

EMPOWERED ⚡ DATA

AANHPI COMMUNITY SPOTLIGHTS



**REVEALING AND ADDRESSING
HIDDEN STRUGGLES THROUGH
DISAGGREGATED DATA**



AAPI DATA

THE DECADES-LONG JOURNEY FOR DETAILED DATA

For decades, community leaders serving Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities have advocated for detailed data segmented by ethnicity — disaggregated data. In March 2024, the federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) announced revisions to Statistical Policy Directive No. 15: Standards for Maintaining, Collecting, and Presenting Federal Data on Race and Ethnicity (SPD 15).¹ This historic policy amendment mandates federal agencies to collect disaggregated data in all forms, surveys, and censuses no later than March 2029.

For the first time, all federal agencies will be required to include detailed racial and ethnic categories — such as Cambodian, Samoan, Lebanese, and Mexican — in the forms and surveys used to collect data and the reports and databases they make available to the public. This revision to SPD-15 is a momentous development that acknowledges the growing diversity and complexity of racial and ethnic identity in the United States. It is an important start, but much remains to be done. Federal agencies, as well as state and local agencies, must expend the significant effort, resources, and political will to implement and enforce these new standards.

In July 2024, the Data Equity Working Group of the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) launched a Data Use Campaign to demonstrate the critical need for data disaggregation. AAPI Data spearheaded the campaign in partnership with Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC), Southeast Asia Resource Action Center (SEARAC), and Asian Americans Advancing Justice — AAJC. Informed by conversations with the U.S. Chief Statistician, the Data Use Campaign aims to document the concrete implications of failure to act on and enforce the 2024 SPD-15 revisions. Detailed ethnicity-level data serves


as a foundational component for the allocation of resources and the improvement policy and programs to respond to population-specific needs.

COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHTS: USING DATA FOR CHANGE

This document is a collection of *community data spotlights* that describe ways in which nonprofit organizations and researchers have either gained important insight from detailed ethnicity-specific demographic data or encountered obstacles due to its absence. Each spotlight is designed to stand alone for ease of use in diversity of settings and conversations. Ten of the 60 submissions from the Data Use Campaign appear in this collection:

1. **Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence (API-GBV)**
(gender, violence, mental health, poverty)
2. **Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) — Education**
(K-12 schools, disability, English language learners)
3. **Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) — Indo-Caribbean populations**
(housing, redistricting)
4. **Lavender Phoenix**
(gender, sexual orientation, violence)
5. **New Breath Foundation**
(criminal justice, immigration)
6. **School Policy, Action, and Research Center (SPARC) at the University of California, Davis**
(education, violence)
7. **SCIMA LLC**
(Native Hawaiians, out-migration)
8. **Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF)**
(Sikh, race and faith, hate crime)
9. **Umeed-Hope Inc.**
(family violence)
10. **University of California, Los Angeles, Labor Center**
(employment, safety, poverty)

¹ <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2024/03/29/2024-06469/revisions-to-ombs-statistical-policy-directive-no-15-standards-for-maintaining-collecting-and>



Together, these community data spotlights illustrate the need for detailed community-specific data in a diversity of geographies, issue areas, and settings — direct services, advocacy, research, and philanthropy. Key insights from the spotlights include:

- **Data is power**, and without it, community struggles will remain invisible, unaddressed and unresolved. Data is a key ingredient in garnering resources and accruing political will.
- **Cultural and historical context inform the need for detailed data** and who will be most affected by the lack of data.
- **Disaggregation of administrative data is critical**, including key statistics on education, employment, immigration, health, and crime that serve as the basis of policies and decision-making.

- **Disaggregation by ethnicity is one of many factors** that influence the outcomes and experiences of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. The intersections with gender, socioeconomic status, and religious affiliation are also important considerations.

Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders encounter systemic barriers that limit access to the resources and services they need. The nonprofit organizations serving these populations cannot make a compelling case about the severity and persistence of their struggles without the data they need. Many small and under-resourced organizations must collect their own data to demonstrate the existence of their struggles. The implementation and enforcement of the 2024 SPD-15 revisions constitute a significant step forward in understanding pervasive disparities and ensuring data-driven decision-making in public policy.

COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

ASIAN PACIFIC INSTITUTE ON GENDER-BIASED VIOLENCE



By Grace Huang, Director of Policy for API-GBV

TOPICS

Gender, Violence, Mental Health, Poverty

ABOUT

The Asian Pacific Institute on Gender-Based Violence (API-GBV) is a culturally specific national resource center on domestic violence, sexual violence, trafficking and other forms of gender-based violence in Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities. API-GBV envisions a world free of gender-based violence with equal opportunities for members of all communities to thrive. API-GBV works with community based, culturally specific organizations that assist Asian, Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern survivors of domestic and sexual violence and human trafficking. API-GBV collaborates with these organizations in disruption of gender-based violence, which causes physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual and economic harm within AAPI communities throughout the U.S. and its territories.

DATA NEEDS

API-GBV and its community partners recognize an acute need for detailed ethnicity-specific data on the prevalence of domestic violence and sexual assault. Community-based organizations require detailed ethnicity-specific data to make a compelling case for specialized, culturally specific services. This data is especially important for Southeast Asian, Pacific Islander, and Middle Eastern communities. API-GBV publishes original research that speaks to the experiences of AAPI communities with gender-based violence.

