



*a federation of LGBT
Asian American, South Asian,
and Pacific Islander organizations*

NQAPIA
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**A national conference of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender
Asian Americans, South Asians, and Pacific Islanders**

**August 14 to 16, 2009
Seattle, Washington**

Building on past national convenings, the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance (NQAPIA), a federation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Asian American, South Asian, and Pacific Islander (API) organizations, is planning a national activist convening in August 2009 in Seattle, WA. We hope to acquire and expand the aptitude, ability, and achievements of LGBT APIs, break barriers, and connect community so that we can build the capacity of local groups, invigorate grassroots organizing, train leaders, and challenge homophobia, racism, and anti-immigrant bias.

The Need & NQAPIA

APIs are among the fastest growing minority groups in the nation and are an emerging sector of the LGBT community. More and more LGBT APIs are coming out, yet they still face invisibility, isolation, and stereotyping within both API and LGBT communities.

LGBT APIs live at the intersection of being sexual, racial/ethnic, linguistic, gender, immigrant, and economic minorities. Two-thirds of all Asian Americans are foreign-born and 80% speak a language other than English in their homes. A third are not citizens. Approximately one million Asian Americans are undocumented. After 9/11, immigrants, particularly South Asian immigrants, have been targets of racial profiling, detentions, and deportations. Yet immigration reform is not seen as a “gay” issue.

In response, the National Queer Asian Pacific Islander Alliance was formed as a federation of LGBT Asian American, South Asian, and Pacific Islander organizations to build the organizational capacity of local LGBT API groups, develop leadership, invigorate local organizing, and challenge homophobia and racism.

Convening Objectives

The conference seeks to network, organize, agitate, educate, and build capacity of the nation’s LGBT APIs community.

Networking: Simply sharing ideas has a profound impact. Aside from NQAPIA, there is no formal mechanism to bring together grassroots LGBT APIs to exchange strategies. NQAPIA focuses its resources and support on LGBT API organizations, but we must expand our base. Members of LGBT API groups need to talk about their goals and challenges. This often inspires new solutions, or sometimes simply rejuvenates existing but forgotten ones. The conversations from which these solutions arise are organic, but are best achieved through face-to-face

interaction. We hope to will solidify current relationships and make new connections at local, regional, national, and transnational levels.

Education: The conference seeks to increase awareness on current issues confronting LGBT APIs. This encompasses mainstream API civil rights, immigrant's rights, and LGBT rights issues. Race-based civil rights issues require a queer analysis. At the same time, LGBT rights issues require an approach that considers race, ethnicity, and immigration. We will review a range of topics including immigration reform and marriage equality.

Organizing and Agitating: Conference organizers hope the conference will help identify and build a political agenda for LGBT APIs, brainstorm ideas of action both tactically and ways to involve more groups and individuals. A strategy for advocacy must map out and coordinate currently existing resources in the community. At the same time, it must be founded upon intersections of different forms of oppressions and multi-issue organizing.

Building Capacity: Because the infrastructure of LGBT API organizations is weak or sometimes even nonexistent, we hope to give leaders and members of such groups the tools to develop groups that are better able to achieve their goals. We will build leadership skills broadly defined to include (but not be limited to): board development, communication, risk management, engaging volunteers/ members, and fundraising.

Inclusion: Conference planners are taking affirmative steps to meaningfully involve those who have been traditionally underrepresented, including women, transgender, young people, and activists outside of the Coasts as well as to ensure the conference is pan-Asian. Organizers will target outreach and will provide travel scholarships to ensure inclusion.

Overall, we hope to press a progressive agenda that will bring all LGBT racial and ethnic minority groups into the full fold of society, the LGBT movement, and the API community. We seek the transformation of institutions that discriminate and stratify people based on their nativity or wealth.

Convening Activities/Programming

There will be workshops, panel discussions, presentations, open forums, caucuses, speakers, and performance art. To maximize community involvement, there is an open Request for Proposed Workshops and Caucuses (RFP). We hope for a wide array of topics on politics, organizing, skills, arts and culture, health and wellness, and others. We will work to make sure presenters are balanced in terms of gender/gender-identity, geography, and ethnicity. Caucuses will provide attendees with opportunities to network. Some will be regional meetings based on geography, others peer-support based on identity, such as women, transgender, students/youth, bisexuals, South Asians, polyamorous, etc.

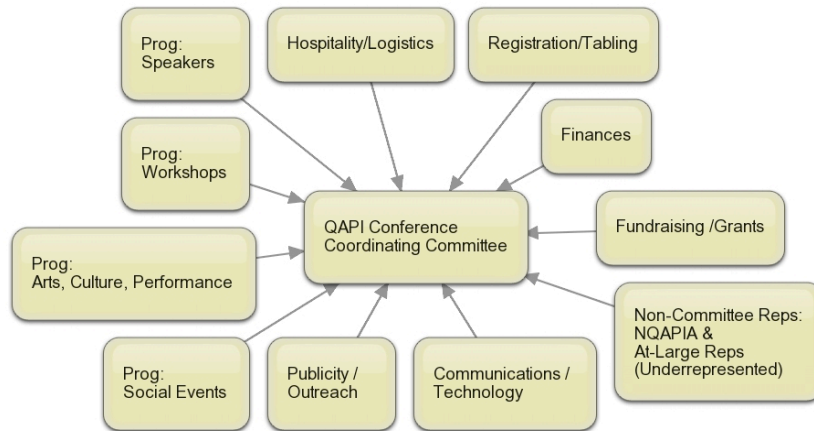
There will be a strategic NQAPIA General Membership Meeting at the end of the conference to discuss next steps and organizational business. There will also be time to give feedback and evaluate the conference.

Social and cultural activities are also planned. It is important to recharge ourselves, connect with each other and recognize our cultures. These events are simultaneously opportunities to promote awareness. One idea is an evening cultural program featuring Queer API poets, writers, and performers. Another idea is to also have a banquet dinner dance featuring another keynote address. This dinner dance also allows young people an equal opportunity socialize with other conference attendees who are often left out when others “go to the bars.”

Other ideas germinating include a simultaneous, but separate, national convening of parents of LGBT APIs, a special track of workshops for Muslim APIs organized with Al-Fathia, and a pre-conference convening of API women and trans folks organized with NAPAWF and APLBTN.

Decision Making and Planning

We hope to be transparent and inclusive in planning the national conference. The majority of the work and decision-making is centered in volunteer committees and a coordinating committee made up of both local and national representatives. Anyone can join any of the committees.



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