



Labor Toolkit on Anti-Asian Racism

This toolkit is a guide to the labor movement for how we can build a workers’ movement that is truly inclusive of all workers. Continued indifference toward the issue of anti-Asian racism renders the struggles of Asian American workers invisible. The vision of a stronger movement requires us to fight against anti-Asian racism as deeply and swiftly as we fight for workers’ rights.

Anti-Asian racism has a long history in unions and the labor movement broadly: former AFL president Samuel Gompers advocated for the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act, which set the foundation for immigration exclusion and exploitation today. Vincent Chin’s murder in 1982 was at the hands of two white auto workers, fueled by anti-Japanese rhetoric from auto executives and union leadership scapegoating Asian Americans for industry layoffs. In the last year, multiple union leaders have blamed China and Chinese Americans for the COVID-19 pandemic, contributing to the sharp rise in racist harassment and attacks on Asian Americans. We must remake the labor movement to be a stronger force for and with Asian American workers.

Note: in this toolkit, we intentionally say “Asian American” when referencing issues that impact Asian Americans only. If an action or issue impacts both Asian Americans AND Pacific Islanders, then we use the “AAPI” acronym. For example, the current rise in anti-Asian violence is specific to Asian Americans, whereas leadership programs should serve all AAPIs. In solidarity with Pacific Islander siblings, make sure to differentiate “AAPI” from “Asian American” and include Pacific Islander voices and resources.

Ready for next steps? Take the pledge and commit to action.

Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Actions for International and Local Unions	6
Actions for State Federations and Central Labor Councils (CLCs)	13
Actions for Rank-and-File Workers	17
Conclusion	18
Appendix	18
Fact sheets on AAPI workers	18
Action Checklist	18
Communications Guidance	18

Introduction

Asian American workers have been integral to the U.S. labor movement since the 1800s, when plantation workers in the Hawaiian Islands began forming unions to protest working conditions. Asian American workers are critical to struggles for better working conditions in places as diverse as railroads and farms, canneries, garment factories, and tech. Asian American trade unionists continue to strengthen inter-union coalitions and play critical roles throughout the United States in building political and labor power. Despite our legacy of worker organizing, Asian American have experienced anti-Asian racism throughout the American Labor movement. *Read more in APALA's [Untapped Power Report](#).*

The Many Faces of Anti-Asian Racism

Stereotypes about Asian Americans render them invisible in discussions of race and prejudice in America. Three common examples include the model minority myth, the perpetual foreigner stereotype, and gendered racism that contributes to violence against our communities.

The so-called “model minority” stereotype, is one of the most pervasive and harmful assumptions about Asian Americans, and holds that Asian Americans are a uniformly high-achieving racial minority that has assimilated well into American society through hard work, obedience to social mores and academic achievement. This stereotype creates divides between Asian workers and other racial minorities, further downplaying the role of racism in class inequities. We can counter this with disaggregated data which recognizes the diversity within the Asian American community. *Learn more in the [Appendix](#).*

The “perpetual foreigner” stereotype casts Asian Americans as fundamentally foreign individuals who will never fully assimilate into American society. For example, even second- and third-generation Asian Americans are frequently asked where they are from or told that they speak English surprisingly well. As we have seen with the murder of Vincent Chin and the recent spike in anti-Asian hate, messages like anti-China rhetoric that fuels nationalism by labeling entire countries as “enemies” or “dirty” and scapegoats for COVID-19 and economic downturns, must be stopped. *Learn more in the [Appendix](#).*

Like other communities of color, Asian Americans are also targets of gendered racism. Asian American women are viewed as sexually desirable, exotic and passive, while Asian American men are often seen as effeminate or asexual. These stereotypes create perceptions that Asians are disposable or easy targets and contribute to violence against our communities such as the March 16 shootings in Atlanta massage parlors that resulted in the death of six Asian women workers. However, not all racism appears hateful. When people, especially leaders, reinforce these stereotypes through “jokes” or compliments they contribute to the climate that leads to violence against Asian Americans.

All of these stereotypes rely on the idea that Asian Americans are a monolithic group, but that is far from the truth. Asian American workers actually have the widest income gap, with workers who are overrepresented at both the lowest and highest ends of salary and wages. Now that you've gained a base understanding of anti-Asian racism, read on for actions that you can take to fight it.