API-GBV currently relies on data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics' National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). Both of these national surveys suffer from small statistical sample sizes and lack ethnicity-specific data. The NISVS must provide

disaggregated data about AAPI communities to inform culturally aligned interventions and language supports. The CDC and state health departments conducting Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) surveys must recognize the critical importance of culturally specific approaches in responding to domestic violence and sexual assault. **The Department of Health and Human Services and the Bureau of Justice Statistics must prioritize disaggregated data in the NISVS, NCVS and BRFSS.**

While some states have state-specific violent victimization data, national data and data for Pacific Islanders living in the US Territories (disaggregated from data for the mainland United States) are urgent data gaps that need to be addressed. Some states and localities have focused surveys on specific geographies and populations, but it is inconsistent and sporadic. The lack of detailed data impedes efforts to make a case for culturally and linguistically relevant services, interventions and prevention activities.



Two community advocates reuniting in person at the 2024 API-GBV National Summit: Growing From Our Roots in San Francisco, CA (Photo: Joyce Xi)



Reggie Meredith Fitiao, executive director of Folauga o le Tatau Malaga Aganu'u Fa'asamoa teaching community, advocates during her breakout session, "Nurturing Relational Space to End Violence Through Pasifika Arts, Language & Culture," at the 2024 API-GBV National Summit: Growing From Our Roots in San Francisco, CA (Photo: Joyce Xi)

Recent data from UC San Diego's California's Violence Experiences Survey, as well as data about victimization collected in smaller studies about specific ethnicities, show higher rates of victimization within certain ethnic subgroups. For instance, within South Asian communities, there is a particularly high incidence of domestic violence and in 2023, data showed that 55% of domestic violence-related deaths in these communities were caused by firearms. This highlights an urgent need for more granular gun ownership data, both locally and nationally, to understand the intersection between gun violence and domestic violence. There is a need for language-specific outreach,

greater investment in organizations serving those ethnic groups, and increased training about certain topics, such as immigration remedies for victims in certain locations. Broad-based data must be available at the federal, state and local levels in order to monitor trends and intervene early. Disaggregated data must be compiled to elucidate the prevalence rates of domestic violence, sexual assault and other types of gender-based violence that confronts specific Asian American, Pacific Islander and Middle Eastern communities. To better understand survivors' help-seeking behaviors, **API-GBV needs data on languages spoken, poverty levels, levels of housing and homelessness, physical health and mental health conditions, and disability statuses for survivors of gender-based violence.**



<https://www.api-gbv.org/resources/lifetime-spiral-gender-violence/spiral-graphic>

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COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILIES AND CHILDREN



By Lloyd Feng, Senior Data Policy Coordinator for CACF

TOPICS K-12, Disability, English Language Learners

ABOUT

The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) serves Asian American communities across the state of New York. Their member organizations offer a range of social services, including youth programs, senior care, domestic violence survivor support, English classes for immigrants and small business training. The coalition advocates for equity and opportunity for Asian Americans in education, health and data disaggregation.

DATA NEEDS

CACF and its member organizations have identified an acute need for detailed ethnicity data in K-12 schools. The administrative data from the New York City Department of Education, New York State Education Department and National Center for Education Statistics do not disaggregate by ethnicity. For example, data is available on the number of Asian students who are English Language Learners (ELLs) but data on languages spoken at home is inadequate. The language data does not include all ethnicities or all languages spoken in communities that school districts serve. As a result, families often cannot identify the specific language or dialect spoken at home, instead selecting the “next closest” language option or not identifying their language at all.

Without this precise linguistic data, schools are unable to make data-driven decisions on how to meet the needs of the students and families they serve. Cultural relevance is critical to working effectively with families to support the educational needs of their children. Schools may be unable to differentiate between Indian and Indo-Caribbean students, or between Chinese and Uyghur students. Differences in language and culture are critically important in supporting students’ needs.

This data also is crucial for students with disabilities, whose rights are protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans With Disabilities Act. A successful partnership between schools and families to support students with disabilities must be grounded in an understanding of the family’s culture and language support needs.

One CACF member organization, [South Asian Youth Action \(SAYA\)](#)¹, serves the South Asian and Indo-Caribbean populations in Queens and Brooklyn. The work of SAYA is informed by community knowledge and visits, and the organization emphasizes the need for disaggregated data. Drawing on experiences of CACF members in working with Richmond Hill High School, the organization discerned the importance of distinguishing between Asian Indian and Indo-Caribbean students and



Since 2004, CACF’s Asian American Student Advocacy Project (ASAP) has trained AAPI public school students from across New York City to be advocates for themselves, their communities, and their fellow students. (Photo: Lia Chang)

families. For example, the 2022 American Communities Survey for New York City revealed that Indo-Caribbeans from Guyana have a lower median income and a higher rate of single-parent households compared to Asian Indians. These are important factors in serving students and families, yet Richmond Hill High School does not have disaggregated data on the large South Asian and Indo-Caribbean populations at their school.

To better support the needs of students and families, CACF and its member organizations need K-12 schools to include in their administrative databases detailed ethnicity data on the students and families they serve. Access to such data will enable the community and decision-makers to distinguish differences in educational outcomes, disability status, and English language learner status, and to offer tailored, culturally aligned responses and equitable policies. Disaggregated data by ethnicity must become available at schools, districts and the New York State Education Department.



During the 2024-2025 school year, ASAP Youth Leaders are working on advocacy campaigns focused on mental health, language access, and anti-bullying and harassment. (Photo: CACF)

1 <https://www.saya.org>

Front cover top photo: ASAP Youth Leaders pose for a photo after presenting their research to community members in June 2024. (Photo: CACF)

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CACF
Coalition For Asian American
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COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

COALITION FOR ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILIES AND CHILDREN



By Lloyd Feng, Senior Data Policy Coordinator for CACF

TOPICS

Housing, Redistricting

ABOUT

The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) serves Asian American communities throughout the state of New York. CACF's member organizations offer a range of social services, including youth programs, senior care, domestic violence survivor support, English classes for immigrants, and small business training. The coalition advocates for equity and opportunity for Asian Americans in the areas of education, health and data disaggregation.

