specific data, please see Appendix A.

Neighborhood Network members include local ACS staff from the field offices and Neighborhood Based Services unit, contracted preventive and foster care agencies, and community organizations and service providers.

Chart 1 illustrates the breakdown of organizational affiliations of the Neighborhood Network members surveyed. While contracted agencies have the highest SPA membership overall, this number does not tell the whole story. Certain networks have large numbers of CBO representation, whereas other networks are largely ACS staff. For example, at the time when these surveys were administered, 88 percent in Manhattan SPA 5 were ACS contracted agencies, whereas only 29 percent were ACS affiliates in Queens SPA 1.

The CBOs play a valuable role in the Neighborhood Networks. They provide important services to which ACS can make referrals, observe community trends of which ACS staff may not be aware, contribute to community education efforts, and help identify potential child abuse and neglect cases. These demonstrate some of the ways that community partnerships can lead to child safety.

**CHART 1: ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION OF SURVEYED NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK MEMBERS**
FINDINGS ON THE STRENGTHS OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

It is important to discuss the strengths and potential of the Neighborhood Networks because the services offered are very much needed in the Asian Pacific American community. A neighborhood focus allows close interaction between immigrant communities and the child welfare system, resulting in increased collaboration and partnership, shared resources, and understanding of community needs.

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<th>Strengths</th>
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<td>Neighborhood based focus</td>
<td>Neighborhood Networks learn more about and prioritize projects to respond to neighborhood specific needs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Neighborhood Networks share resources and provide support on community outreach.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Networking</td>
<td>Neighborhood Networks meet and collaborate with other service providers, schools, and organizations.</td>
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A neighborhood-based focus enables the Network to identify and respond to community needs. Over 75 percent of the survey participants agreed that a neighborhood-specific focus allows their agency to learn more about the Asian Pacific American and other immigrant communities.

The Neighborhood Networks provide a forum for community-based ACS staff, contracted agencies, service providers from different sectors, and community stakeholders to engage in joint action planning, resource sharing and advocacy. Examples include:

- Manhattan SPA 5, The Child Welfare Collaborative of BLUM (Battery Park, Lower East Side, Upper East Side, and Murray Hill), identified youth programs as a priority and worked with youth to develop a resource handbook for adolescents.
- Queens SPA 1, the Northeast Queens Community Connection, organized a Parent Youth Employment Forum to develop employment skills for parents and youth.

Neighborhood Networks provide support to members. Survey participants indicated that they received help from other Network members when conducting community education activities and outreach for events. Neighborhood Network participants also indicated additional benefits, including funding to carry out joint programming and in-kind support such as space, food, speakers and other resources.

Neighborhood Networks provide networking opportunities. Specifically, 66 percent of surveyed participants responded positively to having meetings with other service providers and being introduced to new systems on a regular basis. These networking opportunities led to better integration and referrals of services and resources. Participants discussed the opportunities to collaborate with schools, community based organizations, healthcare providers, and local businesses.

These strengths should be utilized to improve services and outreach to the Asian Pacific American community. Having a neighborhood-based approach enables Network members to focus on the unique needs of the various ethnic groups in the communities they serve and to identify resources and services to meet the needs of these groups.

FINDINGS ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING THE NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

Neighborhood Networks are crucial to the protection of children, the education of families, and the support of local CBOs. While Neighborhood Networks have bolstered the child welfare system in New York City, there are still gaps in service to the Asian Pacific American community. These gaps provide opportunities for improvement.
Language barriers are the greatest obstacles to serving Asian Pacific American families. According to surveyed participants, 82 percent experience language barriers as obstacles to serving the Asian Pacific American community. Service providers are currently not able to deliver services to Asian Pacific American clients in the clients’ native language. Agencies lack bilingual staff because they often face difficulty in recruiting as well as retaining bilingual staff. Agencies also lack the resources to hire interpreters. Many agencies do not have the capacity to translate documents and signage. Only 35 percent of surveyed participants translate materials into Asian languages. As a result of these deficiencies, limited English proficient Asian Pacific American families may not be aware of relevant services, programs, information, and events available to them. These families may also have difficulty completing forms and applications that are not translated into Asian languages, which greatly prohibits their access to services and resources.

Service providers surveyed identified their own cultural ignorance as a major obstacle to serving the Asian Pacific American community. 69 percent of the service providers characterized their own cultural ignorance by a lack of awareness and understanding of their clients’ worldviews. This lack of knowledge prevents service providers from reaching and gaining the trust of the Asian Pacific American community. One mental health agency reported difficulty in serving Chinese American clients, even though it has a bilingual Chinese American mental health practitioner on staff. Cultural sensitivity in conducting outreach and providing services is just as critical to engaging and retaining clients as language accessibility.

Service providers would like more assistance in outreaching to and working with Asian Pacific American families. 78 percent of the service providers acknowledged that their agencies need support. Many participants discussed the benefits of trainings and presentations that focus on:

- Asian Pacific American cultural beliefs and values,
- Needs and issues facing the Asian Pacific American community, and
- Ways to better reach and serve this community.

One service provider explained that she would like to gain "cultural understanding and awareness to effectively deal with underlying issues specific to this target population." Another service provider would like to receive "training for service providers regarding Asian culture, immigration patterns, salient family issues affecting the ability to integrate into larger community and more exploration of all the ‘challenges’ they face.” These requests for ways to better understand and serve the Asian Pacific American community demonstrate the multidimensional needs of this community and the complexities in responding to these needs.
There must be more representation of the Asian Pacific American community in the Neighborhood Networks.

- 15 percent of survey participants felt the Neighborhood Network agencies adequately represent the Asian Pacific American communities they serve.
- 69 percent acknowledged the importance of having opportunities to meet Asian Pacific American CBOs through their Neighborhood Network.

One provider wrote that Asian Pacific American CBOs can contribute to the Neighborhood Networks because “they can keep us abreast to what is needed and happening in their community. They let us know where we can be of assistance to partner with their agency to better services.” Another provider stated that Asian Pacific American CBOs can provide “liaison services, interpreters for meetings, and outreach work; break down the barrier of the ‘government’ out to get them and also help [the community] understand and adapt to culture and understanding of ways of living, while keeping their cultural traditions and respecting their way of living.”

Greater involvement of Asian Pacific American CBOs in the Neighborhood Networks will lead to increased dialogue, information sharing, and collaboration, which will improve outreach and services to the Asian Pacific American community. At the same time, Asian Pacific American CBOs must have opportunities to increase their capacity to participate in Neighborhood Networks and to respond to child welfare issues.

Neighborhood Networks need to play a greater role in strengthening services to Asian Pacific American families.

- Only 33 percent of network members felt their Neighborhood Network membership increased their ability to serve Asian Pacific American and immigrant families.
- The majority of respondents indicated that Neighborhood Networks could play a strategic role in developing a plan to identify and address the needs of the Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities in their SPA.
- 78 percent of Neighborhood Network members agreed that if given the opportunity, they would conduct more outreach to the Asian Pacific American community through their Neighborhood Network.
SPOTLIGHT ON NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK BEST PRACTICES

What: Addressing Asian Pacific American Community Needs

Where: Central Queens Community Networks (Queens Service Planning Area 2)

Process: When CACF presented the Neighborhood Network survey results, the network members engaged in a dialogue on the major issues facing the local Asian Pacific American community. These included domestic violence, fear of government intervention post 9/11, and lack of knowledge of social services, among other issues. As a direct result, a subcommittee was established to strategically address these and other emerging issues for the Asian Pacific American community.

Outcomes: The subcommittee began to develop a resource directory which includes information on local Asian Pacific American serving CBOs and the services they offer, laws relating to domestic violence and child maltreatment, as well as immigrant rights and protections to accessing various public services. In addition to raising community awareness, the development of this guide was a first step for the Central Queens Community Network to learn about and reach out to Asian Pacific American serving CBOs in Forest Hills, Ridgewood and neighboring communities.

