



# VA AAPI CAUCUS

Virginia Asian American & Pacific Islander Caucus

The Honorable Ralph Northam Governor of Virginia  
P.O. Box 1475  
Richmond, VA 23218

Dear Governor Northam:

We thank you for your leadership of our economy throughout this public health crisis which has resulted in a significant budget surplus and continued economic growth. AAPI Virginians have faced the challenges of the pandemic while contributing to Virginia's response as essential frontline workers. At the same time, our community has faced a rise in hate and violence. As we rebuild from the pandemic, we have an historic opportunity to address long-standing systemic barriers to public health and economic opportunities affecting Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Virginians.

The 2020 Census shows that AAPIs in Virginia are our fastest growing population – between 2010 and 2020, Virginia's Asian American population grew by 45 percent and Pacific Islander population grew by 44 percent.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout this Spring, the Virginia AAPI Caucus held listening sessions with community leaders and AAPI-serving organizations as well as attended community discussions with you and members of your Administration. Our 2022 legislative agenda and budget requests reflect the priorities raised during these discussions and focus on:

- Expanding Language Access
- Strengthening Education
- Improving Data Disaggregation
- Growing Entrepreneurs and Small Businesses
- Stopping Hate Crimes
- Supporting the Office of New Americans and Supporting Afghans Seeking Refuge and Other Asylees
- Increasing Equity

As members of the Virginia AAPI Caucus, we write to request the following investments in the next Biennial Budget to address these critical issues facing Virginia's AAPI communities and other immigrant communities.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/virginia-population-change-between-census-decade.html>

## EXPANDING LANGUAGE ACCESS

Language access is foundational to ensuring the health and economic well-being of AAPI communities, allowing some of our most vulnerable Virginians to receive critical state government services. Without consistent guidance or oversight, Virginia state agencies have implemented a patchwork of language access policies and has created inequities for LEP Virginians in accessing state services. Expanding language access will require thoughtful planning and implementation by state agencies as well as critical investments in strategies to lift LEP Virginians out of poverty.

### Requests

- **\$5,400,000 to hire 27 language equity and access coordinators (\$2,700,000 in Year 1 and \$2,700,000 in Year 2).**

Funds would provide 1 FTE for a Deputy Diversity Officer for Immigrant Integration in the Office of the Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer; 1 FTE in the Office of the Attorney General; and 25 FTE for language equity and access coordinators at selected, public-facing agencies providing health, social services, economic services, consumer protection, and other key services. These staff would be responsible for developing, implementing, and monitoring language access plans in their state agencies. *(Total is dependent upon final recommendation from the study conducted by the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion)*

- **\$8 million to pilot “public benefit navigators” (\$4 million in Year 1 and \$4 million in Year 2).**

LEP individuals are more likely to live in poverty than individuals who are English proficient. This

pilot would help address the acute needs of LEP Virginians living in poverty by helping them access health care, employment services, transportation, housing, food security, and childcare. This funding would be allocated to the Office of New Americans to competitively award grants to immigrant- and refugee- serving organizations. These grants would provide intensive case management to LEP Virginians to assist them with applying for critical public services, an evaluation of the pilot, and two time-limited staff positions to oversee program implementation.

- **\$10 million to pilot Two Generation/Whole Family services to limited English-proficient Virginians to address multi-generational poverty (\$5 million in Year 1 and \$5 million in Year 2).**

In Virginia, 24 percent of parents of young children (ages 0 to 4) and 21 percent of parents of elementary school aged children (5 to 10) are LEP and low-income. These families are likely to

face housing, food, and financial insecurity and challenges accessing higher paying job opportunities.

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/limited-english-proficient-population-united-states-2013>.