Actions for International and Local Unions

✓ **Make meaningful investments in equity and inclusion. Back up solidarity statements and resolutions with investments of money and other resources.**

1. Sponsor your AAPI members to join APALA and support their time in contributing to APALA chapters and professional and leadership development opportunities [such as APALA's Emerging Leaders Program, Organizing Institute, and Racial and Immigrant Justice Program.](#)

CHECK THIS OUT:

- SEIU sponsored APALA's work with Grassroots Asians Rising to develop a Racial and Immigrant Justice political education and mobilization program based on the Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit. The participant cohort includes AAPIs from across the country and is a mix of members from a variety of different unions as well as non-union workers.
- Fremont Unified District Teachers Association (FUDTA) is investing in their Asian members by providing resources to their members, such as meal stipends, while they're enrolled in APALA's Racial and Immigrant Justice Program.
- Numerous local unions sponsor APALA memberships and convention registrations for their AAPI members including providing for meal stipends, lost time, and other expenses.

2. **Increase investment in your local APALA chapter's membership drives, events, and organizing.** For example, many union locals like UNITE HERE and SEIU sponsor their members to join APALA so they can join an AAPI community to organize with.
3. **Increase investment in organizing non-union workers in industries with higher concentrations of AAPI workers.**

CHECK THIS OUT:

- SAG-AFTRA [announced](#) a new influencer agreement, which allows anyone who is paid to advertise products via their individual social media platforms to be covered by the union.
- IAMAW is organizing [Chinese gig drivers](#) in New York.
- SEIU 721 and gig drivers in LA are organizing globally to [Free Mengzhu](#), a gig driver who tried to organize in China and has been detained for his efforts.

- 4. Invest time and resources into racial justice education and organizing for your leaders and staff.** Any training curriculum should specifically address Asian American issues and anti-Asian bias including microaggressions.

SAMPLE TRAINING: The [Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit](#) from Grassroots Asians Rising is a useful resource on Asian American identity and issues for leaders and staff to include in existing or new trainings.

- 5. Create structures to develop a political analysis of anti-Asian racism and build unity against structural racism.** Host dialogues to develop a shared language around Asian American workers and shared understanding of the history of Asian American workers.

CHECK THIS OUT: NEA/CTA has a new Racial Equity Steering Committee that includes board members, member leaders, and staff appointed and charged with looking at uprooting white supremacy and promoting racial equity in the entire organization. This group has 4 work groups focusing on 1) pathways to education, 2) being a more democratic and anti-racist union, 3) centering the most marginalized, and 4) continuous organizing for racial justice. Through these workgroups, we've been working to revamp a member-led training program, a member to staff intern program, a community school and bargaining for the common good program, revising organizational policy language, etc.eir history in labor.

- 6. Pay for language interpretation and translations in member outreach to ensure equal access for all members.** “Interpretation” refers to spoken language in real time while “translation” focuses on written content.

CHECK THIS OUT: In preparation for APALA's upcoming Biennial Convention, translations and interpretations for all programming, convention business, and associated tools and materials in multiple languages are necessary for all members to participate fully. This requires pre-planning to ensure a substantial allocation in the event budget as well as time for folks in the community to review to ensure accuracy around terms that may be more difficult to explain such as “solidarity” or “structural racism.” To achieve this, we are collecting language access needs from attendees in our registration and membership forms and identifying leaders in our communities who are able to support non-English speakers.

✓ Collect disaggregated AAPI membership data.

Unions should know the communities that members come from and their language access needs. By collecting membership data that is disaggregated by ethnicity, you can ensure that you have the full picture of who your members are and their needs. Data collection can be done through a survey or ideally through direct conversations with members. It is important to collect both Asian American and Pacific Islander data.

Did you know?

AAPIs (Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders) are a group of highly diverse communities with our own complex migration and settlement histories and different experiences with political, citizen, and immigrant status, data disaggregation is one of the most important civil rights issues for AAPIs today. Though our communities represent over 50 ethnic groups and speak over 100 languages, this diversity is rarely represented in data collection, creating severe challenges for communities whose experiences and needs are obscured. See note on “Asian American” vs. “AAPI” [here](#).

CHECK THIS OUT: The National Education Association (NEA) constitution requires locals to collect membership data toward the goal of achieving representation of ethnic-minority populations within each state. To achieve this, each state as a committee that works on advising their board on how to comply with this by-law. For example, the Massachusetts Teachers Association’s [Ethnic Minority Affairs Committee](#) or the California Teachers Association’s [Racial Equity Affairs Committee](#).

