**API, Strategic plan 2013-2014**

**September 2013**

**Mission:**

To improve the quality of life of Iowa’s Asian and Pacific Islanders by ensuring equal opportunities in education, employment, healthcare, housing and safety through advocacy and ensuring access to benefits and services provided to people in the state.

**Summary of Services**

* Assist constituents with accessing other services, conduct outreach to ensure member’s concerns are heard and routed to the decision makers.
* Advocate for culturally and linguistically appropriate services in other government agencies and service providers.
* Ensure constituents are treated fairly and have equal rights and access to education, employment, health & human services.
* Identify gaps and needs of newly arriving refugees and immigrants
* Study the opportunities for changing needs of the Asian and Pacific Islander persons in the state.
* Serve as a liaison between the office and the public, sharing information and gathering constituency input
* Recommend legislative and executive action to the governor and general assembly.
* Coordinate and cooperate with the efforts of state departments and agencies to serve the needs of Iowans of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage in participating fully in the economic, social and cultural life of the state and provide direct assistance to individuals who request it.
* Develop, coordinate and assist other public or private organizations which serve Iowans of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage
* Serve as an information clearing house on programs and agencies operating to serve/assist Iowans of Asian and pacific islander heritage

**2013-2014 Priority Areas and Initiatives**

**Priority Area 1: Language Access**

**Short term priorities (1-3 years)**

1. Ensure all service providers (state or private, Clinics and hospitals, Iowa Workforce, DOT, courts etc) have information of the language needs of the Asian and Pacific Islander population in Iowa and encourage services in appropriate languages.

*Measurement*: Number of institutions visited and presented, Number of institutions providing language services to Asian clients.

1. Increase the number of qualified interpreters by coordinating a training and mentoring program.

*Measurement:* Number of trainings provided, Number of interpreters trained.

**Long term priority (5-8 years)**

Work with appropriate partners (Refugee Coalition, Resettlement agencies, Refugee service providers like LSI and EMBARC, Bureau of Refugee services) to address the English only law in Iowa to be eliminated and enhanced with Language Access Act – that mandates service providers to provide services in appropriate languages based on the population. Language Access Act of 2004 implemented in D.C will be considered role model.

*Measurement:* Implementation of Language Access Act implemented in Iowa.

**Priority Area 2: Better coordination of service providers, 1-3 years**

1. Support and encourage coalition of service providers who are providing service to Asian communities so that they do not operate in silo, have a platform to share with other agencies doing the same work and have better outcomes.
2. Improve coordination of services between agencies
3. Improve information sharing and participation of all API communities and agencies (IAA, IES) with API office and commissioners.
4. Work more closely with all Asian Communities in Iowa.

*Measurement:* Evidences of more collaboration between agencies, formation of a coalition, API facilitating quarterly meetings.

**Priority Area 3: Access to state benefits and services to API communities. 1-3 years**

**DOT**

* Review of language access
* Introduce Instruction booklet in newer languages (Burmese, Nepali)
* Establish and develop relationship for problem solving during crisis and emergency management.

**Iowa Medicaid Enterprise:**

* Ensure new Iowa Health and Wellness Plan is promoted to non-English speaking Asian populations in appropriate languages and in effective ways.
* Advocate for marketing materials and outreach to Non-English speaking communities in language appropriate ways

**Iowa Workforce Development:**

* Ensure non-English speaking Asian population is served with appropriate languages and key materials are translated in at least few predominant languages to serve non-English speaking Asian and Pacific Islander refugees and immigrants.

**Department of Health:**

* Develop partnership and conduct at least three health related programs targeting specific Asian and Pacific Islander populations.
* Ensure all healthcare providers provide language services to limited English speaking population.
* Provide technical assistance to healthcare providers serving Asian populations to enhance services.

**Public Schools**

* Facilitate in cultural awareness and diversity trainings to students and teachers to help smooth transition to newly arrived refugees.

**Housing Authority**

* Develop an awareness and education campaign to API residents about landlord/tenants’ rights

**IYC and SIYAC**

Develop strategic ways to improve Asian participation in IYC and SIYAC by at least 30% (?)

 **Other initiatives: 1-3 years**

1. Partner with community colleges and universities to conduct information sharing sessions with parents and High school students regarding higher education.
2. Mentoring program – Pair up university graduates with community leaders.
3. Develop collaboration with agencies outside of Des Moines to serve as local partners.