<sup>3</sup>

[https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi\\_nciip\\_parents-children-0-4-and-5-10-va-2021\\_final.pdf](https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi_nciip_parents-children-0-4-and-5-10-va-2021_final.pdf)

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“Two Generation/Whole Family” strategy is an evidence-based approach to addressing multi-generational poverty and improving long-term outcomes for children and the adults in their lives, and has been successful in lifting LEP families out of poverty. This pilot would help

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disrupt the cycle of poverty for low-income, LEP Virginian families by providing them with ongoing coaching and connections to employment specialists, school liaisons, youth mentors, and health educators as well as provide family literacy, adult education, workforce development, home visits, and other strategies. This funding would be allocated to the Office of New Americans to competitively-award grants to immigrant- and refugee- serving organizations to implement whole family strategies, an evaluation of the pilot, and two time-limited staff positions to oversee implementation of the program.

## **STRENGTHENING EDUCATION**

Access to strong, relevant education is important to every Virginia student — and students in Virginia deserve to go to school expecting to be safe and to learn how AAPI Americans contributed to our Commonwealth and our country.

### **Requests**

- **\$100,000 to Support Development of AAPI History in the Social Studies Curriculum Revision**

Learning AAPI history — from our social, cultural, and economic contributions to Virginia and our nation to the racism and exclusion that our community has endured — offers important lessons for all students. Additionally, recognizing that AAPI history is integral to Virginia and American history will help to dispel the “otherness” that many AAPI students experience.

This funding would be allocated to the Department of Education to further identify and develop AAPI history materials and resources for teachers and students as part of the revision of Virginia’s K-12 social studies curriculum.

- **\$100,000 to Develop Model Anti-AAPI Bullying Curriculum**

Our Virginia public schools should be a safe place for Virginia students, and any instances of bullying or hate against other students should be treated seriously and with proper recourse. The last year saw unprecedented acts of hate and bigotry against AAPI Americans. We cannot let that hate fester in our public school and must ensure our teachers and staff understand cultural nuances of bullying targeted at AAPI students.

This funding would be allocated to the Department of Education to develop model anti-AAPI bullying curriculum, which would be shared with local school boards as a model that could be used to train teachers and staff.

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/DualGenerationLearning-2016-FINAL.pdf>

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- **\$27.6 million to increase the number of English Language teachers in public K-12 (\$13.3 million in Year 1 and \$14.3 million in Year 2)**

English language learners (ELL) have lower high school graduation rates than their English proficient peers — In 2017, only 48.2 percent of Virginia ELLs graduated from high school, compared to 85.3 percent of Virginia students overall. Increasing achievement for ELL students

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can have expansive, positive results, increasing future workforce opportunities, earning potential, and more.

This funding would be used to support 21.5 FTE instructional positions per 1,000 students as identified as LEP in the 2022-2023 school year, and 23 FTE instructional positions in 2023-2024 school year and thereafter for each 1,000 students identified as LEP.

## **IMPROVING DATA DISAGGREGATION**

The AAPI community includes more than 50 ethnic communities speaking over 100 languages and includes those whose families have been here for generations as well as new Americans. Often, overall data for Asian Americans or Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders mask the disparity among AAPI ethnic communities. For example, on average, AAPI women are paid 85 cents for every dollar a white, non-Hispanic man is paid for the same job but disaggregated data shows us that Burmese women make

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52 cents, Vietnamese women make 63 cents, and Korean women make 83 cents. Data disaggregation is

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critical to providing insight into the diverse needs of our community and ensuring that our state government can better target its services to serve AAPI Virginians.

### **Request**

- **\$150,000 for data disaggregation study (Year 1).**

This funding would be allocated to Virginia's Chief Data Officer to develop recommendations, in consultation with state agencies and community stakeholders to collect, report, and make accessible disaggregated data for key indicators such as health, economic well-being, small business growth, educational attainment, housing, food security, and criminal justice.

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<https://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2017/02/23/512451228/5-million-english-language-learners-a-vast-pool-of-talent-at-risk>

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<https://www.cnbc.com/2021/05/20/aapi-women-have-the-smallest-pay-gap-but-that-doesnt-tell-the-full-story.html>

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<https://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/economic-justice/fair-pay/asian-women-and-the-wage-gap.pdf>

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## **STOPPING HATE CRIMES**

Virginia ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in the country for AAPI hate incidents occurring between March 2020 through June 2021. The rise in racism and violence towards the AAPI community is deeply concerning and needs to be

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addressed holistically.