DATA NEEDS

An area of significant concern for CACF is the insufficiency of data on Indo-Caribbean populations among New Yorkers at the state, city and county levels. A considerable proportion of New York City's growing Indo-Caribbean population hails from or claims ancestry from Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and other Caribbean countries. In 2022, the New York City's Mayor's Office

of Immigrant Affairs (MOIA) found that Guyana and Jamaica are among the top five countries of origin for new immigrants, with the fastest-growing group coming from Guyana. Despite these statistics, Indo-Caribbean New Yorkers are perpetually invisible — New York's forms and surveys do not include a specific designation for Indo-Caribbean, and the U.S. Census Bureau categorizes Caribbean nationalities as *Black/African American* (such as Jamaican or Trinidadian) or *some other race* (such as Guyanese). Indo-Caribbeans often select "Other" as a result.

Through its work with community-based organizations in southeastern Queens, CACF has found that Indo-Caribbean communities in New York continually encounter barriers to necessary and equitable funding and resources from New York City and state agencies. The lack of data on Indo-Caribbeans further marginalizes this fast-growing community. Examples include:

- **Falling through the social safety net.** During the past 50 years, the significant influx of Indo-Caribbean families immigrating to Queens has escaped the attention of the housing authority, evidenced by the lack of data on Indo-Caribbeans at either the local or state level. Indo-Caribbean immigrants who come to the country are unable to access good-quality housing (as [Chhaya's BASE Campaign](#)¹ has documented), are unhoused, or live in overcrowded housing conditions. They are fearful for the safety of their families and they are unfamiliar with the processes to access public benefits. This problem affects many immigrant communities. When public agencies fail to collect community-specific data at intake, community-based organizations spend years trying to make the case that the communities exist, are growing rapidly, and have acute and urgent needs. Public systems need to be better positioned



Awardees of the CACF co-administered Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund (CCNSF) pose after a recent training. (Photo: CACF)



CACF's Co-Executive Directors Anita Gundanna (left) and Vanessa Leung rally for a fair and equitable New York City Budget on the steps of City Hall in May 2024. (Photo: Radhika Chalasani)

to anticipate needs and react accordingly rather than placing the burden of proof on nonprofit organizations.

- **Diminished political voice.** The redistricting process, which occurs every 10 years, relies on community counts from the Decennial Census. Redistricting processes in the southeast Queens neighborhoods of Richmond Hill and South Ozone Park recurrently divide fast-growing South Asian and Indo-Caribbean populations into three or more districts, diminishing their political power and voice

as ethnic communities. That is true as well for the latest redistricting, through which the potential power of the area's South Asian and Indo-Caribbean communities once again has been diminished, in order to protect political incumbents that have consistently failed to meaningfully recognize and respond to their needs.

Data collection processes must capture more complexity. The interplay of nationality and ethnic heritage have important implications that marginalize Indo-Caribbean families. To understand how to best advocate for the Indo-Caribbean community, social services and government agencies need data on age, gender, immigration patterns, socioeconomic status, utilization of public benefits, housing situation, occupation and educational outcomes resulting from supportive advocacy at every level.

CACF has identified an urgent demand for the Census Bureau, Housing and Urban Development, Health and Human Services, and other federal agencies to recognize and prioritize data collection regarding Indo-Caribbean populations. Likewise, New York State and New York City agencies must acknowledge and incorporate Indo-Caribbeans in their administrative and survey data so that they can proactively respond to the needs of this fast-growing community within their jurisdictions.

1 <https://chhayacdc.org/campaigns/base-campaign/>

Front cover top photo: For nearly 40 years, CACF has brought together advocates and community-based organizations across New York City to advocate for AAPI families. (Photo: Radhika Chalasani)

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LAVENDER PHOENIX



By Yuan Wang, Executive Director of Lavender Phoenix

TOPICS

Gender, Sexual Orientation, Violence

ABOUT

Lavender Phoenix is a community-based organization that supports queer (LGBTQ+), transgender, and non-binary and Asians and Pacific Islanders in the San Francisco Bay Area. The organization builds real solutions to enable members of queer and transgender Asian and Pacific Islander communities to develop self-determination and promote healing.

DATA NEEDS

Lavender Phoenix needs but lacks disaggregated data for queer and transgender Asian and Pacific Islander (QTAPI) communities. To ensure the well-being of QTAPIs, Lavender Phoenix uses data to identify the priority needs of their communities and make the case for supportive resources, policies and practices. The data deficiency hinders the ability of the organization to enlist the partners and resources needed to instigate real change for QTAPIs.

Lavender Phoenix offers comprehensive education on the needs of transgender and non-binary Asians and Pacific Islanders to other service providers and advocates in the San Francisco Bay Area. Data is critical to the adoption of policies and practices that align with the needs and experiences of QTAPIs. Some federal agencies are starting to ask questions about sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), but supportive disaggregated data by race and ethnicity is not widely available. Data-driven decisions about culturally and linguistically aligned supports and services cannot be made in the absence of disaggregated data for each ethnic group.

- **Language:** Many transgender and queer Asians and Pacific Islanders are immigrants and refugees, or come from immigrant or refugee households, with a wide range of language diversity. Without clear

data on the linguistic preferences and needs of our community, the one-size-fits-all approaches to LGBTQ+ health equity overlook important service gaps.

