



2017-2021

## **Strategic Plan**

**Asian Americans / Pacific Islanders  
in Philanthropy  
June 2016**

# **AAPIP 5-year Strategic Plan, 2017-2021**

## **OUR COMMITMENT**

AAPIP believes that philanthropy has a responsibility and role in fostering a thriving civil society by meeting urgent needs and investing in our collective future. Since our founding, we have worked with philanthropic and community leaders to create greater knowledge, opportunity, solutions, and funding for Asian American/ Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. AAPI communities are deeply affected by systemic racial discrimination and inequity in society at large, so we have always approached our work with a commitment to expanding equity and social justice and will continue to do so.

While the AAPI population in America includes communities facing great adversity, it also encompasses communities with significant wealth, assets and access to social and economic capital. We believe that AAPI philanthropic and community leaders have the power and opportunity to shape new and traditional philanthropy that addresses the root causes of social injustice and that is informed, inclusive, and effective in addressing AAPI issues. We will continue our commitment to advancing and expanding philanthropy that supports the full participation of AAPI communities in the civic, economic, and political life of our country.

## **HOW WE ARE EVOLVING**

In 2015, AAPIP celebrated 25 years of work, an extraordinary period that has resulted in a national organization unprecedented in knowledge, relationships, and efficacy in bringing philanthropic resources and attention to AAPI communities and issues. At the same time we celebrated our 25th anniversary, our long-time leader retired and we transitioned to new leadership for our organization. These milestones created an opportunity for AAPIP to reflect on what we have learned and accomplished to date, what it means to be a sustainable organization and force in the world as we move forward, and how we can leverage AAPIP's programmatic experience, field role, and distinctive competence for continued innovation, relevance, and leadership.

AAPIP has long worked in partnership with both institutional philanthropy and community organizations. Our current membership, leadership, and organizational structure reflect this positioning and fluidity, and it has been a great advantage to us over the years. However, we keenly recognize that our environment is rapidly changing:

- The field of philanthropy is transforming, with expanding definitions of what philanthropy is, how it is done, what its role is, and who participates. Traditional philanthropic actors such as private, community and corporate foundations, government agency funding, and high net worth individuals have now been joined by new philanthropic models such as community-based and issue-focused giving circles, cause-oriented marketing, social media crowd funding, online giving platforms, and ethnically focused community foundations. In addition, new approaches in philanthropy such as asset- and community-based initiatives, intersectionality that crosses social issues and sectors, and public-private partnerships, to name a few, are informing and re-shaping the philanthropic sector.
- Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders number over 18 million or almost 6% of the country's population, and are the fastest growing minority group in the nation. This is part of the broader demographic change that will result in people of color becoming the majority of the U.S. population by 2044, with children of color reaching majority by 2020. This enormous demographic change is taking place against a national backdrop of racial tension and activism, growing inequality of wealth and income, and attendant social pressures. The dual nature of AAPI economic and social conditions, with AAPIs among the most well-off and the most impoverished in the country, creates opportunity and necessity for new solutions

to long-standing, seemingly intractable issues in AAPI communities. It also creates opportunity and necessity for AAPI philanthropic and community leaders to step forward and act.

- The rise of data and empirical evidence as a powerful force in advocacy, decision-making, and design/implementation has deeply affected our society, from politics to business to social media to philanthropy and beyond. It is more imperative now than ever that data, research, and messaging about AAPI communities and issues are accurate, disaggregated, and accessible for our partners and allies as they do their work to bring resources to AAPI communities.

These profound shifts in our external environment and the important juncture in AAPIP's organizational life provide an opportunity for us to pursue new strategic directions that build on our past work and position us better to succeed at contributing to the long-term societal change to which we are committed.

## OUR MISSION

As part of this strategic planning process, we revised our mission statement to articulate more clearly what has always been our internal understanding of why AAPIP exists and for whom. Our mission statement was:

***To advance philanthropy and Asian American/Pacific Islander communities***

Our new mission statement is:

***Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy (AAPIP)  
expands and mobilizes resources for AAPI communities to build a  
more just and equitable society***

## OUR VISION

AAPIP envisions a just and equitable democracy with the full civic and economic participation of Asian American/Pacific Islanders.

## OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

We acknowledge that our pursuit of social change is rooted in real life dynamics that must inform our strategies as we progress. The key assumptions that underlie our Theory of Change are:

- Asian American/Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities are affected by systemic racial discrimination and inequity in society at large. Because of this, AAPIP can play a role in advancing philanthropy that addresses the root causes of social injustice that adversely impact AAPI communities specifically and underserved communities more broadly.
- The AAPI community is complex, encompassing communities facing great adversity and communities with significant wealth, assets and access to social and economic capital. AAPI leaders themselves have the power and opportunity to proactively shape new and traditional philanthropy to be more tailored, inclusive, and innovative to address AAPI issues.
- Lasting change is achieved by empowering those who are most impacted, so philanthropy in general and AAPIP's work in particular can be more effective when driven by the goals and perspectives of the AAPI communities served.

- Philanthropy has a responsibility and role in fostering a thriving civil society by meeting urgent needs and investing in our collective future. It has the power to address the root cause of injustice and work in partnership with affected communities.
- Though the amount of philanthropic support in the U.S is on the rise, the needs of AAPI communities continue to be misunderstood and ignored due to misperception, limited quality data, and limited community engagement on the part of philanthropy.
- Everyone can engage in philanthropic efforts, including individual donors across all socio-economic levels, corporations, public agencies, and traditional grantmaking institutions.