To better understand the needs of the Asian Pacific American community and best practices utilized by local service providers, this Neighborhood Network also conducted focus groups with service providers and families. This data will be used to develop a strategic plan to address the gaps in services for the Asian Pacific American community.

Challenges: By increasing its outreach to the Asian Pacific American community, the Neighborhood Network members must be prepared to respond to the increased demand for services. ACS, contracted agencies and community based organizations must build their capacity in order to meet this demand.

Recommendations for Neighborhood Networks

Given the strengths and the potential of the Neighborhood Networks, the following recommendations will improve the capacity of Neighborhood Networks to serve and reach the Asian Pacific American community.

- Conduct needs assessments to identify child welfare issues and family challenges facing Asian Pacific American families in collaboration with local Asian Pacific American community based organizations. Use this information to better respond to community concerns.

- Reach out to Asian Pacific American organizations to educate them on the mission and work of the Neighborhood Networks.

- Build the capacity of member agencies serving Asian Pacific Americans. Through trainings, presentations, and technical assistance, service providers will learn about the diversity within the Asian Pacific Asian community, models of culturally competent service delivery, public policies impacting immigrants, as well as other issues that will help them serve the community more effectively.

- Develop a strategic outreach and education plan with input from the Asian Pacific American community. This plan will allow the community to set goals and measure outcomes that prevent child abuse and neglect within this community.

- Promote language access. Develop a local resource directory on agency language capacity and services offered. This should include a listing, or language bank, of bilingual staff able to provide volunteer translation and/or interpretation services in the community. Through this process, Neighborhood Networks will better recognize and respond to language needs facing the community.
The Community Based Organization Surveys targeted community based organizations serving the Asian Pacific American community. The survey was administered to staff at domestic violence, day care, health, mental health, housing, substance abuse, social service and faith-based organizations. The survey aimed to capture the providers’

- understanding of and experience with child welfare related issues, and
- experiences collaborating with other organizations and city agencies.

These CBOs represent the diversity of the Asian Pacific American community in New York City. Most organizations offer their services in one or more languages other than English. The majority of the organizations provide services in Chinese, as the Chinese population represents nearly half of the Asian Pacific American community. Chart 2 shows the linguistic capability of the survey participants.

**CHART 2: LINGUISTIC CAPABILITY OF CBO SURVEY PARTICIPANTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Number of Agencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bengali</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese-Cantonese</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese-Fujianese</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese-Mandarin</td>
<td>42</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chinese-Taiwanese</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarati</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hindi</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Punjabi</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Urdu</td>
<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FINDINGS ON THE STRENGTHS OF CBOS SERVING ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FAMILIES**

CBOs serving Asian Pacific American families are central to the safety of children and the education of families because these are often the only entities that the community fully trusts. CBOs can reach Asian Pacific American families because the services are accessible and respond to the specific needs of the Asian Pacific American community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Linguistically and culturally appropriate services and resources</td>
<td>Asian Pacific American children and families have greater access to needed services and resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community education</td>
<td>Asian Pacific American children and families know about important resources, policies and events.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust from the community</td>
<td>Asian Pacific American families are more likely to utilize services from Asian Pacific American CBOs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CBOs serving Asian Pacific Americans provide much needed services that are language accessible and culturally competent. These CBOs are often the first place Asian Pacific American families turn to for assistance. Based in the ethnic communities they serve, CBOs are often staffed by community members and are acutely aware of community needs. Staff members are often bilingual/bicultural and are familiar with the culture shock that immigrants may experience when arriving in the United States. CBOs guide families through the City’s bureaucratic systems and advocate for them when needed.

CBOs provide community education and information. CBOs use a wide range of strategies to outreach to the community. They distribute multilingual flyers and brochures throughout the community, including hospitals, schools, courts and other locations frequented by families. Some organizations publish multilingual newsletters to inform families of events, programs and important policies. Others have hired outreach coordinators to distribute information at health fairs, schools, street fairs and community events. CBOs also often use the ethnic media to inform Asian Pacific American families of important policies, resources, and community events. Ethnic media includes ethnic press, radio and television stations.

CBOs have gained the trust of the community. CBOs are sensitive to barriers (e.g., immigration status and shame) that prevent Asian Pacific American families from seeking services. Given the success and history of many CBOs serving Asian Pacific Americans in New York City, mainstream and public agencies can learn about more effective service delivery and outreach from these CBOs. Mainstream and government agencies would also benefit from partnering with these CBOs to collectively meet the community’s needs.

**SPOTLIGHT ON CBO PROMISING PRACTICES**

**What:** Getting the Word Out  

**Where:** Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)

**Process:** The Asian Pacific American community often relies upon ethnic media as the main sources for information. In addition to using the ethnic press, the Chinese-American Planning Council has airtime on a monthly radio show in order to showcase CPC’s various programs and provide information about important issues. CPC also conducts workshops for parents in schools and produces a quarterly newsletter which discusses new policies and emphasizes parenting skills in Chinese and English.

**Outcomes:** Using multiple strategies to outreach to the community maximizes the target population. CPC effectively raised the awareness of and educated the Chinese community on laws and policies, available resources and services, and skills to strengthen families and communities.

**Challenges:** Increased outreach to the community has led to an increased demand for CPC’s services. As a community based organization with limited resources, CPC cannot meet this increased demand. The prioritization of ACS referrals and limited slots for cases leave many Asian Pacific American families with long waits for services.

**FINDINGS ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING CBOS SERVING ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FAMILIES**

Because there are only five Asian Pacific American CBOs contracted by ACS to provide preventive services, ACS must support CBOs through deliberate efforts to build the capacity of these organizations to address child welfare issues. This means greater monetary support, among other opportunities for improvement. If ACS can provide incentives for greater CBO participation in ACS programs and increase its commitment to Asian Pacific American families through the support of CBOs, children and families will be better served, educated, and protected.
CBOs serving the Asian Pacific American community still face language and other barriers. A number of factors contribute to this problem, including a shortage of qualified social workers and the perception of social work in the Asian Pacific American community. There is an extremely limited pool of qualified applicants who fit the minimum requirements for being a bilingual, bicultural social worker. One surveyed participant explained, “[There are] not enough qualified professional applicants for agency openings.” The social work profession is also not highly valued in the Asian Pacific American community. Additionally, the cost of social work education and the low salaries for social workers may deter Asian Pacific Americans from entering the field.xx

CBOs also struggle to serve the unique language needs that accompany each new wave of immigration. There is an extreme shortage of service providers for the Bangladeshi population, even though this is the fastest growing ethnic group in New York City. According to the Asian American Federation of New York:

- Bangladeshis have a higher incidence of poverty (31 percent) than the rest of the Asian Pacific population in New York City (21 percent).
- 38 percent of Bangladeshi children are living in poverty, compared to the city average of 30 percent.
- 85 percent of the Bangladeshi population is foreign born and 60 percent of Bangladeshis are limited in English proficiency.xxi

In spite of the clear challenges facing this population, Bangladeshis continue to be underserved. The rapidly growing Fujianese population is experiencing similar barriers to accessing care.

CBOs serving Asian Pacific Americans also face other barriers in outreaching to the community including:

- convincing Asian Pacific American parents to access services, particularly mental health services,
- parents’ reluctance to allow their children to participate in programs not on school sites,
- long hours that parents work, and
- immigration status, lack of insurance and financial barriers that prevent some families from accessing services.

CBOs lack resources to meet the high demand for services. One participant wrote, “There are so many needs that we are spread too thin to handle and advocate for all our children and families.” Agencies cited inadequate resources, lack of funding to hire additional staff, and limited support for existing and new programs as contributing factors. Funding is desperately needed for violence prevention and support services, youth programs, family service programs, and community education in the Asian Pacific American community.

