



Asian American Federation of
New York

PRESS RELEASE

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Asian American Federation Will Continue to Provide South Asian Language Assistance at FEMA Relief Center

Volunteers Translate and Advocate for Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu-speakers

November 12th, New York – The Asian American Federation announced today that it would continue to organize and schedule volunteer translators at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Family Assistance Center at 141 Worth Street through December 1st. The Family Assistance Center is a multi-service center that includes representatives from over 40 government and nonprofit agencies such as the Department of Labor, Small Business Administration, NY Crime Victims Board, Red Cross and Safe Horizon.

Thousands of affected individuals have visited and applied for assistance since the Center opened the week after September 11th. However, the Center has been unable to meet all Asian language needs to provide full assistance to recent immigrants. Cao K. O, Executive Director of the Federation, stated, “The Asian American Federation organized volunteer translators in response to reports that there is a serious need for Asian translators to help immigrants at the Center. This bridges a critical language gap and enables affected community members to access the many services and benefits that are available at the Center.”

The Federation has coordinated over 25 volunteers who are bilingual in at least one major South Asian language, including Bengali, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu. Additionally, the Federation has been working with the Manhattan Borough President’s Office to ensure that the vast Chinese language needs of the Center are being met. Parag Khandhar, Assistant Director of Policy and Planning, said, “Without the help of our volunteer advocates, many South Asian and other

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immigrants in immediate need of financial and social service assistance after September 11th might have been turned away before they could speak with anyone about their situation.”

The Federation has placed trained volunteers in the Center since October 30th to ensure that bilingual assistance is available for community members in need. The Federation will have volunteers on-site Tuesdays, Thursdays (except Thanksgiving), Fridays, and Saturdays through December 1st.

AA Federation South Asian Language Access Project at 141 Worth Street

November 13th – December 1st

Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays (10 AM – 7 PM)*

Saturdays (10 AM – 2 PM)

* Closed on Thanksgiving Day, Thursday 11/22

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The Asian American Federation is a not-for-profit leadership organization with 36 member agencies that serve the diverse Asian American communities in the New York Metropolitan area. In addition to extensive community capacity-building initiatives, the Federation sponsors the Asian American Community Fund, a competitive re-granting program, and the Federation Census Information Center (CIC), a center for data and policy analysis. The Federation’s work with volunteer translators is part of a wider Relief, Recovery and Rebuilding Initiative of the Federation, established to coordinate services and address unmet community needs in the aftermath of the events of September 11th. For more information about the Initiative, contact Parag Khandhar at (212) 344-5878, ext. 18 or parag@aafny.org. Visit our website at www.aafny.org.