

## 2024 Youth Poll: Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Young Californians

Power California (PoCA) and partners seek to mobilize young voters of color in their political campaigns in 2024. This memo profiles Young Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Californians' perceptions of and experiences with the housing crisis, their identities, and outlook heading into an election year.

Young AAPI Californians are civic minded and engaged, although their attitudes differ from other Young Californians of color. AAPI Californians perceive voting and volunteering as crucial ways to improve their communities, but are less likely to perceive running for office and protesting as effective. This research also found that the housing crisis and economic insecurity are experienced unevenly. Young AAPI Californians are experiencing less economic insecurity. That said, those within the AAPI community who are economically insecure are affected in similar ways to other young Californians of color. In addition, they are motivated by different issues than Young Black and Hispanic and Latino Californians, and are more likely to identify as Caretakers than Hustlers. Consistent with other groups, however, Caretaker and Hustler identities are the most common role identities overall.

- **49% of AAPI respondents identify as Caretakers.**
- **23% of AAPI respondents identify as Hustlers.**

Young AAPI Californians' optimism about the future is tempered relative to other racial and ethnic groups. Although 80% agreed that they could achieve their future goals, just 30% strongly agreed compared to 67% of Young Black and 54% of Young Hispanic and Latino Californians. Young AAPI Californians believe in the American dream at similar rates to other Young Californians and view education and friends and family as important factors that can help them reach their goals. Mobilization strategies will need to be developed with these key differences in mind. We recommend working to build solidaristic ties to other Young Californians of color.

### TOP ISSUES AND THE HOUSING CRISIS

Young AAPI Californians want the government to address homelessness, but housing affordability is a lower priority compared to other racial and ethnic groups. Affordable housing ranked as the seventh highest issue priority (13%), suggesting that Young AAPI Californians are less impacted by the state's housing crisis.

- **35% want the government to address homelessness.**
- **25% want the government to protect women's reproductive health.**

Young AAPI Californians perceive corporate landlords (39%), banks and financial firms (38%), and a shortage of housing (33%) as causes of the housing crisis. When asked to identify one cause, 30% blamed corporate landlords, 13% elected officials, and 11% gentrification.

PoCA's research suggests that economic insecurity is less widespread among Young AAPI Californians. However, we urge caution against interpreting this as a sign that they are economically secure. The evidence shows that those who are economically insecure are experiencing the housing crisis in similar ways to other Young Californians. Young AAPI Californians identified similar economic barriers to finding housing.

- **50% reported that high rents were a barrier to finding housing.**
- **33% reported living paycheck-to-paycheck.**
- **28% do not have enough money for a down payment on a house.**

Among those experiencing economic insecurity, Young AAPI Californians report similar experiences to other racial and ethnic groups.

- **25% have considered leaving California.**
- **21% have taken on a side hustle or second job, which is the lowest among all groups.**
- **17% have relied on credit cards to pay basic bills.**

On the other hand, other evidence suggests that the effects of the housing crisis and economic insecurity are unevenly experienced by Young Californians of color. 35% of Young AAPI Californians reported that they had not experienced economic insecurity in the last 12 months compared to 15% of Young Hispanic and Latino and 10% of Young Black Californians.

## **SOLUTIONS TO THE HOUSING CRISIS**

Despite evidence that fewer Young AAPI Californians are experiencing economic insecurity due to the housing crisis, they still support government policies to address the problem.

- **71% support allowing local governments to implement rent control laws and guidelines.**
- **76% support laws to make housing more affordable and to protect those at risk.**

## **COMMUNITY, RACIAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITIES**

This research shows that Young Californians are motivated by issues, not partisanship. 42% of Young AAPI Californians are registered under the label of "decline to state/no party preference." 39% are registered Democrats and 15% are Republican.

PoCA's research found that AAPIs are the racial group most likely to rate their role identities as their central or most important identity.

- **40% rated their community identity as most important.**
- **32% rated their racial and ethnic identity as most important.**

37% of AAPI respondents said that their central identity was important for their politics compared to 70% of Black and 53% of Hispanic and Latino Young Californians. 43% rated their central identity as somewhat important to their politics. This suggests it may be challenging to mobilize Young AAPI Californians with identity-based messaging. We recommend message testing to determine effectiveness of identity-based appeals.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Young AAPI Californians stand out as the group who is unevenly experiencing the housing crisis and economic insecurity. They are less likely to prioritize housing affordability as an issue to address. In addition, fewer AAPI respondents reported experiencing economic insecurity in similar ways to Black and Latino Californians. Despite these differences, Young AAPI Californians support policies that would address the housing crisis at similar rates. These high rates of policy support suggest that Young AAPI Californians can be mobilized. However, it may require a different messaging strategy. One potential path forward would be to develop messaging strategies that build solidaristic ties with other Young Californians of color. This could be achieved by drawing on shared role-based and racial and ethnic identities as Young Californians of Color.