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Annual Report

# OCA At-A-Glance

We are dedicated to advancing the social, political and economic well-being of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs).

Founded in 1973, OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates is a 501(c)(3) non-profit, membership driven organization headquartered in Washington, DC with over 50 chapters and affiliates around the country.

**Immigration Reform:** We fight for comprehensive immigration reform that allows for the reunification of immigrant families and creates a clear pathway to citizenship.

**Equal Education:** We advocate for an inclusive and accessible education system for all students. Familial income alone should not dedicate a student's educational opportunities.

**Civic Engagement:** We encourage civic participation through voter registration, education, and mobilization.

**Technology and Telecommunications:** We support policies that expand affordable broadband access for low-income, immigrant, and elder communities.

**OCA Internship Program, APIA-U, and APAY Leadership Training:** We train the next generation of AAPI leaders in college and high school for a lifetime of advocacy.

**COMPASS Program:** Parallel to our advocacy trainings, COMPASS provides college students with professional development and discussions about breaking glass and bamboo ceilings.

**JACL/OCA Leadership Summit:** This annual summit gives rising stars from local chapters the training and tools they need to make positive change in their communities.

**Womxn's Initiative:** We make space to convene AAPI womxn from various regions and career sectors and create a sustainable framework to develop AAPI womxn leaders throughout the country.

**Mentoring Asian American Professionals (MAAP) and B3: Build, Breakthrough, Believe:** These programs help develop AAPI professionals through networking, mentorship and advice.

**Civic Engagement:** We assist the AAPI community in voicing its growing civic power.

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# Message from the CEO



Dear AdvOCAtes,

On behalf of OCA-Asian Pacific American Advocates, it is my pleasure to present to you the 2017 OCA National Annual Report. This annual report was completed after our final audit that was approved on August 31, 2018.

As one of the fastest growing ethnic groups in the United States, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) are becoming ever more crucial through their increased purchasing power, civic power, and, more recently, media presence and digital influence. We are proud to be part of the growth and development of the AAPI community through our programs and advocacy work. This report will highlight the accomplishments of our members, the executive council, and staff over the past year.

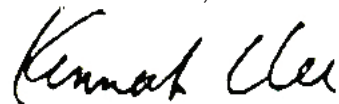
Part of our advocacy work is done through the programs we host. APA Y-Advocate helps high school students navigate their identity; APIA U gives college students leadership and advocacy training; Mentoring Asian American Professionals (MAAP) develops young professionals; and, our internship program provides advocacy experience on the Hill.

With our team of nine based in Washington, D.C., we are able to coordinate these programs for our chapters nationwide and be a voice for the AAPI community at the table regarding policies for education, immigration, and technology and telecommunications.

I'd like to thank our sponsors, individual donors, and past supporters who believe in our mission and vision. Without their support, we would not be able to continue to touch the hundreds of thousands of AAPIs that we do today through our programs and policy advocacy teams. I'd also like to thank our National President Sharon M. Wong and the Executive Council for their support, along with each and every one of our chapters and members for their enthusiasm and dedication, to make 2017 as successful as it was.

We are excited to have you with us on our journey as we continue to build and uplift the AAPI community.

With Gratitude,



Ken Lee  
Chief Executive Officer



Immigration reform remain a cornerstone policy priority for OCA. Our organization focuses on three major areas within the issue: the protection of the family reunification system; creation of a pathway to citizenship for undocumented immigrants; and prevention of abuses for individuals in the detention and deportation process.

Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders overwhelmingly utilize the family reunification system to immigrate to the United States. Because of the visa backlogs, there are currently 1.4 million applicants still waiting to reunify with their families in the U.S. Additionally, because of the per country caps, Asian applicants often take between 10 – 25 years to have their applications processed. As such, a Filipino U.S. citizen sponsoring their sibling would have to wait up to 25 years to see each other. Additionally, of the over 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, 1.5 million are Asian American. Of these, over 100,000 are DREAMers. Legislation providing a pathway to citizenship is necessary for the AAPI community.

