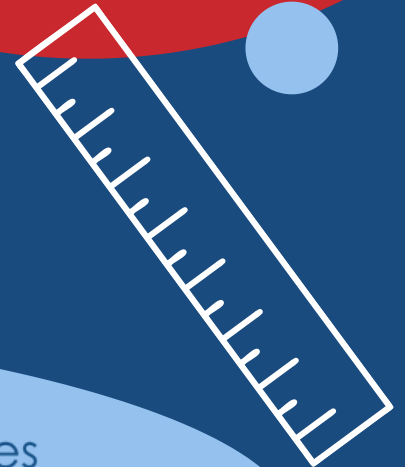




COVID-19 Toolkit

Strategies to Defeat Asian American
Racial Profiling and Xenophobia



OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates

ADVOCATE EMBRACING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

Questions? Contact Matt at
matthew.nguyen.ngo@ocanational.org

BACKGROUND

COVID-19: Asian American Racial Profiling

Since its discovery in December 2019, COVID-19 has become a serious pandemic with devastating effects on people and economies around the world. Communities and governments have been forced to take drastic action to prevent the spread of this disease, including the closure of public spaces and cancellation of events. Unfortunately, the geographic origin of the virus has fueled increasing racial profiling of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs).

AAPIs have suffered from physical assault, verbal harassment, loss of business, and racial discrimination in schools and public spaces.

Even though the Centers for Disease Control and other health organizations have stated multiple times that viruses “do not target specific racial or ethnic groups,” there is still a lot of misinformation that has escalated stereotypes into harmful myths. Bad-faith actors have spread this false information using social media, counterfeit documents claiming to be from health organizations, and malicious rumors in order to drum up unwarranted paranoia. These include the myths that the Chinese created the COVID-19 as a bioweapon, and that Asian lungs are inherently more susceptible to infection. This xenophobia can be traced to a longstanding stereotype that Asian Americans are inherently foreign, and bring foreign diseases.

Questions? Contact Matt at
matthew.nguyen.ngo@ocanational.org

Want more information?
Reference [this](#) working list of
COVID-19-related hate
incidents.

Hate crimes and/or incidents resulting from xenophobia are on the rise.

OCA is aware of at least 13 incidents in New York City alone as of March 24th, many of which involved physical assault. Subways appear to be a common location for hate incidents to occur; national news outlets have reported several attacks on subways, including one against an Asian American man who was sprayed with Febreze air freshener on a New York subway, and a Thai American woman who was subjected to a racist tirade on a Los Angeles subway. Asian American students have also come forward with stories of racial attacks, including a 16-year-old boy in the San Fernando Valley who was sent to the emergency room by bullies.

Racial profiling has also directly led to a decrease in patronage of Asian American-owned businesses, due to unfounded fears of increased risk of infection.

These losses go beyond what businesses in general are losing due to the practice of social distancing, and predate the current social distancing mandates. Restaurants and grocery stores in particular, in which cleanliness is a heightened factor, have experienced the worst hits. Losses have been reported as high as 80%, according to some OCA members. Community leaders and elected officials have made an effort to support Asian American businesses, including a House bill meant to provide government loans to struggling businesses. Elements of this bill are expected to be included in Congress's third COVID-19 stimulus package.

TIMELINE

COVID-19 Xenophobia and Racial Profiling

DECEMBER 2019

- 12/1:** The first identified case of the new disease is located in Wuhan, China.
- 12/31:** Health authorities in Wuhan, China send the first reports of the then-called Novel Coronavirus of 2019 to the World Health Organization (WHO).

JANUARY 2020

- In early January, Asian Americans begin reporting racial harassment due to the COVID-19.
- 1/30:** The new disease rapidly spreads to other Chinese provinces. The WHO declares the Novel COVID-19 to be a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern."
- 1/31:** The Trump administration bans entry of "foreign nationals who have traveled to China in the last 14 days."

FEBRUARY 2020

- 2/3: A fake public health letter (LA County Dept of Public Health) circulates on Facebook targeting AAPI businesses in Carson, California, and University of California students.
- 2/9: Sen. Tom Cotton (R-Ark.) falsely claims the COVID-19 is a Chinese bioweapon.
- 2/11: The WHO renames the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19.
- 2/11: A man on a Los Angeles subway verbally assaults a Thai American woman with an anti-Chinese rant.

