

NAPAWF

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

PLATFORM PAPERS

1. [Civil Rights](#) | 2. [Economic Justice](#) | 3. [Educational Access](#)
4. [Ending Violence against Women](#) | 5. [Health](#)
6. Immigrant and Refugee Rights

This collection of Platform Papers describe the six issue areas that form the basis for NAPAWF's work. The Platform Papers are not meant to provide a complete list of issues and concerns in these areas. Nor does the format of this collection assume that the issues discussed can be neatly separated into six areas. Rather, the Platform Papers are intended to be works-in-progress that serve as companions to the organization's grassroots work.

PLATFORM PAPER ON

IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE RIGHTS

Working Group: Immigrant and Refugee Rights Committee: Claire Guyu Johnson, Xuan Nguyen-Sutter, Masami Suga (Contact person), Ann Webb

ISSUE AREAS

- Limited political empowerment
- Limited and unstable economic and legal protection

PROBLEM STATEMENTS

The United States continues to receive refugees and immigrants from around the world who struggle to find a safe and permanent home in our communities. Asian and Pacific Islander women and girls account for a substantial number among the new Americans. Many face unique social, economic, legal, and political challenges because of their ethnicity, gender, language barriers, educational circumstances, economic conditions, citizenship status, country of origin, and so on. As a result, the civic and political participation of refugee/immigrant API women and girls has been minimal, thus necessitating their reliance on others to advocate for their rights and well-being.

Although welfare myths portray refugees and immigrants as America's economic liability, the majority achieve self-sufficiency in a relatively short period of time. However, public criticism has been particularly severe against refugee/immigrant API women and girls, who tend to require a longer adjustment time due to social and cultural factors, including low literacy rates, family responsibilities, and expected women's roles. Such factors also contribute to difficulties in acquiring U.S. citizenship. As a result, welfare and immigration reform significantly affects the lives of refugee/immigrant API women, especially those without U.S. citizenship, by limiting their access to the economic safety net and legal protection.

PLATFORM GOALS

- To increase visibility and political empowerment of refugee/immigrant API women and girls.
- To ensure and enhance economic and legal protection regardless of citizenship status.

ISSUE AREA OBJECTIVES

- Promote participation of refugee/immigrant API women and girls in public and political affairs.
- Increase the number of refugee/immigrant API women in public policy-making positions.
- Monitor public policy affecting refugee/immigrant API women and girls and disseminate such information in an easily comprehensible format in multiple languages on a regular basis.
- Advocate for the preservation and expansion of economic and legal protection for refugee/immigrant API women and girls regardless of citizenship status.

ISSUE AREA STRATEGIES

- Promote and assist coalition-building among refugee/immigrant API women and girls of all backgrounds to achieve stronger and more unified political representation.
- Organize community forums that are participant-friendly and accessible to refugee/immigrant API women and girls (provide on-site interpreters, transportation, a women-friendly atmosphere) to come to voice their unique concerns.
- Provide education and training opportunities for refugee/immigrant API women and girls interested in a career and/or service in public affairs (e.g. scholarships for a training workshop on how to run for local elected positions).
- Compile a list of qualified refugee/immigrant API women interested in community board service and make such a list widely available to educational institutions, community organizations, businesses, governmental agencies, etc.
- Advocate and organize a system (e.g. peer-teaching) through which public policy affecting refugee/immigrant API women and girls is monitored; translate into an easily comprehensible format in multiple API languages to increase awareness and participation.
- Disseminate accurate information to eliminate welfare myths about refugee/immigrant API women and girls as America's economic liability (i.e., stories and facts about constraints and opportunities must be balanced).
- Work in collaboration with other API and non-API agencies to assist refugee and immigrant women to become U.S. citizens (or to pass the citizenship test).
- Work in collaboration with other API and non-API advocacy groups, mutual assistance agencies, resettlement agencies, etc., to develop and implement a campaign aimed at local government bodies to ensure economic and legal protection for refugee/immigrant API women and girls regardless of citizenship status.

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

None listed

NATIONAL CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL

Objective:

To increase public awareness of issues and needs unique to refugee/immigrant API women and girls.

● **Strategies:**

- Develop an information packet that addresses: 1) experiences common to refugee and immigrant women and girls across ethnic boundaries and 2) issues and needs unique to specific groups of women and girls (by age, country of origin, language skills, etc.) in each of the NAPAWF regions.
- Provide education and leadership training to prepare and produce refugee/immigrant API women and girls for service in public policy-making positions at local, regional, and national levels.
- Build media relations skills among refugee/immigrant API women and girls to effectively address and publicize their concerns, activities, campaigns, etc.
- (Co)sponsor programs and events about issues concerning refugee/immigrant API women and girls.
- Organize fundraising efforts for the items listed above aimed at correcting current injustices to refugee/immigrant API women and girls.