ACS needs to provide more funding to build the capacity of CBOs. This can be done creatively. For example, financial incentives can be provided to CBOs for participation in regular meetings and programs. If 10 percent of a CBO employee’s time will be spent working with Neighborhood Networks on child welfare, then ACS can pay for 10 percent of that individual’s salary. This may mean changing the job descriptions for staff members of CBOs to reflect an institutional commitment to ACS and child welfare.xxii
Survey participants discussed multiple areas of possible agency partnership and cooperative projects. These efforts will increase the Asian Pacific American community’s awareness of and access to needed services. For example, ACS and CBOs could collaborate on:

- Joint workshops and trainings for youth and families
- Professional development for ACS and CBO staff
- Outreach efforts
- Social service fairs and community events
- Community needs assessments

CBOs serving Asian Pacific American families would benefit from trainings and technical assistance to improve their effectiveness in serving children and families. Some examples include assistance with program development, cross-service and cross-cultural trainings, and specialized training for frontline staff. Roundtable discussions or conferences can provide networking opportunities and a venue to share knowledge, strategize collaborative efforts, and identify priorities for technical assistance.

**SPOTLIGHT ON CBO PROMISING PRACTICES**

**What:** Creating Safe Spaces for Families

**Where:** Asian Outreach Clinic of The Child Center of New York (formerly the Queens Child Guidance Center)

**Process:** Because Asian Pacific American families are sometimes wary of utilizing services in an agency setting, the Child Center of New York has placed social workers in schools with large populations of Asian Pacific American students. Because schools are often seen as a trustworthy source of information for Asian Pacific American parents, children and families are more likely to engage in services at school sites.

**Outcomes:** The Asian Outreach Clinic has been able to successfully reach, engage and serve families in schools. Dr. Agnelo Dias, Director of the Asian Outreach Clinic, stated that this has been the best approach for long-term intervention. Parents feel more comfortable meeting with social workers in the schools and more willing for their children to engage in services through the schools rather than in a clinical setting.

**Challenges:** Limited funding remains a major obstacle to expanding school-based intervention programs. There needs to be increased involvement of the schools as a venue for preventing child abuse and neglect through public education and for connecting parents to services.

CBOs have limited interaction with the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS). Chart 3 demonstrates the percentage of CBOs serving Asian Pacific Americans that interact with the different divisions of ACS. Often, interaction between ACS and Asian Pacific American CBOs involves referrals from ACS to CBOs for preventive services, reports of abuse to ACS, provision of trainings to ACS on issues of domestic violence, and collaboration on certain cases.

**CHART 3: LEVEL OF INTERACTION BETWEEN CBOS AND ACS**
With their access to the Asian Pacific American community, these CBOs are in a key position to observe, prevent or assist in addressing challenges facing Asian Pacific American families. In addition, many of the staff members working in CBOs, such as licensed social workers, are mandated reporters of suspected child maltreatment. Mandated reporters are required by law to report suspected child abuse or neglect to the New York State Central Register of Child Abuse and Maltreatment.xxiii

**SPOTLIGHT ON CBO PROMISING PRACTICES**

**What:** Building Bridges with the Community  
**Where:** Bridging the Gap Between ACS and the Asian American Community  
**Process:** Asian Pacific American CBOs and ACS have begun to come together in the form of Bridging the Gap Between ACS and the Asian American Community, a committee to discuss strategies and priorities to meet the citywide needs of the Asian Pacific American community. This committee is comprised of representatives from ACS’ Division of Immigrant Services and Neighborhood Based Services Unit as well as Asian Pacific American serving CBOs providing services such as preventive, mental health, housing and domestic violence.  
**Outcomes:** ACS and the CBOs have jointly identified major priorities such as public education, community outreach, language access, and cross-service trainings and are beginning to develop strategies to address these priorities. CBOs and ACS are pooling their strengths and resources to ensure efforts are culturally competent and can effectively respond to the unique needs of the Asian Pacific American community.  
**Challenges:** There is a need for funding to implement these projects. In addition, citywide efforts should be coordinated with and reinforced by neighborhood-based efforts to deepen targeted impact at the community level.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CBOS SERVING ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FAMILIES**

Community Based Organizations should:

- Request that ACS train and inform the community on the child welfare system, its programs, child abuse and neglect laws, and child rearing practices.

- Educate ACS and the Neighborhood Networks on issues facing the Asian Pacific American community, including culturally competent methods of outreach and service delivery.

- Use Neighborhood Networks to meet other service providers in order to share referrals and information that address the needs of the Asian Pacific American community. Partnering with the Neighborhood Networks can lead to improved relationships between agencies and increased coordination and integration of services for families.

- Play a larger role advocating for services and resources at the policy level. Document and share information with ACS regarding child welfare issues, impacts of policies, and related challenges within the Asian Pacific American community.◆
Policymakers, legislators, and public administrators at the local, state and federal level have a crucial role to play in promoting child welfare. They have the power to pass legislation and policies that affect children and families. They have the authority to allocate government funding to support programs and services for children and families. They have oversight over ACS, New York City’s child welfare system, which is responsible for protecting New York City’s children from child abuse and neglect.

The Administration for Children’s Services and policymakers should:

- **Create an Asian Pacific American Unit.** The unit will be responsible for increasing outreach, building partnerships with the Asian Pacific American community, and improving service delivery. A unit focused on the needs of the Asian Pacific American community will enable caseworkers to support each other and share problem-solving strategies. Fundraising should also be a central focus of any Asian Pacific American Unit as there is a desperate need to fund services and programs for this community. The fundraising will allow ACS to improve its own outreach to the Asian Pacific American community while providing subgrants for Asian Pacific American CBOs to increase their capacity to address child welfare issues. Los Angeles County’s Asian Pacific American Program of its Department of Children and Families Services demonstrates an effective model of providing culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and services to the Asian Pacific American community. (See Spotlight below.)

- **Conduct an assessment of Asian Pacific American families in the child welfare system.** ACS should conduct an assessment to determine reasons families enter the system (e.g., child abuse, neglect, educational neglect, etc.), how these reports were made (e.g., from schools, hospitals, neighbors, etc.), how long families remain in the system (e.g., usage of preventive services or lengths of stay in foster care), and how they exit the system. This information will enable ACS and its partner agencies to better identify and address child welfare issues affecting the Asian Pacific American community, as well as issues related to mandated reporting.

- **Increase funding to improve the Asian Pacific American community’s access to neighborhood-based preventive services.** ACS should increase the number of contracts with agencies that can provide linguistically and culturally appropriate services to meet the needs of the diverse Asian Pacific American community. Due to the limited number of culturally competent and language accessible providers, families experience long waitlists and have to travel long distances to utilize services. There must be greater access to neighborhood-based linguistically and culturally appropriate preventive services, especially for East Asian communities in Brooklyn as well as South and Southeast Asian communities citywide. Funding is also needed to hire and retain bilingual, bicultural ACS staff as well as to translate materials that educate the Asian Pacific American community on the child welfare system and child abuse and neglect laws.

