



APALA

Asian Pacific American
Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO
Organizing • Civil Rights • Economic Justice

2010 & 2011 REPORT & GOALS

About APALA

Founded in 1992, APALA is the first and only national organization of Asian Pacific American union members to advance worker, immigrant, and civil rights. As a membership based organization, APALA has 13 chapters in 8 states serving as a bridge connecting Asian Pacific Americans with the broader labor movement.

Historically, this bridge has been built on three major program areas: organizing a generation of Asian Pacific American union organizers through the APALA Organizing Institute, mobilizing Asian Pacific American voters through the APALA Every Vote Counts political program, and strengthening labor and community partnerships.

Introduction

2010 was an eventful year as APALA grew its membership and increased its programmatic range, kicking off a highly successful series of local APA worker rights hearings. It was also a year where we lost two noted community leaders – APALA President John Delloro, a union leader, teacher, organizer, and mentor, and Tam Tran, a DREAM activist. Delloro was trained through the APALA Organizing Institute and went on to work for SEIU, CSEA, Culinary, and AFSCME, and was a member of AFT. One of his personal career highlights was successfully organizing the hospital where his mother worked as a nurse. At the time of his passing, he was the Executive Director of the Dolores Huerta Labor Institute and was on faculty at Los Angeles Trade-Technical College Labor Studies Center. He co-founded a number of organizations including the Pilipino Workers Center and served on the Board of Taxicab Commissioners for Los Angeles and as an appointee on the California Assembly Speaker's Commission on Labor Education. Tran was an undocumented immigrant and filmmaker who testified to Congress on the DREAM Act in 2007. She attended UCLA and was a second year graduate student at Brown. APALA honors their memory by continuing to fight for immigrant, worker, and civil rights.

"APALA has been pivotal in ensuring that Asian Pacific American workers have a voice on the job and rights at work."

"As the second largest growing workforce in the U.S., our voices must be heard and we must use our growing numbers to elect and influence elected officials so that all workers have the right to organize a union without fear or retaliation; improve their wages, benefits, and working conditions; continue to fight for immigration reform and make sure that quality healthcare is a right for all working families."

- Luisa Blue, APALA National President



"APALA has been at the forefront of engaging Asian Pacific American workers and the larger community in the fight for social & economic justice. The Department of Labor looks forward to strengthening our partnership to ensure all workers have the tools and information necessary to stand up for their rights."

- Secretary of Labor
Hilda Solis



"APALA was founded to support Asian American workers, coalesce Asian Americans in the face of struggle, train organizers to bring attention to API issues and promote APA elected officials."

- Congresswoman Judy Chu (CA-32), Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus



"This was an amazing experience. I am so inspired after attending the first APALA Women's Organizing Institute and so proud of the work APALA is doing. I highly recommend this training for any API woman who is passionate about social justice."

- Denise Tan Agatep,
OI graduate



"APALA has taken the lead in educating the APA community on their civic rights and responsibilities and has galvanized communities across the country to vote."

- Rozita Lee, President of APALA Las Vegas and Commissioner on the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs)

Organizing Institute

Since 1992, APALA has trained and recruited a new generation of Asian Pacific American union organizers, successfully multiplying the number of multilingual organizers and the capacity for effective community outreach. In 2010, with the help of the Berger Marx Foundation, APALA hosted its first women only Organizing Institute to encourage Asian Pacific American women to become union organizers. A recent report published by the Center for Economic and Policy Research demonstrates that APA women comprise close to half of all APA union members. However, there are few leadership development and organizing opportunities targeting this specific demographic. Working with the Orange County Federation of Labor, the event drew over 30 participants, who were exposed to a range of techniques such as role-play exercises, public speaking, interactive workshops, panel discussions and a worker-related action. The program was such a success that participants created an APALA Orange County pre-chapter.

2010 Accomplishments	2011 Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Recruited 30 participants for women-only Organizing Institute ■ Started Orange County and San Diego pre-chapters 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Coordinate Organizing Institute with AFL-CIO in targeted regions ■ Host job fair at APALA biennial convention and provide increased opportunities for students and rank-and-file to join labor ■ Build pre-chapters and work with local, state, and international unions to identify and educate APA union members

Every Vote Counts

The APALA Every vote Counts political program furthers the mission of APALA by supporting Asian Pacific American civic engagement through involvement in local, state, and national elections. APALA believes that a mobilized electorate is a strategic partner and support of the labor movement. Every Vote Counts aims to train Asian Pacific American labor and community leaders to become active participants in the political process.