### **Request**

- **\$300,000 to support an Anti-Asian Hate Taskforce (\$150,000 in Year 1 and \$150,000 in Year 2).**

This Taskforce would be led by the Attorney General and include Commonwealth Attorneys representing localities with significant AAPI populations, AAPI small business owners, AAPI serving organizations, law enforcement, mental health experts, victim service coordinators, and other stakeholders. The Taskforce would be charged with assessing and combating the recent rise in hate incidents and crimes directed at AAPI Virginians. The Taskforce would make recommendations regarding defining, reporting, investigating, and prosecuting hate incidents and crimes; and ensuring that AAPI Virginians have access to appropriate culturally competent victim services.

## **OFFICE OF NEW AMERICANS AND SERVICES TO AFGHANS AND OTHER IMMIGRANTS**

More than 1 million immigrants call Virginia home, and every day new Americans move to Virginia in

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search of their American dream. When it was established in 2020, the Office of New Americans was charged with promoting the economic, linguistic, and civic integration of our new Americans, including implementing a statewide strategy and serving as a resource for localities and immigrant-serving organizations. Now, we must expand the Office of New Americans to meet its broad and vital mandate.

Additionally, Virginia has been a crucial gateway for Afghans seeking refuge from persecution. Virginia expects to resettle 1,200 Afghan refugees, special immigrant visa holders, and humanitarian parolees.

We must make key investments into Virginia’s refugee resettlement system and provide equitable services to all Afghans and other immigrants.

**Requests**

- **\$1,000,000 for 5 FTE for the Office of New Americans (\$500,000 in Year 1 and \$500,000 in Year 2)**

We support the request of the Office of New Americans Advisory Board for 5 FTE to create regional staff positions within the Office of New Americans. These staff would work closely with state agencies and regional and local communities to ensure the needs of new Americans in Virginia are met in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner.

<sup>8</sup> <https://stopaapihate.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/Stop-AAPI-Hate-Report-National-v2-210830.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-in-virginia>

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- **\$12,700,000 for Services to Support Afghan Humanitarian Parolees and Other Immigrants (\$6,350,000 in Year 1 and \$6,350,000 in Year 2)**

The federal Continuing Resolution provides some funding for Afghan humanitarian parolees, which Virginia’s refugee resettlement agencies expect will likely run out before summer 2022. To ensure that Afghan humanitarian parolees and other immigrants receive equitable services to refugees is going to require long-term support and commitment from Virginia.

This funding would be allocated to the Office of Newcomer Services to oversee and competitively award grants to Virginia’s refugee resettlement agencies. The grants would expand the resettlement agencies’ capacity to provide legal services, case management, health care, housing, education, and employment services to Afghan humanitarian parolees and other immigrants.

**INCREASING EQUITY**

Virginia’s focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion is important and must be sustained. The next step in our path to reconciliation is to ensure Virginians that face obstacles to full inclusion and participation in state government and access to state resources and services.

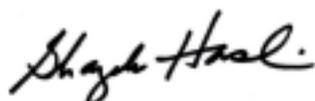
**Requests**

- **\$1,200,000 for 6 FTE Advisory Board (\$600,000 in Year 2)**

This request is for 6 Advisory Board, the Advisory Board, the

to staff each Governor’s (\$600,000 in Year 1 and

FTE to staff the Virginia Asian Office of New Americans Virginia African American



Advisory Board, the Virginia Latino Advisory Board, the Virginia Council on Women, and the Virginia LGBTQ Advisory Board. The staff would report to the Chief Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Officer.



Kathy Tran  
Delegate, 42nd District

Ghazala Hashmi  
Senator, 10th District



Mark Keam  
Delegate, 35th District



Convirs-Fowler



Kelly

Delegate, 21st District

Suhas Subramanyam Delegate,  
87th District