



# Local Strength, National Impact

*A Toolkit for Building APALA Chapters*

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# Pre-Chapters: How to Start a Chapter

## Chapter Start-Up Requirements and Procedure:

1. **Charter Application :** A *minimum* of 10 APALA members in good standing from at least 3 different unions. Additional signatures may be submitted. Signatures may be collected as letters or by signing Charter Application Form.
2. **Pre-chapter Members Agree on Chapter By-Laws.** Pre-chapter members review and agree on chapter by-laws consistent with the national constitution and policies.
3. **File Charter Application and By-Laws with National Office.** Executive Director grants a provisional charter.
4. **National Executive Board gives final approval at next board meeting.** Board meetings occur twice a year.

Before receiving a charter, APALA pre-chapters are required to demonstrate broad and deep interest by recruiting a minimum of 10 APALA members from at least 3 different unions. Pre-chapters are encouraged to go above this minimum. This helps to ensure that chapters get off the ground on a solid footing.

Pre-chapters trying to start a chapter often face a “chicken-or-the-egg” dilemma of how to recruit members to APALA activities because they need members to start with in order to plan and carry out activities, but can’t plan and carry out activities without members. In reality, chapters and pre-chapters need to work simultaneously on both building organizational capacity and programming. In the second and third sections of this toolkit, we go into further detail on these two components of chapter building. To recruit the first few core activists, however, pre-chapters with just one coordinator and a couple members initially may need to rely on highlighting what APALA has done nationally or in other chapters as a way of getting potential chapter leaders excited about the possibilities for a chapter in their area. The national office can also help pre-chapters with some of the legwork of contacting local unions to enlist their help in identifying potential Asian American union activists to work on the building a chapter.

## Suggestions

**Find out if there are already other APALA members in your area.** There are 13 APALA Chapters and Pre-Chapters. If a chapter is not conveniently located near where you work or live, contact the national office for a list of APALA members near you.

**Start an organizing committee.** Form a committee to divide up the outreach work of contacting local labor organizations and to begin discussing the goals and vision for the chapter.

**Contact your Local Central Labor Council and State Federation of Labor.** To find them, check the AFL-CIO website: <http://www.aflcio.org/aboutus/unioncities/> . Send them a letter and then follow-up with a phone call. Ask them about unions to target and whether they would support your efforts by contacting union locals and letting them know that an APALA chapter will be forming in the area. Find out when the CLC or State Fed will be meeting and ask if you can speak at their next meeting about APALA and your how a chapter can help build the local labor movement. See Sample Letter and Rap for Outreach Call in the Tools and Resources section.

**Attend a CLC or State Fed meeting.** These meetings are an opportunity to meet with local labor leaders, identify which locals may have Asian American union members, and enlist the union’s support in finding potential APALA members. Ask them if they would like to join APALA (being Asian is not

required) and what would be the best way to contact their Asian American members. Be sure to have membership forms and recent APALA literature to distribute. The APALA national office can help you prepare a short presentation or remarks.

**Contact Local Labor Unions.** Start by asking your own union about how you can contact Asian American union members. Some possible ways to reach the members is to

- Ask if you can say a few words about APALA at a unit meeting
- Ask the newsletter editor if you can write about the pre-chapter in the newsletter
- Ask the local President or staff whether they would be willing to either give you a list of Asian American union members or contact them on behalf of the pre-chapter. You can offer to send them a sample letter to make it easier for them.

**Signing up APALA founding members.** The charter application form must be signed by a minimum of 10 members from 3 different unions. You can either collect signatures in person or have members mail back their interest in forming a chapter. While recruiting members in person, always keep on hand both membership forms and the Charter Application form so you can keep track of your progress towards meeting the chapter start-up requirements.

**Hold a chapter founding meeting.** This meeting will allow your members to meet each other and discuss their goals and ideas for the chapter as well as to finalize the application for a chapter by agreeing on by-laws and gaining additional signatures to the Charter application. Before the meeting or at the meeting, send out the sample by-laws for members to review and comment. An electronic version is available for emailing. Please contact the national office when you think you might be ready to hold a chapter-founding meeting so that we can assist you with preparing for the meeting. We can also be available to attend the meeting itself and answer questions your members have about APALA.

**Assistance from the National Office.** The national office can help you contact labor organizations in your area by helping you to identify them, sending out letters, and calling them.

Tools and Resources:

Membership Form, Blue Sign-up cards  
Sample Outreach Letter  
Sample Meeting Announcement Flyer  
The 5-point Outreach Rap  
Charter Application Form  
Sample By-laws  
Members in your area (available by request from the national office)

# Building Organizational Capacity

In the next two sections, we focus on building organizational capacity and developing chapter programs by outlining general goals and more specific benchmarks for your chapter to use to evaluate your progress and guide your activities. Getting the organizational aspects of your chapter in order will help to build your capacity to accomplish your Program goals and vice-versa. Having chapter programs that your members believe are important and are willing and able to work on builds your chapter gets more people involved and builds your base of activists.

## Assessing your Chapter's Organizational Capacity

Start by taking an honest assessment of where your chapter is in terms of organizational capacity in order to plan for where you would like to see the chapter be in the near future and for the long-term. Below are 5 components of an APALA chapter organization to work on improving followed by more concrete benchmarks by which you can measure your progress and suggestions for reaching those goals.

1. Membership Growth and Retention Plan
2. Developing New Leadership
3. Outreach: Local Unions
4. Outreach: Community partners
5. Calendar or Timetable

## 1. Membership Growth and Retention Plan

### Benchmarks:

- ❑ **Member Retention:** Conduct a membership drive at the beginning of every year. Keep the membership information up-to-date and relay updates back to the national office for our database. Spread the word that members can update their own contact information using the APALA website.
- ❑ **Set a Goal.** Set a target number of members your chapter would like to reach by the end of the year.
- ❑ **Identify new local unions** where you think you will be able to find new members.
- ❑ **Hold regular membership meetings.** Decide whether it will be monthly, every other month, or quarterly.
- ❑ **Year-round membership recruitment.** At chapter, labor, and community events you attend, always talk about APALA and encourage people to join either as paid members or as subscribers to our email newsletter and Action Alerts.

### Suggestions:

Setting Growth Targets. How many members can you recruit in the next year?

Growth of APALA as an organization depends on chapters setting a growth target and implementing it. Because there is a wide variety of chapter sizes and local opportunities to find new members, there is no one number or percentage to recommend for all chapters as an answer to the question. Some chapters are starting out with a larger base of core activists and therefore a larger number of recruiters. Some chapters are located in areas with many more APIA union members than others or more clustered either by workplace or geography and therefore have greater opportunities for recruiting. To determine what is right for your chapter, start by looking at your average membership size over the years and asking your core activists how many new members they think they can recruit over the next year. Though it is not an exact science, it does help to have an actual target number and breakdown where the new members will come from and who will recruit them.

