



---

# The Legal Connection

---

Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC)

Winter 2007

## Challenge Campaign Still Needs \$25,000 to Receive Matching Funds

A generous gift from APALRC co-founder John C. Yang, partner at Wiley Rein LLP, launched the APALRC's Challenge Campaign in the summer of 2006. Mr. Yang offered to match every gift of \$100 or more that the APALRC receives over a three-year period, up to a total of \$75,000. The APALRC welcomes donations of any size, but to qualify for the matching funds, contributions must be \$100 or more.



*The Honorable Susan Lee from the Maryland General Assembly presents John C. Yang with a Governor's Citation.*

On September 6, 2007, the APALRC hosted a Challenge Campaign reception at the Bethesda North Marriott Hotel and Conference Center in Maryland to celebrate the second year of the Campaign. Montgomery County Executive Ike Leggett addressed the crowd of supporters and political dignitaries by highlighting the APALRC's important and valuable role in the County. The Honorable Susan Lee from the Maryland General Assembly was also present to share some inspiring remarks, and to present the APALRC with an official citation recognizing the organization's "exemplary and outstanding leadership and efforts in serving and providing much needed legal and support services to the Asian Pacific American, immigrant and other communities".

The APALRC has made substantial progress, but still needs an additional \$25,000 to meet its Campaign goal, which we hope to reach by the end of 2008. In addition to being the final year of the Campaign, next year will also be the APALRC's 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. As Julie L. Rogers of the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation said at the Campaign's launch last year, "individual giving in America is 80 percent of all giving." With this incredible opportunity presented by Mr. Yang, the gifts received by the APALRC will go twice as far in helping the APALRC to protect the legal rights of members of the Asian American community.

### 2007-2008

#### Board of Directors

Theodore Chuang, *Chair*  
Mytrang Nguyen, *Vice Chair*  
Andy Liu, *Treasurer*  
Keith Nguyen, *Secretary*  
Hyojin Bae  
Joanne Chan  
Kashyap N. Choksi, Ph.D  
Leigh M. Chowdhary  
Megan S. Chung  
Christina Hsu  
Phong Le  
Sunil Mansukhani  
Celso Mataac  
Yuvora Nong  
Benjamin H. Wu  
Jenny R. Yang  
John C. Yang

#### Staff

Jayne Park  
*Executive Director*

#### Development & Administration

Pauline Y. Poh  
*Director of Operations*

Aeda Chung  
*Development Assistant*

#### Direct Services

Marita Etcubañez  
*Director of Legal Services*

Kathy Kwak  
*Staff Attorney*

Pooja A. Regmi  
*Staff Attorney*

Nadia Firozvi  
*Staff Attorney*

Lu Lan  
*Crime Victims Assistance Partnership  
Project Advocate*

Wendy W. Lau  
*Program Coordinator*

#### Advocacy

Jennifer Deng-Pickett  
*DC Language Access Coalition  
Community Organizer*

## APALRC Expands Community Outreach

Starting this fall, the APALRC staff members are conducting regular legal services intake sessions at local community-based organizations such as the Greater Washington Urban League’s Asian Service Center in DC, and the Korean Community Service Center and FAITH in Virginia. As our legal service capacity grows, we are able to do more outreach to community-based organizations to help with their legal needs. To provide better legal services to the immigrant community in DC, we have partnered with Ayuda to create a multilingual referral system for low-income immigrants. Our goal with this project is to increase the number of low-income immigrants that learn about their legal rights and other legal services.

One client who came to an APALRC legal clinic was Ms. B, who had twice been denied the opportunity to become a naturalized citizen. Though she had been granted an English language waiver, her application was still denied based on her inability to speak English. This was understandably confusing to Ms. B and her family. The APALRC helped Ms. B to draft an attachment with her third naturalization application demonstrating that not only had she been granted the waiver previously, but that her applications’ denial was unfounded. Ms. B awaits a decision.

## Hotline Beneficial for Law Students and Callers

Twenty bilingual law student volunteers answer the APALRC’s legal hotline, helping callers communicate their legal concerns and conducting research into their cases. Students serve as conduits of information to our attorneys, who are then able to determine next steps for the client based on the student’s initial intake with the client. Student volunteers benefit from the experience of interacting with clients and honing their problem-solving skills, which they would not be able to do in a classroom setting. By writing memos and conducting legal research, they apply what they learn to everyday problems facing the Asian Pacific American community.