FEBRUARY 2020 (CONT.)

- 2/14: Two Asian American students in California are reported to be victims of racial profiling due to the COVID-19. One of the students is physically assaulted and sent to the hospital.
- 2/24: Four men in London assault Jonathan Mok, saying “we don’t want your coronavirus in our country.”
- 2/28: Reps. Grace Meng, Judy Chu and Nydia Velasquez introduce House Resolution 6040, the “Small Business Relief From Communicable Disease Induced Economic Hardship Act,” to provide federal government loans of up to \$2 million to businesses struggling from COVID-19.

FEBRUARY 2020 (CONT.)

- 2/28:** CAPAC holds a press conference, with remarks from Rep. Judy Chu, OCA Executive Director Rita Pin Ahrens and others to denounce COVID-19-related xenophobia and misinformation.
- 2/29:** The first American dies from COVID-19.

MARCH 2020

- 3/4:** The US Department of Education releases a letter (included in this toolkit) asking school administrations to address anti-Asian bullying arising from the COVID-19.
- 3/6:** A man in Brooklyn accosts an Asian American man on a subway, telling him to stay away and spraying Febreze air freshener in his face.
- 3/8:** New York Mayor Bill DeBlasio announces that the City will provide zero-interest loans of up to \$75,000 to struggling small businesses with fewer than 100 employees, and that have experienced losses of 25% or greater.

MARCH 2020 (CONT.)

- 3/8:** An Asian American man wearing a mask in Brooklyn is stabbed 13 times by another man in a mask, including once in the heart.
- 3/9:** An Asian American woman is attacked at a crosswalk in San Francisco.

MARCH 2020 (CONT.)

- 3/10: A 23-year-old female student and a 59-year-old man are physically attacked in New York.
- 3/10: Two Chinese international students are attacked at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, by assailants throwing raw eggs from a moving vehicle.
- 3/11: The WHO declares COVID-19 to be a pandemic.
- 3/11: A classroom bully in Southern California convinces an 8-year-old Asian American boy he has COVID-19, causing him to fear for his life.

MARCH 2020 (CONT.)

- 3/11: Residents of Cuyahoga County, California ask public health officials if it is safe to eat at Chinese and Italian restaurants.
- 3/13: US President Donald Trump declares the COVID-19 pandemic to be a national emergency, retroactively starting on March 1st.
- 3/14: Classroom bullies in Florida harass Chinese American girls with racist stereotypes that Chinese people are “disgusting” and eat “any type of animal.”
- 3/14: A man stabs a Burmese American family in a wholesale store in Midland, Texas. The suspect admits to attacking them because he believed they were spreading COVID-19.

MARCH 2020 (CONT.)

- 3/16: President Trump refers to COVID-19 as the “Chinese Virus” in multiple tweets, sparking outrage in the AAPI community and prompting a response from OCA National.
- 3/17: An Asian American woman gets jumped at a New York City subway station.
- 3/19: An Asian American man is surrounded by multiple strangers in a grocery store after coughing.
- 3/23: New York Attorney General Letitia James creates a hate crime hotline in response to rising anti-AAPI violence.

MARCH 2020 (CONT.)

- 3/25: Neighbors leave a threat on the door of a Minnesota Asian American couple's door, saying "we're watching you."
- 3/26: A homeless, elderly Asian American woman is attacked and spat upon in New York City, and told to "go back to her country and die."
- 3/28: Three teenagers attack an Asian American woman on a New York bus, striking her with an umbrella.
- 3/30: The Federal Bureau of Investigation declares the March 14th stabbing in Texas to be a hate crime.

APRIL 2020

- 4/7: The owner of an Asian restaurant in Connecticut receives several death threats within a few minutes of each other, including a threat to shoot her family.
- 4/7: A man in New York pours acid on an Asian American woman emptying her garbage outside, hospitalizing her with serious burns.