- ❑ Small Chapters (Less than 50 total members and 5 or fewer core activists): The bare minimum requirement for a chapter is to maintain at least 10 members from 3 different unions, but you will most likely need more than that to build an active presence within your community and local labor movement. Start by going over the basics of forming a chapter: Identify local unions where you can find new APALA members and Enlist the support of the CLC in your area to find contacts.
- ❑ Medium Chapters (50-149 total members; less than 10 core activists). Once you have established a base or a contact in most of the unions with APIA members, focus on building density within those areas by asking an active member to be the point person or coordinator for that workplace or neighborhood. Give them specific tasks such as talking to 5 potential members about APALA, distributing a flyer, or surveying APIA workers from their workplace about issues they face. And of course, don't forget to close by asking them to join APALA. Breaking up the membership into groups each with a coordinator will facilitate communications, help to identify potentially active members (from the members who are general supporters of APALA), and then allow the chapter to concentrate its efforts on mobilizing the potential activists.
- ❑ Large Chapters (over 150 members; over 10 core activists). In addition to the above, consider spinning off an area into another chapter. If there are geographic concentrations, work on finding activists in those areas who can be developed into leaders for that area with an eye towards spinning off a new chapter. As chapter membership grows, it may reach a point where the number of officers and core activists is not enough to effectively coordinate outreach on a personal level and members maintain a real social connection with one another.

APALA's largest chapters tend to reach their limits of growth at the size needed for 3 board seats, the maximum allowable under our constitution. While spinning off chapters means fewer members in the chapter membership, it actually results more representation for the region on the national board. Currently it takes about 250 members for 3 seats, but 2 chapters of 125 each would receive 4 board seats total for the region. For APALA chapter officers, this means a smaller group to track, and with a plan to grow the chapters back up to 200 or more will mean more members overall in the long run. More importantly, it will open up more opportunities to be a chapter officer and help the chapter to reach more Asian and Pacific Islander American workers and connect with them one-on-one.

How does Group Size Affect the Spread of a Message and Mobilizing Activists?

The existence of natural limits on group size and ability to truly form social connections with others in the group has been well documented. In the *Tipping Point*, Malcolm Gladwell cites anthropological research that suggests in humans, 150 seems to be the most number of people "with whom we can have a genuinely social relationship, the kind of relationship that goes with knowing who they are and how they relate to us." The research further notes this pattern can be found in the size of hunter-gatherer societies, the military, and other groups where 150 seemed to be the most efficient size for managing a group of people and beyond that people do not seem to know each other as well. Gladwell applies this principle to how ideas can be spread and concludes that "if we want groups to serve as incubators for contagious messages, then... we have to keep groups below the 150 Tipping Point." Below that point people in the group can be more easily "infected with the community ethos," and above that point they start to become strangers and it begins to become difficult to stay in touch or maintain a close-knit sense of community. For APALA chapters, it means that while need to grow our membership, we need to be mindful of how we structure that growth so that we do not lose the sense of community spirit, which can help turn passive supporters into activists.

### Tips for Recruiting and Retaining members

- Always carry membership forms or Blue Sign-Up cards to APALA meetings, community events, and labor events so that you can sign up new people you talk to about APALA or update information on existing members. Focus on talking to people one-on-one and remember to mention specific ways they can get involved in APALA. Always ask them if they would like to be a member, or receive emailed newsletters on issues affecting Asian American workers.
- Collect the Card On-the-Spot. If you have someone interested in APALA, it is better to have them sign a card on the spot and collect it back from them, rather than hope they will mail it back to the national office or remember to go to the website. Even if they are not interested in paying dues on-the-spot, you can still have them fill out the Blue Card. Anyone can receive the APALA\_Wire and action alerts.
- Forward the APALA Wire and APALA Alerts to activists you know and suggest they forward it on to others. The online “word-of-mouth” can multiply your efforts to recruit new members with minimal effort on your part. APALA Action Alerts allow recipients to take action and allow us to build our list. Once they sign up, the national office can then periodically send you the contact information so that you can reach out to people who have already shown some interest in APALA issues and encourage them to take part in some other in-person activity you have planned.
- Create a Sense of Community. As you develop your programs, be sure to keep in mind how you will create opportunities for members to socialize and for new members to get to become integrated into the group.
- Include a Pitch to sign up for the APALA in your email signature. Most email programs can be set up with a “signature” area, where you can write something such as your contact information to be automatically sent out with every message. Consider including a plug for APALA: “To learn about Asian American worker issues, sign up for APALA at [www.apalanet.org](http://www.apalanet.org) “

## 2. Develop new leaders: Diversity and Rotating Leadership Roles

### Benchmarks:

- ❑ Rotate some chapter offices at least every 2 years to allow different Unions, Age groups, and Asian ethnic groups to serve on chapter board.
- ❑ Identify specific people who are from unions, ethnic groups, or age groups that have not been represented on your chapter board in recent years.
- ❑ Make a special effort to find younger union members, staff, or student labor activists and include them in your planning process.

Our constitution states, “Chapter leadership should take into account and reflect the Ethnic, Gender, Union, and General Diversity of the membership of APALA.” Implementing this principle in chapter operations will improve the chapter’s ability to reach out to Asian American workers. Balancing union, ethnic, gender, and age characteristics on your chapter board gives you a foothold in more communities and unions and a direct line of communication with them.

Although chapters typically have only 5 officers, larger chapters or those with many core activists can give a defined role to anyone expressing interest in helping out by creating functional roles such as Political Chair, Organizing Chair, or APALA Coordinator for Local 10.

Rotating leadership roles is another way to implement diversity in chapter leadership. At the national level, it has helped APALA fulfill its goal of “promoting the participation and leadership of Asian Pacific Americans in the Labor Movement.” It has brought in new perspectives on what role APALA should play in building the labor movement, reinvigorated our organization, and given younger APIA trade unionists a chance to learn leadership skills. If your chapter office holders have not changed in a while or are heavily weighted to one union, ethnic group, gender, or age category, identify and encourage a couple of your active members in the underrepresented categories to run for chapter office. Creating a mix of

experienced chapter leaders and new ones on your chapter board ensures continuity while also promoting diversity.

### **3. Outreach: Local Unions and Community Groups**

Benchmarks:

- ❑ Local Unions: Find out which unions in your area represent or are organizing APIA workers. Establish regular contact with the APIA workers within those unions and a working relationship with union leaders. Assign a chapter officer or activist to be the point person for contacts with each major union local. The point person should maintain a two-way dialogue with the union by being aware of the local's activities so s/he can report back to the chapter and also by informing the unions of APALA projects to let the unions know how they can support APALA.
- ❑ State Fed and CLC: Affiliate your chapter with the CLC. For statewide APALA chapters, also affiliate with the State Fed. Assign a chapter officer or activist to be a liaison and to attend their meetings and report back to the chapter and also use the meetings as an opportunity to get the word out about APALA activities and accomplishments.

### **4. Outreach: Community Groups**

Benchmarks:

- ❑ Identify 3 or more progressive local community groups with an interest in organizing and worker issues.
- ❑ Establish a working relationship with them with the goal of collaborating on organizing or political mobilization projects.

Suggestions for an Outreach Plan:

- a. Make a list of unions, community group, and professional organizations, and student groups to contact.
- b. Break up the list and assign members to contact a few organizations each.
- c. Contact them to tell them about APALA and to ask them questions about what their priorities and interests are.
- d. Assess group's interest in worker issues and collaborations with APALA and capacity to work on projects. It helps to have an upcoming project in mind, so you can ask them if they would like to co-sponsor it or help plan it. This will give you an idea of their level of interest.
- e. Track the information in a uniform way. Keep track of their contact information, a short description of the group, and an assessment of their level of interest in APIA worker issues, and note any other areas of collaborating with APALA.

