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What is “Capacity Building” and why should I care about it?

A top recurring concern voiced by AAPI organizations across the country is that they are too small to register on the federal radar for funding and resources. While their grassroots size and scope may be the best fit for serving many small and less well-known communities, these factors also limit their opportunity to compete for funding compared to larger mainstream organizations who may have national presence. At a very basic level, capacity building is ensuring that an organization has the resources (staff, experience, strategy and of course funding) not just to survive but also to achieve stability and continuity to do their work.

As a member of an Regional Interagency Working Group (RIWG), you could play a critical role in helping AAPI community based organizations obtain access to federal government grant programs and services. You can also help build a better understanding of AAPI community needs and issues within your agency and others. Because this issue is so important to the nonprofit community, you need to figure out how you and your agency can have an impact on capacity building.

Can I make a difference regardless of whether my agency or division offers grants or funding?

YES! While it is important that decision makers involved in funding became more familiar with the nuances of AAPI communities, you can still help foster dialogue and access even if you don’t deal directly with funding. For example, by hosting a roundtable event and reaching out to smaller and emerging community groups, you can boost the conversations between federal agency funders, AAPI service providers and perhaps private foundations as well. As a member of an RIWG, you have the opportunity to think outside the box and beyond your immediate marching orders, in order to leverage the broader mandate of ensuring that federal government (not just your agency) does a better job of serving the AAPI population!

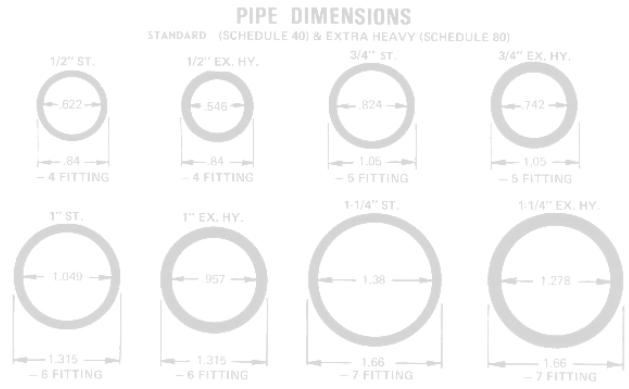


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Training Needs—Ideas for RIWG events

Community feedback strongly recommends that federal government prioritize proactive outreach to the **smaller organizations and emerging communities** since they have the greatest need for capacity building. Here are some ideas for workshops :

- Hands-on workshop on how to fill out grant applications (for federal, local government or foundation): walking through the application process. (Resources: HUD Community and Faith-Based Initiative; HHS Community and Faith-Based Initiative, ... Consider local government resources such as DC's Office of Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, OAPIA Community Grants. Partner with Asian Americans/ Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy to promote Private /Public Partnership.)
- Basics: How do you manage cash flow and budget? (Resources: SBA's SCORE program and other counseling services)
- **"Matchmaking"** Interests and Opportunities workshop – Help CBOs understand what resources fund the work they do. Ask them to pre-register with their areas of interest so that the workshop organizers can suggest opportunities. Include key word search for government grants – the community organization might not use the same jargon as a federal agency might.
- Other grant topic ideas: Teach organizations how to build an **indirect rate** into their proposal. Some organizations are not familiar with this concept and leave it out. Or run a workshop where CBOs sign up for **SAM** now (as opposed to later when the clock may be ticking on a deadline to apply.)
- Proposal-writing workshop – share a successful template application.
- Offer a workshop that explores models of collaboration and joint funding. Facilitate the process of finding partners to apply for grants. Share the experiences of larger organizations who regrant smaller chunks of funding or act as fiscal sponsor. (Resources: Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum, ...)

(See also Region 9 Southern California's 4.8.2014 Roundtable agenda for speaker ideas on government funding)

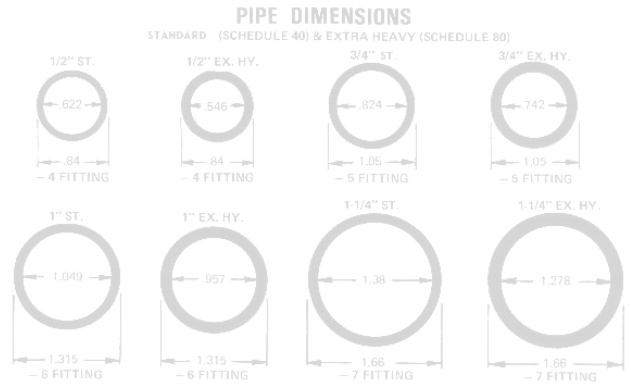


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Best Practices for Federal Agencies

