POLICY PLATFORM BLUEPRINT

FOR

NATIVE HAWAI'IANs and PACIFIC ISLANDERS

IN THE

UNITED STATES
Policy Platform for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders in the United States

Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders

The Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) community is comprised of populations of ancestry originating from Micronesia, Melanesia, and Polynesia who experienced a 35% population increase between 2000 and 2010. There are 1.2 million NHPIs currently residing in the United States (U.S.) sharing a diverse set of relationships between the U.S. Government and NHPIs including statehood, territory, government to government, and Compact of Free Association states.

Policy Platform Blueprint Overview

This policy platform blueprint is offered as a starting point in a process that will express a common set of beliefs, positions, and recommendations that will represent the foundation of a national advocacy effort for NHPIs in the U.S. This is meant to be a living document that changes and adapts to our community’s needs while reinforcing the principles shared by our respective NHPI cultures.

There are numerous common threads woven through each of the following sections, particularly those of data needs, access, and cultural and linguistic competency. A special emphasis is placed upon gaining and providing access to adequate data due the critical role it serves in defining the scale of the challenges we face. Reliable data also represents the best way to define and justify the resources required to assist us in overcoming those challenges through the creation of effective interventions. The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the U.S. Census Bureau are pioneering methodologies that utilize sampling frames to capture better data for NHPIs as an alternative to cost-prohibitive oversampling techniques. This method should be utilized by all federal agencies.

While this blueprint offers generalized policy recommendations, the three common threads of data needs, access, and cultural and linguistic relevancy feature specific policy recommendations across all of the sections in order to highlight their ever present nature in all NHPI policy and advocacy work.

We recognize the benefits of collaborating at the national level in successes like the passage of the Office of Management and Budget Revised Directive 15 (OMB 15) and the subsequent formation of U.S. Census Bureau Race and Ethnic Advisory Committees, which have brought further disaggregation to the national census. However, the OMB 15 must still be implemented at the federal, state, and local level. This policy platform blueprint will aim to continue moving our communities forward in the same manner.

The following sections represent only a broad snapshot of the issues currently facing NHPIs. We recognize that many of these issues overlap, such as the potential for economic injustices through discriminatory civil rights violations committed by financial institutions or the benefits that education policy can bring towards providing more culturally competent health care. We will address these nuances and intersectional issues in a more comprehensive and final policy platform based on this blueprint.
EDUCATION

The rate of educational attainment for NHPIs continue to lag behind that of the general population, helping to perpetuate the cycle of poverty. The challenges faced by NHPIs are mirrored by those seen for other communities with low socio-economic status but this group faces the added burden of having risks masked by the broad "Asian and Pacific Islander" data aggregation and being included in the "model minority" myth inaccurately ascribed to the diverse Asian American community. Only 18% of NHPIs have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 28% for the general population. This disparity only increases for graduate and professional degrees, of which only 4.9% of NHPIs have obtained, compared to 10.2% of the general population. The NHPI community remains underserved under current national education policy.

Policy Recommendations

1) Department of Education (DOE) draft an action plan to reduce education disparities for NHPIs
2) Increase support for programs that broaden opportunities for NHPI students to enroll in higher education institutions
3) Support national support networks for NHPI college students and parents
4) Promote disaggregated data collection, analysis, and reporting
5) Support standardized cultural competency programs for educational institutions
6) Support comprehensive immigration reform through pursuit of higher education

Data Needs

Develop and implement plan for targeted special population studies, internally or through research grant funding announcements and contracts
Develop methods for capturing representative data when oversampling is not fiscally feasible
Use analytical strategies and techniques, such as pooling data across several years, to develop estimates of educational outcomes
Improve public access to DOE minority data and promotion of external analyses
Data by educational institutions at various stages or participation in colleges and universities
  ♦ Applications and admissions
  ♦ Retention
  ♦ Financial aid needs
  ♦ Graduate admissions
Track quantitative and empirical qualitative data, including;
  ♦ Transition-to-college needs
  ♦ Enrollment in community colleges and selective institutions
  ♦ Transfers for non-academic reasons
  ♦ Challenges faced by students
  ♦ Generational status
  ♦ Language used at home or school
  ♦ Parents’ educational background