### **5. Develop a Calendar**

Develop a calendar for your Membership Drives, Outreach, and Program Activities. The best of intentions can fall by the wayside without a workplan with specific tasks and a timetable for accomplishing it. Ideally, these activities will overlap. Program activities should always take into consideration how the program will build membership and a track record that will encourage future support of APALA.

Benchmarks:

- ❑ Hold a planning meeting to set goals on building organizational capacity and outline program plans for the year. Write down your priorities month by month.
- ❑ Assign chapter officers and activists to specific chapter building tasks.
- ❑ Hold regular chapter meetings to check in on progress.

Tools:

Planning meeting agenda  
Building Organizational Capacity Worksheet  
Outreach Letter  
The 5-point Outreach Rap

# Program Goals

The APALA constitution outlines six primary aims and objectives for the organization:

1. “Educates Asian Pacific American Workers and their communities about labor unions and the principals of trade unionism as well as to provide a vehicle for the particular concerns of Asian Pacific American workers.
2. “Promotes, Supports, and assists the organizing of Asian Pacific American Workers into unions.
3. “Promotes political education a voter registration programs among Asian Pacific Americans.
4. “Promotes training, empowerment, and leadership of Asian Pacific Americans within the labor movement and Asian Pacific American Communities.
5. “Defends and advocates for the civil and human rights of Asian Pacific Americans, immigrants, and all other people of color.
6. “Develops ties with international labor organizations and CLCs within their chapter area.”

These objectives can be grouped into 3 main program areas:

- Organizing (including support of bargaining campaigns)
- Political and Legislative Action
- Community Education

Often these areas will overlap. Mobilizing support for legislation might be a step towards advancing an organizing campaign. Community education might be about electoral issues or a union campaign.

Other times your chapter may need to prioritize one area over another. Because APALA chapters are volunteer-based organizations, it may be difficult to be the lead on multiple projects or issues at the same time. There may be one main project that the APALA chapter decides to lead on and then a few others where you lend your support to what others in the community or in unions have set up.

## Evaluating And Prioritizing Projects

Picking one or two projects that your chapter can do really well is often better than spreading yourselves too thin or promising to work on a project and then not being able to follow through. The following are some criteria your chapter should consider before committing to a project. Ask yourselves whether the project:

- Has Widespread interest\***: Will members beyond your officers and core activists want to participate? Will it bring in new members?
- Has Deeply-felt Interest\***: Are your members sufficiently motivated by the project to spend their time and energy in it? No matter how good an idea it is or how important the issue is, if your APALA members do not turn out for it, it is not right for the group.
- Develops Leaders**: Are there pieces of the project that you can ask others to take ownership of?
- Is Fun!** APALA activities that seem like work may discourage participation and so your chapter should also consider the social component—how does it foster a sense of community and allow members to get to know each other.

The following tips on Meeting Facilitation tips will help you assess the level of interest in projects.

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\* Adapted from *Organizing for Social Change: Midwest Academy Manual for Activists* by Kim Bobo, Jackie Kendall, and Steve Max. For more criteria on selecting issues for campaigns, this is a great guide book to choosing issues and developing direct action campaigns.

## Meeting Facilitation & Project Evaluation Tips

- **Preparation:** Have a list of questions prepared in advance to get a brainstorming discussion going and an agenda. Envision step by step how you will transition the topics and bring the discussion to a conclusion.
- **Pair Discussions Get Everyone Talking.** If you would like to increase the number of people contributing to the discussion, try doing pair discussions with report back (that way everyone is “forced” to have a conversation on it) before doing a large group discussion. Even if your group seems small (less than 10), there is still the possibility of just a couple people doing all the talking and then everyone else just going along with it. This will not give you a feel for how widespread or strong the interest is amongst most members. Here is how pair discussions might work:
  1. Make copies of the discussion questions and distribute.
  2. Ask people to break up into pairs and talk to someone they have not talked to in a while.
  3. Go around and have each pair report back and put all ideas up on butcher paper.
- **Grouping Ideas and Narrowing the Field.** After brainstorming a list, bring it down to a manageable number of projects for a given timeframe by looking for common answers or ways to group ideas together (or ask the group if they see any commonalities or whether they see ideas that can be grouped together as a sequence of projects). You may need to re-write the big list.
- **“Poll” for Intensity of Interest.** To narrow down a larger list, have two colors of dot stickers or mini Post-its. Give everyone 3 of each and instruct them to place one color dot for ideas they think are most important and the other color dot for what they personally feel they would have the time and energy to work on. The items that have both colors of dots are the projects to prioritize. If it has only one or the other the project might be too big to tackle, of limited interest, vaguely defined, or not interesting enough.
- **Ask for Volunteers.** The real test for whether there is strong enough interest is to see who will work on it. Ask for volunteers to be the coordinator of a project or be on the committee to plan it. If relatively few people want to work on it, you can say that it will be put on the backburner until there is more interest.

## Organizing

### Benchmarks:

- ❑ Identifies major organizing and bargaining campaigns and assesses the potential role of APIA workers, the community, and APALA.
- ❑ Builds APIA community in support of union organizing or worker issues.
- ❑ Brings labor support to community issues.

Constituency groups like APALA help build the labor movement by connecting labor to the community and maintaining an on-going presence in the community. This is a two-way street. In addition to mobilizing the community to help union organizing or bargaining campaigns, chapters should also work to bring labor’s support to issues the community’s issues. This helps to build long-term trust and credibility.

To contribute to organizing or bargaining campaigns, your chapter must first keep informed about what is going on in the labor scene. This is why affiliating with the CLC and regularly attending their meetings is

important. Rather than surveying locals or just asking each other what you have each heard, the CLC gives you access to a wider network.

Opportunities for participating in organizing and bargaining campaigns vary greatly among chapters locations. Not all chapters will be in an area with unions that (1) Have major active campaigns that depends on community support to succeed (2) Involve APALA members' unions, and (3) Have enough APIA workers to generate strong enough interest to make the worker issue a community issue. Don't be discouraged if there are limited opportunities in organizing in your area. Political Action and Community education about unions are other ways to build support for the labor movement that might ultimately lead to more organizing of APIA workers in your area.

### **Suggestions for Organizing Programs:**

- **Participate in the union's campaigns.** To bring community pressure on an employer, union may call for rallies, circulate petitions, or lobby public officials. APALA chapters can help APIA workers who are organizing by turning out to these events and being visible as APALA. Seeing other Asian American union members and APIA community members supporting their campaign can help to strengthen their resolve at a difficult time for them.
- **Compile a list of local Asian language translators.** APALA chapter often get requests from unions for Asian language translators for help with literature or simultaneous translations of bargaining sessions or other meetings. Language can be an obstacle to APIA immigrant workers' participation in the union.
- **Hold Worker Rights Boards or Worker Forums.** Jobs With Justice has developed the concept of a Worker Rights Board as a way for communities to investigate worker abuses and to hold employers accountable. This structure can be used as part of an existing union campaign or with other APIA worker issues. APALA members and community leaders such as clergy, elected officials, academics, or other organization leaders can create a Worker Rights Board to conduct a public hearing where they listen to the worker complaints, invite the employer to respond, and then follow-up meetings to check on progress towards resolving the dispute. Worker Forums can be a way to gather APIA workers who work in the same industry or occupation, to identify workplace issues they have in common, and mobilize them for action.