AMERICA

Every Vote Counts

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LABOR ALLIANCE - NEVADA

2010 Accomplishments	2011 Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Conducted multilingual voter outreach in Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, and Vietnamese in Hawaii, Nevada, and Washington State ■ Pioneered a novel program called "I Love America" that promotes a culture of civic engagement and celebrates APA voters with a perfect track record, thus encouraging infrequent voters to increase participation ■ Conducted outreach at over 12 community engagement events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Provide support to unions and allies on how best to reach out to Asian Pacific American voters ■ Increase engagement with state federations and central labor bodies ■ Create plan and engage local partners for 2012 political program



Audience members at the Las Vegas Hearing listen to testimony from members of the Bartenders, Culinary, CNA, IBEW, and SEIU.

Asian Pacific American Worker Rights Hearing

According to the Center for Economic and Policy Research, Asian Pacific Americans represent one of the fastest growing segments of the United States workforce, but also among unionized workers.

APALA followed up on the historic first national Asian Pacific American Worker Rights Hearing by putting out its groundbreaking report on APA workers' rights, *Breaking Ground, Breaking Silence*. In addition to speaking at the Smithsonian Institution on the report, APALA organized a series of local hearings in New York, Las Vegas, and Detroit with lawmakers, agency officials union leaders, community leaders, and workers, generating substantial media coverage. The highly successful hearings featured worker testimonials on the right to organize, wage theft, immigrant worker exploitation, and civil rights. Equally important, it provided workers around the country a platform to highlight individual stories of personal courage, and strategies to continue the fight for worker solidarity and economic justice.

Las Vegas

Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis opened the first ever Nevada APA Worker Rights Hearing, which was widely attended by 300 people. The event was cosponsored by the Las Vegas chapter, the Nevada State AFL-CIO, the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Culinary Workers Union, and many of the local unions. "Contrary to the model minority myth, segments of the Asian Pacific American workforce still experience abuses, including wage theft, union suppression and employer intimidation," said Rozita Lee, Commissioner for the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and APALA Las Vegas Chapter President. Nevada is home to one of the fastest growing APA populations in the country, having grown by over 300 percent since 1990.

New York

The first New York Asian Pacific American Worker Rights Hearing was attended by 250 people. Key attendees included NYS Labor Commissioner Colleen Gardner, NYC Comptroller John Liu, NYS AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Terrence Melvin, 1199 SEIU Secretary-Treasurer Maria Castaneda and officials from OSHA and the US Department of Labor. It was also covered in over fifteen ethnic media outlets.



Participants at the First APA Worker Rights Hearing in New York.

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"As one of the fastest growing segments of the Nevada workforce, it is critical to ensure that Asian Pacific Americans, and all workers, are able to have a voice at work. The Nevada Labor Movement is proud to stand with the Asian Pacific American community to advocate for the rights of all workers."

- Danny Thompson,
Executive Secretary-Treasurer
of the Nevada
State AFL-CIO



"APALA has been a growing force within the national labor movement in protecting workers' rights to organize and advocating for the expansion of livable wages and benefits, dignity on the job and a voice in the workplace."

- NYC Comptroller John Liu



"We must do everything we can to bring the American Dream within reach of people who work hard and play by the rules ... As we continue to build the economy, many workers still find themselves short of cash and credit. We're grateful to hear about the everyday experiences of hard working Americans and the challenges they face."

- Kiran Ahuja, Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders



"We are proud of the work that APALA has done to engage students & young workers. They will be an important partner as we continue to build on the AFL-CIO Next Up Young Worker Program as young workers are key to labor's potential and future."

- AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Elizabeth Shuler

Asian Pacific American Worker Rights Hearing *continued*

Detroit

On September 27, the Detroit APALA chapter held a widely attended hearing on Asian Pacific American workers' rights issues and the model minority stereotype. Panelists included Mark Gaffney, President of the Michigan State AFL-CIO, H. Sook Wilkinson, Ph.D., chair of the Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, and Daniel Krichbaum, Ph.D., Director of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights. Several testimonies related to incidents of discrimination and harassment based on stereotypes of Asian women, verbally mocking Asian languages or being spat upon by total strangers. Both the Department of Civil Rights and the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission had staff on hand to hear testimony and to learn about workers' shared concerns. The Detroit event was co-sponsored by Restaurant Opportunities Centers United, Michigan Asian Pacific American Affairs Commission, Reform Immigration for America, Michigan AFL-CIO and Michigan Department of Civil Rights.

