



**Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc.  
Testimony at the New York State Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Public Protection  
February 13th, 2025**

Thank you Senator Krueger, Assemblymember Pretlow, and members of the New York State Senate and Assembly for the opportunity to testify today. The mission of the Chinese-American Planning Council, Inc. (CPC) is to promote social and economic empowerment of Chinese American, immigrant, and low-income communities. CPC was founded in 1965 as a grassroots, community-based organization in response to the end of the Chinese Exclusion years and the passing of the Immigration Reform Act of 1965. Our services have expanded to include three key program areas: education, family support, and community and economic empowerment.

CPC is the largest Asian American social service organization in the U.S., providing vital resources to more than 80,000 people per year in all five boroughs through more than 50 programs at over 30 sites. CPC employs over 700 staff whose comprehensive services are linguistically accessible, culturally sensitive, and highly effective in reaching low-income and immigrant individuals and families. With the firm belief that social service can incite social change, CPC strives to empower our constituents as agents of social justice, with the overarching goal of advancing and transforming communities.

We witnessed widespread fear and anxiety among our community members during the first Trump administration and we are now experiencing another wave of these sentiments. Anxiety that our community members are experiencing today are not abstract, they are deeply felt in real stories and real lives.

Asian Americans have long had the fastest-growing undocumented population, [tripling over a 15-year period, from 2000 to 2015](#), and the number of [Chinese nationals crossing into the U.S.](#) has skyrocketed in recent years. Between fiscal years 2022 and 2024, the number of undocumented Chinese nationals crossing both the northern and southern borders has tripled from just more than 27,000 to more than 78,000- now the highest population crossing the southern border into the US.

The ongoing threats of deportation and the erosion of immigrant rights under the current administration are not just alarming—they are a harsh reality that many members of our community face daily. We cannot ignore the dangerous rhetoric and actions from our federal administration. During his campaign, he explicitly targeted Chinese immigrants for deportation, pledging to remove undocumented Chinese nationals, claiming they were "forming an army against the U.S." This kind of xenophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric has fueled hate and violence against our communities. We saw this particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, and we fear that this administration will only escalate such attacks, leading to even more violence directed at our communities.

For many of our community members, the fear of deportation is not just hypothetical—it is a daily reality. One of our staff members, a Green Card holder, received a letter from USCIS during the last Trump administration stating that her job could be performed by an American citizen, and she was ordered to return to China for two years, separated from her husband. This family has since been reunited, but the fear of being deported again is ever-present. Another staff member, a U.S. citizen, was stuck abroad when the Trump administration's travel ban was enacted. He could not make it back to say goodbye to his dying grandfather and has expressed concerns that his elderly grandmother may face the same fate.

These are not isolated incidents. Many of our community members, particularly those who rely on public services like SNAP benefits, are questioning whether those benefits will be taken away. Others are wondering if they should pull their children out of school, afraid that ICE could enter the premises. And some, like one community member who fled an abusive relationship in China, are wondering if marriage is the only way to reduce their chances of deportation. There is an urgent and critical need for expanded protections and support and it's up to our State to step up when our Federal government is directly attacking those protections.

There must be an expansion of wraparound legal services and language accessible services and resources. Our immigration legal system is overloaded, and for many Limited English Proficient (LEP) speaking individuals, access to legal resources is an enormous challenge. In our community, the demand for Mandarin and Cantonese-speaking attorneys is overwhelming. We have seen how the lack of support directly impacts people's ability to defend themselves or seek help when they need it the most. We need more legal service funding regardless of their language or immigration status to have the access to the justice they deserve.

We cannot forget that we are also facing systemic gaps in language access, which exacerbate the struggles of AAPI immigrants. Language barriers prevent individuals from understanding their rights, accessing services, and navigating complex legal systems. Expanding language services is not just a matter of convenience, it is a matter of equity and justice. It is a moral imperative to ensure that all New Yorkers, regardless of their background, have the resources they need to succeed.

Protecting our immigrant communities means increasing funding for community-based organizations that are seeing a rise in demand for services that are both linguistically and culturally appropriate. Organizations like CPC have built trust and strong relationships with the communities we serve over several decades, continuing to be a critical line of defense from potential dangerous policies passed by the current federal administration. To address the growing needs of the AAPI immigrant community, it is essential to increase funding for the State's AAPI Equity Budget in FY26 to \$54.35 million. The \$30 million allocated in FY24 and FY25 for AAPI organizations across NYS was crucial in expanding vital programs, such as legal services, workforce development, adult literacy, afterschool programs, senior services, childcare, and so much more. These are essential services that our community members depend on to thrive, feel empowered, and safe to live in New York.

We urge the State legislature to advocate for the following in the FY26 budget:

1. Strengthening protections for AAPI and immigrant New Yorkers through expanding the State's AAPI Equity Budget to \$54.35 million to allow AAPI-led and serving organizations to meet growing demands.
2. Expanding wraparound legal services for AAPI communities to meet growing demand that is linguistically and culturally competent.
3. Expanding language access across government agencies, including the courts and immigration services, to ensure that no one is left behind due to language and communication barriers.

We look forward to working with the State legislature to ensure that our AAPI, immigrant, and low-income communities are protected. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

If there are any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Ashley Chen, Policy Analyst at [achen9@cpc-nyc.org](mailto:achen9@cpc-nyc.org).