## **Political and Legislative Action**

Benchmarks:

- ❑ Identifies major elections and legislative issues for the upcoming year and assesses overlap with districts containing APIA voters.
- ❑ Links Political and Legislative action with Organizing and education about importance of unions for APIA working families.
- ❑ Plans and Implements a voter mobilization program around voter registration, issue education, and GOTV.

As with the organizing program, finding out about what is on the political and legislative calendar is the first step towards developing a program. The CLC meeting is once again a great place to start to keep current on this information.

There are many APIA organizations that have voter registration and mobilization programs. What makes APALA unique is when voter programs link political and legislative action and to organizing APIs into unions and the impact this has on improving the lives of APIA workers and their families. For union members and workers, voter mobilization is about more than civic duty or providing a community service.

It is also about building a progressive social movement that promotes respect for workers and economic justice.

APALA chapters have a long track record of implementing successful voter mobilization programs. To start one in your area, please consult the *APALA Voter Mobilization Manual*. In addition, the national office can help you set up trainings for your members.

For legislative action, APALA chapters through the national office have access to the GetActive online activism system. Through GetActive, we can send Action Alerts that match up APALA activists to their congressional or state legislative districts and send messages to the appropriate representative.

## Community Education

Benchmarks:

- ❑ Educates about worker rights and unions.
- ❑ Maintains a visible presence at community events.
- ❑ Host APALA Worker Forums: Invite groups of workers to a town hall meeting, house parties, or discussion groups to find out about what kinds of issues they are facing at work. Write up your findings as a summary report to present to the CLC and to advocate for organizing APIA workers.

**Educational Programs.** Although the numbers of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans in unions has grown over the last two years, many in the community still do not know what a union is and how the labor movement can improve the lives of Asian American workers. Not knowing their rights as workers (or lack thereof) also contributes to the lack of understanding of how working under a union contract is different. Here are a few ideas for educational activities:

- Host Movie Nights. Movies are a great way to raise worker issues and stimulate a discussion. You can show them at the end of a regular meeting to give your meetings a “fun” component. APALA’s national office has acquired a few DVDs it can loan your chapter. If you have suggestions for others, please let us know so we can look into acquiring them. See the Resource Request Form in the Tools Section for a list or contact the national office for the most current list.
- Create workshops on worker rights, unions, and economic justice. The national office has some powerpoint slides on these topics and will make available workshop modules in the near future.
- Offer to speak at community group meetings, churches, or other gatherings.

**Visibility at Community Events.** Being present in community events or community services activities gives you an opportunity to get the APALA name out in the community and explain what we do and why unions are important. The APALA national office can supply you with visibility materials such as APALA posters and literature to help make your booth or table stand out.

**APALA Worker Forums.** While labor unions are organizing in some industries with concentrations of Asian American workers, there are many more industries and occupations where they are not being organized. These workers face challenging issues at work too and may want to join or mobilize in some other collective way (ex: politically or with a professional association) to address these issues. APALA can help them to take steps towards organizing themselves by hosting worker forums to air the issues. It can be targeted at particular types of worker, a community in a particular area, or on issues like health care or immigration that affect all APIA workers. Then by summarizing the issues into a report for the labor and community, the chapter can raise awareness on worker issues and use the information as the basis for advocating organizing them into unions or garnering support to push for political solutions or employer accountability.

The 2002 California State Assembly’s Asian Pacific Islander Worker Rights Hearings is a good example of this type of event and the Report by the UCLA Labor Center and APALA demonstrates how APALA can publicize the issues.

Tools:

Planning guide

APALA Voter Mobilization Manual

Labor-themed movies on DVD (available for borrowing) – See Resource Request Form

Visibility Materials: APALA Posters with Fill-In-Message; APALA Fans with Logo; APALA Rally Headbands; APALA Baseball Hats.

# Communications

## Message Benchmarks:

- ❑ Understands the basic APALA message and how to tailor the message to different audience segments: labor, community, and potential APALA activists.
- ❑ Creates a local labor identity for APALA within the community.
- ❑ Recruits and trains different messengers to reach diverse Asian and labor community audiences.
- ❑ Identifies and utilizes effective and efficient methods of communication.

## Basic Message

“APALA is an organization of Asian American union members and labor activists that builds community-labor alliances in support of union organizing, worker rights, civil rights and economic justice for all workers. We believe union organizing is the best means for achieving respect for human rights and equal opportunity, and improving the quality of life for Asian American workers and all working people by creating a large-scale movement for social justice.”

## Tailoring the Message

Analyzing the interests of labor, community, and individuals APALA activists will help to figure what aspects of the message to emphasize or elaborate on for these very different audiences.

- Labor unions may be more interested in what kind of community support APALA can bring to their campaigns, or how APALA can help them activate their Asian American union members. Stressing the community-labor alliances and the partnerships you have developed with community groups might be of interest to them. If they have Asian American union members, you might want to emphasize the leadership development that comes from participating in APALA voter mobilization and running a chapter.
- Funders: Interested in seeing a track record of accomplishments and may have other priorities that you may need to research first. The publication, “A Briefing on APALA,” is updated periodically to include our latest accomplishments and is available from the national office.
- APIA Community groups are diverse in issue and ethnic group. By ethnic group, you can link the international solidarity work APALA has done with their country of origin. By issue, you can connect the work labor has done on civil rights, health care, and economic issue advocacy to their issues to emphasize shared concerns and also contrast how working under a union contract can help to address these issues in a way that current laws and legislation cannot. For example, unionized workers are more likely to have employment-based health insurance. Union workers experience less of a racial wage gap because union contracts put into place fairer workplace rules with worker input in how things are done.
- Potential Activists. This group includes: rank-and-file union members, union staff, and student activists. Their interests may vary from leadership development, to connecting with fellow Asian labor activists, to career goals. Depending on the group, you may want to focus on the issues that APALA addresses, the movement-building aspects, the community of activists in APALA, or the Organizer trainings.

**Emphasize the local accomplishments of APALA.** In the Tools and Resources section, you will find a worksheet to help you list out your chapter’s most important accomplishments and summarize them into a list of talking points that will help all of your members spread the word about APALA.

## Defining the APALA Niche

Another component of effective messaging is distinguishing your organization or cause and highlighting what makes it unique. In political campaigns, candidates draw sharp contrasts between themselves and their opponents to gain voters’ support. In product advertising, companies create a brand identity to

persuade you that there are real differences between, say, Coke and Pepsi, and that you personally identify with being a “Coke Classic drinker” or being part of the “Pepsi generation.”

A similar concept can be applied to developing a message about APALA to recruit members or gain support. We would like our potential supporters in the labor movement and the community to associate APALA with a particular kind of activism and our members to personally identify with being part of a unique community of activists.

So what makes us unique? At the heart of our approach is union organizing, workers improving their own lives (rather than advocates for them), and the large-scale impact union organizing can have on millions of workers’ lives and on economic justice in society.

This labor identity and social movement quality are what sets APALA apart from being just another civil rights or Asian American group. It attracts the type of activist who prefers organizing over more service-oriented or charitable activities and who sees voter mobilization as one part of building the movement rather than a self-contained civic education project. Conveying this uniqueness can help foster a sense of group identity amongst these activists and a view of APALA as their home within the larger labor movement or progressive movement.