**REPORT A HATE
CRIME TO OCA HERE**

**NEW YORK HATE
CRIMES HOTLINE:
(800) 771-7755**

FOR REFERENCE:

**COVID-19 OUTBREAK
TIMELINE FAST FACTS**

TALKING POINTS

For Meetings with the Media and Elected Officials

Geographic or Ethnically-Targeted References to COVID-19

Public figures routinely refer to COVID-19 as the “Chinese Virus,” “Wuhan Virus,” “Kung Flu,” or other derivatives. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), these names that reference a specific location or ethnic group should be avoided, as they invite unwarranted scrutiny to people who fall under those terms. The use of these terms exacerbates the existing problem of racial discrimination against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs) in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic by associating the disease with AAPI ethnicities.

This language has been the number one concern expressed to the policy department by OCA members since President Donald Trump and other government officials began increasing usage of these terms. On March 24th, the President spoke out against hate crimes, but has not clearly disavowed usage of these terms.

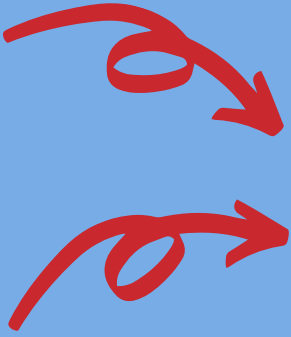
These WHO guidelines were published in 2015. We should not repeat conspiracy theories, including the theory that China “bought” or “bribed” the WHO to give COVID-19 an ethnically-neutral name.

Public officials should refer to the disease by its proper names: the coronavirus, SARS CoV-2, or COVID-19.

All OCA publications should refer to the disease as COVID-19.

The continued improper usage of ethnicity-specific terms will directly contribute to worse, and more frequent hate crimes against AAPIs.

News outlets continue to use stock photos of Asian individuals wearing masks, or of local Chinatowns in coverage of stories. Especially when the issue at hand has nothing to do with AAPI communities, news outlets should refrain from using these photos because they gratuitously connect Asian ethnicities with COVID-19.



Pressure local and national news media to take down and replace stock photos that unnecessarily target AAPI communities in their coverage of COVID-19. An example is provided below.



Image retrieved from a Forbes article on unemployment benefits.

LOSS OF REVENUE FOR AAPI BUSINESSES AND WORKERS

Anti-Asian stigma resulted in dramatically reduced patronage for AAPI-owned businesses long before COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, or social distancing mandates were established. OCA chapters report business losses of up to 80%, especially for groceries and restaurants.

Because of this stigma, AAPI-owned businesses suffer losses even greater than those suffered by other businesses due to social distancing and quarantines.

While grocery stores around the country struggle to keep essential items in stock, Asian grocery stores tend to have fuller shelves due to reduced patronage.

Communities around the country should make a concentrated effort to support small, family-owned AAPI businesses.

These are breadwinners with families to support. We must make sure they have the income to weather this crisis.

HATE CRIMES

Through our experiences and from monitoring the news, AAPI communities know that racial discrimination and hate crimes have accelerated since the outbreak of COVID-19.



We lack adequate data on anti-AAPI hate crimes. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Department of Justice (DOJ) have an obligation to prioritize and improve the investigation of anti-AAPI hate crimes. OCA's request for an AAPI hate crimes investigation task force is outlined in this [letter to the White House, FBI and DOJ](#).

Witnesses to hate crimes should practice the bystander intervention strategies provided in this toolkit.

Use:

#WashTheHate
#COVID19
#AAPI

CLASSROOM BULLYING

AAPI students report the highest level of bullying in school classrooms, hallways, or stairwells. COVID-19-related bullying only adds to the suffering of AAPI students. This bullying has led to serious injury and mortal fear.

School districts, administrators and teachers should take proactive measures to prevent further bullying and support their AAPI students.



OCA - New York celebrates Danny Chen, a Chinese American man who was hatefully bullied in the U.S. Army leading up to his death.

● STRATEGIES ●

FOR COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT LEADERS

Apply pressure through letters, phone calls, and in person (if possible) to discourage the naming of country/ethnicity when referring to COVID-19. Demand that they clearly condemn racial violence, and prioritize the protection of AAPI communities.

