

Voices of Pacific Island Women Residing in the Pacific Northwest

Reflections on Health, Economics, Education
and More



Pacific Island Women's Association



Created by the
Pacific Island Women's Association

c/o 10237 16th Ave SW
Seattle, WA 98148

On the web at:
www.pacificislandwomen.org

Funding made possible by
**Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders
in Philanthropy**

National Gender and Equity Campaign
200 Pine Street, Suite 700
San Francisco, CA 94104

Copyright October 16, 2006



Acknowledgement and Dedication

This project would not have been possible without the leadership and vision of the Pacific Island Women's Association. The strength and vision of their leaders and members truly brought this project to a high level of quality.

Support from the Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, National Gender and Equity Campaign, was essential in the creation of this report. Their partnership buoyed up the project throughout the process.

The elders in the Northwest Pacific Island community are a steady source of inspiration, enlightening us with their wisdom and guiding us towards better physical, emotional, and spiritual health. They are the heart of our community.

And our youth, whose contributions balanced out the oral contributions, remind us of the most important reason behind projects such as these: the health of future generations. Beautiful, strong women, their growth is the most important goal to nurture.

The Pacific Island Women's Association would like to extend a special thank you to Diane Narasaki whose strong advocacy for Pacific Island women paved the way for this report to be a reality. Diane has been a constant support to the Pacific Island community. She is an ally, a friend and a sister.

Other important stakeholders include the Northwest Association of Pacific Americans and the Korean Women's Association, whose shared mission strengthens our own goals, PASEFIKA for their coordination of the project, and numerous community organizations, who we detail in chapter three of this report.

Fa'afetai, Kili so, Vinaka, Koutai, Si yuus maasi, Mahalo, Tika hoki, Sulang, Malo, Noa'ia, Thank you,

To all the women who graced these pages with their voices and insights.

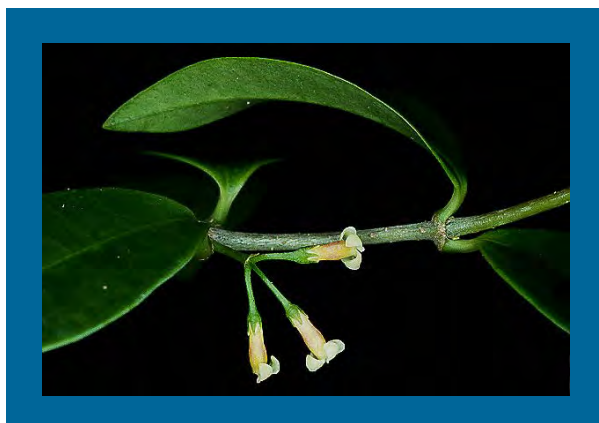






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PIWA



1. Executive Summary

The 2000 United States census reported that the State of Washington has the third-largest Pacific Islander population in the United States. Although little is published locally or nationally about this population, organizations, schools and government departments have identified Pacific Islanders as having some of the greatest health, economic and education disparities in this country. For example, National Vital Health Statistics data documents clear disparities in mortality rates. The United States census reports wide disparities in poverty and income levels for Pacific Islanders when compared with other racial groups. Exacerbating these grim economic and health realities, education partners in the Northwest, such as the University of Washington, report Pacific Islanders as having the highest drop out rates per capita of all ethnic groups.

These issues initiated the establishment of the Pacific Island Women's Association. In 2003, Pacific Island women gathered to discuss concerns facing the Pacific Island community. Key discussions identified gaps in health, economics and education as pressing concerns. The Pacific Island Women's Association determined that the best way to address these concerns was to hold a community forum, the beginnings of a strategic framework.

One recurring issue, which was raised throughout the forum, was the absence of racial priority outside of the Pacific Island community. Historically, Pacific Islanders have been combined with Asians in reports and publications, particularly those published by government agencies. Pacific Islanders are only 4 percent of the Asian/Pacific Islander aggregate racial category, and therefore become invisible when combined with Asians. Although there is a federal mandate to report Pacific Islanders as a distinct and separate racial category, there is no enforcement of this mandate, and therefore disaggregation is not a common practice, skewing the very statistics that are vital to understanding the needs of Pacific Islanders.

The Pacific Island Women's Association recognized that as long as information remained unavailable, efforts to reduce the health, economic and educational disparities in the Pacific Island population would be futile. Therefore, the Association created the community forum as a starting point for gathering stories and statistics upon which to build a foundation for change. From this, recommendations for future work and an action plan were developed. Ultimately, the purpose of the following report is to educate the greater public around the issues facing Pacific Islanders and why it is critical to the survival of the Pacific Islander community that it attains racial distinctiveness in reporting and measuring at all levels of community and government.

The following report contains three important areas of focus: background information on the Pacific Island community in the State of Washington; information gathered at the community forum; and the successes and recommendations for further work in the Pacific Island community.

This report would not have been possible without the support from the Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, the Pacific Island Women's Association, the Northwest Association of Pacific Americans, and most of all, the Pacific Island Communities in the State of Washington.



“Despite the benefits of relocating, moving to a community that is vastly different from the Pacific Islands can be very challenging for some Pacific Islanders. After departing from the islands, many lose access to traditional foods, cultural support, native languages, and generally accepted cultural knowledge.”





1.1 Background on Report

For the past 40 years, Pacific Islanders have steadily relocated from their island homes to the continental United States. Continental living may provide more opportunities for Pacific Islanders, such as access to education, to increased employment opportunities or to a lower cost of living. While many Pacific Islanders thrive on the continent, others face countless challenges. Numerous Pacific Islanders relocate near family members who previously moved to the continental United States or close to communities of Pacific Islanders. Familiarity and community often cushion the difficult geographical and cultural transition.

Despite the benefits of relocating, moving to a community that is vastly different from the Pacific Islands can be very challenging for some Pacific Islanders. After departing from the islands, many lose access to traditional foods, cultural support, native languages, and generally accepted cultural knowledge. Forced to navigate an entirely different system, numerous Pacific Islanders rely heavily on the guidance and support of their new neighbors as well as any previously transitioned family members.

The following pages embody an important attempt to explore the successes, challenges, concerns of the Pacific Island Community. The Pacific Island Women's Association, a community organization in the Northwest, received financial support to develop this report. Although there are a number of areas in the Continental United States with large concentrations of Pacific Islanders, this report specifically focuses on the Pacific Islanders residing in the Pacific Northwest. The problems facing Pacific Islanders in this region are augmented by a lack of data relating to this demographic. This report is only the beginning of a number of efforts to raise awareness on the needs of Pacific Islanders in the region.

1.1.1 *A Voice for the Community*

Community participation, development, and feedback raised the caliber of this groundbreaking report. Although the seeds were sown in a grassroots effort, the voices and views on these pages represent the efforts of many contributors. A critical element of this report was to provide a venue for Pacific Islanders to voice their concerns, celebrate their successes and identify areas of need. Great efforts on the part of the group and the community ensured that many Pacific Islanders had a voice in the project's process, outcomes and recommendations. Although time limitations negated the possibility of including every Pacific Island community in the report, a vast array of communities played an active role in the report's completion.





1.1.2 Pacific Island Women's Association

On September 18, 2003, twelve Pacific Islander women leaders attended a discussion forum, sponsored by the Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, Asian Counseling & Referral Services, Asian & Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center, and the Korean Women's Association, an organization whose Executive Director, Fa'alua'ina Pritchard, is a well known Samoan community leader. The purpose of the meeting was to inform Pacific Island women leaders of a recent publication on Asian American women. Another goal of the meeting was to identify if there was interest in the Pacific Island community to create a similar report on Pacific Islander women. Advocacy and support by women leaders from the Asian community were at the root of this movement. The support came in the form of thoughtful questions raised by Diane Narasaki and Norma Timbang. The dedication and commitment to see the report come to fruition came from Peggy Saika from the Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy. Partnership, mutual respect and social justice were critical elements in making this project possible.

While the Pacific Island women at the first meeting welcomed such an opportunity, they felt there needed to be more outreach to the Pacific Island community to bring together a larger, more diverse Pacific Island group of women to the table. In the following meeting, a larger, more representative group of Pacific Island women attended and a decision was made to submit a proposal to the Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy and to conduct a pilot project for the Pacific Island women residing in the Puget Sound area. The pilot project goal was twofold, to serve as an organizing tool for the Pacific Island women in the Puget Sound area as well as an opportunity to gather data and discuss the issues and concerns of the Pacific Island community. The deliverable was to be a written report, aimed to inform and educate funders, foundations, and policymakers as well inform Northwest Pacific Island communities about the issues that were important to Pacific Island women.

Puget Sound Pacific Island women gathered to discuss issues and concerns facing their community, to share what was working well and to inform and to learn about happenings in various Pacific Islander communities. While celebrating their shared culture and creating a much needed sense of community, the women focused on problematic issues facing their demographic. Pacific Island cultural values encourage all members of the community to think broadly about issues affecting the wellness of the individual, the family and the community. Because of this holistic approach, it was not surprising that the list of issues and concerns raised by the women encompassed all members of their communities.

A communal desire to address shared concerns through an action plan inspired the women to form an organization. Thus, the Pacific Island Women's Association (PIWA) was established in May 2004. Recognizing that there are few organizations that advocate on behalf of Pacific Islanders, PIWA led an effort to identify and address critical issues facing the Pacific Islander community in the Northwest. Over time, the group expanded in size as Northwest Pacific Islanders and other partners learned of their unique mission. Seeking to improve the wellbeing of Pacific Islanders, PIWA moved forward to accomplish their important work on identified areas of need. One of the identified areas is the staggering lack of information on the Pacific Islander population residing in Washington State. Lack of reported data and data collection have undeniably injured this demographic. Ignored and underrepresented, this unique population deserves to be acknowledged, to have their health, education, and demographic statistics reported and recorded.

This report, designed to play a significant role in creating awareness of Pacific Islander issues, is intended to educate and inform policy makers on the needs and concerns of this often ignored population. Indeed, PIWA is not alone in attempts to increase awareness and to advocate for their communities needs. PIWA's fiscal agent, the Northwest Association of Pacific Americans (NAPA), was



founded in 1999 as a consortium comprised of organizations, including churches and associations made up primarily of Pacific Americans. The PIWA project is coordinated by PASEFIKA, a faith-based organization founded in 2000 as a result of Pacific Island community conversations in White Center. Those conversations identified the four priorities of the Pacific Island families as school success, family focused services, jobs and health. PASEFIKA has focused its work on these priority areas as well as actively engaging in advocacy for the Pacific Island community. This report includes details on a number of local and state groups whose missions closely align with PIWA's strategic goals.

1.2 Background on Our Community

According to the 2000 Census, there are 874,414 Pacific Islanders residing in the United States, 588,853 or 67 percent of which reside in the Continental United States. Of these, 42,761 reside in Washington State. Pacific Islanders have been present in the Pacific Northwest for over 200 years. The first account of a Pacific Islander in the Northwest area dates back to 1787. A young woman referred to as Winee, came from Hawaii on a trade ship and landed in the Northwest. With the birth and growth of the United States, merchant ships brought transported increasing numbers of Pacific Islanders, despite political and cultural issues.

A high cost of living and limited economic opportunity in the Pacific Islands has forced Pacific Islanders to relocate away from the islands of their birth, leaving behind their traditional foods, their communities and familiar surroundings. More recent migrations of Pacific Islanders to Washington State have been motivated by access to education, employment or lower cost of living.

In areas such as Washington State, where Pacific Islander make up 0.8 percent of the population, there are very few social services specifically designed for and directed to Pacific Islanders. Yet Pacific Islanders are an important link in the chains of culture, health, and community, deserving of recognition and support. Due to data aggregation and the current cultural infrastructure, documented health and education disparities are often unrecognized. Increased recognition of this demographic and expanding social services to acknowledge their unique cultural needs are two prospective steps for supporting and strengthening this community.

1.2.1 *Our Pacific Island Homes*

Though the Pacific Island people share many commonalities, they maintain unique cultural identities while simultaneously facing a variety of different economic, education and public health challenges. The following listings are brief descriptions for a number of Pacific Island points of origin, which provide key facts as well as economic and health statistics. Located in the Pacific Ocean, this region is a geographic area dotted with thousands of islands. Although the list below is not comprehensive, it acknowledges several homelands for Pacific Islanders in the Northwest.



Dozens of uniquely different cultures and lifestyles are embedded into the Pacific Island's geographic region.

American Samoa

Located 240 miles southwest of Hawaii, American Samoa is comprised of the main island of Tutuila, Aunu'u and the smaller islands of Manu'a, Swain's Island, and Rose Atoll. The American flag was first raised in Samoa on April 17, 1900. U.S. interest in Samoa, as with many of the islands in the Pacific, reflects a military and geographically strategic need. The American Samoan population as of July 2003 was estimated at 70,260 with a life expectancy of 71.4 years for males and 80.4 years for females. Approximately 98 percent of the population has adequate sanitary facilities and 100 percent of the population receives water that is considered to be safe. While Samoan is considered a living language, English is the official language of American Samoa and the overall rate of use hovers at 98 percent. The country is primarily composed of the following ethnic groups: Samoan (89 percent), Other (5 percent), Tongan (4 percent), and Caucasian (2 percent). Roughly 90 percent of the land in American Samoa is communally owned. Tuna fishing and tuna processing are the primary industries of the private sector, with canned tuna as the chief export.



Samoa

Samoa, officially the Independent State of Samoa, is a country comprising a group of islands in the South Pacific Ocean. Previous names for this country included German Samoa, from 1900 to 1919, and Western Samoa, from 1914 to 1997. Samoa has a population of approximately 185,000 and is approximately 1093 square miles in size. The fa'a Samoa, or traditional Samoan way,



Samoa siapo, a tapa cloth or bark cloth.

remains a strong force in Samoan life and politics. Despite centuries of European influence, Samoa maintains its historical customs, social systems, and language. The political structure of Samoa takes place in a framework of a parliamentary representative democratic monarchy, whereby the Prime Minister of Samoa is the head of government.. The economy of Samoa has traditionally been dependent upon development aid, private family remittances from overseas, and agricultural exports. The country is vulnerable to devastating storms, which can cripple its economy. To that end, agricultural-related industries employ two-thirds of the labor force, and furnishes 90 percent of exports, including coconut cream, coconut oil, noni, and copra. Outside of a large automotive wire-harness factory, the manufacturing sector mainly processes agricultural products. Tourism is an expanding sector; for instance, more than 70,000 tourists visited the islands in 1996.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI)

A total of 16 islands constitute the 457 square km land area of CNMI. Located roughly 5,300 km from Hawaii and 2,300 km south of Japan, the estimated population in July 2003 was 80,006. The life expectancy at birth is 73.06 years for males and 79.4 years for females. Alternatively, health and safety remain a foremost concern for the CNMI. In general, health status is moving more towards that of a more industrialized nation and away from the health profile of a developing nation. While the





health care system provides excellent care, resources at all levels are strained, as most of the infrastructure planning was based on the 1984 population of 27,406. For instance, the mean adjusted incidence rate for cervical cancer was nine times higher for Chamorro females (69.1/100,000) than for U.S. White females (7.5/100,000). Cervical cancer rates for Carolinian females (151.1/100,000) were 20 times higher than for U.S. white females. It is estimated that only 80 percent of the population has adequate sanitary facilities and receives water considered to be safe. Addressing culture and tradition, CNMI has three official languages: Carolinian, Chamorro, and English; the literacy rate is 97 percent. Primary ethnic groups include Chamorro (75 percent), Carolinians and other Micronesians, Caucasian, Japanese, Chinese, Filipino, and Korean. An expanding tourist industry has resulted in an influx of migrant workers, rapid population growth, and an economic boom. The tourist industry employs approximately 50 percent of the workforce although garment production is also a key industry.