In a given community, sometimes you see the same people working on several different causes. By distinguishing what makes APALA unique, you attract a particular niche of activists who feel more connected to the APALA vision and are more likely to participate in it over the many other choices they have for spending the limited amount of time they have for volunteer activities.

## Messengers

The deliverer of your message is just as important as the message itself. Having a diverse base of chapter activists in terms of unions and ethnic group will make your message delivery more effective. Community groups based on Asian ethnicity may perceive that an APALA person of the same ethnicity will be more receptive to their concerns and that their group is being represented within APALA. Along the same lines, unions are more likely to be receptive to requests from their own members.

## Methods of Communicating the APALA message

**Incorporate the APALA message into all activities** (One-on-one contact, presentations to groups, visibility at events, workshops, etc.) Talk about what APALA does and why the labor movement is important at every possible opportunity.

**APALA Mass communications.** The membership list is the foundation for mass communications with members and potential members. Chapter should place a high priority on keeping the contact information of your members up-to-date and always recruiting new members or subscribers to grow the list. Remember they do not have to be paid members to join as a subscriber. It is better to have them sign as up as an “e-activist” subscriber, than to have them walk away because they do not want to pay \$20 at the time you contact them. Once you have them on the list, you can work on activating them, turning them into members first, and then later into activists and leaders. The bigger the list, the broader our reach.

Once subscribed to APALA’s online activism program, main forms of mass communications are:

- **APALA Wire, the Email Newsletter.** This contains a calendar of upcoming events, short news items of interest to APIA labor activists, and highlights of new articles on the website. It is sent out via our online activism program called GetActive. At the bottom of every message we send out through GetActive, is a Tell-A-Friend link. When you forward the message on to your friends, please encourage them to sign up for future announcements using the Tell-A-Friend link. Chapters are encouraged to send in news bits and chapter events so that we can post them in

the Wire and on the website. The lists your chapter keeps on its own is not always going to be the same our national list because we receive sign-ups from the website that automatically get added to the list. So to cover both sets, be sure to send a copy to the national office to your lists.

- **GetActive.** GetActive can be used to send Action Alerts to your member of Congress, the state legislature, or specified employer targets. In early 2006, APALA's Action Alert to oppose the anti-immigrant bill HR 4437, which would have criminalized undocumented immigrants and anyone who helped them, generated over 600 emailed letters to Congress and added about 200 E-Activists to APALA's base. The issue itself was compelling enough that original recipients of our Action Alert forwarded the email around to their friends and they forwarded it on and so forth.
- **APALA Alerts.** APALA also sends out action alerts through the GetActive system. These emails direct activists to an advocacy web page where they can write to the target of the campaign. For legislative campaigns, they can write an email message that automatically is sent to their Senators or Representatives. Chapters that have state legislative issues or campaigns can contact the national office to set up an advocacy campaign for their local issues. A recent APALA Alert on an immigration bill generated over 600 letters and 100 new APALA subscribers. With minimal effort we have increased our list and then can re-contact these potential new members to the chapters to interest them in participating in-person.
- **APALA Website.** APALA's website also contains a link to the subscriber sign up page. To generate repeat viewers, we are continually writing new articles about Asian and Asian American workers, update a calendar of events to show that are chapters are active, and have set up a discussion forum (which we hope to encourage people to use more often). In addition, we link our GetActive Action Alerts to our website so that those who respond to the Action Alert can read more about us on our website and also so that those who happen to visit our website, can go to our Action Alert system to take action, whether or not they received the original Action Alert email.
- **Mailings.** We will continue to do hard copy mailings. Annual membership sign-ups or renewal reminders will be sent once a year to all who have paid for memberships in the past and who gave address information via our online signup. Newsletters are produced twice a year and will be sent to members or immediate past members.
- **Listservs.** Some chapters have set up listservs to allow members to communicate with each other. Listservs are email lists where a moderator can control who is on the list, subscribers can update their own addresses, and everyone can send each other email by writing to the listserv's address (rather than keeping a list of separate email addresses on their own). It is a forum for chapters to discuss issues with each other, post notes from meetings, solicit comments from those who could not attend, and post announcements. Yahoogroups.com, Hotmail, and many other online services offer free listservs. These services usually include a space where chapters can store files or a calendar that everyone in the group can access.

**Understanding Old and New Media.** Technological advances have democratized how news is disseminated. News media organizations such as print newspapers, their online versions, and broadcast news are still important to contact, but their audiences have declined as people now have access to a variety of news sources more specifically tailored to meet their interests. Today, grassroots organizations no longer have to hope someone will deem their event worthy to be covered. They may still send out press releases and follow up to pitch their story, but they also have access to many other options for creating and spreading their message on their own. This in turn, may generate mainstream news coverage. In recent years, there have been many examples of news stories that started out as grassroots internet media stories before being covered by the print and broadcast media.

For APALA chapters, the possibilities include: writing their news up on APALA website, creating their own cable access TV show, or recording audio news show and then post it as an internet radio show or as a "podcast," a recording similar to a radio-show that can be downloaded to play on a computer or portable digital music player. The cost of these technologies has dropped significantly. A camcorder to

record and a computer to edit are basically all you need to make a cable access show. Community cable station memberships are usually very minimal and you only need one person to be a member to reserve air time. A computer with a microphone and an internet connection is all that is needed to make a “podcast.”

**Ethnic Newsmedia.** The ethnic news media continues to be another way to reach Asian American audiences. They often rely on freelance writers or volunteers. Freelance writers seek payment for their articles by submitting a proposal first (sometimes referred to as a “query”), getting the editor’s approval for the article in the form of a contract, and then write the article. This means you might be write the article yourself and then submit it for consideration. Consult the National Writers Union, UAW, if you have chapter members who are interested in seeking payment for their writing.

Tools- APALA Publications:

Blue Sign-up Cards

A Briefing on APALA

FAQ

Chapter Talking Points Worksheet

GetActive online program (contact national office, if your chapter would like to send a mass emailing to your area)

APALA website: [www.apalanet.org](http://www.apalanet.org)



## Frequently Asked Questions about APALA

### **Q. What is APALA's Mission Statement?**

A. From the APALA Constitution Statement of Purpose:

"The United States is witnessing a phenomenal growth of Asian Pacific Americans in the work force and within the Labor Movement. The Asian Pacific American Communities and the Labor Movement share common concerns for economic and political justice, equal opportunity and an improved quality of life for all working people.

"In recognition of the importance of Asian Pacific Americans within the work force and within the Labor Movement, this organization is established by the AFL-CIO as a membership organization for Trade Unionists who are united around the goal of promoting the needs of Asian Pacific American Workers. This organization is committed to develop a comprehensive strategy to organize Asian Pacific Americans into Unions, and to promote the participation and leadership of Asian Pacific Americans within the Labor Movement. This organization is further dedicated to strengthening International Labor Solidarity, especially with Labor Unions of Asia and the Pacific."

### **Q. That's kind of long. What should I tell people in 30 seconds or less?**

A. APALA is an organization of Asian American union members and labor activists that builds community-labor alliances in support of union organizing, worker rights, civil rights and economic justice. We work on organizing, political and legislative action, and community education about labor issues.

