



Building Movement Project
Activating Nonprofits | Fueling Change

Report Back on 2024 Elections Scenario Planning AANHPI Movement Challenges, Community Needs, and Infrastructure Recommendations for the 2024 Election and Beyond

*Produced by the Asian Law Caucus, National Council of Asian Pacific Americans,
Building Movement Project, and Aurora Commons
October 2024*

Background

Between July and September 2024, the Asian Law Caucus (ALC) and the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), in partnership with Aurora Commons and the Building Movement Project, developed and conducted the 2024 Elections Scenario Planning Series for organizations working closely with AANHPI communities to prepare for the 2024 elections. The series sought to:

- Bring together, for the first time, dozens of organizational leaders from two distinct national Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) networks—NCAPA and the Asian American Leaders Table, managed by ALC—to help AANHPI groups understand and anticipate potential scenarios, legal and policy shifts, and frontline community needs following the November election;
- Create an inclusive, collaborative, and safe space for cross-organizational preparation and coordination leading up to and in the aftermath of the 2024 presidential election; and
- Collectively map, across issue areas like immigration, health, education, and national security, the policy challenges and opportunities that may need to be addressed beyond the election.

This document summarizes what we learned from the process, as well as the needs and recommendations that emerged during the sessions. We hope that community-based organizations, philanthropic entities, and partner groups will draw upon the information shared here in order to effectively partner with, fund, and support our communities and organizations.

About the Process

Representatives from the Asian Law Caucus and NCAPA, with support from Building Movement Project and Aurora Commons, created a working group that prepared agreements and objectives for the 2024 Elections Scenario Planning Series. The working group developed a multi-session scenario planning learning arc, prepped facilitators, and invited various organizations across diverse AANHPI communities, geographies, and issue areas to participate in the series.

In total, approximately 130 staff from 73 different AANHPI groups across the country joined at least one of the three scenario planning sessions held each month between July and September 2024. Each participating organization was represented by at least one senior management staff member, with the option for one additional staff member to join. Throughout this process, participating organizations' feedback, issue area expertise, and core strategies helped guide the sessions' scenarios and policy analysis.

Participants represented a wide range of movement work, including direct services, law and policy, base building and organizing, and narrative change. Some brought learnings from frontline rapid response, while others offered experience in national policy advocacy and legislation. With this, the scenario planning sessions represent an important bridge between local and national expertise—a model that ALC and NCAPA hope to replicate through additional post-election coordination and collaboration.

Scenario Planning Session Synthesis

Session 1: Learning From The Past (July 25, 2024)

Session 1, *Learning From The Past*, engaged nearly 60 organizational representatives to build an interactive timeline of historical moments between 2016 and 2024. For the timeline exercise, participants recalled events surrounding the 2016 and 2020 elections, such as challenging anti-Chinese and anti-Muslim policies and narratives in the aftermath of the 2016 election, advocating for more equitable health protections and benefits to immigrant and refugee communities in the wake of COVID-19, and grappling with gaps in movement infrastructure during rapid response moments such as the Atlanta spa shootings. Although these events brought back memories of grief and uncertainty, reflecting on past challenges together was an affirming, powerful demonstration that organizations do not have to struggle alone. The group concluded the session by stocking a virtual “Movement Pantry” of collective wisdom, resources, and networks to turn to in the near future, especially in times of crisis.

Overall, Session 1 demonstrated that it is vital to look back to better understand the ways in which government policies have affected AANHPI communities, and to locate current needs within a broader historical context. The timeline exercise revealed a wide range in historical memory and institutional knowledge, which is not surprising given that many AANHPI groups have been dealing with staff turnover, fatigue, and siloed work. Many new groups have also recently formed in more parts of the country over the past decade, including in swing states and regions with growing AANHPI populations.

Session 2: Anticipating the Future (August 14, 2024)

Session 2, *Anticipating the Future*, explored potential immigration, national security, education, and health impacts under either a President Trump or Harris Administration, accompanied by national, state, and local insights. Over 70 AANHPI leaders attended Session 2, and shared the issues that they are most concerned about in the following areas:

- **Immigration**: Ramping up of deportations and rollbacks on immigrant and refugee legal protections impacting AANHPI and other communities of color; resurgence of

anti-immigrant and anti-Asian policies (e.g., Muslim Ban, China Initiative 2.0); immigration being used as a wedge issue to divide voters and community groups.