- **Queer identity:** As research has demonstrated, the health and well-being of QTAPI people differ greatly from the larger Asian and Pacific Islander population. QTAPIs face barriers to health and mental health due to the stereotypes, tropes and phobias that exist in society at large. Data-driven solutions will be possible only through the generation of more data and research on the intersections of race and queer identity.

Because of the lack of data on QTAPIs, Lavender Phoenix must raise funds to conduct its own study. Lavender Phoenix administered [a community-led needs assessment titled “Up to Us”¹](#) in 2020. The study was effective in illuminating the needs of queer



Yuan Wang, Lavender Phoenix's Executive Director, speaks at a rally. (Photo: Nicholas Lea Bruno)

and transgender Asians and Pacific Islanders, but the organization cannot fund studies like that recurrently. Lavender Phoenix has discerned an urgent need for data regarding the needs and experiences of queer and transgender Asians and Pacific Islanders. The “Up to Us” needs assessment reveals the deep obstacles that QTAPIs face in four pivotally important areas:

- **Housing and homelessness.** More than 1 in 5 respondents have experienced homelessness, including almost half of respondents (40%) who live in San Francisco, and almost half of feminine respondents (41%).



Lavender Phoenix members lead a chant at a community rally.
(Photo: Nicholas Lea Bruno)

- **Workplace discrimination.** Almost one quarter (23%) of respondents were fired from a job, treated unfairly or declined in job hiring processes because of their gender identities.
- **Violence, harassment and safety.** More than two-thirds of participants (68%) experienced verbal harassment, and one in every six (17%) were physically attacked. Unsurprisingly, more than 80% alter their appearance regularly to avoid harassment. Nearly two-thirds (58%) experienced sexual assault, and more than 40% experienced domestic abuse.
- **Health and mental health.** Almost half (43%) of respondents were uncomfortable going to the doctor. Almost one third (28%) needed to see a doctor, but could not afford to. Moreover, while more than 70% of respondents seriously considered suicide and almost a third (29%) attempted suicide, 74% of respondents face barriers accessing mental health care, and half (49%) reported that mental health care is generally culturally inaccessible.

Data from the needs assessment enabled Lavender Phoenix to educate service providers and advocates about the needs of queer and transgender Asians and Pacific Islanders. Data must be consistently collected over time in order to assess and anticipate the evolving needs of a growing QTAPI population.

1 <https://lavenderphoenix.org/uptous/>

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COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

NEW BREATH FOUNDATION



By Eddy Zheng, President and Founder of NBF

TOPICS

Criminal Justice, Immigration

ABOUT

New Breath Foundation (NBF) is a public foundation and philanthropic intermediary that grants crucial resources to frontline organizations supporting Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (AANHPI) affected by unjust aspects of the U.S. immigration and criminal legal systems. NBF invests in culturally relevant healing interventions, addresses family separation and advocates for systemic change.

Founded in 2017 by Eddy Zheng, New Breath Foundation is part of the AANHPI grassroots movement striving to prevent community violence, end mass incarceration and mass deportation, and advance cross-racial solidarity and racial justice. Despite the need for support, resources for AANHPI organizations are severely underfunded. NBF has added significant resources to the AANHPI movement and seeks to amplify its influence and educate philanthropic organizations and individuals, as well as the public, about these often-invisible communities.

DATA NEEDS

New Breath Foundation and its community partners have identified immediate need for national data on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders who are incarcerated, including data on the share of incarcerated individuals who are deported, on parole, or awaiting review of their court cases. Organizations invested in their welfare accordingly must have access to disaggregated data on warrants for arrest, probation and parole in order to discern the broader trend of AANHPI individuals who are engaged with the justice system.

Supporting organizations urgently need to assess the number and percentage of justice system-involved

AANHPIs at national and state levels. Many AAPI individuals who are involved in the justice system may be especially vulnerable to deportation, which is of concern in the context of a recent wave of deportations of Cambodian, Vietnamese and other individuals with refugee status. Deporting or changing the immigration status of these individuals — many of whom fled to the United States as the result of U.S. foreign policy — is unjust.

Current criminal justice data and disaggregated ethnicity-specific data have excluded specificity to Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders. **NBF and their community partners call on the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Justice Statistics to collect and publish disaggregated justice data for Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.**

To better understand and serve these individuals, data must be tabulated on their socioeconomic status, language needs, gender identity, sexual orientation and housing status. Each of these elements could help provide insight into incarceration trends and potential



2024 Grantee Convening (Photo: Joyce Xi)

community resources to prevent additional or repeat offenders. These data points are needed to answer important questions such as:

- **Which factors prompt justice system involvement?**

- To what extent do state and federal laws prioritize keeping families together and helping individuals heal from the traumas they've experienced?
- Do language barriers tend to increase criminalization?
- Do relationships exist between stress factors, such as ACEs (adverse childhood experiences), mental health, trauma, and disability for immigrants and/or refugees who are incarcerated?
- What is the relationship for AANHPIs between being unhoused or otherwise criminalized and being incarcerated? Is this different or the same as other populations?



Front page top photo and above photo: 2023 Grantee Convening (Photos: Jean Melesaine)

- How are AANHPIs LGBTQ+ people affected? Are they subject to any trends in which they are disproportionately and adversely affected as a population group?

