


**U.S. PROGRAMS
 Equality and Opportunity Fund
 Summary of Recommended Grant
 Out of Docket Grant Recommendation
 March 10, 2011**

Program Area/Organization

Organization	Grant Code	Recommended	Term	2011	2012
Equality and Opportunity Fund					
Asian American Justice Center ¹	T1: 24448	100,000	2 years	\$50,000	\$50,000
	T1: 24453	100,000		\$50,000	\$50,000
Total Recommended:		<u>\$ 200,000</u>			
GRANTMAKING TOTAL THIS DOCKET:		\$ 200,000			

¹ Total grant to Asian American Justice Center is \$200,000; co-funded by the Equality and Opportunity Fund Racial Justice, T1: 24448 (\$100,000), and Equality and Opportunity Fund Rapid Response, T1: 24453 (\$100,000).


 Approval Signature


 Date

MEMORANDUM

TO: Aryeh Neier
FROM: Ann Beeson and Raquiba LaBrie
DATE: March 10, 2011
RE: Out-of-Docket Recommendation for the Asian American Justice Center

Attached for your approval is an Equality and Opportunity Fund grant recommendation for the Asian American Justice Center (AAJC). AAJC seeks project support for two distinct projects. The first is for its redistricting and broader voting rights advocacy in Texas. The second is to strengthen its capacity as it seeks to achieve greater operational and programmatic alignment with its current affiliates and to broaden advocacy infrastructure in Asian American communities throughout the U.S.

We are happy to discuss this recommendation at your convenience.

Grant ID: 20031972

Legal Name of Organization: Asian American Justice Center

Tax Status: 501(c)(3) public charity

Name of Fiscal Sponsor: N/A

Purpose of Grant: To support the Asian American Justice Center’s capacity building initiative and 2011 redistricting and voting rights project

Grant Description: To provide \$200,000 in project support to the Asian American Justice Center (AAJC), a leading national Asian American civil and human rights organization, for its work in two areas. AAJC and its three affiliates have decided to deepen their programmatic and operational alignment by adopting a common name, “The Asian American Center for Advancing Justice,” and by building shared infrastructure. Support provided under the recommended grant will enhance the organizations’ collective technology and web communications capacity. Second, the grant will support community education, outreach, and advocacy on behalf of Asian Americans, as well as advocacy to ensure compliance with the Voting Rights Act in Texas. AAJC fills an important gap in our strategy: it is one of few organizations positioned to conduct high-level redistricting outreach and voting rights advocacy on behalf of Asian Americans. The overarching goal of U.S. Programs’ cross-fund effort is to ensure a fair, open and transparent redistricting cycle that includes broad community participation and protects the rights of minorities to advance their interests.

Previous OSI Support: \$2,270,000 from Immigrant Rights (1999-2010)

Organization Budget: \$3,700,000

Project Budget: Texas Redistricting and Voting Rights: \$700,000
Capacity Building Initiative: \$400,000

Major Sources of Support: Ford Foundation (\$2,500,000 over 2 years for co-branding communications capacity and redistricting activities)

Amount Requested: \$200,000 over two years

Contingent Grant: No

Amount Recommended: \$200,000 over two years; split as \$100,000 from the Equality and Opportunity Fund Racial Justice, T1: 24448 and \$100,000 from the Equality and Opportunity Fund Rapid Response, T1: 24453

Term: Two years, January 1, 2011 – December 31, 2012

Matching Requirements: N/A

Description of Organization

Founded in 1991, Asian American Justice Center (AAJC) works to advance the human and civil rights for Asian Americans, and build and promote a fair and equitable society for all. AAJC is one of the nation's leading experts on issues of importance to the Asian American community including affirmative action, anti-Asian violence prevention/race relations, census, health, immigration and immigrant rights, adult English Language Learning, media diversity, and voting rights.

In 1995, AAJC founded the Community Partners Network, which consists of 100 Asian American community-based organizations in 44 cities, 24 states, and the District of Columbia. The network builds the capacity of local communities and has helped AAJC have a presence at the local level. AAJC president and executive director Karen Narasaki is a prominent civil rights leader and a frequent media commentator. AAJC and Narasaki have been widely acknowledged by the media, policymakers and government officials and communities throughout the U.S.

Description of Program for Which Funding Is Sought

AAJC requests support for two projects: 1) strengthening its redistricting and voting rights advocacy in Texas; and 2) building technological and web capacity for its co-branding initiative.

