



亞洲人平等會

ASIAN AMERICANS FOR EQUALITY

Good evening, my name is Crystal Feng, representing Asian Americans for Equality. Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony to the New York State Complete Count Committee.

Asian Americans for Equality (AAFE) is a 45-year-old community development and social service organization dedicated to serving Asian Americans and all of those in need throughout New York City.

From community service offices in Flushing and Jackson Heights here in Queens and Chinatown and the Lower East Side in Manhattan, AAFE provides an array of multilingual and culturally sensitive services in support of immigrants and low-income individuals and families throughout New York City.

Each year, AAFE counselors assist approximately 10,000 community members in completing citizenship applications, renewing green cards, filing family petitions, acquiring affordable housing, battling against unscrupulous landlords, applying for critical safety net government benefits, and many other issues. AAFE is proud to be part of the Queens Borough President's Complete Count Committee.

Our organization serves communities throughout New York City, with a focus on neighborhoods with heavy concentrations of Asian residents, including Flushing, Jackson Heights, Elmhurst, Corona and Forest Hills; Manhattan's Chinatown; and Sunset Park, Bay Ridge and Bensonhurst in Brooklyn. While AAFE provides programs and services for New York City's rapidly growing and diverse Asian community - now more than one-million strong - our organization also serves increasing numbers of Latinx community members across the city. AAFE is one of the few nonprofit organizations offering services in English, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

We at AAFE are committed to a fair and equitable Census. A complete count is imperative to make sure our underserved and underrepresented communities receive their fair share of government resources. AAFE serves many "hard to count" neighborhoods where language and cultural barriers have undermined an accurate Census count. A decade ago, many people in Flushing, Manhattan's Chinatown and other areas were overlooked. In 2020, anti-immigrant policies, misinformation, hateful rhetoric coming from Washington and the prospect of the citizenship question being added to the Census form will make our work even more difficult.

The City of New York has committed \$26 million for Census outreach, while the state allocated \$20 million. We applaud these investments, but believe more funding is necessary to ensure that everyone is counted. We urge our elected officials to make additional financial commitments, and to make sure community-based organizations receive adequate resources for education and outreach in New York's immigrant neighborhoods.

Grassroots groups are trusted in communities of color and have the necessary language and logistical skills to conduct effective Census outreach. AAFE plans to engage the residents in more than 1,000 buildings the organization manages throughout New York City, small business owners through our affiliate Renaissance Economic Development Corporation and more than 20,000 community members who access our social service programs each year.

We are especially concerned about the U.S. Census Bureau's reliance this year on digital Census forms. Many members of our communities have no access to computers or the internet. There is still a wide digital divide in the neighborhoods we serve. AAFE is prepared to assist community members in filling out online forms, but this will be a labor intensive undertaking. We urge city and state governments to provide adequate resources to community-based providers working to bridge the digital divide in the 2020 Census.

Thank you for your time and dedication to assuring a complete count in 2020.