**SPOTLIGHT ON A NATIONAL MODEL FOR CHILD WELFARE**

**What:** Creating an Asian Pacific American Unit in the Child Welfare System

**Where:** Asian Pacific Program of the County of Los Angeles Department of Children and Family Services

**Process:** In response to the concerns of the Asian Pacific American community of Los Angeles regarding inadequate responses to their child welfare needs, the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) established a centralized Asian Pacific Unit in 1987. This Unit grew to become a Program comprised of three units, one director, six Supervising Children’s Social Workers, 40 bilingual/bicultural Children’s Social Workers, and eight support staff providing services in 12 Asian languages. The Program maintains a multilingual/multicultural service section within DCFS. The Program serves families with limited English proficiency who request language assistance. A system of matching
needs, language, and culture is used to assign cases to workers. Caseworkers provide vertical case management so that one caseworker works with a family from its initial referral to case termination. The Program also provides specialized child welfare services to the Asian Pacific American community, such as community education, child abuse preventive services and family preservation. The Program also serves as community liaisons.\textsuperscript{xxiv}

**Outcomes:** The Asian Pacific Program is well-equipped to meet the unique and diverse needs of the Asian Pacific American community in Los Angeles County and can proactively outreach to and educate the Asian Pacific American community on the child welfare system and related laws and policies using mass and ethnic media as well as community meetings. The vertical case management method facilitates continuity and consistency to help families navigate and utilize child welfare services. As a result, Asian Pacific American families are more aware of the child welfare system and are less traumatized by involvement in the system. Asian Pacific American children and families receive the supports they need to remain safe and together.

- **Ensure availability of culturally competent services.** Training curricula for new and existing ACS staff must include a cultural competency component. In addition to ACS staff, contracted agencies must also receive training on how to provide culturally competent and linguistically appropriate services. The trainings should include information on ethnic, cultural, religious and geographic diversity of the Asian Pacific American community and community-specific information for contracted agency staff. In addition, the curricula should contain culturally competent practices in investigation, assessment, outreach, and service delivery to Asian Pacific American families. Finally, the trainings should include immigration guidelines on issues related to maintaining confidentiality, assessing immigration history, and providing immigration relief.

- **Support linguistically appropriate services.** ACS must ensure that all services are language accessible at all points of contact with families, including the provision of translation and interpretation services by contracted agencies. ACS staff should be trained on protocols regarding accessing language assistance services for clients. ACS should also ensure language appropriate preventive and foster care services by funding access to language assistance services when needed. In addition, language assistance services should be monitored to ensure accuracy and effectiveness. ACS should translate all of its materials and signage into Asian languages, especially *The Parents’ Guidebook to New York State Child Abuse and Neglect Laws* and *The Parents’ Handbook: A Guide for Parents with Children in Foster Care*.

**SPOTLIGHT ON A NATIONAL MODEL FOR CHILD WELFARE**

**What:** Improving Language Access

**Where:** San Francisco Department of Human Services

**Process:** The Bilingual Services Task Force was formed to assess and make recommendations on improving bilingual services at San Francisco’s Department of Human Services (DHS). Comprised of DHS staff, the taskforce examined DHS’ services, best practices for the provision of bilingual services, and areas in need of improvement.

**Outcomes:** Based on the task force’s recommendations, the Standing Bilingual Services Committee was established to oversee the development and implementation of policies and practices to improve bilingual services. The task force also recommended that resources, including fiscal, material, personnel and other types, be allocated to ensure effective bilingual services. The Standing Bilingual Services Committee has also worked to establish glossaries of terminology in multiple languages, implement formal translation protocols, make telephone-based interpretation services available to staff agency-wide, and raise the skill level required for bilingual certification. Agency commitment to improving bilingual services has ensured that families can access optimal services for their needs.\textsuperscript{xxv}

Connecting the Dots • • • 21
• **Educate the community on the child welfare system and on child abuse and neglect laws.** ACS should develop public education campaigns utilizing multiple strategies to reach diverse populations. ACS should provide public information in multiple languages to educate the Asian Pacific American community on child abuse and neglect laws, resources, services and programs available through ACS, like how to become a foster parent. ACS should also provide more funding for contracted preventive service agencies to conduct multilingual parenting classes and workshops promoting positive child rearing and disciplining practices, which should occur at times more accessible to parents.

• **Recruit and retain more bilingual/bicultural staff.** ACS currently does not track the number of bilingual/bicultural staff, yet they will soon be required to document this as a result of Local Law 73, the Equal Access to Human Services Act of 2003. However, interviews with ACS staff have led to the general acknowledgement that there is a lack of Asian Pacific American bilingual/bicultural staff at all levels of the agency – from the frontline staff to administration. ACS must implement more strategies to recruit bilingual Asian Pacific Americans in order to increase this community’s representation in the agency. ACS should collaborate with schools of social work to develop recruitment campaigns and offer scholarships for Asian Pacific American social workers. ACS should also publicize job opportunities in the ethnic media and through Asian Pacific American community based organizations. Bilingual social workers should be compensated for their additional skills and assistance with interpretation and translation. With bilingual and bicultural staff, ACS will increase the effectiveness of their outreach and service delivery to Asian Pacific American children and families.
The Administration for Children’s Services’ Neighborhood Networks system is a proactive model for addressing community needs by providing a comprehensive framework of supportive services. What is missing for the Asian Pacific American community is collaboration between these Neighborhood Networks and community-based organizations. Increased funding, collaboration, and focus on the Asian Pacific American community is needed to develop effective strategies and services to meet the unique needs of this community.

While it is important to improve the capacity of ACS Neighborhood Networks to serve Asian Pacific American families, Neighborhood Networks alone cannot meet the child welfare needs of the Asian Pacific American community. ACS must ensure that there is a centralized system to keep Asian Pacific American children safe and families together. The diversifying and growing Asian Pacific American community is scattered throughout many neighborhoods of New York City. Different Asian Pacific American ethnic groups are concentrated in different New York City neighborhoods which are served by different Neighborhood Networks, so Neighborhood Networks may not be the most effective strategy to serving all Asian Pacific American families. In other words, the concept of a “neighborhood network” does not necessarily hold for a scattered community that consists of more than 50 ethnic and language groups living in dozens of neighborhoods throughout the five boroughs of New York City.

Instead, the ACS Central Office must ultimately be responsible for serving the Asian Pacific American community. Specifically, CACF strongly recommends the creation of an Asian Pacific American Unit in ACS. Given the success of such units in Los Angeles and San Francisco, ACS must create a similar unit dedicated to addressing the child welfare needs of the Asian Pacific American community of New York City. This Asian Pacific American Unit can hold Neighborhood Networks as well as other ACS divisions accountable to keeping Asian Pacific American children safe and families together. This unit can also serve as the central point of contact for Neighborhood Networks to more closely work with the Asian Pacific American community, providing contact information for CBOs serving Asian Pacific American families and keeping updated information on demographic trends in their neighborhoods. Key functions of the Asian Pacific American Unit can be providing translation for outreach and community education, fostering partnerships between ACS and the Asian Pacific American community, and fundraising to increase salaries for bilingual/bicultural staff at ACS and CBOs.

While increasing the capacity of ACS, the Asian Pacific American Unit can also be responsible for increasing Asian Pacific American CBOs’ knowledge of the child welfare system. The unit can award grants to Asian Pacific American CBOs to build their capacity to address child welfare issues and can allocate contracts for more Asian Pacific American CBOs to provide preventive and foster care services. The development of an Asian Pacific American Unit at ACS is crucial to a more focused child welfare agenda for the fastest growing community in New York City.