Federated States of Micronesia

Four major island groups comprise the Federated States of Micronesia, forming the states of Kosrae, Pohnpei, Chuuk, and Yap. Overall, a total of 607 islands and 270.8 square miles constitute Micronesia. The population as of July 2006 was 108,500, with 38 percent of that population 15 years of age and younger. The life expectancy at birth is 67.4 years for males and 70.9 years for females. Micronesia has five national/official languages and, although the total number of official living languages listed is 17, the literacy rate is 85 percent. The population is comprised of nine ethnic Micronesian and Polynesian groups. Micronesian societies consist of clan groupings that are matrilineal in descent and extend across the islands.



Subsistence farming and fishing constitute the primary economic activities in Micronesia. Potential for a tourist industry exists, however the remoteness of the island's location, insufficient facilities, and limited air travel opportunities present significant development challenges. The ending of the Compact of Free Association (an agreement that provided \$1.3 billion of U.S. financial and technical assistance over a 15 year period) in November 2002, marked a significant reduction in U.S. assistance and future revenues for Micronesia. To that end, geographical isolation, slow growth of the private sector, and a poorly developed infrastructure are likely to impede long-term growth.

Fiji

Fiji, officially the Republic of the Fiji Islands, is an island nation in the South Pacific Ocean, east of Vanuatu, west of Tonga and south of Tuvalu. The country occupies an archipelago of about 322 islands, of which 106 are permanently inhabited; in addition, there are some 522 islets. The two major islands, Viti Levu and Vanua Levu, account for some 87 percent of the total population. The politics of Fiji occur in a framework of a parliamentary representative democratic republic whereby the Prime Minister of Fiji is the head of government. Fiji, endowed with forest, mineral, and fish resources, is one of the more developed of the Pacific island economies, though still encumbered by a large subsistence sector.



Economic liberalization in the years following the coup of 1987 created a boom in the garment industry and a steady development growth rate despite growing uncertainty of land tenure in the sugar industry. The expiration of leases for sugar cane farmers (along with reduced farm and factory efficiency) has led to a decline in sugar production, despite a subsidized price. Urbanization and expansion in the service



sector have contributed to recent GDP growth. Sugar exports and a rapidly growing tourist industry — with 430,800 tourists in 2003 with a significant and steady increase in the subsequent years — are the major sources of foreign exchange. The population of Fiji is mostly comprised of native Fijians (54.3 percent), and Indo-Fijians (38.1 percent), descendants of Indian contract laborers brought to the islands by the British in the 19th century. About 1.2 percent of the population are Rotuman — natives of Rotuma Island, whose culture has more in common with countries such as Tonga or Samoa than with the rest of Fiji. There are also small, but economically significant, groups of Europeans, Chinese and other minorities.

French Polynesia

The islands of French Polynesia have a total land area of 1,622 square miles scattered over 965,255 square miles of ocean. French Polynesia is made up of several groups of islands, the largest and most populated being Tahiti. The island



groups are: Austral Islands, Bass Islands, Gambier Islands, Marquesas Islands, Society Islands, and the Tuamotu Archipelago. The population of French Polynesia was estimated to be 260,338 in July 2006, with an estimated life expectancy at birth for males is 73.69 years and 78.63 years for females. The politics of French Polynesia occur in the framework of a parliamentary representative democratic French overseas collectivity, whereby the President of French Polynesia is the head of government. French Polynesia has a moderately developed economy, which is dependent upon imported goods, tourism, and the financial assistance of mainland France. Medical treatment is generally good on the major islands, but is limited in areas that are more remote or less populated.



Guam

The largest and southernmost of the Mariana Islands, Guam covers an area of 549 square km. The estimated population, as of July 2003, was 163,941. The life expectancy at birth is 76 years for males and 81 years for females. Chamorro and English are the official languages of Guam, and the island boasts a literacy rate of 96 percent. Infant mortality rates (8.67 per 1,000 live births in 1999) and maternal mortality ratios (0.0 per 100,000 live births in 1999) remain low and cancer was the second leading cause of mortality in 1999. Primary ethnic groups include: Chamorro (37 percent), Filipino (26 percent), White (10 percent), Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Other (27 percent). While Chamorros make up less than half the population, this group dominates the political and social life of the island.

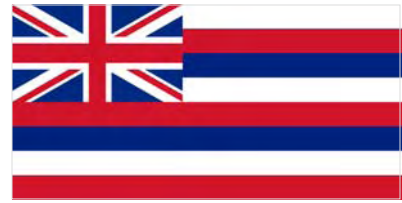


The most developed island in Micronesia, Guam serves as a transportation and communications hub and is often regarded as the “gateway to Micronesia.” The tourist industry has grown rapidly over the past 20 years, creating a construction boom for new hotels and expansion of existing ones. However, tourism has slowed in recent years due to a downturn in the Japanese economy. (Japanese tourists account for nearly 90 percent of tourism dollars).



Hawaiʻi

Hawaii is located in the archipelago of the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean. Admitted on August 21, 1959, Hawaii constitutes the 50th state of the United States and is situated 2,300 miles (3,700 km) from the Continent. Ethnically, Hawaii is the only state that has a majority group that is non-white (and one of only four in which non-Hispanic whites do not form a majority). Further, the island has the largest percentage of Asian Americans. Hawaii is the first majority-minority state in the United States since the early 20th century and, according to the 2000 Census, 6.6 percent of Hawaii's population identified themselves as Native Hawaiian, 24.3 percent identified as White American and 41.6 percent identified as Asian American. Moreover, 1.3 percent identified as Pacific Islander American, which includes Samoan American, Tongan, Tahitian, Māori and Micronesian. Lastly, 1.8 percent identified as African American and 0.3 percent identified as Native American and Alaska Native.



Tourism is the largest and steadiest industry in Hawaii, contributing 24.3 percent of the Gross State Product (GSP) in 1997. Hawaii is known for its relatively high per capita state tax burden. In the years 2002 and 2003, Hawaii residents had the highest state tax per capita at US\$2,757 and US\$2,838, respectively. This rate is partially explained by the fact that services such as education, health care and social services are all rendered at the state level — as opposed to being rendered at the municipal level of all other states.

Waipiʻo Valley, Hawaii.

Many Native Hawaiians are engaged in a movement for sovereignty and self determination. The Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement is made up of a number of community groups seeking self-determination and self-governance for Native Hawaiians (or more broadly Hawaiian nationals regardless of ethnicity), and redress from the United States for its role in the 1893 intervention and overthrow of Queen Liliʻuokalani, and what is seen as a prolonged military occupation beginning in 1898. The Hawaiian Sovereignty Movement advocates for demilitarization, ecological concerns, indigenous recognition, and cultural site protection, amongst other things.

New Zealand

New Zealand is a country in the south-western Pacific Ocean consisting of two large islands (North Island and South Island) and many much smaller islands, most notably Stewart Island and the Chatham Islands.



New Zealand is called Aotearoa in Māori, which may be paraphrased as Land of the Long White Cloud, and has a population of about 4.1 million. About 80 percent of this population is of European descent. Indigenous Māori people are the largest non-European ethnic group at 14.7 percent; Asians make up 6.6 percent of the population; and 6.5 percent of the population are Pacific Islanders. Elizabeth II, as the Queen of New Zealand, is the Head of State and is represented, in her

absence, by a non-partisan Governor-General; the Queen 'reigns but does not rule', so she has no real political influence. In fact, political power is held by the Prime Minister, who is the Head of Government in the democratically-elected Parliament of New Zealand. The Realm of New Zealand also includes the Cook Islands and Niue, both self-governing, but in free association; Tokelau; and the Ross Dependency (New Zealand's territorial claim in Antarctica).

Palau

Palau consists of eight principal islands and 252 smaller islands. Palau has a constitutional government in free association with the United States. The Compact of Free Association was entered into with the United States on October 1, 1994, and also marked Palau's independence. The estimated population in July 2003 was 19,717.

Palauan and English are the official languages and the Palau literacy rate is 85 percent. Palau is comprised of the following ethnic groups: Palauan (70 percent), Asian (primarily Filipinos, Chinese, Taiwanese, and Vietnamese, 28 percent), and White (2 percent). Palauan is more commonly spoken at home and in casual interactions, while English is more commonly spoken in business and government. The average life expectancy at birth is 66.4 years for males and 72.8 years for females. To that end, Palau has one of the highest standards of human development of all Pacific island countries. Following approval of the Compact of Free Association with the United States, Palau has developed national policies promoting economic development, increased tourism and employment, and an improved health system.



Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI)

Located in eastern Micronesia, RMI consists of 29 atolls spread over one million square km of ocean. Estimated population in July 2003 was 56,429, approximately 39 percent of which was under age 15. Marshallese is the official language and the literacy rate is 85 percent.

The average life expectancy at birth is 67.5 years for males and 71.4 years for females. Roughly 81 percent of the population has adequate sanitary facilities, while 88 percent of the population received water considered to be safe. Marshallese Islander females have breast and cervical cancer incidence rates that are 1.4 times higher and 5.8 times



higher than rates in the United States, respectively. Despite increasing Westernization and the introduction of a moneyed economy, social status in Marshallese society still comes largely from one's kinship as chiefs continue to maintain a great deal of authority over land ownership and usage.

U.S. government assistance is the mainstay of RMI's economy. Under the Compact of Free Association, RMI has received more than \$1 billion in aid since 1986. Coconuts and breadfruit are the primary commercial crops. Small-scale industry includes handicrafts, tuna processing, and copra. The



current economic situation in the Marshall Islands is bleak, with the unemployment rate exceeding 25 percent in urban areas. Urban centers have modern power plants, but supplies are inadequate for the growing urban population. Alternatively, imports far exceed exports, as RMI has few natural resources. Government down-sizing, drought, and a decline in tourism and foreign investment have resulted in an average of one-percent GDP growth over the past decade.

Tonga

Tonga, officially the Kingdom of Tonga, Tongan for "south", is an independent archipelago in the southern Pacific Ocean. It lies about a third of the way between New Zealand and Hawaii, south of Samoa and east of Fiji. The official languages of Tonga are Tongan and English; the literacy rate is 98 percent. The population of Tonga was estimated to be 102,000 in July 2005. Tongans represent more than 98 percent of the inhabitants. The rest are European, mixed European, and other Pacific Islanders. There also are several hundred Chinese. Tonga is a constitutional monarchy. However there is a growing pro-democracy movement in Tonga, which emphasizes reforms, including better representation in the Parliament for the majority commoners, and improved accountability in matters of state. An overthrow of the monarchy itself is not part of the movement and the institution of monarchy continues to hold popular support, even while reforms are advocated. Tonga's economy is characterized by a large nonmonetary sector and a heavy dependence on remittances from the half of the country's population that lives abroad, chiefly in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. The monetary sector of the economy is dominated and largely owned by the royal family and nobles. This is particularly true of the telecommunications and satellite services. Much of small business, particularly retail establishments on Tongatapu, is now dominated by recent Chinese immigrants who arrived under a cash-for-passports scheme, which ended in 1998.



1.2.2 Pacific Islanders in the Northwest

Pacific Islanders in the Northwest are very similar to Pacific Islanders residing in our island homes, as they celebrate the same cultural practices, beliefs and traditions. There are, however, many areas where the differences are distinct. Many of these distinctions are a result of the Northwest environment. In many of our island homes, Pacific Islanders play a significant role in aspects of governance and commerce, while making up a significant percentage of the population. In Washington State, however, we represent only 0.8 percent of the population, which translates into a minimal voice and minimal power. Often treated as an invisible minority, Pacific Islanders struggle to raise awareness of the needs of our community.





1.3 General Overview

The geographic origins of Pacific Islanders in the Northwest vary dramatically. Some are descendants of Pacific Islanders who were brought over in the 1800s as laborers in the trade industry. At the other end of the spectrum are Pacific Islanders who recently arrived, with their hopes set on educational and economic opportunities. Many are successful, while others struggle to adapt to the dramatic changes in their way of life and the isolation from their island homes. This report aims to describe the current status of health, economic and education of Pacific Islanders along the entire spectrum.

1.3.1 Health Status

It is extremely difficult to examine the collective health status of Pacific Islanders in the U.S. This difficulty is a result of aggregation of Pacific Islanders with the larger Asian racial group. Pacific Islanders comprise only 4 percent of the Asian/Pacific Islander race category and therefore separating out Pacific Islanders is impossible from most National and local data sources. However, in special cases, data is available on certain Pacific Islander groups. For example, Native Hawaiians experience heart disease mortality rate 44 percent higher and stroke mortality rate 31 percent higher than other U.S. races. Overall mortality rates are also known for Native Hawaiians. The age adjusted death rate for Native Hawaiians is 901 per 100,000 ((compared with 524 per 100,000 for the total American population). An even more alarming mortality statistic is reported on pure Native Hawaiians, disaggregated from part Native Hawaiians, 2,200 per 100,000.

Special Points of Interest:

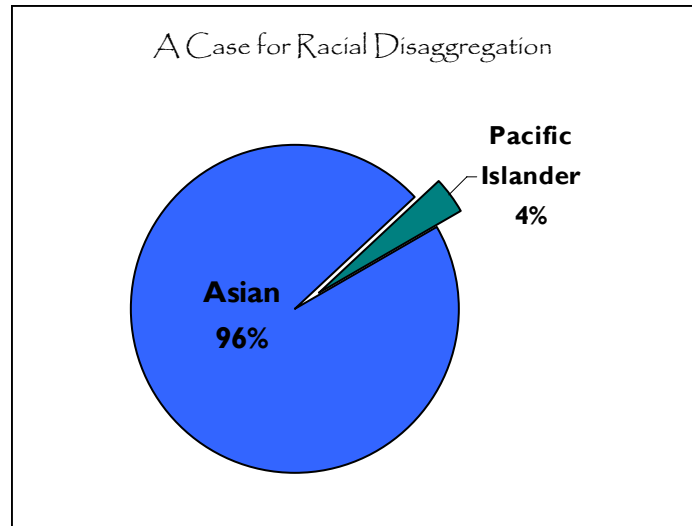
- Washington is one of the few states that collects health data on Pacific Islanders separate from Asians.
- Unfortunately, very little reporting of this data is made publicly available, making it extremely difficult for Pacific Islander communities to assess critical health statistics information for advocacy and planning.
- Despite the minimal data available on Pacific Islanders, the information that is known is alarming.

Cancer is a disease from which Pacific Islanders experience devastating health disparities. Pacific Islanders are among those who have the highest mortality and lowest survival rates from cancer when compared to the general U.S. population (ICC, 2004). These rates indicate that Hawaiian (Look and Braun, 1995; Miller, et al., 1996), Marshallese (Palafox et al., 1998), Chamorro, Carolinian (CNMIDPH, 1995), and Palauan (Republic of Palau, 1998) women all suffer from a higher rate of incidence and mortality from breast cancer, when compared to overall U.S. rates. Native Hawaiian women have the third-highest breast cancer mortality rate in the nation (Miller et al., 1996). Cervical cancer is also a major health issue among many groups of indigenous Pacific Island women. Women in the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) have cervical cancer incidence rates that are 5.8 times higher when compared to the United States. Rates for women in the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas are exceedingly high, with Chamorro women experiencing rates nine times higher



(69.1/100,000) than for U.S. White women (7.5/100,000), and Carolinian women experiencing rates 20 times higher (151.1/100,000) (CNMIDPH, 1995). Once diagnosed with cancer, outcomes for a clean bill of health are elusive for many of these groups. Native Hawaiians have a 5-year survival rate, which is 18 percent lower than Whites and 15 percent lower than U.S. (all races) for all cancers combined (Tsark, 1998). In many of these groups, cervical cancer is the most common form of cancer, including among Palauans (38.4/100,000), and cervical cancer also causes the most cancer deaths (20/100,000) (Republic of Palau, 1998). Given the technologies that have been available for years to improve survival rates from cervical cancer, these statistics are devastating.