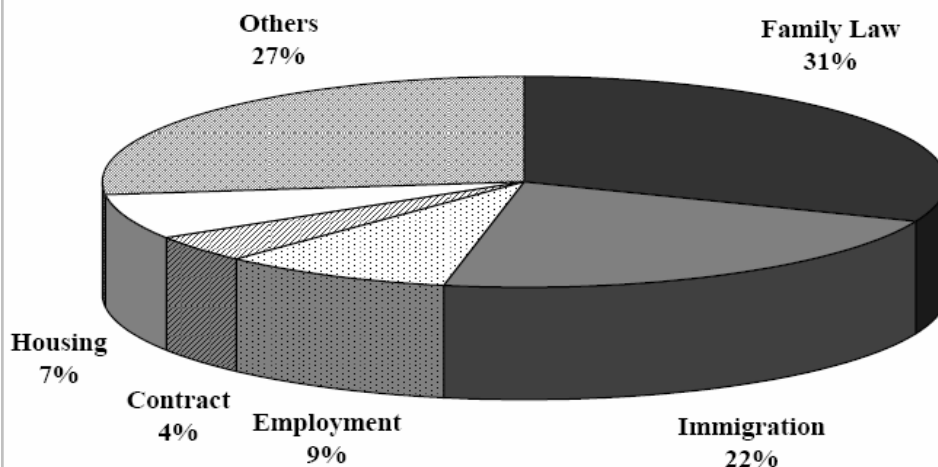
*“I enjoy putting my legal knowledge and language skills to good use as a hotline volunteer.”*

*~ American University Washington College of Law student*

The hotline is a way for individuals to call us and voice their issues, whether they are legal problems or social service issues. Callers usually hear the hotline through the APALRC’s outreach, our website, other community-based organizations, or ethnic media.

**This year the APALRC’s hotline is staffed on Monday from 2 pm to 7 pm, Wednesday from 4 pm to 6 pm, and Friday from 10 am to 5 pm.**

## 2007 Breakdown of Cases Handled



**Family Law:** Child custody, visitation and support, spousal support and divorce. Many of the family law cases handled by APALRC involve victims of domestic violence.

**Immigration Law:** Naturalization, adjustment of status, family and employment, employment authorization, and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) petitions.

**Employment Law:** Unpaid wages, discrimination, wrongful termination, unemployment benefits, and workers compensation.

**Contract:** Real estate, sale of goods, and breach of contract disputes.

**Housing:** Landlord-tenant law, public housing.

## Coalition Continues Fight to Make DC Agencies Accessible to All

The DC Language Access Coalition—an alliance of 20 community-based organizations advocating for language access rights in DC—is working on behalf of more than 28,000 DC residents who say they speak English less than very well. The goal of the Coalition, led in part by the APALRC which also serves as its fiscal agent, is to ensure that DC residents and workers who are limited English proficient can obtain equal access to essential government benefits and services including food stamps, Medicaid, health care, unemployment benefits, job training programs, public education, fire and emergency services, police and mental health services. According to the 2005 Census, 15.7% (or 74,951) of DC's population five years old and over speak a language other than English at home.

The Coalition achieved several major victories in 2007, including drafting and advocating for regulations and amendments to the DC Language Access Act, and organizing 16 public testimonies at a language access hearing held by DC Councilmember Carol Schwartz in October.

Also this year, the Coalition reaped the results of a year-long collaboration with the Equal Rights Center (ERC). The ERC concluded a study investigating five major departments of DC government to determine whether they were in compliance with the Act. This study culminated in a joint press conference sponsored by the Coalition and the ERC to release the results as well as recommendations for more effective implementation of the Act. The report stated that DC agencies failed to comply with the law 87% of the time. Specifically, the ERC report looked at the practices of the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Department of Human Services, the Department of Employment Services, the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs and the Alcoholic Beverages Regulation Administration.

The Coalition's work and public testimonies have brought heightened awareness to government agencies that language access is a necessity for all immigrant populations in the District. Councilmember Schwartz has called upon all

agencies to include in their future budgets a line item for language access implementation. Furthermore, agencies such as DC Public Libraries have engaged the Coalition to conduct trainings to help them educate library personnel about the law. The DC Department of Health is working to hiring a full-time language access coordinator to ensure compliance with the law. In October, Mayor Adrian Fenty held a press conference during which he acknowledged the significant work that remains to ensure full implementation of the Act. Fenty also launched a Know Your Rights Campaign to spread information about the law to every immigrant population in DC.