With these in mind, we challenged ourselves to articulate a long-term 10-year outcome that we believe is realistic and achievable. The theory of change driving this strategic plan is as follows:

***If AAPIP achieves the following outcomes in 5-7 years:***

- An engaged and diverse network of philanthropic leaders works together to increase investment in AAPI communities and issues;
- Philanthropic and community leaders use high quality information, storytelling, and relationships to influence advocacy, action, and resources for the benefit of AAPI communities;
- Innovative partnerships and projects generate new solutions and practices that advance equity and resources for AAPI communities,

***Then in 10 years we will realize our long-term outcome:***

AAPI philanthropic and community leaders influence philanthropic investment, practice, and knowledge to strengthen AAPI communities to participate fully in shaping a more inclusive, equitable America.

## OUR FOUR OUTCOMES

Over the next five years, we will focus AAPIP's resources and attention on achieving four outcomes, three of which correspond to key outcomes we articulate in our theory of change. The fourth outcome is related to strengthening AAPIP as an organization to support our external programmatic work.

### ***Outcome 1:***

***Increased and enduring investment in AAPI communities and issues results from the work of an engaged and diverse network of philanthropic leaders.***

### **Context:**

Since AAPIP's founding in 1990, membership comprising traditional institutional and individual funders has been at the core of our organizational purpose and structure. More recently, launched in 2011, AAPIP has led a national Giving Circle campaign to organize individual, community-based giving to AAPI issues and communities. The Giving Circle campaign has now produced 50 giving circles across the United States.

With the philanthropic landscape rapidly changing – traditional foundation work being joined by new grassroots giving circles, small family foundations, social entrepreneurs and crowd-sourced funding platforms – AAPIP is well positioned to create a “bigger tent” that encompasses a larger, more diverse philanthropic membership. In doing so, we have the potential to play a more influential role as a cross-constituency convener, “network-weaver” and advocate for AAPI community assets and philanthropy at large to invest in a broad range of AAPI issues and needs.

### **Strategies:**

- 1-1. Build a more inclusive membership body.
- 1-2. Create meaningful convening and engagement opportunities for members.
- 1-3. Explore establishment of a national Board of Governors or Advisors.

### **Outcome 2:**

***Advocacy, action, and resources benefiting AAPI communities are mobilized by philanthropic and community leaders using high quality information, storytelling, and relationships.***

### **Context:**

Since AAPIP’s inception, we have used research, education and advocacy as cornerstone strategies to inform philanthropy about AAPI needs and to help the nonprofit community with its public and philanthropic case-making. Many of our commissioned research reports have been groundbreaking, yet challenges persist in translating research into action, which often requires the disaggregation of data, longer-term tracking and analysis, and engaged activists on the ground.

At the same time, AAPIP also supports 10 regional chapters across the country as a means to address the issues and needs of AAPIs in their respective local and regional landscapes. While each chapter designs its own unique programs and events, the potential for AAPIP chapters to serve as “test beds” to activate research, education and advocacy addressing specific AAPI community needs, and the role of AAPIP national to help coalesce this type of activity, has not been fully realized.

AAPIP has a significant opportunity to align these assets and activities to help shine a light on critical AAPI issues and demonstrate the power of bringing place-based philanthropy and community together to produce real change.

### **Strategies:**

- 2-1. Establish long-term research and advocacy partnerships to advance an equity agenda.
- 2-2. Strengthen AAPIP chapters for more effective alignment and impact.
- 2-3. Develop more effective communications and engagement strategies to reach broader sector advocates and the public.

### **Outcome 3:**

***New solutions and practices that advance equity and resources for AAPI communities are generated by new and innovative partnerships and projects.***

### **Context:**

AAPIP incubations emerged out of our belief that we must proactively address core structural inequities facing AAPI communities (e.g., inadequate funding, a lack of understanding about AAPI community needs and assets and too few AAPI leaders in the field), rather than waiting on the sidelines for others to step in. Our track record in this arena is extensive, and the creation of a range of new AAPI field tools, information and philanthropic practices has become a significant part of

AAPIP's distinctive competence and "brand." We have the unique opportunity to deepen and codify this area of work and to build new philanthropic partnerships around equity-based innovations addressing, in new ways, AAPI community issues and needs.

**Strategies:**

- 3-1. Formalize policies and practices on initiating and closing out incubation projects, using an equity lens, and document lessons learned.
- 3-2. Invest in expanding and deepening successful incubation projects.
- 3-3. Explore regranteeing opportunities to support innovative activities with an equity agenda.
- 3-4. Create an active philanthropic learning community around innovation in social justice funding for AAPI communities and issues.

**Outcome 4:**

***AAPIP's strong organizational values and infrastructure support healthy growth and positive external impact.***

**Context:**

As AAPIP moves forward with new programmatic strategies to expand and diversify membership and create interconnected program strategies to achieve our mission, we must ensure that our organizational platform is strong and that our focus on social justice is clear in order to advance our goals. In addition to producing high-quality programs, we will strengthen our human and financial resources, governance and operating systems. By doing so, our own organization will lead by example by being a sustainable, healthy institution invested in the long-term success of AAPI communities in the U.S.

**Strategies:**

- 4-1. Clarify AAPIP's shared equity framework to articulate program needs and purposes.
- 4-2. Develop a sustainable business and revenue model and financial management system to ensure that AAPIP has the resources and capacity to undertake current and future work.
- 4-3. Improve systems for tracking, measuring and analyzing data to learn from and strengthen program delivery, coordination, impact and evaluation.
- 4-4. Retain a qualified and committed staff team that provides consistently high quality work and builds a strong and supportive staff culture to advance AAPIP's mission.
- 4-5. Strengthen and engage the Board of Directors to support AAPIP's governance needs and the long-term outcomes in this strategic plan.