Washington state is one of a handful of states that collects race data in new categories in its vital statistics file, despite the Federal standards mandating this change that were released in 1997 by the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB). These revisions included splitting the racial category "Asian or Pacific Islander" into two categories, "Asian" and a "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander." OMB standards apply to all federally collected data and reporting, including all levels of education, the national census, medical research, disease statistics, drawing boundaries for Congressional districts, the Voting Rights Act, and compliance with federal law and statutory regulations. Although this new racial classification was mandated in 1997 and was expected to be fully implemented by 2003, the 2005 DHHS and AHRQ, National Healthcare Disparities Report reported that the absence of quality data prohibited them from detailing disparities for Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders.



Despite the Washington state's efforts to comply with federal mandates and to collect appropriate data, very little reporting is made on Pacific Islanders. A small subset of Pacific Islander maternal and child health data was made available to be included in this report. The percent of infants born to Pacific Island mothers who smoked during pregnancy was 13 percent, compared to all races combined, which was 5.5 percent. The percent of infants born to Pacific Island mothers who were under the age of 18 was 2.3 percent compared to all races combined, which was 1.5 percent. The percent of Pacific Island infants born with low birth weight was 8.9 percent, compared to all races combined, which was 6.3 percent. The percent of Pacific Island infants born premature was 13.4 percent, compared to all races combined, which was 9 percent.

As a result of inadequate data collection and racial misclassification on official documents, it is important to note that current national data sources grossly underestimate the extent of health needs among Pacific Islanders as a result of inadequate data collection and racial misclassification on official documents.



Figure 1

Household Income in 1999	Percent of Population	
	Pacific Islanders	All Races
Less than \$10,000	9.6	7.6
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6.1	5.5
\$15,000 to \$24,999	11.0	11.7
\$25,000 to \$34,999	12.1	12.5
\$35,000 to \$49,999	20.4	17.1
\$50,000 to \$74,999	22.8	21.4
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11.2	11.6
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5	8.3
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1.1	2.1
\$200,000 or more	0.9	2.2

1.3.2 Economics

An analysis of economic indicators from the 2000 United States Census shows that Pacific Islanders in Washington state are experiencing economic disparities when compared to all other races in the state. A higher percentage of Pacific Islanders are represented in lower household income categories, while fewer Pacific Islanders are represented in the higher income categories (Figure 1).

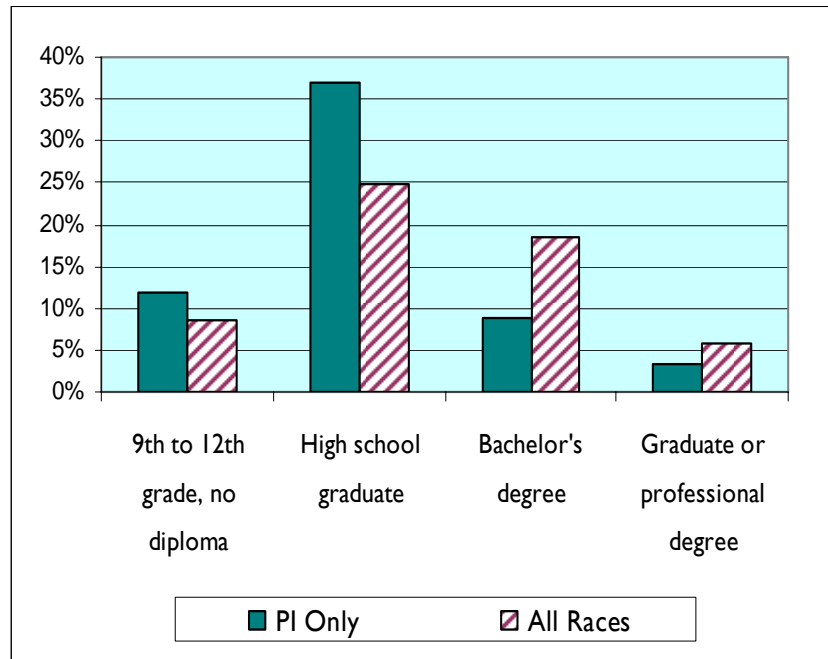
Moreover, the number of Pacific Islanders below the federal poverty level is alarming. 16 percent of Pacific Islanders in Washington are below the poverty level, while poverty numbers for all races in the State is only 10 percent.

Employment is another indicator of economic status and the need for specific reporting criterion. According to the 2000 United States Census, 4 percent of Pacific Island males and 3 percent of Pacific Island females were unemployed, while the unemployment rate for all races was 3.6 percent for males and 4.5 percent for females.



1.3.3 Education

An analysis of education attainment shows that Pacific Islanders in Washington state are experiencing high educational disparities when compared to other populations in the state. A higher percentage of Pacific Islanders are represented in lower educational attainment categories, while fewer Pacific Islanders are represented in the higher educational attainment categories.



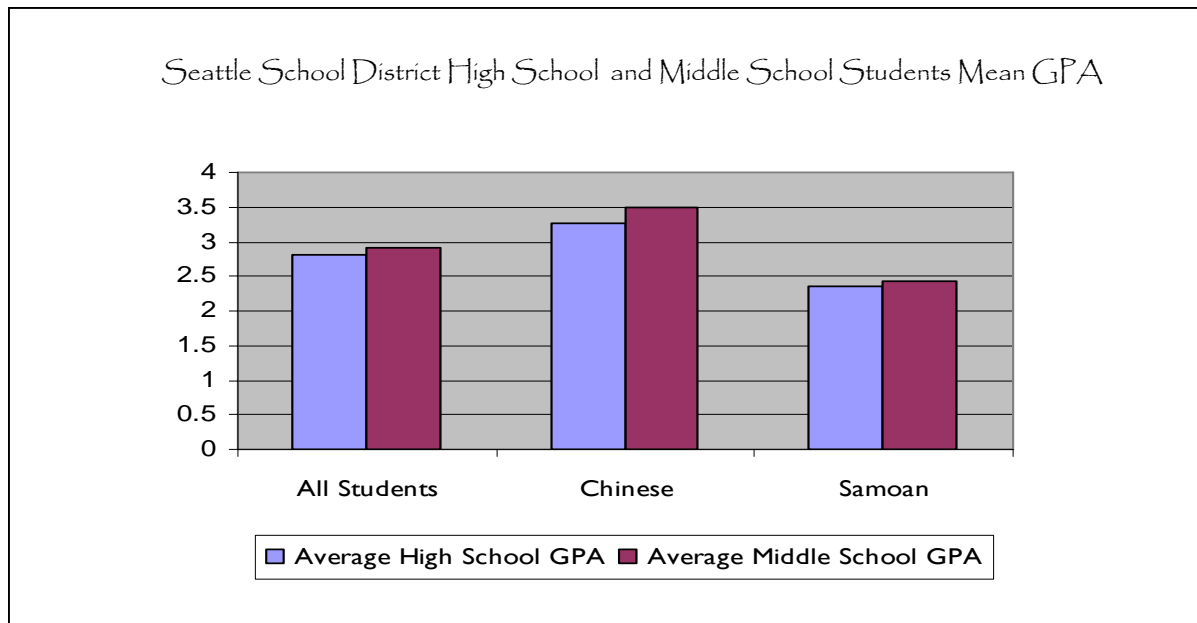
The 2000 United States Census data describes how Pacific Islander fair in educational attainment. Pacific Islanders are more likely to have attained only a high school degree or no diploma, and are less likely to have attained a bachelors or graduate degree, when compared to all other races combined.

One of the greater challenges that the Pacific Islander community has in describing its needs and challenges is the lack of substantial data available on the population. Pacific Islanders are grouped under the larger Asian race category and as a result are not able to adequately describe education status and disparities. Asians in Washington state experience some of the highest educational attainment rates set out in the data; however these numbers are reported under the Asian/Pacific Islanders umbrella, implying that Pacific Islanders are achieving more success than is accurate.

Fortunately, one school district in Washington state does disaggregate one Pacific Island group from the Asian category. The Seattle School district makes an effort to report Samoans independently, allowing for more accurate reporting on the educational status of Samoan students and subsequently a demonstration of the importance of desaggregating data.



During the 2004-2005 school year, Samoan high school students were reported to have a mean GPA of 2.36, while the largest group in the Asian category, the Chinese demographic, reported a mean GPA of 3.27. For all high school students in the Seattle School district in the 2004-2005 school year, the overall mean GPA was 2.81. This disparity was also seen in the middle school students. During the 2004-2005 school year, Samoan middle school students were reported to have a mean GPA of 2.42, while the largest group in the Asian category, Chinese students, reported a mean GPA of 3.49. For all high school students in the Seattle School district in the 2004-2005 school year the overall mean GPA was 2.92.



Disparities in educational attainment are also seen in testing. In 2005, the percentile of Samoan high school students performing below the 25th percentile in 9th grade standardized testing was 46.4 percent, while the percentage total for all students was only 18.4 percent. Samoan students experienced the largest percentile below the 25th percentile of all ethnic groups.

On the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) Test results Samoan students demonstrate the lowest of all ethnic groups meeting or exceeding standards (38.9 percent for Samoan 10th graders, 66.9 percent for all 10th graders combined). In areas such as science, only 5.6 percent of Samoan 10th graders were reported to meet or exceed expectations. There are other areas where Pacific Islander students are experiencing disparities. Samoan high school students have one of the lowest overall school attendance rates at 86.1 percent, while they simultaneously have the highest percentage of short-term suspensions at 20 percent.

High schools are not the only educational institutions reporting disparities for Pacific Islanders. The University of Washington reports that Pacific Islanders have the highest drop out rate for any ethnic group. The primary explanation for the drop-out rate is reported to be financial difficulties. Regardless of the reason, attrition at educational institutions is a pressing concern for Pacific Island youth in the Northwest.



1.3.4 *Data Quality and Access Challenges*

When reporting data or reviewing reported statistics, it is imperative to pay special attention to the aggregation of racial groups. Aggregation of racial groups, which is defined as a total considered with reference to its specific parts, is often challenging, as demonstrated in the Pacific Islander community by the Asian and/or Pacific Islander category. The Asian and/or Pacific Islander category consists of people who have roots in at least 29 Asian countries and 20 Pacific Islander cultures. Members of this group speak over 100 languages and belong to numerous religions; while the bulk, specifically 96 percent, are of Asian origin, the remaining 4 percent are Pacific Islanders. When a small racial group is clustered with another larger racial group, the status of the larger group can mask the status of the smaller group. An example of masking is seen in the age-adjusted death rate for Asian/Pacific Islanders, which is 350 per 100,000 (compared with 524 per 100,000 for the total American population), while the age-adjusted death rate for Native Hawaiians, a subset of the Pacific Island group, is 901 per 100,000. Even more alarming mortality statistics are reported on pure Native Hawaiians, disaggregated from part Native Hawaiians, 2,200 per 100,000. Justification for racial category aggregation is limited and weak in foundation. With the growing capacity of technology, the ability to record, track, and report on smaller populations is not only possible, but it is essential for identifying and addressing health disparities among subpopulations.

Attempting to address the ongoing aggregation problem, the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) published final revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity. These revisions included splitting the racial category "Asian or Pacific Islander" into two categories, "Asian" and a "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander." Historically, OMB standards apply to all federally collected data and reporting, including all levels of education, the national census, medical research, disease statistics, drawing boundaries for Congressional districts, the Voting Rights Act, and compliance with federal law and statutory regulations. Although this new racial classification was mandated in 1997 and was expected to be fully implemented by 2003, the 2005 DHHS and AHRQ, National Healthcare Disparities Report reported that the lack of quality data prohibited them from detailing disparities for Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders.

The continued aggregation of Asians and Pacific Islanders has been catastrophic for Pacific Islanders. In the August 27, 2004 issued MMWR, Asian/Pacific Islanders were reported having lower cardiovascular disease prevalence than the median of the 19 states and the District of Columbia. However, the Hawaii Department of Health, who enforces the disaggregation of Asian/Pacific Islanders, reported that compared to other U.S. races, Native Hawaiians bear an abnormally large proportion of the burden of Cardiovascular Diseases (CVD). Among Native Hawaiians, heart disease mortality rate is 44 percent higher and stroke mortality rate is 31 percent higher than other U.S. races. This may have deleterious effects including, difficulty advocating for programs targeted at addressing CVD among Pacific Islander groups.

- Separating Asians and Pacific Islanders in reporting will allow for the identification of disparities.
- The non-reporting on Pacific Islanders makes it impossible to advocate and address disparities.
- Pacific Islanders and Asians differ greatly in many health and socioeconomic indicators.

“On April 8, 2006 the Pacific Island Women’s Association held its first community wide women’s forum, with over 200 Pacific Island women in attendance. A historical event, the forum’s tone was celebratory, though grounded in the intense need for strategic planning and increased communications.”









2. Voices from the Pacific Island Community

2.1 The Importance of Community Representation and Involvement

2.1.1 Introduction

Over 200 Pacific Island women attended the historic, first-ever Pacific Island Women's Association Community Forum on April 8, 2006. The event could not have happened without the work and passion of many Pacific Island women who are committed to their community. This report contains the comments of the community members who participated in focus groups and/or responded to the questionnaire.

Held at Tyee High School in Sea Tac, Washington, the community forum offered a resource fair, food and entertainment. Initially, the outreach team drew upon their friendships, community networks and churches to recruit families to participate in the event. Many nations answered the call, including women representing the Chamorran, Fijian, Hawaiian, Marshallese, Niuean, Palauan, Tahitian, Tokelauan, Tongan, and Samoan communities.

The forums' goals and objectives were to provide an opportunity for Pacific Island women to discuss their concerns and voice their thoughts regarding many important issues. This particular event was the outcome of planning meetings held over a year prior to the forum, where Pacific Island women identified a number of topics critical to the Pacific Islanders. Three issues in particular were discussed, including: Health, Economics/Employment, and Education.

A training session provided the Pacific Island facilitators and note takers with the necessary skills to ensure participants were comfortable and able to participate in a productive, culturally appropriate and respectful setting.