- **What is the severity of consequences?**

- Does the data indicate any reasons why AANHPI youth who are prosecuted as adults tend to have longer average sentences and longer average probation periods compared to other populations?¹
- What is the prevalence of double-punishment incarceration and deportation for East Asians, Southeast Asians, South Asians and Pacific Islanders?
- How commonly do AANHPIs experience a change of immigration status as a consequence of incarceration?

Incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals are overlooked and rendered invisible, without attention, resources, nor remedies for their marginalization and continued deportation. Without data, these injustices will continue to be unseen and unremedied.

1 Human Rights for Kids (2023, May 9). "Crimes Against Humanity – The Mass Incarceration of Children in the United States." <https://humanrightsforkids.org/publication/crimes-against-humanity-the-mass-incarceration-of-children-in-the-united-states>, p. 35

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**NEW
BREATH
FOUNDATION**



COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

SCHOOL POLICY, ACTION AND RESEARCH CENTER



By Kevin Gee, Professor and Director of SPARC

TOPICS

Violence and Discrimination, Education

ABOUT

The School Policy, Action and Research Center (SPARC) at the University of California, Davis (UC Davis), generates research leading to actionable insights that can support the educational well-being of vulnerable youth. SPARC's work focuses on children experiencing adverse life and social circumstances, including Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) youth who have been bullied, children experiencing chronic absenteeism, and youth involved in the child welfare system who have experienced maltreatment. Established by Professor Kevin Gee at the UC Davis School of Education, SPARC's research explores the implications of bullying and hate speech.

DATA NEEDS

While hate and bullying against AAPI youth are longstanding and systemic, this is a critically important juncture to study bullying against AAPI youth amidst the intensification and proliferation of anti-AAPI hate, both nationwide and in California. Yet disaggregated data specific to ethnicity, vital to gaining understanding of the scope of the problem, is deficient.

The California Healthy Kids Survey (CHKS), a large-scale statewide survey of youth conducted annually under the sponsorship of the California Department of Education. It is the only dataset that captures bullying experiences with disaggregated information on AAPI subgroups. The Bureau of Justice Statistics also offers data on hate speech and bullying through the School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), but the data is disaggregated only by racial group, not by ethnicity. **A significant data gap remains at the national level, with no data to assess the effects of hate speech and bullying on youth in each AAPI ethnic group.**

SPARC's recent report *Bullying of California's Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth*¹ leveraged data from the California Healthy Kids Survey to analyze rates of anti-AAPI bullying among 9th and 11th graders who identify as Asian American, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. The study examined experiences with bullying in specific AAPI ethnic subgroups, including Asian Indian, Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Filipino, Southeast Asian (Cambodian, Laotian and Hmong), and Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Research questions included:

1. How do anti-AAPI bullying rates, overall and for each AAPI student subgroup, compare to statewide rates?
2. Which AAPI subgroups experienced the highest rates?
3. How did bullying rates during pandemic-induced school closures differ from the frequency of reported bullying incidents prior to 2020?



Anti-AAPI bullying declined as schools shifted to remote learning during the pandemic.

4. Which California regions experienced higher rates of anti-AAPI bullying?
5. Do supportive school climates result in reduced incidence of bullying for AAPI students?
6. Which districts have the most accessible bullying-related resources and online reporting systems for AAPI students and families?

The *Bullying of California's Asian American and Pacific Islander Youth* study found that Cambodian, Hmong, Laotian, and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander youth are subjected to the highest rates of bullying among all students statewide. The researchers delineated the impact of COVID on bullying, as well as the regions where bullying of AAPI students was most

prevalent. Importantly, the study identified important mitigating factors — notably, AAPI students who felt connected to their schools and supported by adults at the school had a lower risk of experiencing bullying. The findings also pointed to the efficacy of anti-bullying resources and reporting systems in specific school systems throughout California.

With the alarming rise in suicide rates among AAPI youth documented in a *JAMA Network Open* report,² these findings point to the urgent need for disaggregated data that tracks AAPI youth experiences with bullying and hate speech. **Disaggregated data is urgently needed across all age groups in the K-12 system — elementary school, middle school, and high school — at the national, state and school district levels.** There is currently no data on middle school students. Existing datasets need to support disaggregation by ethnic group, such as the NCVS School Crime Supplement and the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study — Kindergarten (ECLS-K), and the Common Core of Data (CCD).



Solving anti-AAPI bullying requires building strong school climates where students feel connected to school and each other.

- 1 Gee, K. A., Hang, S., Jost, G., & Cooc, N. (2024, May). Bullying of California's Asian American and Pacific Islander youth: Who is most at risk and what can schools do? UC Davis School Policy, Action and Research Center. https://education.ucdavis.edu/sites/main/files/misc/sparc_report_bullying_aapi_youth_05-2024_final.pdf
- 2 Bui, A. L., & Lau, A. S. (2024). Suicide rates among Asian American and Pacific Islander youths — A cause for alarm. *JAMA Network Open*, 7(7). <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.22694>

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COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

SCIMA



By Justin Hong, Principal of SCIMA

TOPICS

Native Hawaiians, Out-migration

ABOUT

SCIMA is an independent research and evaluation company that works primarily with Native Hawaiian serving organizations in Hawai'i. It is focused on understanding, supporting, and advocating for Native Hawaiian communities. SCIMA has worked with multiple organizations to understand issues around education, health, economics, spirituality, and changes in demographics. These efforts have helped to support program development by and for Native Hawaiian communities, as well as bring visibility and clarity to key issues.

