



Asian American Federation
of New York

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**ASIAN AMERICAN FEDERATION OF NEW YORK LAUNCHES JOINT PROGRAM TO PROVIDE
IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH CARE FOR ASIAN AMERICANS AFFECTED BY SEPTEMBER 11TH
Recovery Grant Supports Five-Agency Initiative
To Serve Elderly Chinatown Residents and Families of World Trade Center Victims**

NEW YORK – The Asian American Federation of New York, a nonprofit leadership organization, today announced it has launched and will lead a five-agency initiative to increase the quality, supply and use of services geared to meet cultural and language needs of Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area who continue to experience emotional trauma resulting from the events of September 11th.

The “Building Bridges and Leveraging Assets for Community Recovery” project is supported by a September 11 recovery grant from the American Red Cross Liberty Disaster Relief Fund.

Building on landmark Federation research, the innovative one-year program will provide accessible, culturally-appropriate mental health services to two particularly vulnerable groups that have not been served sufficiently by existing programs: elderly Chinatown residents, and New York City and New Jersey families of Asian Americans who died in the World Trade Center attacks.

The Federation will collaborate with four community-based organizations: Asian LifeNet (ALN), Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC), the New Jersey Asian American Association for Human Services (NJAAHS) and the South Asian Council of Social Services (SACSS).

“Three and a half years after September 11th, Chinatown’s senior citizens and Asian American victims’ families continue to need truly responsive professional support to deal with long-term emotional issues, including depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress syndrome and family tensions,” said Cao K. O, executive director of the Asian American Federation. “The program we are leading is designed to meet these populations’ specific needs.”

Responding to findings in the Federation’s 2003 research report titled *Asian American Mental Health: A Post-September 11th Needs Assessment*, the new program will:

- Reach out to targeted populations and serve them in familiar, accessible settings, such as senior centers, community centers, agency offices and housing complexes, rather than in hospitals and clinics.
- Provide specialized training to help front-line staff members assess mental health needs, including those related to aging; inform individuals about mental health issues; engage targeted populations in obtaining assistance; and make appropriate referrals.
- Strengthen means of connecting people in need with suitable service providers, for example, by forming and consulting a group of experts in Asian American mental health.
- Enlarge the pool of qualified professionals available to serve targeted populations, via linkages between bilingual Asian American professionals in mainstream institutions and community agencies.

Through the program, the Federation will add to the body of knowledge on Asian American mental health issues and most effective ways to address them. For instance, a mental health screening tool, a service directory and a resource library will be developed. In addition, the Federation will document program results and share lessons with service planners, funders, policy-makers and other community stakeholders.

The Asian American Federation of New York is a nonprofit leadership organization that works collaboratively to improve human services and the quality of life for Asian Americans in the New York metropolitan area. Established in 1990, the Federation supports 35 member agencies and other community-based Asian American service and advocacy organizations; promotes strategic philanthropy within the Asian American community; and conducts research and advocacy concerning critical community issues.

The American Red Cross September 11 Recovery Program, which awarded the grant, supports nonprofit organizations throughout the United States that address a wide variety of longer-term recovery needs related to September 11, including: health; mental health and wellness; community recovery; children and youth; ensuring access to September 11 services; and more.