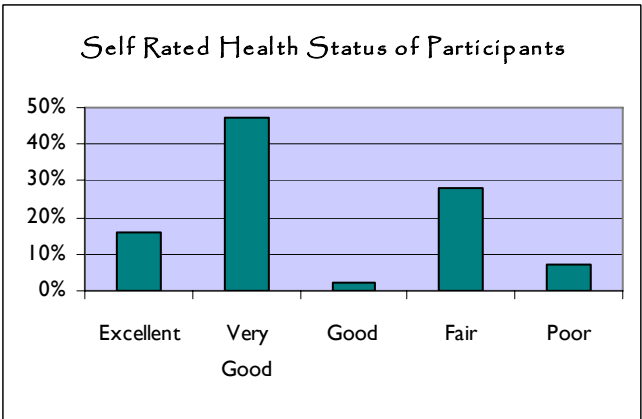
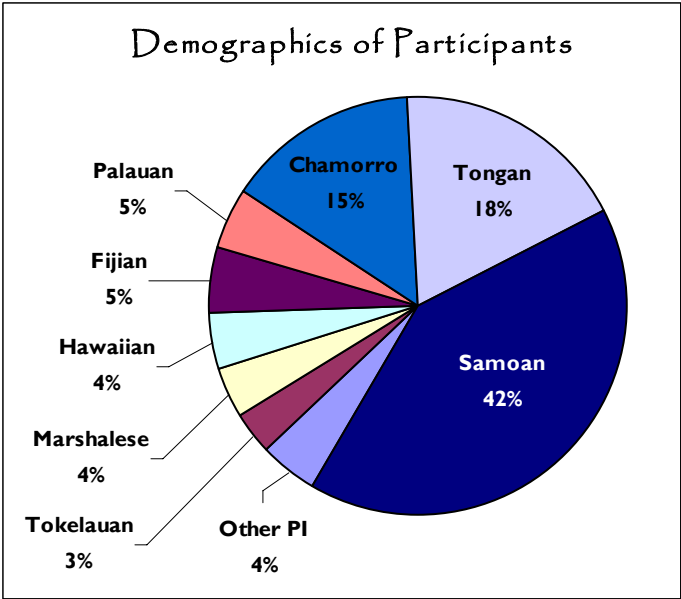




2.1.2 *Demographics of Participants*

The majority of participants were Samoan, 42 percent; followed by Tongan, 18 percent; Chamorro, 15 percent; Palauan, 5 percent; Fijian, 5 percent; Hawaiian, 4 percent; Marshallese, 4 percent; and Tokelauan, 3 percent. The other 4 percent included other Pacific Islanders, such as Tahitians, Rotumans, and Niueans were also represented at the forum. Many Pacific Islanders reported their island nations as their place of birth, while about a quarter of participants reported being born on the west coast of the continental United States.

Over 61 percent of the participants had resided in Washington for more than 10 years: with the average length of residency in



the state being 14 years. Ninety one percent reported having family in the area.

Forum participants spanned a wide age range, from thirteen to seventy three. For those who were of working age, 35 percent reported being unemployed. Participants were also asked to self rate their health status: 16 percent reported excellent, 47 percent reported very good, 2 percent reported good, 28 percent reported fair and 7 percent reported poor. Many participants (80 percent) also reported having health insurance.





2.2 Voices of the Women

2.2.1 Focus Group Methodology

Participants in the forum, all of which were women, were separated into six focus groups. There were three Nation specific groups, Tongan, Samoan and Chamorro, as well as three Pacific Islander groups comprised of women from different groups. This structure was identified by the community members as the most appropriate way to divide up the focus groups, allowing for language needs and culture specific issues to be addressed. One of the mixed Pacific Island focus groups consisted of youth only, encouraging age specific issues to be raised in an appropriate atmosphere.



The responses of 200 women to the focus group questions were detailed, complex and varied, revealing information that has been largely undocumented or unavailable in most similar reports. In recognition of this unique opportunity to gain a better understanding of the issues raised by the Pacific Island women who participated in one of the six focus groups we employed the following data coding, collection and analysis strategies:

- First, the comments of group members in each focus group were recorded by the facilitator and scribe.
- Second, after reviewing a typed version of the focus group transcripts, all responses were coded using a detailed sorting method in order to identify key themes and recommendations. This process, though labor intensive, ensured that the nuanced and different speaking points were not muted or overlooked and that the focus group's most important topics were noted as such.
- Third, the responses of all focus groups were reviewed to identify areas where comments across these groups were aligned, divergent, complementary or would possibly be described as outliers.
- Fourth, the responses were organized to thread together common points and understandings and to select quotes and comments which would best illustrate significant points.
- Fifth, based on the coded responses, a brief summary was created of key findings in each of the three topic areas across the six focus groups. The list noted the most frequent comments as well as which were most significant in a particular group.
- Sixth, recommendations were presented for each of the six focus groups in each of the three topic areas. These drew upon the voices of the women, synthesizing this information into representative categories.





- Seventh, summaries across the six focus groups common findings and recommendations, were presented along with quote that best reflected the experiences of women.
- Eighth, an overall summary of each main topic area was created and can be found in the conclusion to each section. Highlighting the most important messages from the forum, these summaries serve to determine the next course of action.



2.2.2 Focus Group Structure and Suggested Discussion Questions

Women in each of the focus groups were asked to address general questions about the three main topics of Health, Economics and Education. Focus group members met in six groups organized by specific language and age groups, and were asked the following questions:

Health

- What is health to you?
- What are the key health problems in our community?
- What would be effective community actions to improve health?

Economics/Employment

- What is being financially stable to you?
- What are the barriers to financial ability or employment in our community?
- What would be effective community actions to improve the financial well being of our community?

Education

- What is education to you?
- What are the key education problems in our community?
- What would be effective community actions to access education for our community?



2.2.3 Health

Question 1. What is Health to You?

Many people identified health as a state of mind and as the importance of having a healthy mind, body and soul. Some underscored the dual importance of mental and physical health, while others emphasized the benefits of spiritual health, citing the power of prayer ministries. Yet others associated health with how you live and life choices. A Samoan woman said, "Health means insurance, medical coupons, doctor visits, general hygiene and cleanliness, good nutritious meals, exercise, preventing diseases and sickness, and general wholesome living."

Being free from diseases and as having well being were also offered as definitions of health. Overwhelmingly, health was one of the first or second most important considerations in the lives of most people, with many linking health to economic stability and happiness, noting the strong ties. Frequently, women connected health insurance to health, noting the effect of the presence of the former on the status of the latter. Regardless of their age, all participants saw health as a big issue. A person from the Young Women's Group summed it up by saying, "Health is a problem. It is a big problem." Another young woman agreed, adding a note about food consumption, "Pacific Islanders are taking in ... intake is too much."

At the same time, health was alternately described as something separate, a private issue not to be discussed, and, by some, as something that "happened to you" rather than as something that "you could influence." Health was also identified as an important issue for parents to model for their children, drawing upon cultural beliefs and important life choices.

Some focus group members reported that external factors influenced community members' views of their own health too, pointing out that the depictions of beauty and health in the media were untenable, held little relevance to those from their cultural groups, yet put undo pressure on many school age girls.

Without your health you can't help your kids if you're sick all the time. You can't even perform your duties at work if you're not healthy. And for me the big factor is being a role model for my children and everyone around me and I can't even do that because of my health if I'm sick.

- Fijian and Samoan Women's Group

Health is a problem. It is a big problem.

- Youth Women's Group

Health means taking care of one's well being by watching what you eat, exercise, and doing all those things that make your heart good to go.

- Chamorro Women Group.

Yeah, I totally agree with what everyone talked about but I think we should focus more on empowering one another, we're intelligent women and we all have the education. And, empowering each other is where we lack in our community. And empowering each other we can do it.

- Pacific Island Women's Group

Things we go through in life. Menopause, mental and physical wellbeing. Taking care of wellbeing.

- Chamorro Women's Group



Question 2. What are the key health problems in our community?

Many different types of health concerns were identified in the focus groups. The box below lists them in order of frequency, though all were identified as significant health concerns.

Main Health Concerns

(Across all focus groups in order of frequency)

Diabetes, high blood pressure, breast cancer, nutrition, lung cancer, smoking, obesity, alcoholism, menopause, mental and physical well being, stress, aging, pregnancy, gynecological diseases, resistance to care, teen suicide.

The reasons underlying and contributing to low access to health care drew the most passionate responses, with the majority of participants emphasizing the many factors that influenced whether people from their community sought health care. The provider system was identified as insensitive and unaware of the needs of persons from different cultures.

In our society, the problem here is that most of us don't have health insurance – that's what's the most priority. Most of the time we're afraid to go there to get help because most of us the men don't have jobs. It's really hard especially with the insurance in America. It's not like back home. Back home you pay \$2 to pay for everything you want in the hospital. Over here is so different. We have to adapt.

- Pacific Island Women's Group

One of the most common refrains was the resistance of elders to health care, with many people attributing this resistance to fear or embarrassment and to a strong feeling that the medical care they would receive would not be offered in a manner which honored their culture or recognized the value of different healing approaches. These concerns, many pointed out, were borne out of painful negative experiences in which persons from their community had not been adequately welcomed or served by members of the health provider community. Legal barriers related to political status also stood in the way of some participants accessing health care. Palauans, for example, were not eligible for health care insurance for a period of five years after they moved to the United States.

"My mom is from the old school and every time she gets sick I say let's go to the doctor. And, she says no, I don't want to go. I say why? And it really frustrates me... She'll just suffer till it's too late.

- Pacific Island Women's Group

Other barriers to accessing health care, included a lack of information about health care providers, especially those who were affordable, a lack of health insurance, and recent changes in health care status, which resulted in persons having to identify new strategies for accessing health care. A woman from the Tongan group said, "A high percentage of the Tongan community are not really aware or educated about what our bodies need or what it takes to be healthy."

This latter group included people who no longer received military benefits, and those who were newly single.

No health coverage or money to pay for doctors visits.

- Tongan Women's Group.



They're just afraid. So afraid to go out. To find out things...because we don't want to get in trouble. Now we're in America. Not like back in the Islands, who cares?

- Pacific Island Women's Group.

Apparent lack of awareness about health concerns and what resources or services are available to the community? Several factors include language barriers and no medical coverage/insurance.

- Tongan Women's Group.



Health means wellbeing...what I worry about is my kids. I have a lot of cousins who have kids who are overweight and obese and that's huge, not just for Islanders, but they are talking about how kids are overweight. The kids are doing their video games and they're not doing activities outside."

- Pacific Island Women's Group



Health means insurance, medical coupons, doctor visits, general hygiene and cleanliness, good nutritious meals, exercise, preventing and curing diseases and sicknesses, and general wholesome living.

- Samoan Women's Group



Values

Cross cultural differences were a paramount concern. Some participants noted that they did not want to acknowledge or buy into the western standards of beauty. Others wanted to be able to identify and access doctors who subscribed to non-western forms of medicine. Value clashes within families were evident too, with elders sometimes opposing family members' efforts to pursue, for example, dietary choices that differed from those of their ancestors.

Children trying to adjust to the modernization of the world but their parents are teaching them this is our culture. A lot of conflicts between their age and the old school and a lot of disappointments...

- Pacific Island Women's Group

Coach or educate our people (mainly seniors) to feel comfortable and know what to expect when attending medical appointments where the issue such as "getting undressed" makes them feel violated, disrespected, or such a thing is unheard of.

- Tongan Women's Group

With a lot of our people it is always fear. Being in a new area there is always fear of not knowing what to do. Being in a new area they don't wanna do a lot of things because they won't know.

Fijian and Samoan Women's Group



Needs to come from within – self-esteem

- Pacific Island Women's

Lack of cultural awareness and sensitivity in some cases.

- Tongan Women's Group



Lifestyle

The health costs of different lifestyle choices were frequently mentioned, with many noting that differences in their United States' lifestyle made it impossible for them to maintain the dietary customs of their culture without jeopardizing their health. Because they exercised less in the United States, purchased processed foods, and worked in comparatively sedentary jobs, obesity, diabetes and high blood pressure were on the rise. The close relationship between culture and food was raised frequently, as was the need to more fully understand the health costs of choices related to nutrition.

Because my father is always like, "Do not deny me food because it brings me joy." So how do you tell a parent, "Oh Dad you know you're killing yourself?" And your dad is like, "You know you're killing me if you're not feeding me." So you as a daughter are torn and the only answer to your parent is, "Whatever you want Father, I will provide for you...Don't worry about the doctor, I will deal with him."

- Fijian and Samoan Women's Group

And I believe that, as a Samoan I believe we have just come out of the woodwork. We've just come out of... Out of the jungle. And in terms of mass produced pharmaceutical medicine, it's hard for my body, my own experience, for my body to take that and my body to accept that. My body responds more if you go grab a root, go dig up the root, go get me the bark, or give me the leaf, my body responds more to that because that's more to what I am. In terms of my flesh and you know the earth. And how I am serviced you know and terms of my health... - Fijian and Samoan Women's Group

I don't think we should have to change our diet just because we move to the states. It's just understanding how much of it we can eat. If we change the way we eat too much, we're going to become Americans...It's just a matter of understanding how much we can eat."

- Pacific Island Women's Group

Health is all of that but also social health; there is no sense of identity for the next generation. The kids of inter-race. Education and culture and the growing changes...

-Chamorro Women's Group

Unemployment due to company downsizing or outsourcing. Illegal immigrant status/unable to work. Poor education and lack of skills and experience/ qualifications.

- Tongan Women's Group



Economics

The economic aspects of accessing health care were also on the minds of many. Numerous jobs held by community members did not offer adequate or any health insurance and dental care was largely absent. Transportation to health care was not available for elders and the provision of culturally competent care was limited due to the lack of qualified trained workers.



What Can We Do?

In the focus groups many of the women spoke of way to make changes and improve health.

- Educate the community, young and old alike, about common or prevalent diseases, causes and the importance of individuals following up with their doctor/healthcare professional regularly.
- Coach or educate the community, focusing heavily on seniors so that they feel comfortable and know what to expect when attending medical appointments; thus diminishing their feelings of violation and disrespect.
- Strengthen or improve the transmission and dissemination of pertinent information via radio and TV or through printed materials/ brochures.
- Organize meetings with local church leaders to bring more people in the community to participate in healthcare dialogue or sessions, as well as bringing health professionals to the people.
- Open a health clinic that specifically meets the needs of the Asian Pacific Islander community.
- Provide literature on health and other related issues.
- Take time to demonstrate health care topics to Pacific Islanders using real life examples that they can relate to.

Over at the PASEFIKA Ambassador Senior Program they really educated us. It was really neat because she has a big Samoan plate lunch and showed all the sugar that was in one Samoan plate lunch. So it's amazing, the education really helped open my eyes. "Oh my gosh! All that sugar is in the chop suey and banana, all that sugar" and other information. So she was geared, really detailed about just the Pacific Islander foods to educate us health wise.

- Pacific Island Women's Group

If we had some advocate, Fijian, Samoan, Tongan, who doesn't have to be a health care professional but someone who could take you to your appointment, or translate for you. There's very few Tongan translators and I think this is a great beginning because we can say I know someone who can take you...I don't think there's lots of resources. But, if the state gives us money maybe we can pay for community people to advocate.

- Pacific Island Women's Group



I think health care workers, Pacific Island health care workers, if they trained other Pacific Islanders to train our own people, I think that'll be a good source of education...seminars and stuff like that...

- Fijian and Samoan Focus Group

If we just had one person come and tell us the goods and bads about it, especially for a community group like this, if we had one person come in and tell us about it, then we can go back and tell our people and have somebody come in and talk to smaller community groups - Pacific Island Women's Group



Who Can Help?

- Get church leaders involved to generate or motivate more participation from the community.
- Encourage families to be responsible, assigning a family member to work with healthcare professionals or to access resources for sick family members.
- Create leadership within the community, bringing groups together to deal with the real issues rather than working solo.
- Assign leaders and work groups to prioritize specific community goals and achieve good outcomes.
- Identify providers who understand the healing beliefs and traditions of different culture groups.
- Train Pacific Island health care providers from different cultures and community based organizations on improving support of the health care needs of their communities they serve.
- Inform the community about affordable health providers who best understand and are able to respond to the needs of persons from different cultures. Additionally, identify those who offer affordable services.



For me, it starts from wanting to know ...the desire to want to know to heal yourself by education. I think the fear we talk about it is really about ourselves and our images we have of ourselves as Polynesians...used to be beautiful queens back in the day...