Despite these gains, however, a lot more needs to be done. According to the DC Public Schools, more than 4,000 of its students are limited English proficient and live in poverty. According to the Mayor's Offices of African Affairs, Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, and Latino Affairs, approximately 50 DC residents call their offices each week requesting language access to government services. Over the next year, the Coalition will be launching several new initiatives to ensure that these populations are not denied their rights to government information, programs, and services while they are moving toward gaining English proficiency.

### The DC Language Access Coalition

#### Executive Committee

African Resource Center  
 Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center  
 Central American Resource Center  
 CentroNía  
 La Clínica del Pueblo  
 Multicultural Community Services  
 Vietnamese American Community Service Center  
 Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs

#### Members

AU - Washington College of Law, International Human Rights Law Clinic  
 Asian American Justice Center  
 Asian American LEAD  
 Bread for the City  
 Columbia Heights Shaw Family Support Collaborative  
 DC Employment Justice Center  
 DC Learns  
 Latino Federation of Greater Washington  
 Life Skills Center  
 Mary's Center for Maternal and Child Care  
 Neighbor's Consejo  
 The Legal Aid Society of D.C.

## Crime Victims Assistance Program Helps DC's Residents Through Trauma

When individuals with limited English proficiency are victims of crimes, they often do not know where to turn. They may be afraid of police or be afraid they will not be understood. As the only organization that provides direct services to Asian crime victims in the District, the APALRC is one place where victims feel comfortable and safe seeking help after a crime. We provide services to people who are traumatized by crime and help them through the emotional crisis while they struggle with the severe consequences of being a crime victim. Each client we have helped has been grateful to the APALRC and, as a result, has become an advocate for our program in the community.

Our Crime Victims Assistance Program (CVAP) helps individual victims, many of whom are limited in English proficiency, with the process of reporting crimes, applying for crime victim compensation, navigating the criminal justice system, and interacting with law enforcement. The APALRC also advocates for crime victims' fair access to District government services. We provide these services in several Asian languages.

One case the APALRC handled this year was on behalf of the family of Mr. M, a homicide victim who was killed while delivering food. His family back in his home country was not able to travel to the US due to difficulties in obtaining a visa. Through the DC Crime Victim Compensation Program, APALRC helped the victim's family

obtain a police report, collect documents, and apply for victim compensation, which covered funeral expenses and child support.

Most victims or families of victims who come to us have experienced violent crimes such as robbery, assault, burglary, and occasionally homicide. The APALRC helps victims during the application for compensation process and follows through by collaborating with government agencies, hospitals, and law enforcement while the application is pending. For victims who are cooperating with prosecutors, the APALRC serves as a bridge between victims and prosecutors, by contacting the Victim Witness Unit, preparing the Victim Impact Statement, and accompanying them to court for their trials.

Another CVAP case involved Ms. S, who was assaulted at work in DC. The APALRC helped her to apply for victim compensation to cover her medical bills. We accompanied Ms. S while she testified in court. The defendant was found guilty on two counts and awaits sentencing.

From October 2006 to September 2007, APALRC has helped 25 individuals apply for victim compensation, and a total amount of \$66,552.62 was paid to the victims. In addition, we screened 272 cases for compensation eligibility. DC's Office of Victim Services recently awarded APALRC a significant grant to continue this important project.

## 2007 Law Student Volunteers

### American University Washington College of Law

Helen Lee  
Philip Lee  
Andrew Lim  
Suthima Malayaman  
Keith Nguyen  
Funjung Park  
Elizabeth Sohn  
Allen Soohoo  
Aditya Surendan  
Laura Whalen

### Georgetown University Law Center

Simin Bu  
Joanne Chan  
Ho Cheol Kim  
Grace Lin  
Lew Jan Olowski  
Chris Park  
Charles Shi  
Minjung Yu

Yibing (Sabrina) Yuan  
Sin Sung (Sean) S. Yun

### University of Maryland School of Law

Yeo-Jin Kim

### The George Washington University Law School

Thomas Kwon  
Phong Le  
Amisha Patel  
Nisha Patel  
Yanfei Shen  
Michelle Weiselt

### University of District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law

Sunseok (Sam) Han  
Yary Lim

## New Board Members

**Ben Wu**, incoming president of the US-Asia Institute, has a long personal and professional connection with Asian Pacific American community organizations nationally and in Maryland. As a senior administration official in both the federal and state governments, and a Congressional staff member, Ben has served on a number of boards and organizations that serve the Asian Pacific American community. He is the former chair of the Maryland Governor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs; a current member of the Committee of 100, a national philanthropic organization of leading Chinese Americans; and a past member of the executive advisory board of the Asian American Policy Review, a publication of the Harvard Kennedy School of Government. He has been recognized with awards, honors, and distinctions by a number of professional and community organizations for distinguished service, leadership, and contribution. Ben was born in Taiwan.

