



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
OFFICE OF COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
Office of the Director
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COPS★

Honoring Asian and Pacific Islanders

May was selected as the month to honor the AAPI community because it commemorates the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in May of 1843, as well as the completion of America's transcontinental railroad in May 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks for that literal and symbolic linking of our nation were Chinese immigrants. In the more than 150 years since, the AAPI community has continued to grow across this country, with some of the most exponential growth occurring in recent years. The White House AAPI Initiative estimates that this community grew by 43 percent between 2000 and 2010, and now includes more than 15 million individuals. It is projected to grow by another 35 million people over the next 40 years.

Even though the AAPI community is one of our fastest growing communities, it is often left out of discussions of diversity, particularly in law enforcement. But as police chiefs across the country recognize that we need to diversify agencies in order to reflect the communities we serve, the AAPI community cannot be left out of the discussion.

Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month is the perfect time to talk about the need to increase diversity in the field and the importance of cultural competency in effective policing. To be culturally competent as a law enforcement agency means being conscious of the dynamics inherent when cultures interact and adapting service delivery to reflect an understanding of the diversity in communities.

The COPS Office has been working to address this very issue in recent years, sponsoring the development of two training curriculums designed to explore AAPI communication styles and cultural variations, and how these different communication styles can alter law enforcement and AAPI citizen interactions. Two trainings may not change the world, but much like a heritage month, it does provide a chance to highlight an important need and spark a discussion. And this is a discussion I look forward to continuing with all of you as we work together to ensure law enforcement agencies in this country are serving their communities in ways that both reflect and value the diversity that makes each one unique.

Sincerely,

Ronald L. Davis, Director