- Pacific Island Women's Group



Health Summary

Strong mental, physical, and emotional health is a treasured Pacific Island value. At the community forum, participants voiced their thoughts and feelings on the importance of health, on the importance of being positive roles models for the youth. Many women spoke about the challenges to living a healthy lifestyle, including limited or no access to traditional Pacific Islander medicine, foods, and lifestyles. The women also voiced difficulties to accessing the western medical system, citing fear, embarrassment or the ability to afford care as barriers. In a discussion of strategies to address challenges to quality health, solutions included culturally appropriate medical services, an increased number of Pacific Islanders in health care delivery as well as culturally specific and relevant education in churches, communities and schools.

Although there are currently some medical services aimed to specifically address the needs of Pacific Islanders in the Northwest, many participants were not aware or able to access the services. However the fact that many Pacific Islanders are part of a tight social network is a boon for community communication about health topics. While effectively reaching the community requires trust and patience, it is clear from the women's comments that there is great need in the community for improved health outreach and offerings. Finding the appropriate mechanism to reach this group would involve successful engagement of community leaders and tailoring health services to meet the community's unique cultural needs.



"We need to push for more connections between the health services that receive funding to serve our PI community and have them work more closely with the churches and the organizations that have a proven track record of serving our families. We need to take the services to where our people are if they are not coming to the clinics. Why can't we have a clinic that serves the PI population (e.g. Seamar) with office staff, nurses and doctors who speak our language? I thought ICHS was thinking of opening an office in S King County? Why can't it have a focus on the PI community? We have a lot of Samoan registered nurses, office staff, health workers? - Samoan Women Group"





2.2.5 Economics/Employment

I. What does being financially stable mean to you?

The women had many definitions for financial stability. For some, job security is equated to financial stability. For others, being able to attain the resources to make ends meet and have a roof over one's head met this goal. It was evident that, while some women looked at long-term financial stability as the ability to eventually retire without worrying over basic needs, many more did not. A few linked financial stability to money, to the cost of living and to financial freedom. The pendulum of responses varied from those who regarded meeting costs as being financially stable to those who thought that being financially stable meant you were able to, "live a certain way".

The Tongan group provided a list of definitions for financially stable, citing job skills, poor finances and barriers to financial stability faced by illegal immigrants. They also noted that having a home and a job defines financial security.

Secure job...resources to make those needs.
- Chamorro Women's Group

Because of economics and the way things are here, there is pressure to just focus on your own immediate family needs but that is not the way we were raised, we have family, village, church and community obligations... these are what hold us together and define how we are different... it is also our support network when we are in need.. we always go to each other before we go elsewhere. It is hard to continue to keep our values because of economic differences and limitations here but we need to find ways to do it as it is the essence of who we are as Samoans... always being there for each other... "o le tele o lima, e mama ai se avega" or "many hands lighten the burden." - Samoan Focus Group

Having home or health insurance and investing well..... Having a safety net. Job equality. Budgeting in the home. Financially stable and good credit. - Tongan Women's Group



There was a concern that due to parent's struggles, children would develop a negative view of life and of the work world, feeling that the cost of hard work and financial drive was not worth the labor – perhaps because they saw few tangible rewards. Worried about the problems their older children often had supporting themselves, some focus group members expressed a sentiment that older children needed to build their self sufficiency skills in order to live independently after high school. Cultural factors influenced the definition of age at which one could become financially stable. Women in the Micronesian group noted, for example, that Micronesian children often stay with their parents until they are 21 years old, a commonplace practice among different Pacific Island ethnic groups.



Concerns over children's ability to convey financial requests to their parents were also voiced, as some noted children's difficulty in asking their parents for money for field trips or other school activity related purchases. Knowing that their parents resources were limited, children were hesitant and torn. The "money request" demands on children, and on parents were particularly burdensome – because the requests seemed trifling – even though they were for things that youth and their peers may regard as important rites of passage, like school events.

Financial stability was determined by many as having enough money to meet their family's needs. In most cases, family was defined as their immediate and extended family, including the church and the community, both here and in the islands. In light of limited resources, this definition posed difficult and uncomfortable choices. Some felt that economic stability is having enough to meet one's individual needs and to be able to give freely to those in need of help. Underscoring the importance of a caring community in the Samoan Women's Group a proverb was raised, "o uo laso uma ao uso mo aso vale" or "a friend is for everyday but a brother/sister is for tough times."

Finally, many people linked financial stability to having the necessary skills for managing their lives or progressing ahead. For those individuals, fundamental budgeting and job skills made it possible for them to earn a "decent living", an important set of skills. Some people in this latter group defined financial stability as what one owned or possessed, such as a house or savings.

Financial freedom, hopefully sooner than later.

How you exist in the economy.

Cost of living.

The way you live.

Just want to survive.

- Pacific Island Women's Group



Financial stability levels of barriers, feels and looks differently to individuals. Job security is a financial security for some people. The ability to attain the resources to make ends meet, having a roof over one's head, getting retirement necessities in check, being able to afford medical and food too. The younger Micronesian generation depends on their parents support....

Education seems to be the key to the health and financial stability issues earlier discussed in this paper...Job training and technical training should be provided or accessible to those who need to service. The retention of keeping the children in school is difficult. Because of the increase in the cost of living in the West, one can no longer survive off having a High School diploma.

- Chamorro Women's Group





2. What are the barriers to financial stability or employment in our community?

Focus group members noted that barriers to financial ability frequently included a need to have stronger English speaking and comprehension skills. Not having a college degree, or a high school diploma was also identified, with many expressing frustration at the lack of training opportunities that might lead to good jobs. Lacking the appropriate papers in the United States was also mentioned by several persons who expressed concern about those working under-the-table jobs to earn money due to their citizenship status. In fact, barriers were identified at every step of the job pathway, beginning with poor workforce preparation at the high school level up to poor support mechanisms for small business owners.

The cost of childcare, housing and healthcare were also cited frequently, with many women noting that obtaining stable childcare in order to attend school or work was an enormous challenge for all parents, especially single parents.

Also, political status was again a defining factor, often intervening with the rights to scholarships or health care, both considered in light of career advancement and job retention.

Discussions around money centered on discussions of values, with a few people expressing frustration and concerns about American values that drive the acquisition of unneeded possessions and cars. Several women raised the issue that wants and needs are different, noting that, in America, the divides between these two conditions were often muted or nonexistent.

Consistent and persistent increases in the cost of living were a barrier that many raised, citing seemingly endless increases in housing, gas, and childcare – all costs they regarded as necessary, rather than luxury. Against this backdrop, it was not surprising that many mused over how to address the ever burgeoning budget and income earning needs.

To some extent, the concept of budgeting seemed necessary. Yet some women said that their realistic ability to plan a budget was obscured by their need to survive.

I grew up in poverty in housing projects in Hawaii – my parents did best for us...not educated...did not tell us how to do everyday things...I knew better had lots of potential in school...didn't get grasp...I'm blue collar – I want education – don't know how to get it...I want to achieve want to go to college some day – I'm 38 years old...

- Pacific Island Women's Group

Being raised in Guam everyone had a hard life. But raising kids here in the U.S. it's hard because it's competing with the U.S. culture. Peer pressure challenge to raise kids.

- Chamorro Women's Group

If we want to succeed financially, we can do something about it - explore all avenues of employment opportunities; strive for more and higher education, learn a trade (there are plenty of opportunities to do so) and learn to budget well.

- Samoan Women's Group

Culture doesn't give us enough credit.

- Chamorro Women's Group

Hard for children to communicate – don't know what to do to move forward – want easy way out...

- Pacific Island Women's Group





3. What would be effective community actions to improve the financial well being of our community?

What can we do?

- Teach children about how to use credit, to pay bills and to obtain other valuable financial life skills.
- Offer English as a Second Language instruction, job training and work experience training linked to jobs that offer financial security.
- Promote continuing education.
- Offer financial planning training to persons of all ages.
- As a community, encourage entrepreneurial workshops and support for Pacific Islander business.
- Work to promote strategies that make it possible for people to capitalize on their skills and previously earned degrees in today's labor market.
- Provide guidance and support to young people and college age children in order to help them access scholarships, grants and/or student loans.

...most Samoan families are struggling financially, and many people have to have at least two jobs to be able to afford living in this country. Although several of our people have good and secure jobs and make a lot of money, many still find it hard to live the lifestyle they had anticipated in the states. As a result, several families have had to move back to the homeland with whatever savings they have to relax and get away from it all.

- Samoan Focus Group

A lot of our people have qualifications and skills from the islands but when they get here they just work any job to support their family and end up staying there. There should be ways to help them to get jobs in the fields they were in the islands. There should be some programs to help them get those qualifications as well as make enough money to raise their families.

- Samoan Women's Group



- Mentor youth and college graduates to help them stay in school and avoid dropping out.
- Emphasize the importance of education as a route to financial security to children at an early age.

There are many ways to involve the children in becoming financially stable through involving teenagers in current activities and events. Be knowledgeable about retirement and educating the children through active community involvement. - Chamorro Women's Group



Who can help?

- Teachers and parents can work together to incorporate practical life skill and financial education training in school curriculum.
- Teachers, parents and scholarship providers can collaborate to help youth access scholarships and strong post secondary preparation necessary for today's labor market.
- Banks and community based organizations can jointly provide financial literacy and budgeting training.
- Parents can model to children the values of work, saving, and making sacrifices that will yield long term gains.

Economics/Employment Summary

Economics, specifically the interrelated issue of financial stability, is viewed very uniquely in the Pacific Island community. Unlike the “typical American dream”, which often incorporates private property and physical wealth into the definition of success, Pacific Islanders tend to regard financial stability as the ability to meet the financially tend to the needs of their family and community. Individual gain and material possessions, while related, are not the goal; community health and continuation is of utmost importance. Even the concept of a nuclear family is foreign to Pacific Island people, as they often view the “family” as an extended version of community. At the PIWA community forum, it was clear from the women's words that their concept of family included many generations, extensions of family, the community and beyond. Yet in the Pacific Northwest, their stated barriers to financial stability included a lack of job skills, a dearth of education and the inability to work legally in the US due to citizenship issues. Many of the women's suggestions for addressing economic issues focused on preparing Pacific Islander youth. Indeed, early skill building was considered a critical step in becoming financially stable.

One of the challenges Pacific Islanders face is finding balance, a stable equilibrium between two worlds, that of the Pacific Island values and that of the American ideals. Holding on to the cultural values of community and of shared support, in which one gives freely to those in need, stands in stark contrast to the American value of saving, of investing in one's individual future. The community forum's powerful discussion of this conflicting value system was an important first step. Future efforts to address community-wide economic stability would allow for both the Western and Pacific Island values to flourish in harmony. Within this goal, youth education and outreach would ensure that economic success could continually be fostered and maintained.



2.2.6 Education

I. What is Education to You?

The women used various words and concepts to describe the role and meaning of education. Some associated education with acquiring knowledge. Others focused more on the byproducts or results of education, pointing to leadership, literacy, self esteem, the power to communicate effectively, access to good jobs and financial success.

Education was important to women in all the focus groups. A woman in the Tongan group said, “Education is important – its bread and butter.” Women in the Tongan group also noted that education is knowledge, leadership and literacy.

For most, education was not limited to one domain or area, instead referring to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual help. Furthermore, the majority did not see education as tied to time, topic or place: viewing the face of education as ageless, the location and subject unbound.

The majority emphasized that education was needed to prepare children to be responsible adults and

Education of our people proves to be our primary concern.

- Samoan Women’s Group 40—70

Sometimes our family members do not see the importance of our senior citizen programs and our elders miss on opportunities that help them get educated and orientated in the new country and lifestyle. Perhaps our seniors should learn to be able to get around independently, maybe all adults should be taught to drive a car.

*- Samoan Women’s Group
(40-70 year old group)*

My granddaughter is really interested in learning about Hawaiian culture and history. Would have bettered her.

- Pacific Island Women’s Group



could include traditional schooling, home schooling and access to more advanced degrees or training. Others pointed to “naturally occurring” education that happens in informal venues, and could be facilitated through networking, peer support, mentoring or advocacy.

*Education means: Knowledge.
Education. Power. Leadership.
Literacy. Accomplishments/self
esteem. Acknowledgment.
Effective communication.
Exploration.*

- Tongan Women’s Group



Of great importance, was providing children with an education about their own language, culture, religion or background. Some felt this was essential in order for children to see their history as it pertained to their lives and to the world beyond.

In the education, health and employment/economy focus group discussions described above, a litany of areas where Pacific Islanders needed to be educated were cited, including: child health and nutrition, budgeting, community resources, legal rights, health insurance and subsidies, workers compensation, crime victim's compensation and scholarships.

2. What are the Key Educational Problems in Our Community?

The Pacific Island Young Women's focus group members described a list of educational problems, noting that students faced racism and stereotyping, and were often disrespected. They also identified school violence and gangs as everyday realities, and as deterrents to receiving a good education. Problems with substance abuse and the use of kava in the population were identified as problems by the Tongan Focus Group.

Language barriers, lack of mentorship, parent and community support for the educational progress of children were also frequently cited in every focus group. Many felt that the school support of their children's progress was weak or absent. Women expressed frustration that the schools appeared to expect and demand less of their children and intervened less aggressively when help was clearly warranted.

Some women thought that educational problems also were not well addressed in the home, as video and TV games consumed the hours and lives of many children, pointing to the need to focus the attention of the whole family on academics.



Education was seen by some as solely for children and by others as for people of all ages. Some expressed frustration that the doors to continued adult education were either shut or unknown. Moreover, many were concerned that the connections between school staff and the elderly family members, who often care for children, due to language barriers and a lack of knowledge about the school system.

Some women emphasized that support from their parents for their education



was low. Others were concerned that Pacific Islanders' needs were buried in the statistics, due to their designation as Asians. A Tongan woman noted, "It's important for Pacific Islanders to be heard and not lumped together with Asians. They don't see us. Asians are about 80 percent and Pacific Islanders 20 percent. And 80 percent of the Pacific Islanders aren't graduating high school. Funding is being taken by Asians."

3. What Would be Effective Community Actions to Access Education for Our Community?

What Can We Do?

- Invite higher education counselors to talk to children about preparing for college.
- Work with educators to understand that the needs of all Asians or Pacific Islanders are not identical.
- Involve representatives from different ethnic groups to participate in a strategic plan that will result in educational improvements for Pacific Island children.
- Offer Work Study Programs.
- Help parents and grandparents understand how the school system works and look for home based, alternate teacher-parent meeting times, in which to engage parents who cannot take time off during the school day to meet with teachers.
- Develop strategies to improve the academic achievement of Pacific Island children.
- Hire teachers/advocates/mentors from different cultures to help parents learn English and basic everyday communication skills so that they can better advocate for their children.

Education seems to be the key to the health and financial stability issues earlier discussed in this paper. Many of the women in the group think that a better education leads to a better job and a better way of life. Job training and technical training should be provided or accessible to those who need to service. The retention of keeping the children in school is difficult. Because of the increase in the cost of living in the West, one can no longer survive off having a High School diploma.

- Chamorro Women's Group

Some parents are not getting involved in their children's education. They do not understand the school system and policies. There may be a lack of participation in the PTA (Parents Teachers Association) too and therefore do not have a voice in what's going on in school.

- Samoan Women's Group 40—70

That's because the old folks don't understand English so they don't wanna go to the school to go to PTA and be part of a school system.. That's why we don't see them... Our parents you know they are grandparents and we're working because we want to feed our kids and provide for our families.