- **National Security**: The potential expansion of “joint terrorism” task forces; the elimination of the Department of Homeland Security and other federal agencies that could impact structural checks and balances regarding due process, civil rights, and immigration; laws and policies increasing transnational repression, surveillance, and disenfranchisement of historically oppressed groups; the resurgence in hate-based violence and racial profiling, particularly targeting Muslim, Southeast Asian, and Chinese communities.
- **Education**: Dismantling of the Department of Education, particularly the Office for Civil Rights and the DOJ Civil Rights Division which enforce Title VI; reducing access to educational opportunities especially for undocumented students and people of color; rolling back school curricula and federal funding on DEI, critical race theory, gender, and ethnic studies; the closure of offices and school programs protecting equity, inclusion, and justice.
- **Health**: Threats to healthcare access, including reduced affordability and cuts to Medicaid, the Affordable Care Act, and cultural health services; changes to Public Charge rule that lead to denying immigrants permanent residency if they received benefits; attacks on abortion access, LGBTQ+ and mental health care; rescinding immigrant/DACA eligibility; and lack of confidence in the healthcare system including undermining Centers for Disease Control and the National Institute of Health.

Session 3: Identifying Synergistic Opportunities (September 23, 2024)

Session 3, *Identifying Synergistic Opportunities*, focused on identifying next steps to collectively address potential post-election crises, particularly around immigration, national security, health, and education. During this session, nearly 50 participating leaders reflected on how policy issues will become more interconnected and require greater coalition-based work, including regular and frequent coordination and communication, as well as more creativity and adaptability in shared approaches.

Building off Session 1 and 2, participants did a deeper dive into hypothetical post-election scenarios on **immigration** (increased border militarization and deportations), **education** (dismantling of federal education programs and protections), **national security** (reinstating the China Initiative, which would lead to profiling and discrimination against Chinese American scientists and researchers), and **health** (return of the Public Charge rule, making immigrants who have used or are expected to use public benefits ineligible for permanent residency). For each scenario, participants discussed the expected effects of these policy changes on their communities, as well as potential effective stances and actions to take.

Additionally, organizations discussed possible internal implications on their staff and teams, such as:

- The need to protect staff and team wellbeing, digital safety, and mental health.
- The need to build individual and team capacity to engage in rapid response, organizing, or advocacy efforts, as well as how to prioritize these with existing programs.

- The need to address changes in funder interest as philanthropic institutions pivot to narrower, “defensive” funding priorities.

Through discussion and analysis of these challenges, participants crafted emerging recommendations to strategize and prepare for the identified challenges, with an emphasis on community defense strategies such as preparing for a surge in litigation, launching or expanding education and know-your-rights efforts, and proactively advocating for affirmative policies at the state and local levels to counteract negative federal actions.

Recommendations

While scenario planning revealed daunting issues and community needs, participants also identified promising opportunities for collaboration and coordination, as well as key recommendations along the following themes:

- **Build Cross-Movement Solidarity**
 - **Multiracial Coalitions:** Forge relationships in solidarity with Black, Muslim, Indigenous, Latinx, and other communities which allow for shared strategies, resources, and a stronger collective voice.
 - **Cross-State Coordination:** Share best practices, resources, and strategies across regions, especially as states implement ways to resist or enforce federal policies.
 - **Tactical Coalitions:** Join cross-sector coalitions where partners may not be fully aligned but can move together on a common shared interest over the short-term.
- **Change the Narrative and Provide Community Education**
 - **Shaping public narratives to counteract misinformation, stigmatization, and divisive rhetoric,** particularly around immigration and healthcare. This includes messaging that portrays immigrant communities, including Southeast Asian and Muslim populations, as integral to American society. It also includes countering fear and intimidation and crackdowns on protests that will make organizing harder.
 - **Narrative Shifts:** Advocate for narrative changes in public discourse through **storytelling** that highlights the human impact of these policies to shift public opinion and galvanize support.
 - **Combatting Mis/Disinformation:** Set up centralized hubs to fact check information quickly and distribute in-language information, and prepare communication campaigns to counter disinformation, especially regarding Project 2025 bills, public safety, voting rights, and immigration laws.
 - **Community Ambassadors:** Build a network of trained community members as leaders, advocates, and disseminators of information in times of crisis.
 - **Information Sharing:** Establish systems to communicate in-language, tailored, accessible information to the broader community on policy changes, safety guidelines, and advocacy efforts.
- **Protect Physical and Digital Safety**
 - **Electoral Safety:** Work with legal advocates to ensure ballot access and organize rapid responses to challenges in election certification. Educate voters on ballot curing processes and how to ensure their votes are counted. Organize efforts to monitor and respond to voter intimidation and suppression tactics, especially in areas with contested election results.