The number of Asian Pacific American children continues to grow rapidly in New York City, yet the tools to protect them and help them develop are not adequate. The child welfare system and the community need to be proactive in their efforts to protect the physical and emotional health and safety of Asian Pacific American families. All agencies must commit to increasing Asian Pacific American families’ access to linguistically and culturally appropriate services. ACS, CBOs, Neighborhood Networks, policymakers—all are responsible for educating the Asian Pacific American community about child abuse and neglect laws, parents’ and children’s rights, and available resources and services. By connecting the dots between these various constituents, we can build a comprehensive framework of supportive and accessible services for Asian Pacific American children and families.
APPENDIX A: FINDINGS ON NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORKS

QUEENS SERVICE PLANNING AREA (SPA) 1 • NORTHWEST QUEENS COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The Northwest Queens Community Connections is the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Neighborhood Network that serves Queens SPA 1 which is comprised of Community Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4. ACS Neighborhood Networks are forums for community-based ACS staff, child welfare agencies, local service providers and community stakeholders to collaborate to ensure the well-being of children in their community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CD</th>
<th>Neighborhoods</th>
<th>Asian Pacific American Population*</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Asian Pacific Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Astoria, Astoria Heights, Steinway, Ravenswood</td>
<td>31,527</td>
<td>211,220</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Sunnyside, Woodside, Long Island City</td>
<td>31,883</td>
<td>109,920</td>
<td>29%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Jackson Heights, East Elmhurst, North Corona</td>
<td>26,647</td>
<td>169,083</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Elmhurst, South Corona, LeFrak City</td>
<td>51,444</td>
<td>167,005</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>141,501</td>
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</table>

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FAMILIES IN NORTHWEST QUEENS

Neighborhood: 22 percent of the total population of Queens SPA 1 identifies as Asian Pacific American.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Ethnic Groups as a percentage of 113,596. Total Asian Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

57 percent of surveyed providers have contact with Bangladeshi families in Queens SPA 1. 43 percent of providers have interacted with Chinese and Indo-Caribbean families. 29 percent engaged with Korean and Pakistani families and 14 percent have worked with Filipino, Indian and Vietnamese families. Given the diversity in Queens SPA 1, services must be linguistically and culturally appropriate.

SURVEY RESULTS

Challenges facing Asian Pacific American Families: 71 percent of surveyed providers expressed language barriers and lack of understanding of government determined rules as major challenges for Asian Pacific American families. Cultural barriers, lack of immigration status and fear of government intervention are also widespread problems. Greater efforts are needed to outreach to and educate Asian Pacific American families on their rights as well as social services and resources available to them in the community.

Child Welfare Issues facing Asian Pacific American Families: 57 percent of surveyed providers stated excessive corporal punishment as a frequent child welfare issue. Other major issues include parent-child conflict, truancy and youth gang involvement. Families will benefit from skills trainings to learn cultural norms on child rearing/disciplining practices as well as to learn how to address conflicts with their children. Youth need targeted programs to prevent truancy and gang involvement.

Obstacles to Accessing Child Welfare Agencies: 57 percent of surveyed providers stated language and 43 percent cultural barriers as obstacles facing their agency, organization or school in serving Asian Pacific American families. Agencies will benefit from trainings in cultural competency, hiring diverse staff to reflect the community served, and utilizing interpreters and translators.

BEST PRACTICES

Translation and Interpretation should be provided. 43 percent of surveyed participants utilize interpreters and 57 percent translate materials into Asian languages.

Neighborhood Networks are valuable. 71 percent of surveyed participants felt the Neighborhood Networks provide a space to meet service providers. The networks can provide valuable opportunities for participating in community development activities, finding and sharing resources, and meeting Asian Pacific American community-based organizations.

Neighborhood-Based Services are important. 75 percent agreed that having a neighborhood focus allows and encourages their agencies to learn more about the Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities in the community districts they serve. 75 percent also agreed that given the opportunity, they would like to conduct more outreach to Asian Pacific American families through their Neighborhood Network.
QUEENS SERVICE PLANNING AREA (SPA) 2 • CENTRAL QUEENS COMMUNITY NETWORK

The Central Queens Community Network is the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Neighborhood Network that serves Queens SPA 2 which is comprised of Community Districts 5 and 6. ACS Neighborhood Networks are forums for community-based ACS staff, child welfare agencies, local service providers and community stakeholders to collaborate to ensure the well-being of children in their community.

### QUEENS SPA 2: ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN POPULATION BY COMMUNITY DISTRICT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CD</th>
<th>Neighborhoods</th>
<th>Asian Pacific American Population*</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Asian Pacific Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ridgewood</td>
<td>11,600</td>
<td>165,911</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Forest Hills</td>
<td>26,242</td>
<td>115,967</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td></td>
<td>37,842</td>
<td>281,878</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

U.S. Census 2000 * Asian only or in combination

### ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FAMILIES IN CENTRAL QUEENS

Neighborhood: 13.4 percent of the total population of Queens SPA 2 identifies as Asian Pacific American.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Ethnic Groups as a percentage of 35,277. Total Asian Only:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Queens SPA 2, 57 percent of surveyed providers have had contact with Bangladeshi families. 43 percent interacted with Chinese and Indian families, 29 percent with Korean, Pakistani and Indo-Caribbean families and 14 percent engaged with Filipino and Vietnamese families. Services must be accessible to a diverse community of many cultures and languages.

### SURVEY RESULTS

**Challenges facing Asian Pacific American Families:** 100 percent of surveyed providers included lack of knowledge of social services as a major challenge for Asian Pacific American families. 86 percent included language barriers and lack of understanding about government-determined parental rules as widespread in the Asian Pacific American community. Other major challenges included cultural barriers, housing problems, long work hours and low wage jobs. Greater efforts are needed to educate Asian Pacific Americans on social services and resources available as well as U.S. laws regarding parental rights and responsibilities. Increased collaboration among local housing, social service and employment agencies will strengthen support for families.

**Child Welfare Issues facing Asian Pacific American Families:** 57 percent of surveyed providers stated corporal punishment among Asian Pacific American families as frequent and 43 percent included parent/child conflict due to cultural/communication issues. Other child welfare issues include truancy and youth gang involvement, indicating a need for programs targeting youth. Given the prevalence of these issues, greater attention needs to be placed on educating parents on the laws regarding child disciplining and addressing conflicts with children.

**Obstacles to Accessing Child Welfare Agencies:** 86 percent of surveyed providers stated language and cultural barriers as obstacles facing their agency in serving Asian Pacific American families. Agencies will benefit from trainings in cultural competency, hiring diverse staff to reflect the community served, and utilizing interpreters and translators.

### BEST PRACTICES

**Translation and Interpretation should be provided.** 29 percent of surveyed participants utilize interpreters and 29 percent translate materials into Asian languages.

**Neighborhood Networks are valuable.** 86 percent of surveyed participants felt the Neighborhood Networks provide an important forum to meet other service providers and Asian Pacific American community-based organizations and participate in community development activities. The networks can provide valuable opportunities for finding and sharing resources as well as for learning about Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities and their strengths and needs.

**Neighborhood-Based Services are important.** 86 percent stated that given the opportunity, they would like to conduct more outreach to Asian Pacific American families through their Neighborhood Network. The majority also agreed that having a neighborhood focus allows and encourages their agencies to learn more about the Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities in the community districts they serve.
QUEENS SERVICE PLANNING AREA (SPA) 3 • NORTHEAST QUEENS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The Northeast Queens Community Partnership is the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Neighborhood Network that serves Queens SPA 3 which is comprised of Community Districts 7, 8 and 11. ACS Neighborhood Networks are forums for community-based ACS staff, child welfare agencies, local service providers and community stakeholders to collaborate to ensure the well-being of children in their community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>QUEENS SPA 3: ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN POPULATION BY COMMUNITY DISTRICT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

U.S. Census 2000 * Asian only or in combination

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FAMILIES IN NORTHEAST QUEENS

Neighborhood: 32 percent of the total population of Queens SPA 3 identifies as Asian Pacific American.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Ethnic Groups as a percentage of 153,733. Total Asian Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

63 percent of surveyed providers have contact with Chinese, Korean and Indian families in Queens SPA 3. 50 percent of providers have interacted with Vietnamese families, 38 percent with Filipinos and Pakistani families, and 13 percent with Indo-Caribbean families. Given the diversity in Queens SPA 3, services must be linguistically and culturally appropriate.

SURVEY RESULTS

Challenges facing Asian Pacific American Families: 88 percent of surveyed providers expressed language and cultural barriers, lack of understanding about government-determined parental rules as well as lack of knowledge about social services as major challenges for Asian Pacific American families. 75 percent also included domestic violence and long work hours as widespread. Other challenges included health and mental health issues as well as fear of government agency intervention. Greater efforts are needed to educate Asian Pacific American families on U.S. laws regarding child abuse and domestic violence.

