

Policy Recommendations for Addressing Hate Violence

ASIAN AMERICAN TABLE

INTRODUCTION

The history of hate violence against Asian Americans is a long and ugly one. Unfortunately, attacks against Asian Americans have been on the rise due to a climate of fear, xenophobia, and racism during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has been perpetuated by the highest echelons of government. This policy recommendations guide is a collaborative effort by Asian American-serving organizations to provide forward-thinking and practical policy solutions to address violence against Asian American communities for policymakers, survivors, and allies.

This policy guide focuses on community-centered solutions to interpersonal hate violence, rather than funneling yet more resources to law enforcement agencies and incarceration that already consume government budgets. As organizations with a long history of protecting and advancing the rights of Asian American community members, we believe the solution to interpersonal violence is not more systemic state violence in the form of aggressive and discriminatory law enforcement, that inevitably harms communities of color. Our recommendations center on providing community-based interventions to hate violence, and culturally and linguistically accessible, community-based services for survivors and their families.

It is also important to emphasize that challenging and responding to interpersonal hate violence is not enough. We must also address the root causes of systemic violence. This includes unequal access to housing, education, employment, health care, transportation, and immigration status experienced by marginalized communities, which in turn creates the conditions that make these community members more vulnerable to interpersonal violence. We need to improve conditions for low wage workers, including providing access to COVID vaccines, economic relief, and health care. **And importantly, we need to dismantle laws that criminalize poor communities of color.**

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WHAT IS HATE VIOLENCE?

Hate violence can occur through physical violence; it also can take place in the form of verbal harassment, threats, intimidation, vandalism, bullying, and civil rights violations.

COMMUNITY-CENTERED SOLUTIONS TO ADDRESSING HATE VIOLENCE

1) Establish Rapid Response Network to Track and Respond to Incidents:

Community members who experience hate violence are often afraid to report to police for a variety of understandable reasons, including lack of trust, language and cultural barriers, and fear of entanglement between police and immigration enforcement. To receive reports of and track hate violence, a rapid response network that is operated by community-based organizations and not working with local law enforcement should be funded.

- Community members should be given the option to report incidents anonymously and in their primary language via phone, in person, and online.
- Rapid response networks also should be funded to conduct analysis of data collected from reports of hate violence. This includes funding for data collection software, training, and data analysts.
- Rapid response networks should be funded to coordinate with policymakers to bring awareness to and denounce incidents of hate violence through issuing community alerts; organizing press events; organizing language-accessible and culturally competent community meetings to develop community-centered responses; working with victims to develop safety plans, provide case management, and obtain victim compensation; and providing policy and budget recommendations to policymakers based on patterns identified in reports of hate violence.

2) Provide Bystander Training to Educate and Empower Allies: Reports of violence against Asian Americans show that these incidents often take place in public places, such as on the street, on public transit, in stores, online, and near places of worship. Bystander training for interested community members provides tools and tactics to support victims, document incidents, and when possible, safely intervene to de-escalate. For more information on bystander trainings, see hollaback! [here](#).

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3) Fund and Support Restorative Justice Programs: Central to the vast majority of hate crimes laws are extensive punitive measures for the individual who caused the harm. Such laws have proven to be ineffective on multiple fronts. First, hate crimes are underreported and rarely prosecuted, especially with regard to Limited English Proficient immigrant community members. Second, the carceral system does little to provide the individual who caused the harm with the tools to not recidivate; to repair the harm caused to the victim and the victim's community; to engage the community; and to transform the individual who caused the harm's underlying bigoted attitudes and behaviors. Thus, we recommend a restorative justice approach to hate violence when the individual who was harmed is amenable to this process. It is important to note that restorative justice is only possible when the individual who caused the harm accepts responsibility, and all parties voluntarily agree to engage in the process. The restorative justice process must be facilitated by a person who is well trained in restorative justice practices and equipped with the cultural competency to identify the needs and challenges faced by all parties involved.

4) Ensure Victim Funds are Accessible: In many states and counties, survivors of hate violence cannot access victim compensation funds unless they collaborate with police and prosecutor offices in a criminal case. However, as stated above, there are many barriers to victims reporting hate violence to police. In addition, some incidents of hate violence, such as hate speech in many cases, do not qualify as crimes. Victims should be given access to victim compensation funds without a condition that they have to work with police and prosecutors.

5) Fund Culturally Competent and Mental Health Services for Victims: Due to the underfunding of services for minority communities and training for mental health providers to serve minority communities, it can be very difficult for Asian American victims of hate violence to access culturally competent and language accessible mental health services. Policymakers should be encouraged to fully fund these vital services and training for mental health providers. This includes funding mental health providers to be first responders to individuals in mental health crisis, rather than local law enforcement.

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6) Fund Community-Based Ambassador Programs: Cities like San Francisco and Oakland have launched community ambassador programs to employ a multi-cultural and multi-linguistic team of trained community members to provide assistance to vulnerable community members, including individuals who are elderly.

Thank you for reviewing this guide. Do you have ideas and suggestions for this guide? Please email them to Angela Chan at angelac@advancingjustice-alc.org.