DATA NEEDS

SCIMA emphasizes the critical need for disaggregated data on Native Hawaiian communities for specific geographies. In the Aloha State, the Native Hawaiian population is defined as anyone who reports being of Native Hawaiian race or ancestry alone or in combination with other races or ethnicities. Despite the unique historical and cultural significance of Native Hawaiians, this population remains largely underserved and overlooked due to the lack of granular, community-specific data. Native Hawaiian communities were previously defined at the sub-county level (e.g., census tracts and county subdivisions), which revealed crucial insights into variations within neighborhoods. However, recent changes to the U.S. Census have resulted in the loss of county subdivision-level geographies for the Native Hawaiian population. This reliable middle ground for geographic resolution has been erased. Without this key level of granularity, the Native Hawaiian population becomes less visible, leading to inaccurate representation in both research and policymaking.

A significant example is the 2020 Census data. While it contains detailed demographic and housing characteristics (DHC-A and DHC-B), it excludes many of the tables that were contained in earlier Census releases, such as those in Summary Files 1 and 2 (SF1 and SF2). This lack of detailed, community-level data prevents effective tracking of population changes, thereby impeding the ability to discern key trends, such as out-migration, population aging, and community-level economic disparities over the past decade.

Native Hawaiians are the only major racial/ethnic group in Hawai'i with consistent negative net migration, indicating a critical need to understand out-migration patterns to the U.S. continent. The lack of detailed disaggregated data severely limits the ability to answer important questions, such as:

- How many Native Hawaiians have left Hawai'i, and what are the annual out-migration rates?
- From which communities are Native Hawaiians most likely to move?
- How do employment, educational attainment and homeownership influence migration patterns among Native Hawaiians?

Further, Native Hawaiians face multiple barriers that thwart equitable access to resources, the limited availability of which often is exacerbated by inadequate data collection. For instance, communities with lower employment rates or higher concentrations of young adults may be disproportionately affected by out-migration, but this cannot be adequately tracked without detailed, disaggregated data. Furthermore, recent Census data does not capture the complexities of mixed-race identities, leaving a significant portion of

the population uncounted or misclassified. This lack of visibility translates into diminished political power, limited funding opportunities, and poorly targeted community interventions. Detailed disaggregated data is crucial not only for understanding socioeconomic outcomes but also for ensuring fair representation during redistricting processes and other political activities. For the Native Hawaiian community to be effectively served, federal and state agencies must prioritize the collection of disaggregated data that accurately reflects community-specific needs. This data should capture nuanced details, such as migration patterns, educational attainment, employment status and household characteristics at the most granular and

reliable geographic levels possible. Native Hawaiians' unique identity and experiences must be recognized across data collection processes, including those led by the U.S. Census Bureau, Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and state and local Hawaiian agencies.

Ethnicity-specific population data for county subdivision-level geographies must be restored, and detailed tables that track changes over time must be included in Census reports. Only with accurate and detailed data can meaningful, data-driven solutions be developed to support Native Hawaiian communities and ensure that their voices are heard in policymaking and planning processes.

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COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

SIKH AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE AND EDUCATION FUND



By Jyot Singh, Policy and Research Consultant, SALDEF

TOPICS

Sikh, Race and Faith, Hate Crime

ABOUT

The Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund (SALDEF) is the nation's oldest Sikh American civil rights organization focused on building leadership and capacity in the Sikh American community. The mission of the organization is to empower Sikh Americans by building dialogue, deepening understanding, promoting civic and political participation, and upholding social justice and religious freedom for all Americans. SALDEF, based in Washington, D.C., envisions a United States in which Sikh Americans are respected and recognized as a vibrant and integral part of the fabric of this nation and are appreciated for their shared values of service, social justice, and an unshakeable belief in freedom and equality for all.

DATA NEEDS

SALDEF believes that federal data must encompass more detail and nuance on the diversity of the South Asian communities in the United States, for which compilation of disaggregated ethnic data constitutes an important milestone. In the experiences of Sikhs, a religious minority within the Indian diaspora, faith is the historical basis for discriminatory treatment if not overt state-sponsored violence against them, both within India and abroad. Caste-oppressed individuals, including Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus, are victimized by on the basis of their caste assignment at birth; they are subjected to structural discrimination by employers, higher-positioned coworkers, landlords and others of higher caste within India, and increasingly within the United States.

Federal agencies have failed to gather information about religious or faith-based constructs such as caste, and the lack of data translates into a lack of resources to rectify those harms. Federal data systems must

collect and publish statistics on many aspects of the Sikh community, including:

- **Hate crime data.** Sikh advocates and community members emphasize the need for crime statistics from the Department of Justice and the FBI. Sikh Americans are among the most targeted communities per capita in hate crimes and hate incidents. Detailed data on Sikh Americans is needed to push for a stronger cultural emphasis in law enforcement and reporting of hate crimes and incidents. The DOJ's inclusion of an anti-Sikh hate category was a significant victory, yet much work remains to rectify noncompliance by municipal and county-level agencies and to mitigate systemic underreporting.
- **Locations.** To advocate for fellow Sikhs, SALDEF needs to know where Sikh communities are located (Census American Communities Survey and Decennial Census). SALDEF proactively seeks out Sikh communities across the United States by using data from the Census Bureau's American



Sikh youth conducting SikhVOTE voter outreach and education efforts at their local Gurdwara

Community Survey. This information is cross-checked with SALDEF's own data-gathering on the locations of gurdwaras (houses of worship that serve as community centers) throughout the country. While Census and ACS data are hugely important, the inability of survey respondents to specify Sikh identity alongside national origin remains a major barrier to engaging and advocating for Sikh community members who may need help the most.