### **Q. How is APALA structured?**

A. APALA has five national officers and a 41-seat national executive board. The organization holds a convention every two years where delegates may submit resolutions and constitutional amendments. The national board meets twice a year. Chapters are located across the country and are volunteer-run organizations governed by a chapter board.

### **Q. Who can join APALA?**

A. Anyone who supports the principles of the trade union movement can join APALA. Members do not need to be of Asian descent. APALA has two categories of membership: Regular and Associate. Regular members must be members of unions and are eligible to hold national APALA offices (including the national executive board) and serve as delegates to the biennial convention. Other supporters of the labor movement are eligible to be associate members and can hold chapter offices and vote at the chapter level.

Membership dues expire at the end of every calendar year and are split with the chapters. Dues are \$20 for regular and associate members. Retirees and students may pay \$10. The Los Angeles chapter set its portion of dues higher, so their members pay \$25 for regular/associate and \$15 for student/retiree.

### **Q. Is APALA a union? What's the difference between APALA and a union?**

A. APALA is not a union. We are a membership organization, but we do not represent workers in a collective bargaining context.

### **Q. Is APALA a non-profit organization?**

A. Yes. We are organized as a 501(c) 5 non-profit organization, but contributions to APALA are not tax-deductible.

### **Q. What are some of APALA's major accomplishments? Where can I read more about APALA?**

A. A summary APALA's accomplishments in organizing, political action, and international solidarity can be found on the APALA website. APALA also has a report titled, "A Briefing on APALA" which contains a summary of accomplishments, description of the structure of APALA, and current plans.



# **Tools and Resources**

# Resource Request Form

Chapter Officer name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Request: \_\_\_\_\_ Date Needed: \_\_\_\_\_

## Visibility:

When tabling at events, attending rallies, or other events, make sure unions and the community know that APALA is there.

### Quantity

\_\_\_\_\_ APALA Signs [White with Logo and Blank Space for a Write-In Message]. For additional visibility, you can staple two of them back-to-back and attach them to a stick. [Tip: 3/4 inch plastic PVC piping available at hardware stores and then cut to size are light-weight and easy to carry. Tape up the cut ends for safety.]

\_\_\_\_\_ Fans [Blue Circle with Logo on a flat stick;]. Can be used as mini-rally signs and stapled back-to-back for visibility from front and back.

### Quantity Amount Enclosed

\_\_\_\_\_ Baseball Hats [Tan with Blue Embroidered "APALA"] \*\*\$5 each

\_\_\_\_\_ Rally Headbands [Navy with white lettering "APALA"]: \*\*\$1 each

## Signing Up Members:

Always Ask! Whenever you are at a community or union event, always ask people if they would like to join APALA and be sure to have either membership forms or E-Activist Sign-up cards handy.

\_\_\_\_\_ Membership forms

\_\_\_\_\_ E-Activist Sign-up cards (blue card stock paper)

\_\_\_\_\_ Student Interest sign-up cards (yellow card stock paper)

## Chapter Start-Up

Charter Application: By email to: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of hard copies \_\_\_\_\_

Sample By-Laws: By email to: \_\_\_\_\_ Number of hard copies \_\_\_\_\_

## Educational Materials:

\_\_\_\_\_ Brochure: Tagalog, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese

\_\_\_\_\_ Guide to Careers and Internships in the Labor Movement (Note: audience is college students)

\_\_\_\_\_ Posters: Labor Pioneers

\_\_\_\_\_ Social Security Privatization Fact Sheet

\_\_\_\_\_ APALA Congressional Scorecard 2002, 2004

\_\_\_\_\_ APALA Newsletters (limited quantities)

\_\_\_\_\_ A Briefing on APALA, March 2006

\_\_\_\_\_ Report on California APA worker rights hearing

\_\_\_\_\_ Powerpoint Slides on APIA Labor History, APALA, and APIA Workers (Research)

\_\_\_\_\_ Powerpoint Slides on Economic Inequality and Role of Unions

## DVDs Available for Borrowing: When do you need it? When will you return it?

Labor Women \_\_\_\_\_

Wal-Mart: The High Cost of Low Prices \_\_\_\_\_

Secrets of Silicon Valley \_\_\_\_\_

The Story of Chungwa Telecom Workers Union (Taiwan) \_\_\_\_\_

## Creating Chapter Talking Points and Reporting on Activities

### Basic Rap:

APALA is an organization of Asian American union members and labor activists that builds community-labor alliances in support of union organizing, worker rights, civil rights and economic justice. We work on organizing, political and legislative action, and community education about labor issues.

The publication, "A Briefing on APALA" contains a summary of APALA's accomplishments and some highlights from the work of the chapters. We distribute it to union activists and leaders and community organizations and update it every several months whenever we finish an important project or hear about something chapters are doing that we think might be of interest to these audiences.

Similarly, chapters can keep on on-going record of its accomplishments and periodically distribute an update to chapter members so they can all be articulate spokespeople for the chapter and not be stumped when asked, "What has the chapter done lately?" In addition to the basic rap on APALA above, having local examples of APALA organizing and political action make the work of APALA more relevant to local organizations and unions. The following questions will help you to write-up a compelling paragraph about how the chapter helped out on a campaign and keep a record of your accomplishments. It may come in handy for writing future brochures, fundraising letters, or for the chapter's own website or its section of the national APALA website.

**Please also use the questions below to write-up your activities for the National Office so that we can compile a year-end report on Chapter Accomplishments and publicize all the great work that you do.**

### Organizing/Bargaining Campaigns

For each campaign,

1. When or over what time period did this occur?
2. Describe the workers affected (Ex: What union(s) were involved? What kinds of jobs? What kind of work/industry is it? What is the name of the employer? Note the demographics: %Asian, mostly people of color/immigrants, women, etc.)
3. How many workers?
4. What were the main issues that led them to want to organize or the main issues at the bargaining table?
5. What did the employer do to try to stop their organizing or divide the workers?
6. How did the APALA chapter help? Note any community partners APALA brought into the campaign and how many/how often APALA members
7. How did the labor-community coalition overcome employer opposition?
8. What was the outcome? Note the election results, workplace issues solved, or contract improvements won.
9. Ask a worker what this victory meant for them and their families and write down their quote.

### Political Action

**For each election or legislative issue:**

1. Describe the election or issue: When was the election or when was the legislation under consideration? What was at stake? Describe ballot initiative or candidates (office they're running for, current office held/occupation, whether they are a union or APALA member). For legislative issues, what would be the impact on Asian Americans, union members, or workers?
2. Phone banks: How many APALA volunteers? How many APALA phone bank nights? How many calls did APALA members make?
3. Canvasses: How many APALA volunteers? How many APALA canvass days? How many households did they go to?
4. Literature: How many piece of literature were distributed? In what languages? In what locations or Asian communities?
5. Community partners/youth involvement: What community partners did APALA bring into the effort? Note if any youth participated.
6. Other methods of reaching voters or mobilizing for legislative action: Lobby Day, PSA's on the radio, Street Fairs with an APALA booth, Community meetings attended.

### **Community Education**



1. Describe the purpose of the community education event. What did it accomplish? When did it occur?
2. How many people attended? What groups did they represent?
3. Ask a participant for a quote on what they learned or what they thought of it.