The NEA bylaws demonstrate how you can institute data collection using accountability measures:

“It is the policy of the Association to achieve ethnic-minority delegate representation at least equal to the proportion of identified ethnic-minority populations within the state. Prior to December 1 of each fiscal year, each state affiliate shall submit to the NEA Executive Committee for its approval a legally permissible plan which is designed to achieve a total state and local delegation to the Representative Assembly held that fiscal year which reflects these ethnic-minority proportions. If a state affiliate fails to submit such a plan, the NEA Executive Committee fails to approve a plan which is submitted, or a state affiliate fails to comply with an approved plan, the Representative Assembly may deny to the delegates from the state affiliate any right to participate in the NEA Representative Assembly at the Annual Meeting other than to (i) participate in elections for Association officers and (ii) vote on increases in Association membership dues. Local affiliates shall comply with the approved plan of the state affiliate, and if a local affiliate fails to do so, the right of its delegates to participate in the NEA Bylaws Representative Assembly at the Annual Meeting may be limited as indicated above. The failure of a state or local affiliate to comply with the provisions of this Bylaw shall in addition be grounds for censure, suspension, or expulsion pursuant to Bylaw 6-5.”

✓ Create and enforce codes of conduct and anti-discrimination policies that hold leaders and members accountable for anti-Asian racism.

Comments or “jokes” that scapegoat, stereotype, and dehumanize countries or people by ethnicity are harmful. Ensure that there are mechanisms for union staff, members, and leadership to file complaints under the code of conduct. These mechanisms should be strongly and consistently enforced.

CHECK THIS OUT: In the wake of racist remarks made by a Philadelphia SAG-AFTRA board member, APALA Philly and the Asian American Journalists Association are helping SAG-AFTRA establish a code of conduct by collecting example nondiscrimination language from contracts and other leadership codes. Read more about the incident [here](#).

SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR CODES OF CONDUCT AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES:

“Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to, actions such as the use of epithets, slurs, cyberbullying or cyber harassment, negative stereotyping, microaggressions, derogatory or insensitive jokes, pranks, or comments; or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to any of the above protected categories.”

“Toxic behavior, whether verbal or non-verbal, includes various activities that can create a pattern of counterproductive work behaviors that debilitate individuals, teams, and whole organizations over the long term. It can include the subtle abuse of power to reinforce and enact inequity on an interpersonal level. Abuses of power or positionality within an interpersonal relationship differentiate toxic behavior from productive conflict and the discomfort of growth. Toxic behaviors must be understood within the context in which they occur, and so, it is critical to trust and not invalidate the experience of those who have been subjected to such behaviors, especially individuals with subordinate or otherwise marginalized identities, by being defensive or dismissive when they name a toxic behavior.”

Implementation of codes of conduct is as important as the language itself. Make sure to:

- Read the code of conduct at every meeting or gathering
- Train all members and union staff and hold one-on-one conversations to go over the code
- Post materials on your resources page or send it out in a newsletter
- Find more resources here: go.aflcio.org/codeofconduct-resources

✓ Build leadership pipelines for your AAPI members; create caucuses and advancement opportunities.

Caucus spaces are an important infrastructure both for the leadership development of individual members and to ensure a diverse and inclusive leadership for the union. Host community events for members and leaders to convene and share resources on how to organize workers of color. Diverse leadership means promoting AAPI members and staff into leadership roles. Make sure that shop steward trainings include language translations and flexible scheduling.

CHECK THIS OUT:

- The [SEIU API Caucus](#) was re-envisioned in 2012 to uplift the need for more leadership opportunities for API members and staff. SEIU has had an Asian Pacific Islander caucus since 2015. The caucus has five national officers and six Vice Presidents who are elected to represent different regions. The Caucus supports these officers and encourages them to mobilize SEIU API members to serve on APALA's National Executive Board and in Chapter Leadership.
- AFT launched an [AAPI task force](#) in February with 14 members drawn from local affiliates all over the nation to build a community of AAPI members within the union, strengthen their commitment to activism, bring an AAPI perspective to the union's agenda and call their members' attention to issues facing the AAPI community that the whole union can address.
- California Teachers Association (CTA) has a [Pacific Asian American Caucus](#), one of four member caucuses within its Racial Equity Affairs Committee to advance representation and input by underrepresented communities.

✓ Strengthen and invest in partnerships with worker centers and community organizations.