OCA also strongly believes that AAPI immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers have a right to live without constant fear of detention and deportation; access to due process protections if they are detained or in the deportation process.

OCA greatly focuses on the ‘great equalizer’ for social and economic mobility - education. Besides full access to K-12 and higher education for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, OCA also advocates for student data disaggregation so that necessary resources can be provided to the most vulnerable communities. OCA also continues to push for expanded multilingual resources for parents, especially limited English proficient (LEP) parents, which is integral to their children’s success.

OCA’s K-12 education priorities include anti-bullying measures that are inclusive of LEP and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) students. AAPI students are often bullied based on their race and language skills, and LGBTQ AAPI students face additional hardships because of both their gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and language ability. OCA works to ensure that federal protections include everyone within our communities.

OCA continues to work to ensure that higher education is accessible and affordable for all AAPI students, including those that are undocumented. OCA’s higher education platform includes a congressional mandate for all public universities to allow the enrollment of undocumented students, along with translations for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and its availability for undocumented students.

The modern age we live in now is structured upon digital communications networks; as such, affordable access to mobile phones, broadband and other forms of modern communications are necessary for Americans to succeed. Due to lack of data disaggregation, AAPIs are shown as some of the earliest adopters of technology and have one of the highest rates of internet usage - a statement that is not true for many recent immigrants or Southeast Asians/Pacific Islanders. This lack of access can seriously impact educational attainment, income, and language ability.

# Programming



# Programming

The **OCA Internship Program** creates a pipeline of future leaders for the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community by providing students from all over the country with the opportunity to be involved in policy and advocacy through national organizations in Washington, D.C. After 27 years, the program continues to successfully lead our internship alumni to be more politically active on their college campuses and represent AAPIs in the community in local, state and federal governments.

OCA Interns are placed in Congressional offices, federal agencies, the OCA National Center, and other prominent non-profit organizations for ten weeks in and around Washington, D.C.



The Internship program, which runs three times a year during the spring, summer and fall, was developed to achieve the following goals:

- Provide a substantive complement of professional and personal development opportunities
- Introduce key concepts of individual and collective empowerment that are derived through engagement in social justice movements and American public policy issues that affect AAPIs
- Offer opportunities to meet and interact with national policy makers and thought leaders in Washington, D.C. and throughout the OCA National network
- Encourages careers in sector and professions where AAPIs are underrepresented through professional development, training, and mentoring
- Connect emerging AAPI leader with broad based coalitions and OCA partner across the country

Interns are also given the opportunity to schedule meetings with their member of Congress for an advocacy visit. Visits entail discussions concerning public policy and an inside look at the legislative work of Congress. We encourage our interns to take this opportunity and train them on how to bring important issues to the attention of their members of Congress.



*My internship experience was my first opportunity to be exposed to the larger AAPI community and the advocacy space in D.C. Tackling an issue as daunting as our own personal identities was frightening for me, but Sama Sama and other workshops put on by the OCA Internship allowed us the space to explore these issues. Although this meant being vulnerable, it helped me become stronger and more connected with my community. Even one year later, the program remains valuable to me through the continued support I receive from the people I built relationships with over the course of ten weeks.*

- Ben Tran, Summer Intern Class of 2017  
University of California, Irvine 2018



# Programming



APA Youth Advocate

APIA U: Leadership Training

**Asian Pacific American Youth Advocate** (APA Y-Advocate) is a half-day interactive training focused on equipping our youth with skills to enhance their personal development as well as providing them a stronger platform before going to college. OCA chapters host these trainings, facilitated by OCA Internship alumni, for their local AAPI high school youth.

Through hands-on activities, students learn about financial responsibility, career planning, and leadership-driven community engagement. With their peers and the facilitators, the students also engage in discussions about the implications of individual behavior on the community and what it means to be a leader.



**APIA U: Leadership Training** is a college leadership training program that involves interactive activities, small group discussions, and presentations led by qualified Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) facilitators. The training packed with a full day's worth of gaining self-awareness and team-building skills, and learning about direct action organizing. Participants will be asked to challenge themselves and share their experiences with the end goal that they learn to develop themselves to serve as catalysts for change.