- Pacific Island Women's Group

I have the school Principal call me about my grandchildren and problems they were having with learning at school. How do I know to help my grandchildren when they don't tell anything until something bad happens? Nobody at the school tells me about any programs available to help my grandchildren. The people at PASEFIKA helped me find out about school things, went with me to talk to the principal and they would help my grandchildren with their homework.

- Pacific Island Women's Group



Who Can Help?

- Teachers, Principals and family members who are school liasons need to work as a team to develop a true understanding of Pacific Island children's needs and to use this information to jointly strategize solutions.
- Teachers and parents develop strategies to promote student learning, focusing on tutoring, dropout prevention and post secondary preparation.
- Post secondary institutions, training institutions and parents can work in unison with scholarship providers to make sure that parents and children know how to apply for and access scholarship assistance.
- Employers, school counselors and career development staff create applied learning, mentorship and work study positions at youth, designing those that will give students a applied learning life-based understanding of the relevance of getting an education.
- Faith based organizations, elders and community based organizations provide a variety of educational programs and outreach services that ensure that Pacific Islander community members have access to a wide range of different educational activities.

Parents should be able to read and understand notes from the schools concerning their children. They need to understand their children's report cards in order for them to know how their children are doing in school. On the other hand, our children (especially those born and raised in the U.S.) must have somewhere learn Samoan so that they can communicate with their parents and be able to help the latter understand. We questioned the fact that there are so many Samoan children attending schools here in Washington yet our language is not on any school curriculum. Our children are learning Spanish instead.

- Samoan Women's Group 40—70

Parents and youth need to talk to Principals and build relationships with staff...we need support groups...We need to create activities that will attract students.

- Young Women's Group

If you notice a lot of our students that are going to school, their parents are old folks you know that they're taking care. Their parents, if you're looking at their children are going to work but the grandparents are taking care of the kids. They're sending them to school so when the teacher or system are calling them to come in because of this, they don't understand English.

- Pacific Island Women's Group



Education Summary

Education, both academic and cultural, is very important to Pacific Island women, serving as the foundation for many aspects of community growth and advancement. Although much of the focus of the education topic discussion was on primary and secondary education, many women voiced their thoughts on education as a life long process, including cultural education. Indeed, education on Pacific Island history, language and culture was considered to be essential in creating balance and stability for Pacific Islanders, as individuals and as a whole. Barriers to education included language skills, lack of mentorship, and racist stereotyping, many of which were encountered within the United States' educational system. Suggestions to address these barriers include assisting Pacific Islander families with navigating the educational system and informing Pacific Islanders of educational opportunities, such as training or advancement. Mentorship was discussed as an important component in improving educational levels in the Pacific Island community.

It must be noted that there are many Pacific Islanders who have successfully navigated the educational system. Reconnecting them to their communities is an important first step in addressing educational barriers. Many Pacific Islanders with higher education are working in non-Pacific Island communities because there are limited job opportunities to serve Pacific Islanders. As more programs are created to serve Pacific Islanders, successful role models will return, raising the spirits and goals of the entire community.

2.2.7 Summary Observations

The responses to the Health, Economics/Employment and Education topics demonstrate the interrelationships that exist among these three areas and shows how problems or successes in any one topic area can affect one or both of the others. This suggests the benefits of taking a cross institutional and cross domain examination of solutions and problem solving. This may inspire, for instance, new ways for schools, community members, churches, employers, colleges, and community based organizations to think about and work together towards a set of jointly forged goals and solutions.





2.2.8 Questionnaire

In addition to the focus groups, participants were provided an additional opportunity to express their thoughts, opinions and concerns in a follow up questionnaire. Once the focus groups were completed and lunch had been served, participants were notified of a follow up questionnaire in their information packet. This questionnaire consisted of three questions;

1. What issues do you feel are most important for Pacific Islanders?
2. What do you think would best address those issues?
3. What was the highlight of the day for you?

Many valuable comments and responses were gathered using this follow-up questionnaire. A few selected comments are provided below.

What issues do you feel are most important for Pacific Islanders?

- o “Availability of health insurance to low income families.”
- o “Break down barriers on residency requirements for federated states of Micronesia Pacific Islanders (requiring 5 years of residency) vs. United States citizenship.”
- o “Availability of educational resources (i.e. scholarship).”
- o “Be removed from labeling as “Asian/Pacific Islander” group and be a separate entity as “Pacific Islander” - to be offered greater opportunity for financial resources in educational institutes.”
- o “To have equal rights with other races in this country.”
- o “To stand up and be heard.”
- o “Poverty is a big issue that I see, education must be properly stressed and parents (as well as future parents) must raise their children to become strong, motivated, and determined.”
- o “Availability of crucial information to islanders in the Washington area.”
- o “Preservation of cultures and languages.”
- o “Networking among existing groups and establishing outreach programs to local islander communities.”

What was the highlight of the day for you?

- o “I feel very blessed to have been a part of this day. The focus groups were extremely beneficial. We are planning as a result of this day, information sessions for money management at the university.”
- o “Everything, as a young woman I feel empowered!! Thank you for giving me this opportunity — I am blessed to be a woman.”
- o “The discussions and the openness of the women in my group was awesome, inspiring, and something to remember and take with me.”
- o “To see participation of young and old. Learning and respecting one another.”
- o “Meeting other Pacific Island women and networking.”



- o “Expand networking programs on PIWA website.”
- o “More exposure to the media on specific Pacific Island groups, exposing individual islander issues.”
- o “Forums to express our issues.”
- o “We need to create position in government, education, society, communities where our Pacific Islander families can go for help.”
- o “Establishing a bigger network of people to support each other.”
- o “Financial viability.”
- o “Health Care and budgeting for healthy living.”

2. What do you think would best address those issues?

- o “Workshops to educate women on these issues.”
- o “Do more empowering gatherings like this.”
- o “Parents and children to get involved in the communities.”
- o “Encourage education.”
- o “Promote health.”
- o “All getting to know one another and our topic discussions.”
- o “Meeting new people and getting to know that Pacific Island Women have opinions and concerns to promote our Pacific Island community.”
- o “Gathering more information, input from each others knowing that we are one family, we need to be educated so we can understand what's going on. Knowing that we have a lot of Pacific Islanders involved.”
- o “Sharing with women who are concerned with the same problems discussed in the sessions.”
- o “Listening to the various ladies from all backgrounds and ages and realizing that we all share the same concepts and desires for ourselves and our families.”
- o “The gathering of fellow sisters from the islands with such great openness, welcoming attitudes and the willingness to work together.”
- o “Meeting women like me.”
- o “Meeting my people to know them and share our life and culture. I have a chance to share who I am and where I come from and why I am here. It was worth my time to come here, and also I love all the people that I met today and look forward for another meeting.”





PIWA





3. Community Successes and Resources





3.1 Community Successes

The Pacific Island community in the Northwest has experienced many successes despite the challenges it has faced. Community members have come together under the united cause of supporting Pacific Islanders and their families. The result of community activism has been the creation of a number of organizations dedicated to provide services and social support for Pacific Islander families. A number of these community organizations are described below. Though this is by no means an exhaustive list, it is a testimony to the successes of the Pacific Island community in the Northwest.

3.1.1 Community Organizations

Hawai'i 50th Club

Located in Tacoma, Washington, the Hawaii 50th Club was created to bring together those of Hawaiian descent and persons interested in the Hawaiian culture. Organized in February of 1963, the Club's membership has always been composed of former residents of Hawaii as well as individuals interested in supporting the Club and enjoying Hawaiian culture and entertainment. The Hawai'i 50th Club is proud to provide scholarships to the children of its members, contributing to their continued education experience.



Kamehameha Schools Alumni Association-Northwest Region

Kamehameha School's Alumni Association-Northwest Region's mission is to serve its alumni in Washington and Alaska by sharing ideas, energy, spirituality, expertise, time, and mana to help others in an atmosphere that promotes goodwill and improves the well being of our community. The primary goal of the organization is to provide scholarships for Pacific American college students. Additionally, the organization sponsors various programs to mentor and guide all Pacific Islander college students in the Northwest. In conjunction with other community organizations, they provide workshops on perpetuating Hawaiian culture.



Lokahi 'Ohana O Hawai'i, Incorporated

Lokahi 'Ohana O Hawai'i, Incorporated, is a non-profit, Native Hawaiian organization in Washington. This organization provides local and Native Hawaiian community resources with information to meet the needs of the Great Northwest and Western Region of Hawaiian communities. Formed in 1992, Lokahi 'Ohana O Hawai'i, Incorporated is wholly operated and composed of passionate native Hawaiian volunteers.



Micronesian Islands Club

The Micronesian Islands Club's purpose is to recognize the brothers and sisters of the Micronesian Islands who are currently attending the University of Washington. The club provides an outlet for social and educational support to those from the Micronesian Islands and promotes their culture away from home.

Northwest Association of Pacific Americans

The Northwest Association of Pacific Americans is an organization comprised of a variety of clubs, churches and associations made up primarily of Pacific Americans. The Northwest Association of Pacific Americans is organized according to the requirements of the State of Washington as a nonprofit organization exclusively for educational and charitable purposes within the meaning of section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.



Pacific American Foundation/National Pacific American Leadership Institute

The mission of the Pacific American Foundation is to improve the lives of all Pacific Americans encompassing citizens of the United States who can trace their ancestry to the indigenous settlers of the state of Hawaii, Territory of American Samoa, Territory of Guam, and Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands, Fiji, New Zealand, Tahiti, Tonga, and others connected with Pacific American cultures. The five main pathways of the Pacific American Foundation include education, mentorship/leadership training, employment, research, and community partnership/fund development. The organization has a strong presence in the Northwest.

PASEFIKA Summer Academy (PSA)

Since 2001, PASEFIKA has annually served over 200 Pacific Islander students (K-12) for a seven week period each summer. The mission: to provide academic, cultural, spiritual, social and recreational opportunities to improve and enrich the lives of Pacific Islander students in a culturally relevant and supportive environment so they are encouraged to dream and to pursue their goals in life. PSA requires mandatory participation of students in both the academic and the cultural/recreational components of the program. The academic component, is taught by certified Pacific Island teachers and teaching assistants, is held Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. All students receive literary and math instruction using a culturally relevant curriculum. The Cultural/Recreational component of the program is taught by the Pacific Island teachers and staff on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. This component includes Pacific Island language instruction, history and cultural classes, community service projects and educational field trips every Friday. The Language and Culture classes are taught by Pacific Island teachers using an accredited Samoan Language curriculum. Student assessment results are tracked not just during the summer but throughout the school year through partnerships with the school district and PASEFIKA's year after-school tutoring programs.

Polynesian Student Alliance

The Polynesian Student Alliance is a student organization at the University of Washington. Its mission is to promote and unite ethnic Polynesians for the purpose of learning one another's cultures, discovering similarities, and honoring differences. The Polynesian Student Alliance is active politically, socially, academically, and culturally within the University of Washington.



Wakinikona Hawaiian Club

This club is non-profit organization based in Seattle, Washington and is dedicated to the promotion and preservation of Hawaiian culture. Founded in 1962 and incorporated in 1963, the club has been actively involved in the Pacific Northwest through various festivals, its Hui Wa'a Canoe team and its club meetings/gatherings, which are held monthly.

3.1.2 Resources and Services

Although publicly funded resources and services solely dedicated to the Pacific Islander community are virtually non-existent in the Northwest, many Pacific Islanders access culturally appropriate care through organizations that target the Asian and Pacific Islander communities combined. One such organization is the International Community Health Services (ICHS), a non-profit health agency dedicated to working with Asian and Pacific Islander (API) populations and other communities in Seattle and King County. ICHS is the largest community health center in Washington state. Their agency provides medical, dental, traditional Chinese medicine, acupuncture, and health education and prevention services for its populations.



Additionally, Asian Counseling and Referral Service (ACRS) provides services to Pacific Islanders. A nationally recognized non-profit organization, ACRS offers a broad array of human services and behavioral health programs to Asian Pacific Americans in King County. ACRS is the largest multi-service organization, serving all of the different Asian Pacific American communities - immigrants, refugees and American born - in the Pacific Northwest. Their mission is to promote social justice and the well being and empowerment of Asian Pacific American individuals, families and communities - including immigrants, refugees and native born - by developing, providing and advocating for innovative community-based multi-lingual services.

The Asian Pacific Islander Women and Family Safety Center is another Washington state resource available to Pacific Islander families. Its mission is to prevent violence against women through community organizing and education; to provide safe, culturally relevant services for women, youth, and children; and to create housing resources for families who face domestic and sexual violence and/or victimization from human trafficking in Asian and Pacific Islander communities.



Another agency which provides services to Pacific Islander is the Korean Women's Association (KWA). KWA is a multi-cultural multi lingual community based non profit 501 (c) (3) agency, established in 1972 in the State of Washington. It now serves nine counties of the State, providing over 22 different types of social services to people of over 31 countries of the world, particularly non English speaking immigrants and refugees. Eleven percent (11 percent) and still growing, of KWA's clientele are of people from the South Pacific Islands. Some of the services include but not limited to low-income housing, naturalization, immigration, food stamps, medical

insurance, welfare benefits, social security benefits, employment, English Second Language classes, survival skills, domestic violence, emergency shelter, and more. KWA website:

www.kwaoutreach.org. 888-508-2780.



An organization which provides services specifically for Pacific Islanders in the King County area is PASEFIKA, a faith-based organization whose mission is to engage in the social, economic and spiritual development of its community. PASEFIKA provides holistic, culturally-relevant family programs, support services and referrals. It is active in community organizing and advocacy for the Pacific Islander community. It has successfully advocated, with the support of partners in White Center, for the disaggregation of data for Pacific Islander students at the Highline School District, a school district with a high Pacific Islander student population in the region. PASEFIKA is and has been the project coordinator for the PIWA project from it's inception to the publication of the PIWA Report..

www.pasefika.org (206) 763-0764

Radio, Voice of the South Pacific (VSP) proudly present Pacific Islanders and English language broadcasts from Radio 1150 AM KKNW. It is based in Bellevue, Washington and provides a broad range of high quality programs that include local and international news, health, education, spiritual, political, and cultural entertainment to local and Pacific Islanders overseas. VSP has established a strong

network of Pacific listeners who appreciate "the true pacific way." This, in turn, has created a wide appeal and has made headway towards being an important vehicle of communication for Pacific peoples.

Currently, Radio VSP is funded through public and private donations along with paid program time by local small businesses. VSP is committed to linking our pacific communities, contributing to the preservation of our language and culture, increasing the pool of pacific broadcasters and supporting our pacific music and artists. It is also committed to communicating to





members of the PI communities in their languages to ensure the people understand significant messages conveyed by government, health and other professionals about important matters such as voting, health and safety, education, economic and social issues.

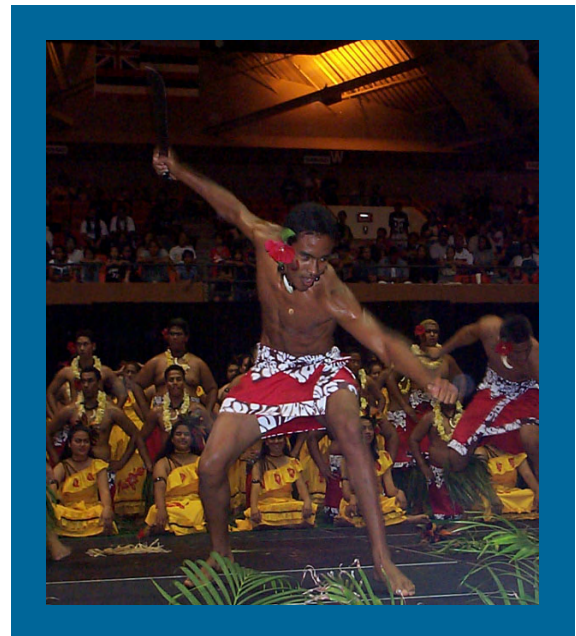
Additionally, the Pacific Island community in the Northwest has a public print resource available for sharing information, for informing community members of local events and for promoting Pacific Islander businesses. The Northwest Hawaii Times, is a free, monthly newspaper that is published at the beginning of every month. The paper publicizes information about islander events in Washington, Oregon and Hawai'i so that readers can participate in these gatherings.

