

Needs Assessment

The Asian and Pacific Islander with disabilities community faces major disparities in access to disability resources and faces obstacles from the general API community due in part to cultural stigma and misconceptions towards a person with visible and hidden disabilities. Furthermore, the model minority social construction often associated with APIs can both diminish and obscure serious issues within the API community. API older youth with disabilities are especially vulnerable, as most disability services target minors or older populations. APIDC's services strive to help empower API with disabilities, especially youth, to incrementally break down these systemic barriers and aid in their full inclusion with the general population.

Original research findings by APIDC have revealed that Asian Americans with disabilities are less likely to be employed than Asians Americans without disabilities. Individuals with both a disability and no English proficiency produce the clearest results of labor market disparities. Only 9.2% of non-English speaking Asian Americans are employed, which is lower than all other ethnic groups. Of this group, only 7.0% of women with disabilities are employed, which is the lowest employment rate of any comparison group.

APIDC was developed to help address these disparities through services, discussion, empowerment, and advocacy.

Organizational History & Accomplishments

Our mission is to give a voice and a face to APIs with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities. We seek to help break down the service and cultural barriers faced by APIs with disabilities, to provide knowledge to APIs with disabilities and their families, and to create a community network for empowerment and independence.

We were founded in 1998 as an informal coalition and in 2009 became a formal tax-exempt 501(c)(3) organization. Over the years, APIDC has organized four major conferences throughout California, the first ever in the state to bring together consumers, service providers and non-profit organizations in the API community, for the goal of connecting information and support resources. Each conference was attended by hundreds of APIs with disabilities and their families, organizational representatives, and advocates, all of whom worked towards the goal of identifying effective mechanisms to deliver culturally competent resources to API families with members facing physical, mental and developmental challenges. The California Governor's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities, private foundations, and corporations financially supported these unprecedented conferences.

As a result of the conference proceedings, we have identified the need for:

- smaller issue forums and trainings to increase awareness of the specific challenges facing APIs with disabilities
- original research to better understand the factors that influence the quality of life for APIs with disabilities and their families
- leadership training and opportunities for consumers to share experiences

Youth Leadership Training

APIDC has facilitated leadership trainings sponsored by AT&T, the Christopher and Dana Reeves Foundation and Southern California Edison:

- In Northern California, APIDC has invited local and national leaders with disabilities, including Congress member Tammy Duckworth, to share their challenges and successes.
- In Southern California, APIDC has launched a Youth Leadership Institute in partnership with higher education institutions, including California State University, Los Angeles, Pasadena City College, and Rio Hondo College. Students with disabilities and students interested in careers to support people with disabilities are recommended by participating colleges and universities to participate in the Institute.

Part one of the program consisted of two sessions covering public speaking, the history of API civil rights, advocacy, policy and legislation, and employability skills. The second part of the program involved each participant using their newfound knowledge and skills to design personal initiatives in their community or school—e.g., a mentorship program for students with disabilities. A debriefing session held at the completion of the Institute indicated that the participants were very receptive towards the information presented, and the program has fueled their enthusiasm and motivation towards doing more for the community through their initiatives, and the graduates have requested to be involved as trainers or mentors at the next Institute. Lastly, a graduation ceremony was held for the students and their families and friends. Featured speakers at the ceremony included the graduates as well as established community leaders.

Pilot Project: Pathways to Employment

APIDC is currently in the stages of expanding our youth with disabilities leadership initiatives into a comprehensive program that provides employability skills training and pathways to entry level employment opportunities. We will be working with at least one local community college through its disabled student service office to identify potential students and provide the appropriate educational tracks and resource support. There will also be a high school student with disabilities track that will encourage students to be dual enrolled in community college classes and get an early start on their path to employment.

In addition, this program will require APIDC's partnership with employers of various fields to provide internships, job shadowing, and mentorship opportunities to selected students with disabilities. The employer partners will also provide guidance as to the ideal curriculum that would most prepare students for employment in their respective fields.

2016 Statewide Disabilities Conference

APIDC is planning its next statewide conference for March 18-19 in 2016.

Since 1998, APIDC has convened four major conferences in California to address the needs of APi's with disabilities. Each conference – Los Angeles (1999), Bay Area (2001), Orange County (2005), and Long Beach (2010) – has explored ways to educate not only API families on how to

better access resources, but also to educate health providers on the specific barriers facing APIs with disabilities, to ensure the provision of culturally competent health systems. Over 400 people have attended prior conferences. Speakers at such conferences have included service providers such as the Department of Rehabilitation, and community based organizations including the Little Tokyo Service Center.

The 2016 Statewide Disabilities Conference in California will continue along the tradition of its successful predecessors and provide a critical platform for the connection between Asian American disability communities and mainstream disability service organizations. The conference will be a two-day event consisting of workshops on topics covering a range of issues within the disabilities community. In past conferences, panel topics have included mental health, autism, Asian American advocacy, youth with disabilities leadership, employment for individuals with disabilities, and the impact of health care reform on API's with disabilities. Each panel consists of one moderator and three or four expert panelists to lead the discussion.

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Advertisement in program booklet

- Full page - \$750
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- Quarter page - \$250

APIDC is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, employer identification number 80-0211920. Your donation will be tax-deductible. Attached is APIDC's non-profit certification from the IRS.

For further information, please contact Patricia Kinaga, pkinaga@kinagalawfirm.com