ACCESS
Recognize NHPIs as an underserved minority group in higher education
Support increased outreach from higher education institutions to NHPI students through AANAPISI and allow individual institutions to carry multiple Minority Serving Institution designations

DATA
Require school districts receiving federal funds to collect and report disaggregated data on enrollment, attendance, dropout rate, and college preparatory class enrollment
Include disaggregated data collection and reporting as weighted criteria in competitive grants

CULTURE & LANGUAGE
Promote cultural competency of NHPI cultures within school districts where NHPI population clusters reside
Translate key materials, documents, and forms regarding financial aid, student and parental rights into NHPI languages
HEALTH

The NHPI community in the U.S. is often aggregated into the “Asian Pacific Islander” category, which has been historically associated with healthy profiles, obscuring NHPI health issues and making them invisible in reported data. The diverse political relationships between various island nations and groups also create barriers to healthcare since access to many public health programs depend on immigration status. Among the highest priority health issues that disproportionately affect the NHPI community are obesity, cancer, and diabetes. Approximately 44% of NHPI adults are obese, compared to 12% for Asian Americans (AA). The rate of death from cancer is also significantly higher for NHPIs than AAs. For example, Samoan and Native Hawaiian women have overall cancer death rates that exceed those of Asians and non-Hispanic White women. Many of the barriers faced by the NHPI community in treating health conditions or prevention are the result of factors including high uninsured rates, language and cultural barriers, and lack of research and data disaggregation investigating health condition causes and solutions.

Policy Recommendations

1) Increase funding for outreach, education, and preventive services
2) Promote culturally and linguistically appropriate services
3) Increase research of NHPI health issues
4) Promote availability of Federally Qualified Health Clinics as a resource for NHPIs
5) Expand National Health Service Corps service areas to better cover where NHPI reside

Data Needs

Develop and implement plan for targeted special population studies, internally or through research grant funding announcements and contracts

Disaggregate data on incidence and prevalence of chronic illnesses and diseases such as:

- Obesity
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Gout
- Asthma

Percentage and amount of federal grants awarded to NHPI academics and NHPI issues

Participation and retention rate of NHPIs in federal health care programs

Health workforce diversity

Explore access and levels of coverage for health/medical
ECONOMIC JUSTICE and HOUSING

Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders have historically faced significant economic challenges. Those challenges have only been exacerbated by the current economic climate and housing downturn. As a result, NHPIs face fewer prospects for ending the cycle of poverty and achieving home ownership without a sustained effort to address fair employment and increased access to asset building programs. The scale of the economic challenge may be seen when comparing the $19,051 per capita income of NHPIs in the United States, compared with $27,334 for the total population, and a 123% increase in unemployment between 2007 to 2011, higher than any other racial group. NHPIs also lag behind Asian Americans and the general public in home ownership rates with only 47% of NHPIs owning homes, compared to 57% for Asian Americans and 65% for the total population. Addressing these issues will require strengthening social safety nets while increasing opportunities for upward mobility.

Policy Recommendations

1) U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) should develop action plan to address home ownership and employment disparities.

2) Increase and expand home ownership programs

3) Promote asset building and savings programs

4) Support greater oversight of equal employment opportunity programs

5) Strengthen anti-predatory loan laws and anti-discrimination laws against financial institutions and insurance companies

Data Needs

Develop and implement plan for targeted special population studies, internally or through research grant funding announcements and contracts

- Employment rate
- Self-employment rate
- Access to capital and community economic development programs
- Wealth accumulation
- Poverty rate
- Salaries (compared to similar educational levels, work experience, and geographic distribution)
- Management position (compared by age, education levels and nativity status)
- Work history
- Welfare participation
- Assets
- Wealth
- Financial services
- Insurance
CIVIL RIGHTS

Civil rights violations against NHPIs have been poorly documented by the government and in the independent research literature. Sufficient anecdotal evidence exists to justify the allocation of resources to conduct a comprehensive review of the adjudication and treatment of NHPIs within the federal criminal justice system. One example includes a Samoan bridal shower mistakenly raided by Los Angeles County Sheriff officers. The attendees were found victims of unjustified use of force and were awarded a $25 million settlement, “the largest civil rights damage award against police in California history.” The NHPI community also faces discrimination by those who may not even recognize NHPI racial or ethnic origins but mistake Pacific Islanders as belonging to other minorities including African Americans and Hispanics. The possibility of institutional racism cannot be ignored as a potential explanation for the treatment and lack of services contributing to the disparities affecting the NHPI community. Without rigorous enforcement of OMB 15, which was created in order to detect civil rights violations, discriminatory acts against NHPIs can continue unabated.