Child Welfare Issues facing Asian Pacific American Families: 75 percent of surveyed providers stated parent/child conflict due to cultural/communication issues as a frequent problem for the Asian Pacific American community. Other child welfare issues include excessive corporal punishment, educational neglect, inadequate parental supervision and unaccompanied minors. Given the prevalence of these issues, greater attention needs to be placed on skills training for parents on addressing conflicts with children and also increase childcare and after-school programs for children.

Obstacles to Accessing Child Welfare Agencies: 88 percent of surveyed providers stated language and cultural barriers as obstacles for their agency, organization or school in serving Asian Pacific Americans. Agencies will benefit from trainings in cultural competency, hiring diverse staff to reflect the community served, and utilizing interpreters and translators.

BEST PRACTICES

Translation and Interpretation should be provided. 38 percent of surveyed participants utilize interpreters and 63 percent translate materials into Asian languages.

Neighborhood Networks are valuable. 100 percent of surveyed participants felt the Neighborhood Networks provide an important forum to find resources for families, share resources and case information with other members and also meet other service providers. The networks provide valuable opportunities for participating in community development activities and learning about Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities.

Neighborhood-Based Services are important. 75 percent agreed that having a neighborhood focus allows and encourages their agencies to learn more about the Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities in the community districts they serve and that given the opportunity would like to conduct more outreach to Asian Pacific American families through their Neighborhood Network.

26 • • • Connecting the Dots
88 percent of providers who participated in the survey have contact with Chinese families in Manhattan SPA 5 and 50 percent have worked with Indo-Caribbean families. 38 percent of providers have engaged with Korean families, 25 percent with Pakistani and Vietnamese families, and 13 percent with Filipino, Indian and Bangladeshi families. Service providers must deliver culturally and linguistically appropriate services and outreach.

**SURVEY RESULTS**

**Challenges facing Asian Pacific American Families:** 88 percent of surveyed providers expressed health and mental health issues, lack of health insurance and fear of government intervention as major challenges for Asian Pacific American families. 75 percent also included language barriers, lack of understanding of government determined rules, housing problems, long work hours and low wages as widespread issues in this community. Efforts are needed to increase Asian Pacific American families’ access to social services and to educate them on the laws and their rights.

**Child Welfare Issues facing Asian Pacific American Families:** 88 percent of surveyed providers stated inadequate housing as a frequent problem for Asian Pacific American children. 75 percent included excessive corporal punishment and parent child conflicts as other major child welfare issues. The need for housing services is an urgent priority. Parent education is also important to address safe methods of disciplining and managing conflicts with children.

**Obstacles to Accessing Child Welfare Agencies:** 75 percent of surveyed providers stated language barriers as a main obstacle facing their agency, organization or school in serving Asian Pacific American families. Agencies will benefit from trainings in cultural competency, hiring staff to reflect the community served, and utilizing interpreters and translators.

**BEST PRACTICES**

**Translation and Interpretation should be provided.** 50 percent of surveyed participants utilize interpreters and 38 percent translate materials into Asian languages.

**Neighborhood Networks are valuable.** 75 percent of surveyed participants felt the Neighborhood Networks provide a forum to meet service providers and participate in community development activities. The networks can provide valuable opportunities for finding and sharing resources as well as learning about the strengths and needs of Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities in Manhattan SPA 5.

**Neighborhood-Based Services are important.** 75 percent agreed that having a neighborhood focus allows and encourages their agencies to learn more about the Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities in the community districts they serve. 63 percent agreed that given the opportunity, they would like to conduct more outreach to Asian Pacific American families through their Neighborhood Network.

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**MANHATTAN SERVICE PLANNING AREA (SPA) 5 • BLUM NEIGHBORHOOD NETWORK COLLABORATIVE**

The BLUM Neighborhood Network Collaborative is the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Neighborhood Network that serves Manhattan SPA 5 which is comprised of Community Districts (CD) 1, 3, 6 and 8. ACS Neighborhood Networks are forums for community-based ACS staff, child welfare agencies, local service providers and community stakeholders to collaborate to ensure the well-being of children in their community.

**MANHATTAN SPA 5: ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN POPULATION BY COMMUNITY DISTRICT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CD</th>
<th>Neighborhoods</th>
<th>Asian Pacific American Population*</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Asian Pacific Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Battery Park</td>
<td>6,564</td>
<td>34,420</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Lower East Side &amp; Chinatown</td>
<td>58,747</td>
<td>164,407</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Murray Hill</td>
<td>16,014</td>
<td>136,152</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Upper East Side</td>
<td>15,275</td>
<td>217,063</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>96,600</strong></td>
<td><strong>552,042</strong></td>
<td><strong>17.5%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**U.S. Census 2000 • Asian only or in combination**

**ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FAMILIES IN MANHATTAN SPA 5**

Neighborhood: 17.5 percent of the total population of Manhattan SPA 5 identifies as Asian Pacific American.

| Asian Ethnic Groups as a percentage of 91,397. Total Asian Only |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Indian | Bangladeshi | Chinese | Filipino | Japanese | Korean | Pakistani | Vietnamese |
| 7.9% | 0.6% | 68.9% | 5% | 8.0% | 5.0% | 0.4% | 0.7% |
BROOKLYN SERVICE PLANNING AREA (SPA) 3 • BRIDGING THE GAPS COMMUNITY NETWORK COALITION

The Bridging the Gaps Community Network Coalition is the Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) Neighborhood Network that serves Brooklyn SPA 3 which is comprised of Community Districts 8, 9, 14, 17, and 18. ACS Neighborhood Networks are forums for community-based ACS staff, child welfare agencies, local service providers and community stakeholders to collaborate to ensure the well-being of children in their community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CD</th>
<th>Neighborhoods</th>
<th>Asian Pacific American Population*</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Asian Pacific Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Midwood</td>
<td>15,347</td>
<td>168,806</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

U.S. Census 2000 * Asian only or in combination

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FAMILIES IN THE MIDWOOD, BROOKLYN

Neighborhood: 9.1 percent of the total population of Midwood/ Community District 14 identifies as Asian Pacific American.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Ethnic Groups as a percentage of 13,053. Total Asian Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

80 percent of surveyed providers have contact with Indo-Caribbean families in Brooklyn SPA 3. 70 percent of providers have interacted with Indian families. 50 percent engaged with Chinese families, 30 percent with Korean, and 10 percent with Filipino and Bangladeshi families. Given the diversity in Brooklyn SPA 3, services must be linguistically and culturally appropriate.

SURVEY RESULTS

Challenges facing Asian Pacific American Families: 80 percent of surveyed providers expressed language and cultural barriers as well as long work hours and low wages as major challenges for Asian Pacific American families. 70 percent also included lack of knowledge of social services, lack of immigration status and fear of government intervention as widespread issues in the Asian Pacific American community. Greater efforts are needed to outreach to and educate Asian Pacific American families on their rights as well as social services and resources available to them in the community.

Child Welfare Issues facing Asian Pacific American Families: 70 percent of surveyed providers stated parent-child conflict due to culture or communication problems as a frequent child welfare issue. Other major child welfare issues include excessive corporal punishment, truancy, youth gang involvement and inadequate parental supervision. Given the prevalence of these issues, service providers need to help parents address conflicts and prevent truancy as well as to increase parents’ knowledge of cultural norms on child rearing and disciplining practices.

Obstacles to Accessing Child Welfare Agencies: 50 percent of surveyed providers stated language and cultural barriers as obstacles facing their agency, organization or school in serving Asian Pacific American families. Agencies will benefit from trainings in cultural competency, hiring diverse staff to reflect the community served, and utilizing interpreters and translators.