- **Employment data.** To better assess economic insecurity and workplace discrimination, data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and Department of Transportation must be made available. SALDEF is actively pushing for better reporting from federal departments overseeing industries in which many first-generation Sikhs are employed, including the departments of Agriculture and Transportation. These data have a secondary purpose as another source to help advocates locate large communities within the United States.
- **Heightened immigration enforcement.** U.S. Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) policies remains a significant concern (DHS/CBP and DHS/ICE administrative data). SALDEF is regularly in contact with DHS enforcement agencies and consistently reviews data released by CBP and ICE. Sikh-specific data is not available, however. Such data would be important in informing SALDEF's regional focus areas and would be used to cross-reference anecdotal reports from released asylum-seekers. These datasets continue to suffer from substantial underreporting, coincident with the prevalence of heightened enforcement reported by community members.

- **Violence.** Growing threats of violence against Sikhs drives a need to understand firearm-based crime (DOJ/ATF). In recent years, SALDEF has more directly confronted the entwined threats of gun violence and hate crimes against Sikhs. SALDEF is exploring the potential of using data from the DOJ's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) to assess violence against Sikh Americans.

The difficulty in expressing Sikh identity along vectors of national origin remains a huge stumbling block for organizations like SALDEF to push community members to engage more deeply in federal systems. Until federal data systems can capture the faith- and caste-based identities of South Asians, the data will continue to mask predictable outcomes, including exclusion from employment, housing or other opportunities by members of our own diaspora. This consequential request is intended to resolve one of the most enduring gaps preventing equity for Sikhs and other South Asians in federal data-gathering systems.



2024 SikhLEAD D.C. internship program cohort at the U.S. Capitol (Photo: Les Talusan)

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COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

UMEED-HOPE INC.



By Komal Kaur, President of Umeed-Hope Inc.

TOPICS

Mental Health, Family Violence

ABOUT

Umeed-Hope Inc. (Umeed) is an organization based in Indianapolis, Indiana, serving family violence survivors. The Umeed team of mental health professionals and attorneys supports families in emergencies, advocates for the needs of family violence survivors, and educates the public on the tools needed to identify triggers and signs of family violence. In collaboration with local community organizations and public schools, Umeed aims to break the cycle of violence through effective and culturally appropriate tools for healing and individual empowerment.

DATA NEEDS

Umeed-Hope is focused on understanding family violence and its risk factors in South Asian communities. To date, the organization has relied on data from the Census Bureau to discern relationships between demographic characteristics, such as ethnic and cultural background, socioeconomic status and language proficiency, and family violence. Demographic data is important but not enough – Umeed-Hope also needs data that captures the intersectionality of issues such as immigration status, cultural practices, mental health and family violence. It is seeking more comprehensive and culturally specific data that reflects the nuanced experiences of South Asian immigrant and refugee communities. **This data is crucial for understanding the makeup of the communities Umeed-Hope serves so it can tailor services accordingly.**

Umeed-Hope lacks but needs ethnicity-specific data on the prevalence of family violence, the pervasiveness of mental health conditions, and the accessibility of culturally competent services for South Asian immigrant and refugee populations. Development of culturally and

linguistically aligned interventions to prevent and/or mitigate such deterring influences of family members remains impossible, however, without disaggregated data. **More detailed data is crucial to assist the needs of the South Asian community, which includes Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Buddhists, Punjabis, Gujaratis, Tamils, Bengalis, Pakistanis, Sri Lankans, Nepalis, Bangladeshis, Adivasis, and Dalits.** Each of these groups have distinct cultural customs and norms for which programs must take account to be successful.

The lack of data hinders Umeed-Hope's efforts to serve community members and advocate for their needs – data is the first step to ensuring the resources and attention needed to meet community needs. Increased collaboration between public agencies and local organizations like Umeed-Hope could help bridge these data gaps and lead to more effective, culturally aligned



Komal Kaur, President of Umeed-Hope, with elementary students at Gurmat Camp—a week-long camp at Sikh Satsang of Indianapolis that emphasizes Sikhi, Punjabi culture, and includes sessions on mental health.

interventions. Umeed-Hope's priorities for essential data disaggregated by ethnicity include:

- **Health, mental health and well-being.** Agencies in these functional areas could improve by collecting and disseminating more specific, disaggregated data on immigrant and refugee populations, including details on their experiences with domestic violence, mental health, and access to services.
 - Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) agencies that should publish disaggregated data include the Administration for Children and Families' Office of Refugee Resettlement (AFC/ORR), Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC oversees key datasets such as the National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey (NISVS) and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS).



Presentation by Komal Kaur for elementary students at Gurmat Camp at Sikh Satsang of Indianapolis. The session covers what bullying is, how often it happens, and whom students can turn to for support.

- **Criminal justice.** The Department of Justice (DOJ) oversees the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), which needs to enhance its data collection on domestic violence incidents within specific ethnic communities.
- **Demographics at a local level.** A significant gap in data is evident regarding the intersection of immigration status, language proficiency, and access to social services at a more localized level, such as city or neighborhood data. If ethnicity-specific data at the local level could be added to the U.S. Census Bureau's American Communities Survey (ACS), that information would be invaluable.

The lack of ethnicity-specific data has implications beyond Umeed-Hope. It also limits foundational academic research and knowledge-building that form the evidence base for effective interventions. For instance, Umeed-Hope and other agencies would welcome invaluable evidence elucidating how cultural stigmas within South Asian communities can discourage people from reporting domestic violence or mental health struggles. Similarly, information on the effectiveness of existing federal- and state-level interventions for these populations, including barriers to accessing services, would greatly enhance the ability of Umeed-Hope to develop targeted support programs.