Worker centers and community organizations are on the frontlines of building the trust of low-wage workers in specific communities and have long been spaces where workers can receive training, English classes, information about their rights, legal support, and access to union jobs. Contribute financial support, trainings, joint programs, or in-kind resources like staff time and space

CHECK THIS OUT:

- IBEW worked in partnership with the National Black Workers Center Project on the "Working While Black" Expo in Baltimore, MD. Local 24 training center provided a work-skills demo and accepted applications for the apprenticeship program.

→ Several union locals give annually to CPA Boston, a worker center focused on Chinese immigrants, such as SEIU 1199, UNITE HERE Local 26, IUPAT Local 939.

→ The Hospitality Vocational Training (HVT) program is coordinated by the Chinese Progressive Association in partnership with the City College of San Francisco's ESL Department and the Chinese for Affirmative Action group. It provides skills useful for the hospitality and service industry, vocational English, interview skills, and tips for looking for stable and dignified employment. According to Ah Sing, a Hotel Steward for UNITE HERE Local 2 in San Francisco, "The most important thing they taught us was the union difference. I didn't know much about unions or worker rights in the U.S. before I attended the training. The teachers explained that there are two types of hotels: those that have unions and those that don't. Unionized hotels provide better protections, pay, and benefits for workers." Read the rest of Ah Sing's story on page 50 of [APALA's Untapped Power report](#) and check out more examples of union and worker center collaborations [here](#).

✓ Use collective bargaining to address racism and xenophobia in the workplace.

Union locals should use the collective bargaining process to fight discrimination and promote racial justice for workers. Below we're including a toolkit and CBA directory with examples of how to use this powerful tool to advance pay equity, nondiscrimination protections, equity in hiring and advancement, freedom from harassment, protections against immigration enforcement, and much more.

SAMPLE CONTRACT LANGUAGE:

→ DPE developed their [Advancing Racial Justice in the Professional Workplace](#) toolkit to share examples and language for how unions have addressed racial inequities through bargaining.

→ [Labor Against Hate](#) has started collecting anti-racist CBA language to push back against white supremacy. One example is the [League of Conservation Voters CBA \(TNG-CWA Local 32035\)](#), which includes first-of-its-kind articles on Racial Justice, Equity and Inclusion and Immigrant Rights.

✓ Advance policies that support Asian workers and oppose policies that invisibilize and divide our communities.

1. Follow APALA's leadership. Read our statements and collaborate with our [leaders](#) and [staff](#).

Learn about Asian workers in America, past and present, and consider the specific impact to our communities of policies that your union may support or oppose.

→ [APALA's Untapped Power report](#) details who AAPI workers are, what barriers we face, and how the labor movement can transcend its early, exclusionary advocacy around immigration.

→ [APALA's Principles for Collective Action](#) guide us to collective liberation and stronger organizing.

- The Home and Sovereignty principle acknowledges that many of us have been displaced and dispossessed from across the globe by imperialism, war, climate change, and corporate greed. The labor movement must acknowledge that historically while unions may have grown in size and political prominence in times of war, it is always working people here and across the globe who suffer as corporate fat cats enrich themselves on military contracts at the expense of public goods like public education, affordable housing, universal healthcare, etc.
- We ask the labor movement to reject policies that divide immigrants against each other, increase policing and militarism, and enshrine reliance on the state and justice system rather than community solutions and collective power.

2. Support the AAPI community's request to the Biden Administration to establish minimum standards for collecting and presenting data on race and ethnicity for all federal reporting.

Federal standards for the collection of demographic data on AAPIs should aim to collect information on all 50+ of our distinct groups through checkbox options so that policymakers consider every distinct community in key decisions. Support minimum standards for collecting and presenting data on race and ethnicity for all state and local reporting.

3. Stop using anti-China rhetoric and policies. Scapegoating a foreign "threat" is a tactic to distract from domestic problems, send profits to arms manufacturers, and promote economic nationalist policies that only benefit the corporate elite at the expense of workers in the U.S. and China. While there are valid concerns about the Chinese government's actions against Uyghurs and ethnic and religious minority groups in China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and elsewhere, the focus should be on strengthening global rules that protect workers and vulnerable groups in both the U.S. and China, not on racial scapegoating and fear mongering. Trade wars and economic aggression do not address underlying issues of inequality, poverty, or worker exploitation in the U.S. or China. The labor movement must build power across borders and fight for rights, equality, and justice.