BEST PRACTICES

Translation and Interpretation should be provided. 40 percent of surveyed participants utilize interpreters and 20 percent translate materials into Asian languages.

Neighborhood Networks are valuable. 70 percent of surveyed participants felt the Neighborhood Networks provide a space to meet service providers. 60 percent said that their Neighborhood Network also allows for finding resources and participating in community development. The networks can provide valuable opportunities for participating in community development activities and learning about the strengths and needs of Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities.

Neighborhood-Based Services are important. 80 percent agreed that having a neighborhood focus allows and encourages their agencies to learn more about the Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities in the community districts they serve. 80 percent also agreed that given the opportunity, they would like to conduct more outreach to Asian Pacific American families through their Neighborhood Network.

28 • • • Connecting the Dots
BROOKLYN SERVICE PLANNING AREA (SPA) 7 • SUNSET PARK HUMAN SERVICES CABINET

The Sunset Park Human Services Cabinet is the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) Neighborhood Network that serves Brooklyn SPA 7 which is comprised of Community District 7 in Brooklyn. ACS Neighborhood Networks are forums for community-based ACS staff, child welfare agencies, local service providers and community stakeholders to collaborate to ensure the well-being of children in their community.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CD</th>
<th>Neighborhoods</th>
<th>Asian Pacific American Population*</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Asian Pacific Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sunset Park</td>
<td>22,375</td>
<td>120,063</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN FAMILIES IN THE SUNSET PARK, BROOKLYN

Neighborhood: 19 percent of the total population of Brooklyn SPA 7 identifies as Asian Pacific American.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asian Ethnic Groups as a percentage of 21,252. Total Asian Only</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

78 percent of surveyed providers have contact with Chinese families in Brooklyn SPA 7. 33 percent of providers have interacted with Korean, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Vietnamese families. 22 percent have engaged with Filipino families and 11 percent with Indo-Caribbean families. Given the diversity in Brooklyn SPA 7, services must be linguistically and culturally appropriate.

SURVEY RESULTS

Challenges facing Asian Pacific American Families: 100 percent of surveyed providers expressed language barriers and cultural barriers as major challenges for Asian Pacific American families. Other major challenges include lack of understanding about government-determined rules, fear of government intervention, housing problems, low wages and lack of immigration status. Greater efforts are needed to outreach to and educate Asian Pacific American families on their rights and the laws as well as social services and resources available to them in the community.

Child Welfare Issues facing Asian Pacific American Families: 33 percent of surveyed providers stated excessive corporal punishment, parent-child conflict due to culture or communication problems, youth gang involvement and inadequate parental supervision as a frequent child welfare issue. Other major issues include educational neglect and juvenile delinquency. Families will benefit from skills trainings to address conflicts with their children as well as to learn cultural norms on child rearing/disciplining practices. Youth need targeted programs that prevent truancy, juvenile delinquency and gang involvement and that can enhance their growth, skills and talents in positive ways.

Obstacles to Accessing Child Welfare Agencies: 67 percent of surveyed providers stated language and cultural barriers as obstacles facing their agency, organization or school in serving Asian Pacific American families. Agencies will benefit from trainings in cultural competency, hiring diverse staff to reflect the community served, and utilizing interpreters and translators.

BEST PRACTICES

Translation and Interpretation should be provided. 44 percent of surveyed participants utilize interpreters and 33 percent translate materials into Asian languages.

Neighborhood Networks are valuable. 78 percent of surveyed participants felt the Neighborhood Networks could provide a space to meet service providers and find and share resources. The networks can provide valuable opportunities for participating in community development activities and meeting Asian Pacific American community-based organizations.

Neighborhood-Based Services are important. 78 percent agreed that having a neighborhood focus allows and encourages their agencies to learn more about the Asian Pacific American and immigrant communities in the community districts they serve. 100 percent also agreed that given the opportunity, they would like to conduct more outreach to Asian Pacific American families through their Neighborhood Network.
APPENDIX B: TIPS FOR WORKING EFFECTIVELY WITH THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY

WHAT IS CULTURAL COMPETENCY?
The Child Welfare League of America defines cultural competency as “The ability of individuals and systems to respond respectfully and effectively to people of all cultures, classes, races, ethnic backgrounds, sexual orientations, and faiths or religions. Individuals and systems should respond in a manner that recognizes, affirms, and values the worth of individuals, families, tribes, and communities, and protects and preserves the dignity of each*.”

SIX ACTIONS DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDERS, ADMINISTRATORS AND POLICYMAKERS SHOULD DO TO PROVIDE CULTURALLY COMPETENT SERVICES TO THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY:

1. EXPAND KNOWLEDGE OF THE COMMUNITIES SERVED
   ✔ Learn about the diverse cultures, religions, languages spoken and immigration history (i.e., migration pattern, status, duration in U.S.) represented by the Asian Pacific American community you serve*.
   ✔ Acknowledge your client’s identity because their ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, immigration history, etc. may influence their perceptions and behaviors.
   ✔ Address differences in culture, customs and behaviors. Be aware of your own conscious and unconscious judgments and how it impacts your interactions with your clients.

2. CONSIDER LANGUAGE NEEDS
   ✔ Consider the language needs of the communities you serve and commit to ensuring linguistically appropriate services. Over 50 Asian languages and dialects are spoken in New York City**.
   ✔ Include interpretation and translation costs in your budget.
   ✔ Hire and appropriately compensate bilingual/bicultural staff.
   ✔ Plan and provide appropriate interpreters. Children and family members should not be used as interpreters because it may lead to inaccurate translation and miscommunication.
   ✔ Translate all written materials and communications. If translating written materials is not possible, then be sure to use alternative forms to communicate with your client population.

3. PROVIDE CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS
   ✔ Ensure your clients understand your role and your services. Given the high numbers of immigrant Asian Pacific Americans, they may not know about the availability of social services and related systems because equivalent services and systems may not exist in their native countries.
   ✔ Increase access to services by reducing barriers for the Asian Pacific American community. Services should be flexible, linguistically appropriate and provided at convenient times. Consider other barriers that prevent utilization of services, such as fear and distrust of government and service systems, shame and stigma related to accessing services, immigration status, and lack of health insurance.
   ✔ Recognize that immigration status may limit willingness to disclose information and/or access needed services. Discuss confidentiality and any limitations to confidentiality with your client.
   ✔ Incorporate the culture of a client/community when conducting assessments and interventions. Research and implement culturally appropriate assessments and interventions***.
   ✔ Acknowledge your clients’ right to determine their family’s well-being and engage client’s in decision-making to the fullest extent possible.

4. PROMOTE CULTURAL COMPETENCY THROUGHOUT THE ORGANIZATION
   ✔ Incorporate principles of equal access and non-discrimination in organizational policies and practices.
   ✔ Assess the diversity of the staff at all levels of the organization (e.g., board, administration, support staff, etc.). Evaluate the diversity of staff in regards to populations served and community demographics.
   ✔ Hire bilingual/bicultural staff and provide appropriate compensation for these additional skills and experiences. Note that being bilingual does not ensure cultural competence.
   ✔ Develop the commitment to cultural competence throughout the organization. Support staff development and trainings in cultural competency.
   ✔ Include principles of cultural competency in strategic planning, policy development, program design and service delivery*.

5. ENGAGE THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY AS PARTNERS
   ✔ Engage local communities by creating formal and informal supportive relationships. These might include collaborating with community and faith-based organizations, places of workshop, and civic, advocacy and cultural organizations.
✔ Develop meaningful partnerships with the community that are mutually beneficial and involve reciprocal transfer of knowledge and skills among all partners. Research models of cross-cultural and cross-service training which can also lead to collaborative planning.
✔ Incorporate the community’s definition of needs and problems and work to address them collaboratively with community members as full decision-making partners when making policy and programming decisions***.

