



**Asian American Federation
of New York**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**January Enrollment Deadline Fast Approaching for
Final Major September 11th Recovery Programs**

Asian American Federation of New York urges eligible community members to step forward for assistance through Service Coordination Program

More than 2 years since the tragic events of September 11th, 2001, which saw immediate casualties of more than 2,700 people, the final major programs created to help the hundreds of thousands impacted economically will end new enrollments at the end of January 2004. The programs, created and supported as part of the September 11th Fund Ongoing Recovery Program (ORP), include stipended job training and English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, as well as up to 18 months of health insurance and programs to offer emotional support for workers and their families.

According to the Asian American Federation of New York (Federation), a non-profit leadership organization on the forefront of the relief, recovery, and rebuilding efforts in New York City for more than two years, there may still be many community members who are eligible but have not yet stepped forward for assistance. The program was designed to assist the most economically impacted workers and business owners during their transition from being under- or unemployed after September 11th, to finding gainful employment and recovering to equal or better state than before the September 11th tragedy.

“Though cash assistance is no longer readily available to individuals and families still suffering from the aftermath of September 11th, these programs represent a critical bridge to recovery for many community members,” said Parag Khandhar, Assistant Director of Programs and Planning at the Federation. “The ORP programs can still help families to reduce expenses through the health insurance program, open new prospects for their future through the Employment Assistance programs, and cope with the emotional burden that these events have had upon those who work or worked in Lower Manhattan before September 11th.”

The program administrators have announced that the providers of the job training and health insurance will stop taking new enrollments of certified ORP cardholders on January 31, 2004. Enrolling for the benefits from the providers is a two-step process: First, the individual must be deemed eligible for ORP benefits. S/he must have been employed below Canal Street (or in Chinatown) on September 11th, 2001, and suffered from a loss in income of 30% or more after the disaster, and must be currently either

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unemployed or employed at a level equal or less than 70% of her pre-disaster income. The individual must present some proof of the impact on income and be certified by Safe Horizon before becoming eligible for the program. Once Safe Horizon certifies him/her through an information session, s/he must then enroll with the appropriate job training, ESL, or health insurance provider before January 31st, 2004.

Since September 11th, the Federation has played an important role in the recovery of NYC and local Asian American communities. The Federation raised and distributed more than \$400,000 to assist over 800 affected workers soon after September 11th. With its partner agencies, the Federation has helped more than 2,500 impacted individuals and families to access emergency and recovery assistance through its extensive Service Coordination Program (SCP). The Federation and its partners have language capacity in Bengali, Cantonese, Fujianese, Hindi, Mandarin, Tagalog, and Urdu.

Through the course of the SCP, the Federation and its agency partners have worked with many community members who have not found or retained full-time jobs after the disaster. Many of these community members have lived off of the immediate cash and mortgage assistance that they received in the weeks and months immediately after the disaster. Many others have exhausted their personal savings and monies borrowed from friends and family. The Federation believes that many of these individuals may be eligible for the ORP programs, or one of the remaining other programs.

“While thousands have already benefited from these programs, the process has been difficult to navigate for others, especially those with limited English proficiency,” said Khandhar. “The September 11th Fund supported us to ensure that the maximum number of eligible community members enroll and access these programs. We urge as many people as receive this message to pick up the phone and call our office today to speak with someone about their eligibility. But don’t wait, because process to enroll takes at least a week, and time is running out.” Community members interested in enrolling in these programs or learning about other benefits should immediately call the Asian American Federation at 718-544-4700, or the Safe Horizon September 11th 24-hour hotline at **(866) 689-4357**.

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The Asian American Federation of New York is a nonprofit leadership organization that works collaboratively to meet the critical needs of Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area. Operating since 1990, the Federation strengthens community-based health and social services capacity by supporting its 35 member agencies and other grassroots organizations; amplifies the Asian American civic voice by defining, analyzing, and advocating for policies to address key community issues; and encourages strategic, high-impact philanthropy within the Asian American community by increasing opportunities for connecting time, talent and financial resources with pressing community needs.

The Federation Service Coordination Program was made possible through the generous support of the September 11th Fund, created by The United Way of New York City and The New York Community Trust. For more information, please visit our website www.aafny.org, or call us at 212-344-5878 ext. 26.