3.1.3 *Community Connections*

The Northwest Pacific Islander community also honors its success through special events and celebrations. Throughout the year, there are a number of Pacific Islander cultural events, which are publicized by newspapers, emails, list serves, flyers and word of mouth. Many Pacific Islanders who are new to the community find out about these special events from family members and friends who are interested in helping others reconnect to the Pacific Island Community.

Cultural celebrations are a vital component of life for Pacific Islanders nationwide. In the Northwest, living far away from their island homes, cultural gatherings are a fundamental way to connect with other Pacific Islanders and strengthen traditional values. Numerous Pacific Islanders participate in cultural activities such as dancing, canoeing and singing. Many of these activities are formally organized and serve as extensions of family.

Numerous Northwest Pacific Islander communities honor their culture, heritage, and traditions by organizing themselves around churches and faith-based organizations. For many, faith and religious affiliation is the primary way to organize and come together in worship, celebration and support. Many Pacific Islanders regard the church as more than a place of worship, as 'their village away from the village'. Indeed, when Pacific Island immigrants arrive in the United States, the church is often the first place at which they find support and connect with their peers, excepting their family members. Forum participants repeatedly mentioned churches and ministers as a place where services and programs are provided and information disseminated, as that is where many of the Pacific Islander communities, particularly the Samoan, Tongan and Fijian groups, are based. Within individual churches, youth, family and cultural activities are often organized. Additionally, the various denominations may organize themselves into districts and regions, both to network and to find fellowship within their own denominational groups or inter-denominationally.









4. Recommendations

1. Next Steps to Address the Disaggregation Issue

- Create an ad hoc committee to develop strategies to ensure that the U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity be implemented/enforced at all levels of government data collection and reporting; specifically, the required splitting of the racial category "Asian or Pacific Islander" into two categories, "Asian" and "Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander".
- Create a report card of whether local, state and federal agencies and institutions are in compliance or non-compliance with the mandate
- Educate federal, state and local government agencies on the provisions and requirements of the mandate, applying pressure to challenge failures to provide disaggregated data for "Native Hawaiians or Other Pacific Islanders"
- Research other options (e.g. class action litigation against institutions and agencies who are not in compliance) and identify the pros/cons of pursuing such an action
- Work with local school districts, higher learning institutions, and the Department of Health and Human Services to raise awareness of the crucial need to implement disaggregation of data, providing referrals of technical assistance resources that can be helpful for those institutions

2. Next Steps to Advocate for Culturally Competent Research

- Research should take into account current crisis areas in PI health, underscoring that research can only be meaningful if the data disaggregation recommendation is fully realized
- Research involving the Pacific Island population must be underpinned by a cultural context framework to ensure that participants' voices are heard and appropriately interpreted
- Cultivate and identify more Pacific Island researchers from the various Pacific Island nations as well create a national network of Pacific Island professionals and researchers who can be consultants or lead such research projects
- Provide professional development opportunities to build the capacity of Pacific Island researchers from all Pacific Island ethnic groups, as well as the capacity of local Pacific Island organizations who are able conduct such research projects
- Design research projects incorporating cultural values; paying special attention to the significant role Pacific Island women play in key family decisions and priorities
- Continue to gather information on the themes identified in this report by connecting with other Pacific Island communities not represented at the community forum
- Examine the impact of country of origin on health, education, and economics amongst Pacific Islander communities



3. Next Steps to Establish Pacific Island-Specific Publicly Funded Service Agencies

- Identify best practices on effectively engaging in legislative advocacy for creation and funding of agencies and services
- Create a report card for existing service providers (health, education, employment) for the Pacific Island population, identifying current services, providers, how many of the Pacific Island population are being served, and the effectiveness of services
- Develop a business plan to establish service organizations to meet the needs of the Pacific Island population. Study existing models, such as Seamar, and potential partnerships with current providers of clinic/health services (King County Health or ICHS) for the Pacific Island community
- Push for publicly funded agencies currently serving Pacific Island populations to actively partner with Pacific Island faith-based or community-based organizations, such as including the recruitment and employment of Pacific Island community members working at all levels of the agency
- Perform a large scale needs assessment of Pacific Islanders in the Pacific Northwest

4. Next Steps To Increase Cultural Sensitivity

- Create a policy/systems change agenda so that institutions will listen to the community as to what they need and how their needs would be better served; for example, the creation of a report card on what key publicly funded agencies and institutions (e.g. DSHS, schools, clinics) are doing to be culturally sensitive/competent in the provision of services to Pacific Island clients
- Establish a speaker's bureau of community people to educate agencies and service providers about the Pacific Island culture, values and the importance of family relationships
- Increase language appropriate services available to Pacific Islanders in appropriate agencies, e.g. interpreters
- Train bi-lingual health care workers so that women can communicate with their health care providers
- Provide career pathways and training programs for Pacific Island people to better link to institutions and agencies
- Plan, develop and advocate for funding of Community Health initiatives encouraging partnerships between faith-based or community-based organizations and health organizations to address health needs of the Pacific Islander population
- Better educate the Pacific Islander community, especially women, about health issues specific to them so they can be proactive in prevention and early detection of high risk diseases

5. Next Steps For Stronger Social Networks, Communities, and Families

- Create ad hoc committee to develop a workplan for a community building agenda within the Pacific Island community, e.g. PIWA, to create opportunities for civic engagement as well as to increasingly discuss current issues affecting the community through public forums, resource fairs,



cultural festivals and community gatherings

- Develop a community/civic engagement plan for Pacific Island community, e.g. trainings and intentional, collaborative efforts to be visible at the legislative table and events, e.g. APA Legislative Day
- Create a master list of all Pacific Island organizations in the Washington area and on a national scale
- Strengthen the existing network of communication and collaborations across Pacific Island ethnic groups, forming alliances and working collaboratively with other strategic partners and ethnic communities for mutual support, e.g. with the Asians and refugee/ immigrant groups
- Increase communication strategies for the Pacific Island community, e.g. via mail, website, newsletters, radio etc
- Research and develop a list of capacity building funds and resources for Pacific Island organizations, e.g. NAC, grant resources, mentoring opportunities
- Research and create a list of women leadership programs available, review curriculum/ requirements, and begin strategic efforts to enlist Pacific Island women; for instance, PIWA-hosted trainings or tap into effective training programs
- Research grant or funding sources (local, state and national) to develop leadership courses for Pacific Island women
- Create a PIWA Directory and or a Pacific Islander Resource Directory for the Northwest and the Nation

6. Next Steps to Prioritize PIWA Issues and Formulate a Strategic Workplan

- Discuss whether to formally incorporate PIWA
- Create a 2007 strategic workplan based on resulting findings and recommendations
- Create ad hoc committees to develop appropriate action plans and timelines
- Recruit membership and strategic partners
- Discuss and plan for further investigation of topics specifically impacting Pacific Island women and their relationships within the broader community

7. Next Steps to Achieving Our Calls for Action

- Develop a plan to rally different constituencies (health, school, labor, etc.) who have a vested interest in learning from this report and work side by side with them to develop much needed education and action plans
- Recruit and organize additional collaborative partners such as the larger national women's movement and/or other local and national constituencies helpful to the PIWA mission



PIWA



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Appendix A: Contributors

Contributors:

Executive Steering Committee

Mabel Fatialofa-Magalei
Fa'aluaina Pritchard
Heather Minton
Diane Narasaki
Jeannine Souki
Maile Tualii

Report Contributors

Maile Tualii, Lead Author
Mabel Fatialofa-Magalei, Author and Project Coordinator
Mairead Widby, Editor and Writer
Annie Laurie Armstrong, Writer
Doran Young, Tongan Focus Group Quotes

Project Officers and Support at Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy

Bo Thao
Peggy Saika

PIWA Event Planning Committee

Outreach: Fe'eta Fuemana, Vina Koke, Filo Fajardo
Venue/Location: Mabel Fatialofa-Magalei, Annette King
Decorations: Annette King
Childcare: Rita Ava, Sili Savusa, Sa Mailoto
Equipment/Supplies: Becki Rabe, Lagi Pomele
Food: Doris Tevaseu, Christina Leatualii, Soona Vili,
Media/Publicity: Julie Siliga
Press Release and Fact Sheet:: Maile Tualii
Survey: Maile Tualii, Fa'aluaina Pritchard, Jeannine Souki
Set Up/Break down: Becki Rabe
Information Booths: Suni Tolton
Registration Table: Becki Rabe, Lagi Pomele
Special guests/Hospitality: Vina Koke
Facilitators/Scribes Recruitment: Rochelle Fonoti
Facilitator Training: Rochelle Fonoti, Agatui Wilson, Suni Tolton
Prizes & Incentives: Mabel Fatialofa-Magalei
Transportation: Vili Talaepa
Traffic/Parking Lot: Joe Fiso

Focus Group Facilitators and Scribes

Facilitators

Faana Aita-Wily, Samoan
Rochelle Fonoti, Mixed PI Group I
Dr. Sela Panapasa, Tongan
Yvonne Pangelinan, Chamorro
Sili Savusa, Young Women
Suni Tolton, Mixed PI Group II
Agatui Wilson, Mixed PI Group III

Note takers

Loaloa Afo, Samoan
Christina Chen, Mixed PI Group III
Stella Gran-O'Donnell, Mixed PI Group I
Kirby Grey, Mixed PI Group II
Kristine Kumangai, Chamorro
Edna Noga, Young Women
Doran Young, Tongan

PIWA Members

Executive Officers

Mabel Fatialofa-Magalei, President
 Maile Taulii, Vice President
 Jeannine Souki, Secretary
 Lani Siliga, Treasurer

Loaloa Afo
 Malama Afoa
 Louisa Agemotu
 Presiosa Aguan Sudo
 Fatima A'ho
 Katalina Aho
 Mele Alefaio
 Malae Asoau
 Makerita Ava
 Leilani Baltao
 Emma Catague
 Reueta Doiron
 Joslyn Donlin
 Neta Etuale
 Leitu Etuale
 Filo Fajardo
 Mabel Fatialofa-Magalei
 Theresa Fautauu
 Rochelle Fonoti
 Fe'eta Fuemana
 Kanoelani Galiza
 Tilesa Iaulualo
 Pou Jennings
 Futiga Keni
 Annette King
 Alvina Koke
 Brenda Kongaika
 Kristine Kumangai
 Moeleoi Lafaele
 Christina Leatualii
 Pologa Leituala
 Gwen Leituala
 Hanna Lene

Fifita Lindsay
 RachelAnna Magalei
 SarahHannah Magalei
 Lani Mao
 Sylvia Matayoshi
 Heather Minton
 Fou Mulu
 Diane Narasaki
 Inoama Nguyen
 Edna Noga
 Tatianna Nouata
 Marie Olson
 Vaeluaga Ovalle
 Fe Palmer
 Hannah Palmer
 Joy Palmer
 Sela Panapasa
 Yvonne Pangilinan
 Luana Pitoitua
 Memory Pomale
 Lagi Pomele
 Melissa Ponder
 Salamasina Porter
 Fa'aluaina Pritchard
 Leba Quiniwasa
 Becki Rabe
 Luisa Ratu
 Tauava'e Robertson
 Asenaca Rogers
 Pusi Sa'au
 Arieta Safiu
 Va Koleti Sagiao
 Motusaga Samoa

Emma Sarona
 Pauline Sauaso
 Fiasili Savusa
 Sharmayne Schilling
 Brenda Sevilla
 Julie Siliga
 Lani Siliga
 Manila Siufanua
 Jeannine Souki
 Preciosa Sudo
 Jeannette Taga'i
 Roberta Tagaloa
 Fono Tagoi
 Maile Taulii
 Dora Taumua
 Doris Tevaseu
 Norma Timbang
 Marie Toilolo
 Suni Tolton
 Agnes Tootoo
 Melissa Tuani
 Victoria Tupua
 Fualaau Vagana
 Soona Vili
 Angie Wayman
 Buna Williamson
 Agatui Wilson
 Faana Wily
 Razalin Wright
 Martha Wyatt
 Doran Young

PIWA Summary

Background on the Pacific Island Women's Association (PIWA)

The Pacific Island Women's Association (PIWA) is leading an effort to identify and address critical issues facing the Pacific Island community in the Northwest. For over three years the PIWA has gathered regularly to formulate a strategic plan to improve the wellbeing of Pacific Islanders. One of the most significant areas of need identified by the PIWA is the lack of information on the Pacific Island population residing in Washington State. With funding support from the Asian American/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, the PIWA has the opportunity to develop a report which will help describe the issues, concerns and needs of the Pacific Island Women community. This report will play a significant role in creating awareness of Pacific Islander issues, helping to educate and inform policy makers on the needs and concerns of this often ignored population.

Background Information of Pacific Islanders in Washington State

The 2000 U.S. census reported 23,500 Pacific Islanders residing in Washington State, the third largest Pacific Islanders population in the United States. Although there is little published about this population, organizations, schools, and government departments have identified this population as having some of the greatest disparities in the State. Local Universities report Pacific Islanders have the highest drop out rate per capita of all ethnic groups. National Vital Health Statistics show clear disparities in mortality rates and the U.S. census reports disparities in poverty and income.

Identified Topics of Focus and Concern for the Pacific Island Community

In its inaugural year, the PIWA identified three topic areas that encompassed many of the problems facing the Pacific Island community. These topics were education, economics and health. Each topic area will be discussed by every focus group. Because of the limited time available, a series of questions on the topic areas will serve as seeds for discussion for the focus groups. It is anticipated that the discussion may lead the groups into various directions. However, it is important that each group understand that it is the facilitators job to help keep the groups focused on the topic areas and the questions designed to gather information. Each group will have exactly 1 hour to discuss each topic. In addition to a facilitator, each focus group will have a scribe/note taker recording the session. The note taker will be taking notes as well as audio recording the session. The focus groups will be recorded for the purposes of ensuring that the true opinions and ideas of all the women are gathered accurately. To protect your privacy, no participants will be identified by name in the report. If you do not feel comfortable with being audio recorded, please inform a facilitator, a note taker or any identified PIWA leader and the session you will attend will not be audio recorded.

Follow Up

Although this report will be a monumental accomplishment, it will only be the beginning of the PIWA's activities. The PIWA is a unique organization, comprised of women from various Pacific Islands, united to address issues concerning all of our communities. The PIWA hopes that the women who attend the focus group will continue to stay involved in future activities and projects.

Please visit the PIWA website for continual updates and activities: www.PacificIslandWomen.org

Pacific Island Women

Attention

WHO: If you are Tongan, Fijian, Samoan, Maori, Tahitian, Hawaiian, Marshallese, Tokelauan, Palauan, Micronesian, Niuean, Chamorro, or other Pacific Islander... You are invited!!!

WHAT: We are coming together to celebrate who we are; to strengthen relationships and build bridges across our groups; to discuss the issues we face, determine our priorities and make recommendations.