Going forward, APALA plans on releasing a roundup report on findings from local hearings and organizing a Congressional briefing on APA worker rights.

2010 Accomplishments	2011 Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Produced report on the first National Asian Pacific American Workers' Rights Hearing including policy recommendations. Presented findings at Smithsonian and report taught at UCLA and University of Maryland. ■ Organized highly successful hearings in New York, Las Vegas, and Detroit with lawmakers, union leaders, community leaders, and workers, generating substantial media coverage. ■ Featured worker testimonials on wage theft, immigrant worker exploitation, right to organize, health and safety, immigration reform, and DREAM Act amongst other issues. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Coordinate additional local hearings in Oakland, Los Angeles, Seattle, and Washington DC ■ Secure support of national and local allies ■ Release national report summarizing findings from all local hearings ■ Organize Congressional briefing focusing on APA workers' rights

Union Solidarity & Coalition Building

In 2009 and 2010, APALA played a lead role in protecting worker rights and labor education. APALA is proud to serve as the bridge between the labor movement and the broader Asian Pacific American community to fight for social and economic justice. Here is a sampling of the campaigns that APALA supported:

- Stopped Gov. Schwarzenegger's attempts to defund the UCLA and UC Berkeley Labor Studies Centers
- NUMMI Campaign – APALA members distributed fliers at the DC Auto Show to educate participants on the potential impact that the New United Motor Manufacturing Inc. (NUMMI) closure would have on California's economy.
- NBC Contractors Wage Theft Justice campaign – The Alameda County chapter, working with the IBEW, played a pivotal role in ensuring that justice was granted to immigrant workers who were cheated out of \$3.6 million in unpaid wages and who were forced to falsify hours. The campaign succeeded in ensuring that workers received backpay, that the contracting company paid taxes that they had illegally withheld from the state, and that their boss who engaged in wage theft went to jail.
- Los Angeles CLEAN Car Wash campaign – The Los Angeles chapter, working with the Steelworkers, supported carwash workers seeking to form a union to secure basic workplace protections and address health and safety hazards for the workers and the larger community.

Union Solidarity & Coalition Building *continued*

APALA members also took on leadership roles within their home unions, and provided information on civil and human rights to union members.

- Gave presentations to AFSCME, AFT, CWA, IBEW, and IFPTE conferences
- Former SEIU organizer Jean Quan, an APALA Founding Member, was elected as the first female mayor and first Asian American mayor of Oakland, CA
- APALA Founding Member Josie Camacho took the reins of the Alameda County Central Labor Council and became Acting Executive Secretary-Treasurer
- Founding Member Sin Yee Poon was elected as Chief Elected Officer of SEIU Local 1021
- Former APALA Executive Director Amado Uno joined the Department of Labor as Special Assistant to the Secretary
- Victor Uno, business manager of IBEW Local 595 and founding member of APALA, was elected Vice President of the Electrical Minority Workers Conference
- APALA Board Member Maf Misbah Uddin, who serves as District Council 37 Treasurer received the “Distinguished Labor Leader Award” from New York State Assemblyman Nick Perry
- Ahmed Shakir, Secretary of Local 37 of AFSCME DC 37 was recognized by Indian Ambassador Mr. Prabhu Dayal with the “Distinguished Labor Leader Award”

Rally for NBC Contractor workers with IBEW 595
Business Manager Victor Uno



Goals for 2011

- Convene a national biennial conference with increased student presence
- Support organizing drives that target APA workers
- Build a young workers campaign to support union campaigns in targeted areas

Advocating for Immigrant, Worker, and Civil Rights

One of the founding reasons for APALA is to reach out to the immigrant community and to educate Asian Pacific Americans about the power of unions. APALA has been at the forefront of pushing worker rights issues in the Asian Pacific American community and has also taken a leadership role on immigration reform. APALA organized a joint statement from national APA groups on supporting the DREAM Act.