Redistricting and Voting Rights Act Advocacy

AAJC and its affiliates are recognized as experts on redistricting and compliance with Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act, which seeks to eliminate linguistic barriers to voting by requiring language assistance and translated voting materials in communities with large numbers of Limited English Proficient (LEP) people. AAJC will coordinate the redistricting and Section 203 work of its affiliates and partners with a focus on Asian American communities in the Greater Houston Area.

In collaboration with U.S. Programs redistricting grantees, the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund, AAJC recently produced an updated redistricting handbook. With the requested funding, AAJC will add to the handbook by developing supplementary materials focused on Asian Americans. AAJC will work with Asian American partner organizations in Texas to collect data about their communities, build consensus around priorities, and identify communities of interest. It will educate Asian American community members regarding redistricting through ethnic media, trainings and presentations. It will also conduct community forums with African Americans and Latinos to identify opportunities for collaboration.

AAJC's Section 203 efforts will include working with the Department of Justice and the Census Bureau to ensure post-Census 2010 Section 203 determinations are properly implemented during the 2012 elections. Through its ongoing position on the 2010 Census Advisory Committee, AAJC will advocate for quality data to capture LEP populations. It will disseminate information on language assistance availability and rights under Section 203 in multiple Asian languages. It will work with local election officials and community leaders in Texas to ensure counties provide adequate and appropriate language assistance in Asian languages. If a county fails to qualify for Section 203 coverage by a small margin, it will work with local officials to attain voluntary coverage of languages.

Technological and Web Communications Capacity

After working independently for decades, AAJC and its three affiliates – the Asian American Institute in Chicago, the Asian Law Caucus in San Francisco, and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center in Los Angeles – have formally agreed to adopt a common name and coordinated policy agenda. In the past year

and a half, the four organizations have made significant progress in developing a shared brand, operational guidelines, and fundraising and revenue sharing agreements that will help grow collective resources to invest in new offices and affiliates. They have also developed a shared platform with policy prescriptions to advance justice in Asian American communities.

In the next 12 months, the four organizations will implement web communications strategies to facilitate exchange of information across offices, streamline dissemination of reports, and improve the use of social media to engage Asian Americans and the broader public.

Rationale for Recommendation

Support for AAJC advances the overarching goal of the cross-fund redistricting effort: to ensure a fair, open and transparent redistricting cycle that includes broad community participation and protects the rights of minorities. AAJC fills an important gap in our cross-fund strategy: it is the only organization positioned to conduct high-level redistricting outreach and Section 203 advocacy on behalf of Asian Americans in Texas. The recommended grant also advances the Equality and Opportunity Fund's overall mission of prohibiting arbitrary and discriminatory government action, and lifting barriers that prevent people from participating fully in economic, social and political life.

AAJC and its affiliates have an impressive track record in voting rights advocacy. In the 2002 election season, AAJC played a key role in pushing the Department of Justice and the Census Bureau to release post-Census 2000 Section 203 language access determinations in jurisdictions across the country, including Houston, which became covered for Vietnamese in 2002. AAJC also played an instrumental role during the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act in 2006.

In its redistricting advocacy, AAJC has targeted the ways in which language barriers contribute to Asian Americans' exclusion from vital decision-making regarding allocation of resources in their communities. Over one in three Asian Americans is Limited English Proficient and one in four lives in a household where every member 14 years or older has some difficulty speaking English. Lack of translated voting materials presents an immense obstacle to Asian Americans trying to vote. It is also challenging to organize the Asian American community politically across ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences.

These challenges are evident in Texas, which has the fourth largest population of Asian Americans. Given U.S. Programs' selection of Texas as an early target of the State Strategies Initiative, staff decided to recommend support for AAJC's work in the state with a focus on the Greater Houston Area where AAJC has local partners. Generally, Asian American communities tend to be smaller and more dispersed than other minority groups. To address the demographic particularities of Asian American communities, AAJC has crafted a sound, multi-faceted strategy. It will analyze the demographics of Asian American neighborhoods in order to draw community of interest maps that include diverse Asian American communities as well as other minorities. It will also advocate for proper implementation and enforcement of Section 203 as critical steps to improving Asian American political representation.

Staff is also enthusiastic about AAJC's efforts to expand advocacy capacity in the Asian American community by creating greater alignment with its affiliates and working to strategically and purposefully build offices and new affiliates in regions across the U.S.

The recommended grant to AAJC was approved by the cross-fund redistricting working group in the fall of 2010. Because the Equality and Opportunity Fund did not have sufficient funds available in its 2010 budget, the group agreed to move the grant in the first docket of 2011 and combine it with EOF's planned support for AAJC's planned initiative to strengthen alignment with its affiliates.