WHEN: Saturday April 8, 2006
9:00am - 1:00pm

WHERE: Tyee High School
4424 S. 188th St.
SeaTac, Wa 98188

FREE! FREE! FREE!
Extensive Pacific Island Buffet Luncheon
(with dishes from all of our island groups!)

group discussions prizes information booths
entertainment child-care

for more information visit the website:

www.pacificislandwomen.org or call 206- 763-0764

Pacific Island Women's Association (PIWA) Luncheon & Focus Group Event

Saturday, April 8, 2006

Tyee High School

Seatac, WA 98188

AGENDA

- 
- | | |
|-------|--|
| 9:00 | Registration, breakfast & visit information booths |
| 9:30 | Logistics Announcements
<i>MC: Pastor Mabel Fatia'lofa-Magale'i</i> |
| 9:35 | Opening Prayer
<i>Mele Kele (Fijian)</i> |
| 9:40 | Welcome
<i>Lua Pritchard (Samoan)</i> |
| 9:45 | Greetings
<i>Brenda Konga'ika (Tongan)</i>
<i>Martha Wyatt (Chamorro)</i> |
| 9:50 | History of PIWA Project
<i>Diane Narasaki (ED of ACRS)</i>
<i>Pastor Mabel Fatia'lofa-Magale'i</i> |
| 9:55 | Data Review
<i>Maile Tau'ali'i (Hawaiian)</i> |
| 10:05 | Special Guest
<i>Dr. Sela Panapasa (Tongan)</i> |
| 10:15 | Break & proceed to focus groups |
| 10:30 | Focus Group Session 1 |
| 11:40 | Focus group Session 2 |
| 11:30 | Break |
| 12:45 | Wrap up & PIWA Next Steps
<i>Pastor Mabel Fatia'lofa-Magale'i</i> |
| 1:00 | Lunch & Visit Information Booths |

PACIFIC ISLAND WOMEN ASSOCIATION 2006 EVENT REGISTRATION FORM

NAME

Last

First

MI

ETHNICITY: *Circle all that applies.*

Tongan

Maori

Marshallese

Micronesia

Fijian

Samoan

Tahitian

Tokelauan

Niuean

Hawaiian

Palauan

Chamorro

Other _____

ADDRESS

Street

City

State

Zip Code

Home Phone

Alternate Number (Cell)

How did you hear of this event?

MEDIA RELEASE: By signing this, I give permission for the PACIFIC ISLAND WOMEN ASSOCIATION to use, without limitation or obligation, photographs, file footage or tape recordings which may include my image or voice for purposes of memorializing this event as produced by Pacific Island Women Association.

Applicant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Thank you for joining us today, we are glad you are here!

Appendix B: PIWA Survey

Pacific Island Women's Association

Brief Survey

Introduction: This survey is designed to collect a little information so we can describe who participated in the focus group. All responses are private and confidential. Results will be analyzed only in the aggregate and individual responses will not be reported.

If there are any questions you would prefer not to answer, please skip them. Only answer questions you are comfortable answering. This survey will take about 5 minutes to complete.

Thank you for your help with this important project!

1. What Pacific Island heritage are you (please mark all that apply)?

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ Chamorro | <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Maori | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₁ Tokelauan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ Chuukes | <input type="checkbox"/> ₇ Marshallese | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₂ Tongan |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Fijian | <input type="checkbox"/> ₈ Niuean | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₃ Yapese |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Hawaiian | <input type="checkbox"/> ₉ Palauan | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₄ Other Pacific Island _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ Kosraean | <input type="checkbox"/> ₁₀ Samoan | |

2. Do you identify with another racial group(s) (please mark all that apply)?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₁ Asian | <input type="checkbox"/> ₄ Hispanic |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₂ American Indian/Alaska Native | <input type="checkbox"/> ₅ White |
| <input type="checkbox"/> ₃ Black | <input type="checkbox"/> ₆ Other _____ |

3. In what area do you live?

_____ Area

4. What is your zip code?

____ Zip Code

5. How many people are in your household:

____ number in household

6. Do you have children living at home?

- ☐₁ Yes ☐₂ No

7. If you answered yes to question 7, what are the ages of the children in your home?

_____ Ages of children in home

8. In what year were you born?

___ ___ ___ ___ year

9. Where were you born?

10. How long have you lived in Washington?

___ ___ ___ ___ year

11. Do you have family in the area?

☐₁ Yes

☐₂ No

12. How would you rate your health?

☐₁ Excellent

☐₂ Very Good

☐₃ Fair

☐₄ Poor

13. Do you have health insurance?

☐₁ Yes

☐₂ No

14. Are you employed?

☐₁ Yes

☐₂ No

15. If you are employed, in what city do you work?

___ ___ ___ ___ City where you work

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS PROJECT!!!!



Issues and Concerns of Pacific Islander Communities in Washington State

Who are Pacific Islanders?

Pacific Islanders are the indigenous people from islands of Chuuk, Fiji, Guam, Hawaii, Kosrae, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Niue, Rapa Nui, Palau, Pohnpei, Saipan, Samoa, Tahiti, Tonga, Vanuatu, Yap, and other islands in the Pacific. Many have relocated to the continent of the United States. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, more than 870,000 Pacific Islanders reside in the United



Pacific Islander Children from Pasefika Summer Academy

Washington State has the third highest concentration of Pacific Islanders in the United States. According to the 2000 U.S. census nearly 43,000 Washington residents self identify as Pacific Is-



The Pacific Ocean covers a third of the planet's surface.² The ocean served as a great highway connecting island nations, uniting a people. Pacific Islanders of all the different nations are the people of the ocean.

A Unique Relationship with the United States

There are many misconceptions about the indigenous status or immigrant status of Pacific Islanders. Pacific Islanders are a unique population of people because of the relationship the U.S. has with the Pacific.³ Many Pacific Island Nations are part of the U.S. Associated Pacific—American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia. As indigenous people of these islands, they have a special relationship with the United States. Native Hawaiians also have a unique relationship with the U.S. Other Pacific Islanders do not have this same relationship with the US. These Pacific Islands remain independent Nations or have special relationships with other countries such as France or New Zealand. Regardless of the relationship Pacific Island Nations have with other countries, there are common bonds of culture, language, history, and genealogy that all Pacific Islanders

What are issues and concerns of Pacific Islanders?

Many Pacific Islanders are living healthy, successful lives away from their island homes. However, a number of Pacific Islanders in Washington State face many serious challenges. Although there is little published information about this population, organizations, schools, and government departments have identified this population as having some of the greatest disparities in Washington State. Local Universities report Pacific Islanders have the highest drop out rate per capita of all ethnic groups.⁴ National Vital Health Statistics show clear disparities in mortality rates and the U.S. census reports disparities in many socioeconomic indicators,

Education, Economics and Health

In it's inaugural year, the Pacific Island Women's Association met to discuss issues and concerns the Pacific Island community faced. Education, economics and health were identified as the greatest concerns.



In 1997 the U.S. Office of Management and Budget published final Revisions to the Standards for the Classification of Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity. In this Federal Register it was stated that by January 2003 all federally collected data would be required to identify Pacific Islanders separate from Asians.⁷

Education

Education statistics are alarming for Pacific Islanders (PIs). High schools report PIs perform poorly on standardized tests and have the highest rates of disciplinary problems.⁸ Higher education is also a problem for PIs. The University of Washington Office of Minority Affairs reports PIs have the highest drop out rate of all students, primarily for financial reasons.⁵ Scholarships are available for PIs, however they often are forced to compete with Asian students for these scholarships. The category Asian or Pacific Islander (A/PI) is still used in many settings, even though Federal registers require the separation.⁷ Pacific Islanders only make up 4% of the A/PI category and are for the most part invisible in this aggregation.¹

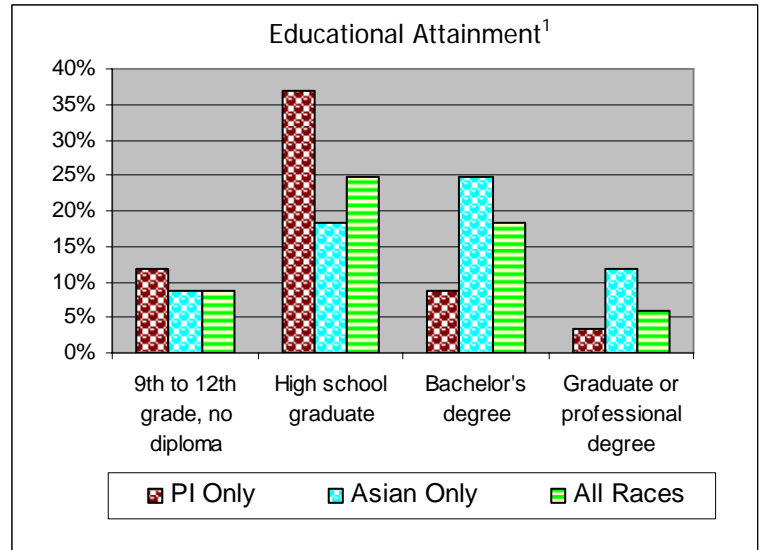


Table 1. Household income in 1999¹

	PI	All Races
Less than \$10,000	9.6%	7.6%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	6.1%	5.5%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	11.0%	11.7%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	12.1%	12.5%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	20.4%	17.1%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	22.8%	21.4%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	11.2%	11.6%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	5.0%	8.3%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1.1%	2.1%
\$200,000 or more	0.9%	2.2%

Health

Economic, cultural, social, historical and other factors have lead to severe health disparities among Pacific Islanders. National data sources grossly underestimate the extent of health needs among PIs due to inadequate data collection and racial misclassification on official documents.⁹ But in spite of these deficiencies, PIs experience higher death rates from heart disease (44% higher) and stroke (31% higher) than other U.S. races.¹⁰ They also rank high in the known associated risk factors for CVD including obesity, hyperlipidemia, elevated blood pressure and cigarette smoking.¹⁰ Researchers have found that Pacific Islanders are among those who have the highest mortality and lowest survival rates from cancer when compared to the general U.S. population.¹¹ These rates indicate that Hawaiian, Marshallese, Chamorro, Carolinian, and Palauan women all suffer from a higher rate of incidence and mortality from breast cancer, when compared to overall U.S. rates.¹¹ Native Hawaiian women have the third highest breast cancer mortality rate in the nation.¹¹

Despite the challenges, Pacific Islanders in Washington State are thriving. The Pacific Island Women's Association is a testimony of the growing support and strength the Pacific Island community has within it's community.

¹ 2000 U.S. Census ² CIA World Factbook, www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/zn.html ³ US Department of the Interior ⁴ University of Washington, Office of Minority Affairs ⁵ U.S. National Centers for Health Statistics: ⁶ 2000 U.S. Census ⁷ Office of Management and Budget, 1997 Federal Register ⁸ Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Washington State ⁹ McGee DL, Liao Y, Cao G, et al. Self-reported health status and mortality in a multiethnic US cohort. Am J Epidemiol 1999;149:41-46. ¹⁰ Hawaii State Department of Health ¹¹ Miller, B.A., L.N. Kolonel, L. Bernstein, J.L. Young, Jr., G.M. Swanson, D. West, C.R. Key, J.M. Liff, C.S. Glover, G.A. Alexander, et al. (Eds). 1996. Racial/Ethnic Patterns of Cancer in the United States 1988-1992. Bethesda, MD: National Cancer Institute. NIH Pub. No. 96-4104. ¹² Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders In Philanthropy Grant Funds Awarded 11/2005

Appendix C: Issues, Concerns, & Needs Raised by PIWA Members

Health

Diabetes

High Blood Pressure

Obesity

Heart

Cancer

Kidney

Nutrition

Prenatal Health

Mental Health

Family Planning

Teenage Pregnancy

Asthma

Alcohol Substance Abuse

Tobacco

Sexual Abuse

Physical Abuse

Mental Abuse

Verbal Harassment

Insurance

Language Barriers

Accessibility

Culturally Competent Service

Employment

Language Barriers

Discrimination

Cultural Barriers – Self Promotion

Non-Recognition of Diversity

Lack of Education

Lack of Training

Lack of Skills

Accessibility

Lack of initiative

Low self esteem

Childcare

Adult Care

Benefits

Social Graces

Interviews/Interaction

Mingling at Social Functions

Education

Economics

Family Obligation Priorities

Language

Access Criteria

Lack of Mentors

Lack of Role Models

Scholarship Availability

Awareness of Resources

Lack of Parental Involvement

Stereotypes in Sports

Counseling

Stereotypes in ELS, Special Education, Remedial

Early childhood education/Preschool

Immigration

Lack of Awareness of Resources

Lack of Awareness of Laws

Language Translation

Illegal Status

Appendix C: Issues, Concerns, & Needs Raised by PIWA Members

Human Rights

Self Determination

Sovereignty

Government Relationships

Recognition as Indigenous

Pacific Island History

Stereotypes stigmatization

Cultural Assimilation

Color Blindness

Specific Needs

Statistical Insignificance

Patriarchal Society Issues

Housing

Understanding Financial Opportunities

Cost of Living

Affordability

Discrimination Against Large Families

Small House Plans

Long Term Elderly Care

No Availability of Large Homes

Economic/Community Development

Entrepreneurial Skills

Professional Networks

Faith Based Initiative Opportunities

Applying for SBA Loans

No Support for PI Women in Business

Advocacy

Training on Lobbying

Lack of Knowledge of Public Officials

Access of Legal Services

Maternal and Child Issues

Focus on Youth

Education on cultural issues

USA vs Home

Self Esteem

Youth Incarceration

Gang Activity

Single Mothers

Leadership Skills

David Unoi, Graphic Designer
Ben Leiataua, Printer, On Demand Imaging
Stan Dahlin, Photographer
Sherman Brown, Photographer
Julie Siliga, Photographer
Jack Storms, Photographer, stormsphoto.com

Pacific Island Women's Association

Voices of Pacific Island Women Residing in the Pacific Northwest

The 2000 U.S. census reported that the state of Washington has the third-largest Pacific Islander population in the United States. Although little is published locally or Nationally about this population, organizations, schools and Government departments have identified Pacific Islanders as having some of the greatest health, economic and education disparities in this country.

These issues initiated the establishment of the Pacific Island Women's Association. In 2003, Pacific Island women gathered to discuss concerns facing the Pacific Island community. Key discussions identified gaps in health, economics and education as foremost concerns in the community. The Pacific Island Women's Association determined that the best way to address these concerns was to hold a community forum. This groundbreaking report contains three important areas of focus; background information on the Pacific Island community in the State of Washington; information gathered at the community forum; and the successes and recommendations for further work in the Pacific Island community.

"I'm very concerned with the statistics that show the large percentage of high school drop-outs are Samoans. Something is very wrong and not working at all. Why are our children failing? What are the schools and school districts doing to address the problem? What are we as parents and families doing to address the problem? How will this problem impact our society & our economy now and the future? We need to make these decisions ourselves as no one will make them for us. This kind of meeting is where we can discuss these things and decide as a community to make a change. Mothers are powerful, they can make things happen when they believe it is good for their children"

" You know I notice when I do exercise, my blood counts go way down...as much as we hate to exercise I think we really need to do it. It's no fun to do it by yourself. When I was at home I had a partner and we would walk 3 days together at the beach... I was great at- I've gained 30 lbs since I've been here and I think we have to come together that way and motivate each other to exercise"

"For me, it starts from wanting to know... the desire to want to know to heal yourself by education. I think the fear we talk about is really about ourselves and our images we have of ourselves as Polynesians...used to be beautiful Queens back in the day..."