6. INCREASE COMMUNITY OUTREACH TO THE ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY
✔ Educate the Asian Pacific American community about your agency’s services, resources, policies and procedures.
✔ Translate outreach materials into Asian languages. Avoid jargon and ensure that the language is appropriate for the target audience.
✔ Partner with community based organizations, faith-based organizations, places of worship, civic, advocacy and cultural organizations, schools, hospitals and child care centers to distribute information to the community. Post flyers and hold workshops or forums in places frequented by Asian Pacific American children and families.
✔ Use ethnic media to disseminate information to the community. For example, ethnic television, radio, newspapers, and magazines are important sources of information for Asian Pacific American communities.
✔ Participate in community events, street fairs, and parent-teacher conferences to distribute brochures and flyers.


APPENDIX C: RESOURCE DIRECTORIES AND REFERRAL SERVICES

Below is a listing of organizations that publish resources and provide referrals of health and human services to the Asian Pacific American community.

ASIAN AMERICAN FEDERATION OF NEW YORK 212-344-5878 | www.aafny.org
The Asian American Federation of New York supports member agencies, conducts research and produces a directory of human services for Asian Pacific Americans in New York. A Resource Directory of Human Services for Asian Americans in Metropolitan New York can be found on-line with searchable queries at www.aafny.org and the hardcopy can be purchased.

ASIAN LIFENET 877-990-8585 | www.mhaofnyc.org
Asian LifeNet is a part of the Mental Health Association of New York and operates a hotline with Cantonese and Mandarin speaking referral specialists to mental health and substance abuse services. The Asian LifeNet Hotline operates Mondays through Fridays from 6:00 am to 10:00 pm and Saturdays and Sundays from 11:00 am to 7:00 pm.

COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN CHILDREN AND FAMILIES 212-809-4675 | www.cacf.org
The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families conducts policy advocacy, youth mobilizing, community education, research, and training in the areas of child welfare, mental health and education. An on-line directory of services to diverse Asian ethnic groups can be found on-line at www.cacf.org.

NY COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN MENTAL HEALTH 212-720-4524 | www.asianmentalhealth.org
The New York Coalition for Asian American Mental Health is dedicated to improving the quality of mental health services for the Asian Pacific American community. The Coalition’s website includes resources such as a directory of mental health organizations and providers and psychosocial measures for Asian Pacific American populations. Asian American Behavioral Health Service Directory for Metropolitan NY can be found on-line with searchable queries at www.asianmentalhealth.org.

SOUTH ASIAN HEALTH PROJECT 800-530-9821 | www.southasianhealth.org
The South Asian Health Project aims to ensure access to culturally competent health and human services for the South Asian community. The South Asian Health Project publishes a directory of services for the South Asian community. Community Resource Directory for South Asians—Health and Human Services in New York and Health and Human Services in New Jersey NY can be found at www.southasianhealth.org.
APPENDIX D: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed methodology to collect data from different participants. CACF administered Neighborhood Network surveys and community based organization (CBO) surveys, conducted a focus group with Administration for Children’s Services (ACS) staff, and interviewed preventive service staff. In addition, data was collected by talking to parents and other community stakeholders and through a literature review. This led to a deeper and more thorough understanding of the experiences and perspectives of ACS staff, the Neighborhood Network members, and providers from CBOs serving Asian Pacific Americans.

1. Neighborhood Network Surveys. Surveys were administered to participants in eight Neighborhood Networks during a monthly meeting. Neighborhood Network survey participants included ACS staff, such as representatives from the field offices, Child Evaluation Specialists and Network Planners, frontline and supervisory staff from local preventive and foster, social service, health and mental health agencies, as well as community based organizations. New York City is divided into 59 community districts comprising of multiple neighborhoods. For this study, surveys were conducted with eight Neighborhood Networks serving community districts that consist of 15 percent or more Asian Pacific Americans, with the exception of one network which was included because of a large emerging South Asian population. The surveys gathered information on 1) the experiences, strengths and challenges of the Network participants in serving the Asian Pacific American population, 2) the current and potential role of the Neighborhood Network in strengthening services to the Asian Pacific American population, and 3) the needs of network members to improve service delivery and outreach to the Asian Pacific American community. A total of 71 surveys were collected.

The survey was administered to participants in the following eight Neighborhood Network/Service Planning Areas (SPAs):
- Brooklyn SPA 3: Midwood
- Brooklyn SPA 6: Bay Ridge, Bensonhurst, Sheepshead Bay
- Brooklyn SPA 7: Sunset Park
- Manhattan SPA 5: Lower East Side, Chinatown, Murray Hill, Upper East Side
- Queens SPA 1: Astoria, Elmhurst, Jackson Heights
- Queens SPA 2: Forest Hills, Ridgewood
- Queens SPA 3: Flushing, Bayside
- Queens SPA 4: Ozone Park, South Ozone Park, Howard Beach, Kew Gardens

2. Community Based Organization Surveys. Surveys were mailed to CBOs in Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens which provide direct services to the Asian Pacific American community. Surveyed participants included a mix of supervisory and frontline staff. These surveys sought to assess 1) the understanding of and experiences with child welfare related issues; 2) the experiences of collaborating with other city, community-based and mainstream agencies; and 3) the opportunity to be more involved in meeting the child welfare needs of Asian Pacific American families. A total of 50 CBO surveys were administered.

3. ACS Focus Group. A focus group was held with ACS staff from the Neighborhood Based Services unit. Participants included the Deputy Director of Neighborhood Based Services, the Queens Borough Coordinator, and various Neighborhood Network Planners to assess 1) the current roles and responsibilities of Neighborhood Based Services and the Neighborhood Networks given the ACS Realignment Plan, 2) examples of the types of support and technical assistance from which the Neighborhood Networks would benefit to improve outreach and services to the Asian Pacific American community, and 3) Neighborhood Network achievements and lessons learned with regard to outreaching to and serving the Asian Pacific American community which can be shared citywide.

4. Preventive Service Staff Interviews. In-depth interviews were conducted with representatives from each of the five agencies that provide preventive services to Asian Pacific American families. Representatives included directors and frontline staff. These interviews sought information on 1) their experiences serving the Asian Pacific American population, 2) best practices used to reach and serve the Asian Pacific American community, and 3) recommendations on how the child welfare system can better serve the Asian Pacific American community. Four of the five agencies (Chinatown YMCA, Center for Family Life, Chinese-American Planning Council and Lower East Side Family Union) are contracted by ACS to provide preventive services, and the fifth agency, the Asian Outreach Clinic of the Child Center of New York (formerly the Queens Child Guidance Center) provides preventive services through private funding.

5. Data on Parents’ Experiences. Parental understanding of the child welfare system and their experiences with the system were gathered anecdotally through referrals, workshops, and other types of assistance CACF provides to the community.
ENDNOTES


xvii In November 2006, ACS released educational brochures translated into Chinese and Korean. However, these educational brochures have not been translated into languages for the entire Asian Pacific American community. Also, The Parents’ Guidebook and The Parents’ Handbook have yet to be translated into any Asian languages.

xviii ACS has developed a new telephonic interpretation system, but it is severely underused by CPS workers.

xix These five agencies are Center for Family Life, Chinatown YMCA, Chinese-American Planning Council, Lower East Side Family Union, and The Child Center of New York (formerly the Queens Child Guidance Center).


xxii ACS has a program called ‘Community Partnerships’, which incorporates a capacity building component. Through an Request for Proposal (RFP) process started in late 2006, 11 neighborhoods will be given $25,000 to address their emerging needs. This program should be expanded to address the needs of the Asian Pacific American community, as only three of the 11 neighborhoods has significant numbers of this growing community.

xxiii Mandated reporters include social workers, child care providers, social service workers, mental health professionals, doctors, police officers, and teachers.