Ready for next steps? [Take the pledge](#) and commit to action.

Actions for State Federations and Central Labor Councils (CLCs)

✓ **State Federations and CLCs should make every effort to ensure that all constituency groups are meaningfully represented on their boards.**

Constituency groups like APALA are not allies or auxiliary to the labor movement: we **are** the labor movement. Our role is to address the challenges that workers from diverse backgrounds face and ensure full participation in the labor movement.

SAMPLE LANGUAGE: In your constitution, adopt language to ensure seats for each constituency group on your board and representation of diverse worker communities even when there isn't a chartered chapter in your region or state:

Per the MI AFL-CIO Constitution, Article 9, Section 2(e): "There shall be up to 7 members representing Constituency Groups recognized by the AFL-CIO and affiliated with the Michigan State AFL-CIO. These representatives shall be from a Local Union affiliated with the Michigan State AFL-CIO. Each Constituency Group shall hold a caucus prior to the nominations and election to choose their respective delegates to be nominated as General Board members. In accordance with Section f below, if a Constituency Group does not have a chartered chapter in the state, a position will be created by the General Board between conventions to serve the interests of the union members that Constituency Group would otherwise represent. The terms of these members shall expire at the same time as the other General Board members."

State federations and CLCs that only allow for one representative for all constituencies, or that provide seats but no voting power, are in effect asking many diverse communities to compete for a single perfunctory role and doing the opposite of building solidarity.

Even with strong constituency group representation language in the constitution, it means nothing if it is not adhered to and enforced. Robust outreach is required to make sure that the constituency group chapter leaders know about the opportunity and how to participate. If you do not know if the chapter exists or how to contact them, reach out to the national office or the AFL-CIO's Civil, Human and Women's Rights Director to find out.

The contact for APALA is kristina@apalanet.org. We would love to work with you to identify AAPI leaders and establish APALA chapters where they don't currently exist.

Create and enforce codes of conduct that hold leaders and members accountable for anti-Asian racism.

Comments or “jokes” that scapegoat, stereotype, and dehumanize countries or people by ethnicity are harmful. Ensure that there are mechanisms for union staff, members, and leadership to file complaints under the code of conduct. These mechanisms should be strongly and consistently enforced.

SAMPLE LANGUAGE FOR CONDUCT AND ANTI-DISCRIMINATION POLICIES:

“Examples of harassment include, but are not limited to, actions such as the use of epithets, slurs, cyberbullying or cyber harassment, negative stereotyping, microaggressions, derogatory or insensitive jokes, pranks, or comments; or threatening, intimidating or hostile acts that relate to any of the above protected categories.”

“Toxic behavior, whether verbal or non-verbal, includes various activities that can create a pattern of counterproductive work behaviors that debilitate individuals, teams, and whole organizations over the long term. It can include the subtle abuse of power to reinforce and enact inequity on an interpersonal level. Abuses of power or positionality within an interpersonal relationship differentiate toxic behavior from productive conflict and the discomfort of growth. Toxic behaviors must be understood within the context in which they occur, and so, it is critical to trust and not invalidate the experience of those who have been subjected to such behaviors, especially individuals with subordinate or otherwise marginalized identities, by being defensive or dismissive when they name a toxic behavior.”

Implementation of codes of conduct is as important as the language itself. Make sure to:

- Read the code of conduct at every meeting or gathering
- Train all members and union staff and hold one-on-one conversations to go over the code
- Post materials on your resources page or send it out in a newsletter
- Find more resources here: go.aflcio.org/codeofconduct-resources

Strengthen and invest in partnerships with worker centers and community organizations.

Worker centers and community organizations are on the frontlines of building the trust of low-wage workers in specific communities and have long been spaces where workers can receive training, English classes, information about their rights, legal support, and access to union jobs.

1. **State Feds / CLCs can contribute financial support, training or educational workshops, or in-kind resources such as staff time on co-branded events or union hall space.**

CHECK THIS OUT:

→ The Gulf Coast Area Labor Federation in Texas has [collaborated](#) with APALA TX and community organizations to do a multilingual get-out-the-census effort to reach Houston-area immigrant and working class communities.

→ The Washington State and King County Labor Councils both have an allocation built in their yearly budget for constituency groups. APALA Seattle usually typically requests funds for ticket purchases at their annual banquet, which includes the price of APALA membership. Both councils receive updates on the work the chapter is doing in the community and supports their work by sending invitations on behalf of the chapter to their contact lists.