2010 Accomplishments	2011 Goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Comprehensive Immigration Reform & DREAM Act: APALA spoke at the One Nation, Working Together rally at the Lincoln Memorial discussing the importance of building strong community & labor partnerships■ Elected Secretary of the Executive Board of National Coalition for Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), a broad coalition comprised of 29 national Asian Pacific American organizations. This provides a greater opportunity for APALA to continue to engage our national allies and partners around worker, immigrant, and civil rights. Also, APALA revived and grew the Housing and Economic Justice committee of NCAPA to address shared economic concerns.■ Keynote speech at the 20th Annual Students of Color of Conference, as well as panels on APA activism and undocumented students and the DREAM Act.■ State legislation: The Hawaii chapter was very involved in passing “Hawaii EFCA” or HB 952 (2009) over Gov. Lingle’s veto. The bill allows certain plantation and agricultural workers to form a union through card check neutrality, provides for arbitration if both sides cannot reach an initial contract within 110 days, and increases penalties for unfair labor practices.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Promote policy goals at federal, state, and local levels, working with affiliated unions, chapters, and allies.■ Educate community allies and elected officials on state battles and their importance to APA and immigrant communities■ Produce and distribute information about the state of APA workers■ Increase presence with APA student organizations, including speaking at national conferences



“APALA’s leadership within the APA community and in coalitions like NCAPA has helped move important agendas forward like health care, immigration, and economic justice. Furthermore, APALA continues to train leaders that serve the greater APA community with the same passion and conviction that has long been the hallmark of the labor movement.”

- George Wu, OCA Executive Director and NCAPA Chair

APALA

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Strengthening Agency Ties

APALA has built stronger ties to agencies and to the Obama administration by educating staff and appointees on issues of specific concern to APA workers. The Department of Labor Roundtable on Asian Pacific American worker rights was a highlight of agency advocacy efforts.



Aung Oo, Ironworker, testifies to the DoL on hazardous working conditions

The DOL and the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI) convened the first Roundtable Conversation on Asian American and Pacific Islander low-wage workers on Wednesday, May 19, 2010. Presided over by Secretary Hilda Solis and facilitated by Patricia Shiu, OFCCP Director, the meeting was also attended by Chris Liu, Cabinet Secretary and Assistant to the President, Tina Tchen, Director of the Office of Public Engagement, Kiran Ahuja, WHIAAPI Executive Director, and officials from several DOL agencies.

APALA provided recommendations to penalize employers who knowingly commit wage theft, increase resources to hire compliance and enforcement officers that can effectively communicate with Asian immigrant workers and advocate for the collection and disaggregation of AAPI sub-population data, specifically for the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Other topics addressed at the roundtable conversation included health and safety, response to the BP oil spill in the Gulf Coast region, wage and hour violations, and women workers.

2010 Accomplishments

- Provided Keynote speech to the NLRB for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. Other speakers included NLRB Board Member Craig Becker and representatives from the WHIAAPI and the EEOC
- Met with Secretary of Commerce Gary Locke on disaggregation of Census data, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan on education and the Federal DREAM act
- Met with Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid on judicial confirmations

2011 Goals

- Plan OSHA Hearing in New York City with workers and advocates
- Host listening sessions around the country with the White House Initiative on AAPIs and DOL
- Provide ongoing feedback on how to increase federal responsiveness to APA communities

International Solidarity

APALA leaders held three international solidarity visits to Cambodia, Vietnam, and Taiwan. In Cambodia, APALA members held roundtable conversations, one on one meetings with union leadership, site visits, house calls, and skills building workshops. APALA also participated in a May Day rally with over 7,000 trade unionists in Phnom Penh to demand that the government increase the minimum wage from \$50 a month to \$93 a month.

As part of an ongoing exchange between APALA and the Vietnamese General Confederation of Labor (VGCL), the Alameda and San Francisco chapters hosted a delegation of VGCL leaders. They participated in a panel on international union solidarity with Alameda County CLC leader Josie Camacho, UNITE HERE Local 2 Organizing Director Tho Do, IBEW Local 595 Business Manager Victor Uno, and UCLA Labor Center Director Kent Wong.

In New York, Kent Wong and Workers United Vice President Emeritus May Chen gave a presentation on Vietnamese unions and how Vietnamese trade unionists migrate elsewhere in Asia due to globalization and economic hardship.

In Taiwan, the Solidarity Center had approached APALA for technical assistance for an organizing training specifically for Vietnamese migrants in Taiwan. Maria Somma, former APALA President and current APALA Board Member and United Steelworkers (USW) organizer helped lead a training with the local Vietnamese Migrant Workers and Brides Office. It included leadership development, public speaking, issues identification and strategic planning. Taiwan's labor law has recently been changed to allow migrant workers the right to unionize and there was a great deal of interest in learning how to utilize the new law to help the workers improve their working conditions. APALA hopes to identify and participate in future international trainings to educate and learn from unions around the world.