Our mission is to provide AAPI student leaders and activists with a unique training opportunity that keeps in mind the viewpoints and experiences of AAPIS and other students of color.

# Programming

The goal of the **MAAP Program** is to cultivate the next generation of confident, empowered, equipped, and collaborative Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) professional leaders through a mutually-beneficial platform of networking and skills building. Our methodology combines career planning, professional and personal skills building and networking with both one-on-one and group mentoring sessions. The mentoring cohort participates in a series of three network convenings conducted as group seminars, peer-mentoring, learning activities and facilitated discussions. Over the course of these three months, our goal is for both the mentor and mentee to learn and grow from their different and shared experiences.



Our **B3 Program** was launched in 2009 as a convening for aspiring Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) professionals interested in taking their personal and professional goals to the next level through leadership development and networking.

The conference aims to be a space for relevant professional development, peer networking and mentoring to aspiring AAPI professionals. In a one-day program consisting of workshops, panels and/or seminars, participants learn about a range of topics from personal branding to corporate success strategies. Alongside this goal, B3 hopes to increase the level of civic engagement of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders throughout the U.S.

# Programming



JACL/OCA Leadership Summit

Civic and Census Engagement

The **JACL/OCA Leadership Summit** is an annual three-day convening of OCA and JACL members from across the country to build their capacity for advocacy work. Participants hear from a variety of speakers and facilitators; develop their community leadership skills; learn about current civil rights issues; engage with government officials; and deepen their commitment towards achieving equity and equality for AAPI communities through peer-to-peer learning.

The Summit helps expand the social, economic and political power of AAPIs by uplifting local leaders, giving them the necessary tools to advocate for their communities. Sessions have included workshops on legislative visits, education policy, and general civil rights. We also host a Congressional Speaker series to provide direct engagement with policymakers.



Though the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) population is projected to double by 2040, our gains in the political system are being stifled because of low turnout rates. Continuing a long tradition of fostering civic participation, OCA's efforts are aimed towards enhancing the role of marginalized AAPIs in our political system.

OCA operates through a multi-tiered system, in order to engage all our Chapters in Civic Engagement efforts depending on the capacity and networks of the chapters. Each chapter receives a sub-grant based on local plans and through consultation with APIAVote. Activities range from hosting a public event to promote civic engagement, to hosting phonebanks to encourage AAPIs to get to the polls. OCA National helps coordinate chapter efforts by providing education and trainings around Civic Engagement. By doing so, our Chapters are able to fully mobilize their members and community to get to the polls and voice their vote.

Using the same methods for civic engagement, OCA is gearing up to push for full participation from the AAPI community in completing the 2020 Census in order to ensure that our community is accurately counted. This data impacts political districting but, most importantly, also the allocation of resources that our community depends on.

OCA's inaugural **AAPI Womxn's Initiative** was started in 2016 as part of its effort to be more aware and inclusive of issues and challenges that AAPI womxn face. As a result, OCA passed a resolution and developed a program, AAPI Womxn's LeadHERship Summit, to bring together AAPI womxn from various backgrounds and sectors to discuss how they can uplift and support each other, as well as their collective civic power. We hope to train and develop AAPI womxn leaders throughout the country and develop a strong social network for mentors and mentees.



AAPIs continue to be underrepresented in many career fields, and even within those that have diverse representation, AAPIs struggle to break through the bamboo ceiling into leadership and executive positions. These obstacles facing AAPIs only become more pervasive as our presence and participation grows in professional arenas. The **COMPASS program** aims to help AAPI students address these issues so that they feel confident and prepared as they transition into professional life. COMPASS convenings act as opportunities for students to engage with experienced AAPI professionals in order to foster stronger networks and create mentorship opportunities. Student engage in discussions and activities that help to address common obstacles facing AAPIs in the workplace such as microaggressions, communication differences, and latent biases. By helping students access their personal and professional potential, we empower the AAPI voice and create a more equitable society.

OCA - ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN ADVOCATES

**B A C**

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