#### **Reminder:**

Don't forget to send a copy of your write up to the APALA office at [apala@apalanet.org](mailto:apala@apalanet.org). We need to spread the word within the Labor Movement and the Community about what APALA chapters have done and inspire others to start APALA chapters.

# Sample Union, CLC, or State Fed Outreach Letter

Please contact the national office if your chapter would like the letter to be sent on our letterhead.

		<i>Organizing Civil Rights Economic Justice</i>
<b>Return Address, City State Zip [OR TYPE INTO FOOTER] Phone, Email</b>		
Date		
President Labor Organization Address City, State Zip		
Dear President _____:		
<p>The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA) is an organization of Asian American labor activists that works on building labor-community alliances in support of union organizing, worker rights, civil rights, and economic justice. We are contacting labor organizations in the [FILL IN CHAPTER AREA] _____ area in an effort to identify Asian American union members and encourage them to become more active in their unions and communities.</p> <p>Our members are rank-and-file union members, union staff, and other community members who support the labor movement. Through our chapters, members have worked on projects such as educating the community about labor unions and worker issues, voter mobilizations within the community, and building support for union organizing and bargaining campaigns. APALA members gain valuable skills in leadership, organizing, and political action from participating in these activities as well as the confidence and knowledge to become more effective trade union activists within their Locals.</p> <p>Here in [FILL IN CHAPTER AREA] _____, our chapter is working on [fill in projects]_____ this year.</p> <p>We are contacting you to seek your assistance in reaching out to APIA union members [LOCAL UNION NAME, CLC, or STATE FED NAME] and would also like to discuss ways that the chapter and [Fill in “your union” or “the CLC” or “the State Fed”] can work together to increase the participation of APIA union members in the and build a stronger labor movement in the [YOUR CITY/STATE NAME]_____ area.</p> <p>We will be calling your office to follow-up. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.</p> <p>In Solidarity,</p> <p>[FILL IN NAME] [FILL IN TITLE]Chapter President/Coordinator [FILL IN EMAIL]____@____</p> <hr/> <p>[FILL IN YOUR CHAPTER ADDRESS, PHONE, EMAIL]</p>		

## The 5-Point Outreach Rap

### APALA Rap: Unions, Labor Organizations

1. Introduce yourself and why you are calling, ask to speak to a community outreach organizer, organizing director.

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling from the \_\_\_\_\_chapter of APALA, the Asian Pacific Labor Alliance. We are a constituency group of the AFL-CIO and are contacting unions in the \_\_\_\_\_metro area to help get Asian American union members more active in their union.

2. Tell more about APALA

APALA is an organization that builds labor-community alliances in support of union organizing, worker rights, and economic justice. It is also a way for Asian American union members to learn skills that can encourage them to participate more in their unions' organizing and political activities and to connect their communities to the labor movement.

3. Ask questions about the Union or Labor Organization

We were also interested in finding out more about your union and its priorities for the year to see how we might work together. [Take note of their priorities.]

That's similar to our interest in \_\_\_\_\_. Maybe we can work together on \_\_\_\_\_.

4. Assess their interest or possibilities for working with them:

We would also like to reach out to your Asian members and let them know about APALA programs. Is there any way you might be able to assist us in contacting them? [Suggest mailing a flyer, writing a short blurb about APALA for their newsletter, or speaking at a unit meeting. If you have a specific event coming up, ask them to participate]

5. Thank them for their time, and wrap up conversation. [Also, collect their contact info. Can we reach you by email?]

### APALA Rap: Members and Potential Members

1. Introduce yourself and why you are calling, ask to speak to a community outreach organizer, organizing director.

Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am calling from the \_\_\_\_\_chapter of APALA, the Asian Pacific Labor Alliance.

2. Tell more about APALA

APALA is an organization that builds labor-community alliances in support of union organizing, worker rights, and economic justice. It is also a way for Asian American union members to learn skills that can encourage them to participate more in their unions' organizing and political activities and to connect their communities to the labor movement.

3. Ask about their thoughts on APALA and APIA worker issues.

We are interested in finding out about what our members see as top priorities for an Asian American workers' agenda. What are some of the issues you or Asian Americans you know are facing at work?

What are some of your thoughts on how APALA should work on these issues?

4. Assess their interest in APALA.

That's a very good idea. Would you be interested in helping out on making that happen?

Would you be interested in joining as a member? [Wait for answer.] Or if you'd like to just receive periodic updates and alerts about issues facing Asian American workers, you can fill out this blue card. [If by phone, ask for their email address so that you can send them the link to sign-up online for APALA.]

[If already a member, check contact info] Is your address still\_\_\_\_\_, and phone number\_\_\_\_\_, and email address\_\_\_\_\_.

Our next meeting is \_\_\_\_\_. We will be working on\_\_\_\_\_. Do you think you would like to attend? [Give time, place, location if interested.]

5. Thank them for their time and wrap up conversation.

# Outreach: Contact Tracking Sheet

Volunteer Name \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Phone/Email \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment \_\_\_\_\_

Org/local Make a List of Organizations or Unions to Contact	Contact Name, Phone, Email	Local Description -What industries, employers, jobs? -Geographic areas rep? - Demographics of members: Race, APIA, gender?	Current Campaigns -Any Public or Community campaigns?	Getting API union members more active in labor movement through union and APALA -how to contact: phone list, listserv, leave lit at worksites, can we to a unit meeting?	Evaluate Their Interest in Working with APALA [1-most interested, 5-not interested]	Contact Log Note Dates of contact and type
Example AFSCME Council 31	Henry Bayer (312) 555-3344 hbay@afscme.org	-Public sector, state employees in various govt agencies. -Statewide; broken up into local unions -		Willing to distribute APALA handouts and flyers as well as put thing on their newsletter. Call again to talk to Margaret more on this issue. Very positive, want to help	2	11/7/05: Sent outreach letter 11/29/05 Called; LM 12/3- Spoke to H Bayer

## Sample Meeting Announcement Flyer



***Save the Date!***

### Texas Chapter **Planning and Founding Meeting**

**February 7, 2006**

*5:30-7:30 pm*

*Location:*

*Seafarers International Union  
1221 Pierce Street  
Houston, TX 77002*

*Refreshments will be served.*

The members of APALA in Texas will be meeting to formally establish a chapter and discuss how we as Asian and Pacific Islander trade union members and labor activists can improve the lives of APIA workers and mobilize the Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) community in support of union organizing, worker rights, civil rights, and economic justice.

Please RSVP to the national office at [apala@apalanel.org](mailto:apala@apalanel.org) by Feb. 3 or by calling (202) 974-8051.

Texas pre-chapter coordinators: Jonah Lalas can be reached at (281) 222-1041 and Shwe Tun Aung can be reached at (713) 659-5152.



## Planning & Discussion Guide for APALA Chapters

One of APALA's main functions in the labor movement is to serve as bridge to the community to build support for labor unions and to relay the concerns of the APIA workers and their communities to labor unions. It is through the chapters that we can fulfill this role and of critical importance that we build solid organizing, political, and community programs at the chapter levels as well build the capacity to carry it out. To get chapter programs and capacity-building on track, we suggest that chapters hold a planning meeting.