To better serve survivors of family violence, Umeed-Hope needs HHS, DOJ, and the Census Bureau to integrate ethnicity-specific data in all reports. This data is critical to informing Umeed about how best to serve the community, to improving understanding of the drivers of family violence in the community, and to enhancing the ability of the organization to advocate for necessary resources.

Front cover top photo: Umeed-Hope board members alongside community allies at Healing Collectively, a coalition-building event hosted by Umeed aimed at raising awareness about gun violence and honoring the victims of the FedEx mass shooting.

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COMMUNITY DATA SPOTLIGHT

UCLA LABOR CENTER



By Lucero Herrera, Senior Research Analyst, UCLA

TOPICS

Employment, Safety, Health, Poverty

ABOUT

For more than 50 years, the UCLA Labor Center has created and disseminated innovative programs that offer a range of educational, research and public service activities within the university and in the broader community, especially among low-wage and immigrant workers. The Labor Center is a vital resource for research, education and policy development to help create jobs that are good for workers and their communities, to improve the quality of existing jobs in the low-wage economy, and to strengthen the process of immigrant integration, especially among students and youth.

DATA NEEDS

The UCLA Labor Center identifies an urgent need for detailed ethnicity information within labor and employment data. Comprehensive, disaggregated data is essential for organizations and government agencies to advocate for better working conditions and economic mobility for people in communities of color, including Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPIs). This data is needed at the national, state and local levels. The UCLA Labor Center needs disaggregated data at the county level to produce actionable insights, in response to county-specific policies and enforcement, and due to county-specific concentrations of AAPI populations and industries.

UCLA Labor Center conducts research in a broad range of industries, including the restaurant, grocery, janitorial, home care and personal services sectors. For illustration, this brief details the experiences of workers in the nail salon industry. In March 2024, the UCLA Labor Center and the [California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative](#)¹ released *Nail Files: A Study of Nail Salon Workers and Their Industry*.² Their goal was to develop a comprehensive profile of the nail salon workforce in

California, emphasizing labor conditions and potential policy solutions to improve labor standards and economic mobility. Research questions included:

- What are the demographic characteristics of nail salon workers?
- What are their employment outcomes – for example, type of employment, wages, hours worked?
- How might employment outcomes vary by demographic and household characteristics – for example, immigration status, years in the United States, English proficiency, home ownership status, poverty status, number of people in the household?

For this study, the UCLA Labor Center primarily relied on the American Community Survey (ACS) and Current Population Survey (CPS), supplemented by the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW) for information on key industries. The research team focused on demographic variables, employment outcomes, and some household characteristics (including house tenure, reliance on public assistance, and children in the household) to elucidate the impact of low wages and precarious labor conditions on workers and their families. The researchers found that nail salons and other personal care services industries have a high concentration of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) workers, substantiated in key statistics:

- Nail salon workers tend to be women (85%), Asian (84%), and immigrants or refugees (81% were born outside of the United States). Among those born outside of the United States, 82% were born in Vietnam.
- Most nail salon workers are middle-aged, with the largest concentration of workers 45–60 years old, skewing older compared to California workers in other fields.

- A majority (80%) of nail salon workers are paid low wages, with an hourly median wage of \$10.94 (which is below California's \$13.00 minimum wage mandated in 2021 for businesses with up to 25 employees).
- Almost a third of nail salon workers are self-employed, which is triple the average for all other industries in California.
- Housing and food security are a concern for 65% of workers who are rent-burdened or severely rent-burdened, for 19% who live in overcrowded households, and for 15% who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits.

All these findings together helped UCLA Labor Center researchers determine the types of interventions needed to promote better working conditions and economic mobility for workers. For example, the study shows that most workers receive low wages and many may be misclassified as self-employed contractors rather than employees, thereby indicating need for greater enforcement of labor laws. Local and state agencies would benefit from partnering with worker centers and Vietnamese-serving institutions to initiate contact with nail salon workers to ensure that they are aware of educational materials and that enforcement resources are culturally appropriate and available in their primary language. Further education to help nail salon workers elevate their skills for potential advancement constitute another key intervention point. Because many nail salon workers are monolingual Vietnamese speakers, education programs and career-building opportunities must be made available to fit the specific needs of this community. [California's AB2444](#)³ seeks to address this need. UCLA Labor Center research highlights the need for multi-stakeholder partnerships to develop comprehensive programs that help owners achieve labor law compliance, including education on sustainable business practices, fair pay, scheduling, benefits and worker advancement opportunities.



Nail salon worker in California (Photo: Joyce Xi)

The ability to identify Vietnamese Americans in the nail salon industry was critical to the nuanced understanding of the language and cultural needs of this segment of the workforce. This research illuminates the importance of disaggregated data in all survey and administrative data, including the American Community Survey (ACS), Current Population Survey (CPS), and the Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW). This data is essential at the state and county levels, because labor enforcement and protections often start locally. **Disaggregated data is critical to assessing and ensuring labor law compliance and fair wages for communities of color in the United States.**

- 1 <https://www.cahealthynailsalons.org>
- 2 Huynh, J., Sharma, P., Waheed, S., Fu, L., Herrera, L., Nguyen, M., & Porter, C. (2024). Nail files California: A study of nail salon workers and industry. UCLA Labor Center and California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative. <https://www.cahealthynailsalons.org/reports/nail-files-california>
- 3 Introduced February 13, 2024, by Assembly member Alex Lee (24th District, which includes parts of Alameda and Santa Clara counties). <https://a24.asmdc.org/press-releases/20240213-bill-ensure-labor-law-education-nail-salon-industry-introduced>

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