Remind elected officials that AAPIs are the fastest-growing voting block, which will be reflected in the 2020 Census.

FOR NEWS MEDIA

Pressure local and national news media to take down and replace stock photos that unnecessarily target AAPI communities in their coverage of COVID-19. An example is provided above.

● STRATEGIES ●

FOR FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LEGISLATORS

Contact policymakers in support of legislation that provides relief to struggling AAPI businesses, preserves access to voting during times of crisis, and prioritizes investigation of anti-AAPI hate crimes.

Some examples of bills to support include H.R. 6040, introduced by Rep. Grace Meng in New York, which provides Small Business Administration loans of up to \$2 million to small businesses impacted by disease epidemics, and H.R. 6202, introduced by Rep. Earl Blumenauer, which makes all states allow universal absentee voting during crises.

Limited elements of OCA-endorsed bills H.R. 6040 and 6202 are included in the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed into law on March 27th. However, more can be done at all levels of government to advance the interests of AAPI communities.

● STRATEGIES ●

FOR SUPPORTING LOCAL AAPI BUSINESSES

Most grocery stores have limited stock due to panic buying. However, Asian groceries are generally better-stocked due to racial discrimination. Shop at Asian grocery stores to support AAPI businesses and for a higher chance of finding essential goods.

RESTAURANTS

We recommend that restaurants offer online gift certificates that can be purchased remotely, redeemable in person after the pandemic subsides or immediately through no-contact delivery and takeout.

For restaurants offering no-contact delivery, individuals can order food for delivery. Otherwise, order takeout.

We ask individuals to tip their delivery drivers well.

• STRATEGIES •

FOR FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Keep pushing for the priorities outlined in [this letter](#) to the White House, FBI and Dept. of Justice:

- Improved training for law enforcement officers
- Improved quality assurance for data collection
- Pressure local law enforcement to report to the FBI

REPORT HATE CRIMES

A doctor needs to know the symptoms before they can prescribe the proper treatment. OCA encourages reporting hate crimes to law enforcement, and also to OCA for its own records. Use OCA's [hate crimes reporting tool](#).

You can use the five bystander intervention strategies from the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) and Hollaback! to intervene on behalf of victims, when safe:

- DISTRACT
- DELEGATE
- DELAY
- DIRECT
- DOCUMENT

OTHER RESOURCES

OCA National has enclosed documents that may serve as valuable resources for local chapters to use in their advocacy. These include:

- The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) and Hollaback's bystander intervention guide
- The latest World Health Organization (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID-19
- The WHO's 2015 guidelines for naming diseases
- The Department of Education's letter to educational institutions
- OCA's letter to the White House, Federal Bureau of Investigation, and Department of Justice to prioritize the safety of AAPI communities
- A copy of House Resolution 6040: "Small Business Relief From Communicable Disease Induced Economic Hardship Act of 2020"
- A copy of House Resolution 6202: "The Resilient Elections During Quarantines and Natural Disasters Act of 2020"
- A document outlining the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) plan for COVID-19 response
- The Families First Coronavirus Constituent Service Resource Toolkit, which explains the benefits offered by the federal government's COVID-19 relief programs

HATE CRIMES TRACKING

OCA is keeping a working list of anti-AAPI hate crimes. If you have an incident to add to the list, please use the online reporting tool at <https://www.aapihatecrimes.org/> and contact Matt Nguyen-Ngo, Civil Rights Fellow at matthew.nguyen.ngo@ocanational.org.

Find the working list of anti-AAPI hate crimes [HERE](#)

[Find OCA's COVID-19 landing page HERE](#)

MULTILINGUAL HEALTH RESOURCES

The CDC offers its COVID-19 website in:

[中文 \(Chinese\)](#)

[Español \(Spanish\)](#)

King County, WA offers health information in:

[Amharic](#), [Arabic](#), [Chinese](#), [Filipino/Tagalog](#), [French](#), [Hindi](#), [Japanese](#), [Khmer](#), [Korean](#), [Marshallese](#), [Russian](#), [Somali](#), [Spanish](#), [Thai](#), and [Vietnamese](#).