Target Date:

November, December (in advance of national board meeting in February)

Goals:

- 1) Take an honest assessment of where you are as a chapter on program (organizing, political action, community action) and in capacity (core members, union and community relationships)
- 2) Set realistic goals on what the chapter would like to accomplish in 2006 and long-term.
- 3) Calendar out a plan for 2006

Recap of Facilitator Tips (See toolkit section for full explanation):

- **Preparation:** Have a list of questions prepared in advance and an agenda. Envision step by step how you will transition the topics and bring this discussion to a conclusion.
- **Pair Discussions Get Everyone Talking.** Groups broken into pairs means everyone has to have a conversation on the topic.
- **Grouping Ideas and Narrowing the Field.** Look for common answers, ways to group ideas together, ideas that form a sequence, etc.
- **Prioritize by "Polling" for Intensity of Interest.** Narrow down a larger list by giving everyone 3 dot stickers or mini-Post-Its in two different colors to place by items on the list. One color is for ideas they think are the most important and the other color is for what they personally feel they would have the time and energy to work on. Items with both colors should be the highest priority.
- **Prioritize by Asking for Volunteers.** Ask for volunteers to be the coordinator of a project or be on the committee to plan it. You'll know that the interest is not strong, if few people respond.
- **Break up into committees to** figure out the specific steps to carry out each priority project.
- **Follow-up:** Before ending the meeting, be sure to get a commitment to do a specific task by the following meeting or some other set date.

### Supplies to have on hand:

Butcher paper, markers, tape, Circle dots with 2 different colors (or mini-post-its)

|

### Discussion Guide Questions:

1. Current Role of APALA chapters in the labor movement: [Brainstorm on butcher paper into organizing, politics, community categories and divided in most successful/least successful]  
In organizing:
  - What have been our most successful projects as a chapter in terms of contributing to the labor movement and getting our members active? Why did it work—what were the elements that made it successful?

- What have been the least successful projects? Things that we tried, but did not work as well as we had hoped. What went wrong? Is the project itself worth improving (if so how?) or should it be dropped (and why? Lack of interest, doesn't fit with our skills/abilities, etc.)?

In politics, same questions: what have been our most successful projects and our least successful?

2. Chapter Vision: Putting aside what we have been doing for the moment, what ideally what do you think the role of the chapter should be in building the labor movement and in the community? What do APIA workers in our area need and what role can we play?
3. Implementing the vision: What are the local projects we could do in organizing, political action, legislation action, or community programs/outreach to implement this vision? Are there opportunities coming up locally that we could tap into?

Of the list we brainstormed, what do we think is most important and what do we think we have the time and energy to work on? [

4. Capacity:
  - How can we increase or develop more core activists to carry out this program? (routinely contact local unions with APIAs, diversify board so key local unions are represented, assign a person to contact each key union) What is the plan for 2006 membership drive when membership expires at end of 2005?
  - How strong are our contacts with local unions and community groups (ie: can we really deliver their support to a labor action/event)? What are going to do to improve it?
5. Calendar: Chart ideas that garner the most interest month-by-month.
6. What assistance do we need from the national office?

## Worksheets

The following 3 worksheets will help your chapter to assess where they are now and then take a closer look at internal organization as well as programs.

- Chapter Assessment & Overview
- Building Internal Capacity
- Building Chapter Programs

# 1. Chapter Assessment & Planning Worksheet

## Overview:

Where would you rate your chapter in the following areas?

	Reacting	Building Power	Agenda-Driving	Recommend
Organizing				
Political Action: Electoral				
Political Action- Legis/Issues				
Community Alliances/outreach				
Union Relationships				
Membership Growth				
Membership Retention				
Membership: Leadership Development				

## 2. Building Organizational Capacity Worksheet

Take a closer look at the internal operations by asking yourselves the following:

### 1. Membership and Growth Plan:

Current Number of Members \_\_\_\_\_ Target Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 What unions and geographic areas will the come from? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What activities can we do to sign up new members? \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Developing New Leaders:

- Union diversity:  
 What unions are represented on the chapter board? \_\_\_\_\_  
 What unions with APIAs have not been on the board in recent years?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
- Ethnic Diversity: Are there any major Asian ethnic groups in our community that are not reflected in our chapter leadership? \_\_\_\_\_
- Age Diversity: Are we making an effort to include younger union members and activists in the planning of chapter activities? \_\_\_\_\_
- Have we rotated leadership to ensure that unions, age groups, and ethnic groups that have not been in chapter offices have a chance? \_\_\_\_\_
- Who specifically can we recruit to diversify and develop new leaders? And for what roles?  
 \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Local Union outreach

Unions	Who will contact them?
1. State Fed, CLC	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

### 4. Community Outreach:

Organization	Who will contact them?
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

### 5. Calendar- Place activities from above on calendar.

Month	Priority
January	
February	
March	
April	
May	
June	

Month	Priority
July	
August	
September	
October	
November	
December	

### 3. Building APALA Chapter Programs

1) Current Programs: What do we do well? Where do we need improvement?

[categories below may overlap]	Contributions/Strengths/Projects that worked very well	Weaknesses/Projects that could have been done better	Opportunities	Challenges
Organizing				
Political Action				
Community Action				

2.) Chapter Vision: What do we see as the role of our chapter in building the local labor movement? Top Priorities?

3) Specific Program Projects

[categories below may overlap]	Project Ideas	Who Will Coordinate? Who will work on it?
Organizing		
Political Action		
Community Action		

4) Calendar: What is the focus for each month?

	<b>Program Activities</b>	<b>Organizational Capacity Building/Maintenance Activities</b>
Jan		
Feb		
March		
April		
May		
June		
July		
August		
September		
October		
November		
December		

# APALA

Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO



*Organizing  
Civil Rights  
Economic Justice*

## Membership Form

**APALA** is a national membership organization that unites the labor movement and the Asian and Pacific Islander community by mobilizing the API community in support of worker organizing and political action, advocating for worker rights, civil rights, and immigrant rights, and building long term labor community alliances. Any active or retired member of a union may join as a Regular Member, entitled to full participation at the national level governing bodies. Supporters of the labor movement may join as associate members, entitled to participation in chapter governing structures, including holding chapter office. All members receive Action Alerts on issues on important to working families, subscriptions to APALA's print newsletter, APALA News, and email newsletter, APALA\_Wire.

### Required Information

Memberships expire at the end of the calendar year. Please enclose payment and return to an APALA chapter representative or mail to the national office at the address below. Please Print.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP CODE \_\_\_\_\_

HOME PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

FAX \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

UNION/ORGANIZATION (if none, write *None*) \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ UNION TITLE (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

### Membership Type & Fee per calendar year (Check one):

- Regular/ Associate- \$20 (or \$25 Los Angeles)
- Retiree- \$10 (or \$15 Los Angeles)
- Student - \$10 (or \$15 Los Angeles)

### I am (Check one):

- Applying for a new membership.
- Renewing my membership.

***Dues are split between the national organization and the chapter.***

I would like to make an additional contribution of: \_\_\_\$25 \_\_\_\$50 \_\_\_\$100 \_\_\_Other \_\_\_\_\_

Contributions to APALA are not tax-deductible.

I hereby apply for membership in the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO. I support the principles of APALA and abide by its constitution and by-laws.

X \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

***Optional.*** In order to tailor our programs to fit our members' interests, please tell us a little about your work.

What is your occupation or job title? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the name of your employer (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

What kind of business is it or what industry or sector is it in? \_\_\_\_\_