- **Community Safety Plans:** Develop plans to protect the physical safety of AANHPI communities in the face of increased militarization, policing, and racial profiling.
- **Know Your Rights Workshops:** Offer workshops for vulnerable community members—such as immigrants, scholars, and students—on how to safely engage in protests and their legal rights more broadly.
- **Online Security Protections:** Create a digital safety toolkit and reporting mechanisms. Ensure community members are aware of ways to protect their personal data and respond to doxing.
- **Focus on Long-Term Movement Building**
 - **Base-Building and Leadership Development:** Ramp up grassroots organizing and leadership development within affected communities.
 - **Community Care:** Revitalize and support mutual aid networks and community care systems for financial, legal, food, and mental health resources.
 - **Movement Networks:** Convene and coordinate with like-minded organizations.
- **Build Legal Defense Infrastructure**
 - **Legal Networks:** Develop strong relationships with legal advocates, lean on existing coalitions like Protecting Immigrant Families, and build coalitions focused on defending immigrant rights, civil liberties, and education protections.
 - **Impact Litigation:** Prepare for creative legal strategies and legal challenges against executive orders and harmful federal and state policies. Focus on those most at risk including (but not limited to) undocumented immigrants, protesters, LGBTQIA folks, Muslims, and individuals in states with aggressive policing and extreme legislation.
- **Advocate with Local and State Governments**
 - **State-Level Protections:** Engage state and local officials to maintain protections for vulnerable communities, including undocumented immigrants and students.
 - **Local Policy:** Build relationships with local law enforcement, school boards, and electeds. Advocate for sanctuary cities and education reform to resist rollbacks.
 - **Research:** Collect data on the community impacts of policies to support advocacy efforts with legislators and frame public communications campaigns.
- **Prioritize Mental and Emotional Well-Being**
 - **Staff and Volunteer Health:** Prioritize wellness programs and mental health resources, such as training for emotional regulation and burnout prevention, to ensure that people remain resilient and engaged. Create peer-led health support systems that allow organizers and activists to learn from one another.
 - **Safe Spaces for Community Dialogue:** Establish regular check-ins for people to decompress, share experiences, and process emotional and mental health challenges, which will help in maintaining a sense of community and mutual support.
- **Invest in Rapid Response Infrastructure**
 - **Direct Action and Rapid Response:** Build organizational infrastructure to engage in rapid response actions, including protests, mass mobilizations, and emergency legal challenges. Set up network structures to communicate and connect daily or weekly.
 - **Advocacy Pipelines:** Establish communication channels and relationships with partner organizations, local officials, and community members to quickly disseminate information and mobilize efforts.
 - **Strengthening rapid response coalitions and networks.** This includes building or reactivating rapid response networks as well as creating multi-issue alliances that

can address anti-trans, anti-Palestinian, anti-Muslim, anti-Chinese, and xenophobic policies and narratives.

- **Identifying Roles and Stances:** Decide which stances each organization will take (e.g., Building Movement Project's [Election Resources Toolkit](#) offers categorizations of Defend, Disrupt, Demand, Document, and Discuss) depending on the issue.

- **Secure Organizational Operations and Resources**

- **Funding:** Anticipate funding gaps and diversify funding streams.
- **Staffing:** Hire staff for outreach, legal support, and community services.

For funders in particular, it is vital to support AANHPI organizations at the national and local levels not only with rapid response grantmaking, but with long term infrastructure in the areas mentioned above. Many organizations have been navigating cycles of community crises, and need recurring general operating support in order to expand their programs and activities, hire skilled staff, and build effective solidarity-based partnerships.

Looking Forward

The positive impacts of scenario planning are evident in the strengthened relationships, increased coordination, and ongoing collaboration between NCAPA and the ALC's Asian American Leaders Table—two of the largest AANHPI movement networks with over 100 distinct local and national organizations—as well as new and renewed bonds between the networks' member groups.

In one-on-one conversations and a participant survey following Session 3, participants voiced a desire for regular calls and convenings—particularly to keep building strategy, learning, and mutual support across local and national movement stakeholders—in the aftermath of the November election. Several participants passed resources gained from the scenario planning sessions along to their staff, and a few have even modeled their own local and statewide scenario planning from these efforts.

As 2025 approaches, ALC, NCAPA, and our partners are hopeful that the scenario planning series is the first of many strategic movement-wide collaborations to increase the power of our communities, expand organizational and ecosystem-wide infrastructure, and ensure the collective health and well-being of our community members and organizational staff.