2. Encourage worker center members to join your board. Elevating AAPI workers and the principles of worker centers is key to advancing AAPI leaders in the labor movement.**CHECK THIS OUT:**

→ Bharavi Desai is the Taxi Workers Alliance President and the only Asian American on the AFL-CIO Executive Council, representing workers who are being threatened by the gig economy.

→ In 2010, Josie Camacho was the first woman of color to lead the Alameda Labor Council and the first Pacific Islander to lead any AFL-CIO Labor Council in the country. Under her leadership, the Oakland Workers' Collective became a delegate to council and affiliated with the AFL-CIO.

→ In 2020, the Greater Boston Labor Council elected its first woman of color as executive secretary-treasurer, Darlene Lombos. With more than 20 years of community and youth organizing experience in the labor movement, Darlene's work continues to protect and promote the interests of working-class families and communities of color in the Greater Boston area.

3. Learn about AAPI worker issues and follow the lead of worker centers on policy issues.

CHECK THIS OUT: [Adhikaar](#) is a New York based community organization which organizes the Nepali-speaking community through their domestic worker, nail salon worker and [Temporary Protected Status](#) (TPS) member leaders. They have been in partnership with Workers United since 2016 organizing nail salons around the One Fair Wage campaign to win \$15/hour, a workforce development beauty licensing school to train their members with partners from NYCOSH, and advocating for more expansive reopening COVID guidelines with the state.

✓ Make meaningful investments in equity and inclusion. Back up solidarity statements and resolutions with investments of money and other resources.

1. **Sponsor your AAPI members to join APALA and support their time in contributing to APALA chapters and professional and leadership development opportunities** such as [APALA's Emerging Leaders Program, Organizing Institute, and Racial and Immigrant Justice Program](#).
2. **Increase investment in your local APALA chapter's membership drives, events, and organizing.** The King County Labor Guild in Washington state works closely with the APALA Seattle chapter and sponsors memberships for AAPI workers.
3. **Increase investment in organizing non-union workers in industries with higher concentrations of AAPI workers.**
4. **Invest time and resources into racial justice education and organizing for your leaders and staff.** Any training curriculum should specifically address Asian American issues and anti-Asian bias including microaggressions. The [Asian American Racial Justice Toolkit](#) from Grassroots Asians Rising is a useful resource on Asian American identity and issues.
5. **Develop a political analysis of anti-Asian racism and build unity against structural racism.**

CHECK THIS OUT:

- The National Labor Leadership Initiative (NLLI) is an intensive year-long leadership development program for top-level national leaders in the labor movement and the broader movement for worker justice. Launched in the fall of 2013, the NLLI grew out of a partnership between the AFL-CIO, The Worker Institute at Cornell, and top labor educators from Harvard, Rutgers, Berkeley, Oregon, UALE, University of Illinois – Urbana-Champaign, and the Rockwood Leadership Institute.
- The Greater Boston Community Labor Council passed a motion to invite a representative from APALA to lead a workshop on the history of Asian American labor organizing to build a shared understanding among all members.

6. **Pay for language interpretation and translations for meetings, events, and materials to ensure equal access for all participants.** “Interpretation” refers to spoken language in real time while “translation” focuses on written content.

Ready for next steps? [Take the pledge](#) and commit to action.

Actions for Rank-and-File Workers

✓ **Join APALA. To become a member and find your chapter, visit www.apalanet.org.**

1. Join or start an APALA chapter if there isn't an active chapter where you live.
2. Ask your union to pay for your membership.

✓ **Ask your union to pay for your participation in APALA chapters and leadership development programs.**

Some [opportunities](#) include Organizing Institute, Emerging Leaders Transformation, and Racial and Immigrant Justice for AAPIs.

✓ **[Join APALA's mailing list](#) to track opportunities and actions.**

✓ **Read our toolkit *#WeKeepUsSafe: APALA's Resource Guide on Anti-Asian Violence* bit.ly/asianresources**

Ready for next steps? [Take the pledge](#) and commit to action.

Conclusion

Solidarity is much more than what we say; it's what we do. Statements and resolutions are important symbols but without action or accountability they do very little. Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM) is a New-York-based community organization whose [model for solidarity](#) shows the four levels: symbolic solidarity, transactional solidarity, embodied solidarity, and transformative solidarity. If solidarity does not include action, it is performative only and will not make the material change that workers need. This toolkit seeks to move the labor movement beyond the symbolic and into embodied and transformative solidarity, where we are literally living our values.