- Grant selection officials and people at a senior policy level should get familiar with the AAPI populations and their dynamics. (Recruit more AAPIs to senior policy levels. And develop relationships with key people in organizations so they can understand their community and needs.) **RIWG members and other federal agency representatives who work in the field must share their insights into the community with decision/policy makers.**
- Assess the way you score cultural competency and language accessibility of services.
- How is data and accountability scored? Suggest adding considerations for capacity, collaboration, and capacity building.
- Explore innovative funding, such as micro-grants, scalable to small communities.
- Facilitate “umbrella” grants where larger grants are made to a more established AAPI nonprofit who can then sub grant to smaller, more specialized, and local nonprofit organizations.
- Review data disaggregation: When developing an RFP, consider if AAPI groups may be excluded. Raw numbers from the Census may do a disservice to APPIs but perhaps need to factor in emerging populations and rates of growth. For example, in one instance, the funder’s definition of poverty areas failed to capture AAPI populations in the community.
- Consider specific funding for the AAPI community.
- Communicate—Hold public hearings for community to articulate funding needs. Give CBOs opportunity to hear about federal policy and trends so that they can be more proactive than reactive. Consider face-to-face meetings in addition to webinars.
- Respond to organizations as to why they didn’t receive the funding or were ineligible.
 - If an organization’s grant is not competitive, provide specifics as to why it wasn’t competitive.
 - If something disqualified them in the process, if they were missing documents or information, provide that specific feedback to the org.

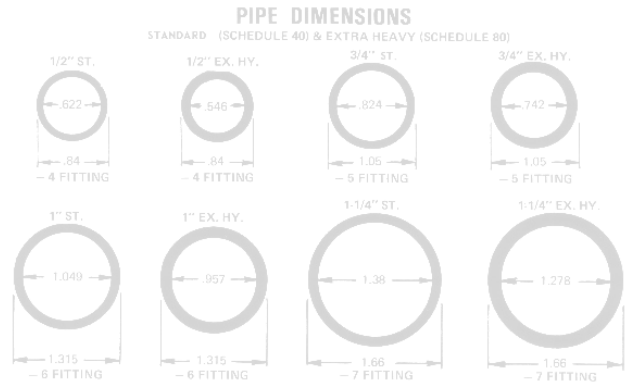


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Best Practices for AAPI nonprofits

Self Awareness and Preparation

- Do you have your elevator pitch for your organization ready?
- Consider strategic planning: defining long term and short term goals as well as key relationships is an important step to obtaining successful funding.
- Register in advance with SAM, before any funding deadline!
- Develop relationships with professors at local schools and universities to obtain help with evaluation plans and evidence-based data.

Opportunity Alerts

- Develop a profile under grants.gov. Set key words for a search to receive funding opportunity alerts.
- Think about your focus area from a number of perspectives. Brainstorm with others to capture the various ways an issue might be described.

Networking

- Consider collaborating/partnering with other organizations. Identify organizations that have similar goals and build coalitions to access federal funds.
- Build relationships with legislative staff.
- Connect with groups such as WHIAAPI, NCAPA, and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), or your local RIWG.
- Subscribe to private companies who support organizations with automatic updates on federal funding sources.
- Use networking opportunities with potential funders to educate them about your communities needs and patterns.

General

- Don't waste any opportunities. If you were turned down, ask the funding organization why you didn't receive the funding or were ineligible.

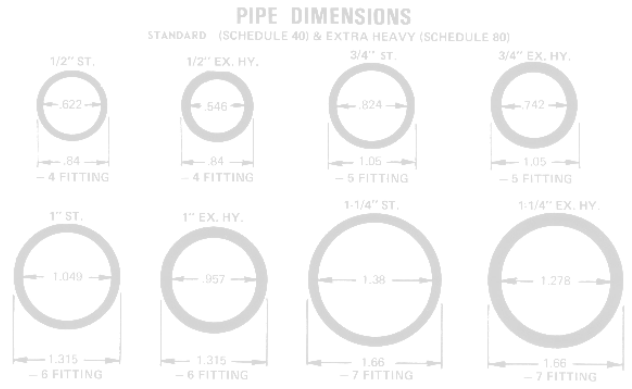


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Resources

[please consider this a stub, to be refined and further developed]

- WHIAAPI's **Guide to Federal Agencies**
http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/aapi_federal_agencies.pdf
- Grants.gov
- <http://collaboration.grantcraft.org/>
- **Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA)** in Washington DC periodically gives a class on how to apply for grants.
- **Zero Divide** drafted a data standard (spreadsheet) to describe grants, in order to encourage the sharing of information. Would allow greater ease of comparing criteria and searching for data. Standard was not widely adopted as some potential contributors were territorial about sharing funding information.
- The Office of Minority Health (HHS) along with Women's Health offer workshops on capacity building and grant writing.
- HHS Community Resource Center offers technical assistance on a first come, first served bases by an HHS contractor through the Office of Minority Affairs.
<http://minorityhealth.hhs.gov/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=1&lvlID=8>
- Office of Women's Health (HHS) has quick health data online and offers free training on how to use the data. <http://www.healthstatus2020.com/>
- National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development (NCAPACD)
www.nationalcapacd.org
- Asian Americans / Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy aapip.org
- Asian Youth Services (Michelle Freridge) and Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles Chapter (Rebecca Shea) expressed their willingness to help train smaller organization on how to get grants.