Policy Recommendations

1) U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) develop an action plan to address civil rights disparities for NHPIs.
2) Federal Law Enforcement agencies should release all currently existing data on the number of NHPIs currently engaged with the Federal criminal justice system at each stage, from arrest to post-sentencing
3) Support voter access by increasing availability of translated materials and opposing voter suppression efforts
4) Support anti-discrimination policies that encourage institutions receiving federal funding in areas with high concentrations of NHPIs to undergo cultural competency trainings
5) Build relationship between federal law enforcement personnel and community based organizations in areas with high NHPI concentrations

Data Needs

Develop and implement plan for targeted special population studies, internally or through research grant funding announcements and contracts

DOJ and DHS must disaggregate NHPI data for:
- General population
- Arrest rate
- Held in pretrial detention
- Sentencing
- Incarceration
- Releases on parole
- Parole revocations
- Census of Jails report
- Suspicious Activity Reports

ACCESS
- Increase funding for federal public defenders

DATA
- All federal agencies should implement OMB 15 at a minimum when collecting and reporting disaggregated data

CULTURE & LANGUAGE
- Translate vital documents including court forms and other educational materials
IMMIGRATION

Policymakers must recognize that the Native Hawaiian* and Pacific Islander (NHPI) community encompasses an extremely diverse and complicated set of relationships with the United States. Those relationships create numerous, distinct barriers to successful integration in the U.S. Approximately 14% of Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders (NHPIs) are foreign born although that rate varies widely between Pacific Islander groups.¹⁴ For example, 65% of Fijians, 35% of Tongans, and 10% of Samoans residing in the U.S. are foreign born.¹⁵ The impact of foreign-born status is further complicated by the diverse relationships that exist between the U.S. Government and our NHPI community’s homelands. Those relationships include statehood, territories, independent countries, and special relationships with countries such as those under the Compact of Free Association. Available avenues of access to essential services and resources must be communicated more clearly to Pacific Islander immigrants while service providers must be kept apprised of our community’s diverse challenges and needs.

Policy Recommendations

1) Create a clear and simple roadmap to citizenship
2) Ensure access to affordable health care and economic security programs for immigrants
3) Create and enforce standards for interpretation and translation assistance
4) Reduce the backlog of family-based immigration visas
5) Establish full workplace rights and protections for all workers regardless of immigration status
6) Allow academically responsible individuals brought to the U.S. as undocumented youth to apply for citizenship

Data Needs

Develop and implement plan for targeted special population studies, internally or through research grant funding announcements and contracts

DHS and other federal agencies that serve NHPI immigrants must disaggregate NHPI data for:

- Undocumented immigrants
- Held in detention
- Persons obtaining legal permanent residency
- Deportees
- Health care and economic security program participation rates
- Workforce
- Workplace abuse complaints

Recognize and acknowledge the extremely diverse relationships between NHPIs and the U.S.

Expand access to counsel and due process in deportation proceedings

Federal agencies charged with handling immigration matters should implement OMB 15 at a minimum when collecting and reporting disaggregated data

Translate vital documents including forms and other educational materials

Create and enforce interpretation and translation assistance standards

*Native Hawaiians are indigenous to the United States and not immigrants.
ENDNOTES

1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2007-2011 American Community Survey, Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25 Years and Over (Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone or in combination with one or more other races), Table C15002E.
9. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 American Community Survey, Selected Economic Characteristics, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone or in combination with one or more other races, Table DP03.
12. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census SF2, Table HCT2.
We would like to acknowledge the following entities for your sponsorship and support of our work:

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