Appendix

Fact sheets on AAPI workers

[Who are Southeast Asian Workers?](#)

[Who are East Asian Workers?](#)

[Who are South Asian Workers?](#)

[Who are Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Workers?](#)

Action Checklist

- [For International and Local Unions](#)
- [For State Federations and Community Labor Councils](#)
- [For Rank and File Worker](#)

Communications Guidance

→ ***The AAPI community is not a monolith. Be specific with the groups being referenced and whenever possible, include disaggregated facts or statistics. Include facts and statistics about specific ethnic groups if the issue or action uniquely or disproportionately impacts these communities.***

[APALA's Untapped Power report](#) details who AAPI workers are, what barriers we face, and how the labor movement can transcend its early, exclusionary advocacy around immigration. Check out these factsheets for each AAPI subpopulation:

[Who are Southeast Asian Workers?](#)

[Who are East Asian Workers?](#)

[Who are South Asian Workers?](#)

[Who are Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Workers?](#)

→ What about Pacific Islanders? What’s the difference between using Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) vs. Asian American?

In this toolkit, we intentionally say “Asian American” when referencing issues that impact Asian Americans only. If an action or issue impacts both Asian Americans AND Pacific Islanders, then we use the “AAPI” acronym. For example, the current rise in anti-Asian violence is specific to Asian Americans, whereas leadership programs should serve all AAPIs. In solidarity with Pacific Islander siblings, make sure to differentiate “AAPI” from “Asian American” and include Pacific Islander voices and resources. We follow the guidance and leadership of [Empowering Pacific Islander Communities](#) (EPIC).

→ Explicitly include the AAPI community in progressive pro-worker issues, actions, and messaging. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders must be framed and regularly discussed as part of the multi-racial workforce fighting for housing, climate, healthcare, worker, immigrant and gender justice.

Consider using [APALA’s Principles for Collective Action](#) which contains seven principles for collective liberation and organizing stronger communities to frame messages.

→ Reject narratives and policies that divide immigrants and BIPOC workers against each other in the U.S. and across the globe. Center narratives that uplift the working class with dignity and a vision of shared liberation.

Refuse messaging that reinforces the model minority myth and criminalization which increases policing and militarism. Uplift community solutions and collective power. APALA has developed a [resolution](#) in solidarity with the Movement for Black Lives and their calls for defunding the police. APALA is also co-creating a set of [community-centered solutions](#) with the [Asian American Leaders Table on Anti-Asian Violence](#).

Refuse messaging that encourages militarism and U.S. imperialism. Violence across oceans and borders also impacts the AAPI community domestically and abroad. Scapegoating countries (i.e. anti-China rhetoric) or groups of people (Muslims) as foreign “threats” is a tactic to distract from underlying issues of inequality, poverty, or worker exploitation by the corporate elite across the globe. The labor movement must build power across borders and fight for rights, equality, and justice.

Messaging Guidance Chart from [Changelab's Messaging Guide on COVID and Racism](#)

DON'T SAY	DO SAY	WHY
Anti-Asian sentiment	Anti-Asian Racism	Sentiment is individual while racism is systemic.
AAPI or Asian American and Pacific Islander, if you're really just talking about Asian Americans	Asian Americans	Including Pacific Islanders in conversations that are not relevant to them or their concerns marginalizes them in the AAPI coalition
Many Asian Americans are experiencing racism for the first time	Anti-Asian racism is nothing new. Asian American children experience bullying, women experience violence, workers experience exploitation, elderly experience language barriers in their everyday lives all related to being Asian American	Avoid model minority making, and lift up the history and present realities of anti-Asian racism
Asian Americans don't deserve to be treated this way / shouldn't suffer racism	No one should experience racial hostility in the workplace, or while walking in our neighborhoods...	Avoid exceptionalizing Asian Americans. Position us as part of a multiracial majority that rejects racism
Asian Americans are hardworking and responsible citizens	Asian Americans are part of a multiracial essential workforce / part of a multiracial America	Avoid reinforcing the model minority myth and justifying criminalization; instead position us as part of a multiracial America
The attackers should be punished	We need to hold our political leaders accountable for fueling racism and violence	Put the focus back on the root causes of hate crimes; avoid reinforcing criminalization