**Jenny R. Yang** is a civil rights attorney with Cohen, Milstein Hausfeld & Toll, P.L.L.C., where she represents workers in class action employment discrimination and unpaid overtime cases. Prior to joining the firm in 2003, she was a senior trial attorney with the United States Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Employment Litigation Section, where she worked for five years on employment discrimination cases against state and local governments. Before that, Jenny worked at the National Employment Law Project in New York City on a fellowship where she litigated the first federal case to hold garment manufacturers liable for unpaid wages owed to garment workers. Jenny also worked on the Presidential Transition and at the White House, Office of Presidential Personnel. She earned her bachelor's degree from Cornell University and her law degree from the New York University School of Law, where she was a Root-Tilden Public Interest Scholar and a Note and Comment Editor of the Law Review.

**Christina Hsu** is a senior manager with Deloitte & Touche, LLP. Christina has 14 years of auditing and IT experience and is a certified public accountant and a certified information system auditor. As a minority, Christina understands the unique challenges one faces in finding her identity in the mainstream culture both professionally and personally. She founded an Asian American affinity group in the Greater Washington office of Deloitte two years ago. She is also currently serving as the vice president of external affairs for the local chapter of a national association for Asian American professionals in finance and accounting. Her involvements reflect her deep passion in promoting diversity in the marketplace and community. She is excited to join the board of APALRC to support the great mission in advancing and advocating for the legal and civil rights of Asian Americans in the DC Metro area.

## New Staff Members

**Jennifer Deng-Pickett** oversees the DC Language Access Coalition. Prior to joining APALRC, Jennifer worked for Asian American LEAD and taught high school in Prince George's County. Jennifer brings to the APALRC extensive experience in grassroots fundraising, coalition building, personal and organizational sustainability, executive transitions, communications and media, and policy advocacy. Jennifer earned her bachelor's degree from Austin College and her master's degree from the University of Limerick. She is fluent in Mandarin.

**Nadia Firozvi** manages DC-based direct legal service and outreach programs for the APALRC. She supervises the hotline and supports the DC Language Access Coalition's advocacy initiatives. Previously, Nadia worked for the law firm of Howanski & Greene, LLC in Towson, Maryland where she served as an immigration associate. The child of immigrants, Nadia chose public interest law as a way to give back to the community. She is fluent in Urdu and Hindi and literate in Arabic, French, and German. Nadia earned degrees from Loyola College in Maryland, the University of Baltimore School of Law, and the American University Washington College of Law.

### *APALRC Expands Development Team*

**Aeda Chung**, development assistant, brings expertise in public relations and development as well as personal experience living in a variety of cultures to her new role as development assistant. Her responsibilities include grants management, funding research, and proposal writing, as well as other development, public relations, and office management activities. Living in other countries had provided Aeda with a greater understanding of her own and other cultures that helps her communicate effectively about the diverse needs of APALRC's clients.

**Mariko Agena**, development intern, is a senior at Georgetown University. She reports, "This semester I'm taking an anthropology class focusing on immigration and community-based organizations. Our aim in the class is to understand how anthropology can not only be a field of studying new and perhaps struggling populations, but also how advocacy and active participation in community-based groups can enhance our understanding of the populations we study. I thought the APALRC had a really unique means of serving the Asian immigrant community and was excited to call the APALRC home for my research. Having worked as an intern at a Japanese consulate and at a local DC think tank on Asian regional politics, I think this new environment will really make for a well-rounded survey of Asian American studies. Seeing how this organization works from the inside, from the teamwork to the commitment to the Asian population in DC, I am truly inspired by the work that is being done. Watching the organization and its services grow in just a semester is really interesting, and it's great to be even a small part of that."

## Robert E. Wone Fellowship Brings Amy Randhawa to APALRC as Law Clerk

To honor the memory of Robert E. Wone, the Asian Pacific American Bar Association Educational Fund (AEF) created the Robert E. Wone Fellowship. Wone, a former board member and advisory board member of AEF, died tragically in the summer of 2006. Sandeep Randhawa, who goes by Amy, is a second-year law student at American University Washington College of Law who received the inaugural Robert E. Wone Fellowship to support her work as a law clerk with the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center.

The Asian Pacific American Bar Association Educational Fund (AEF) awards summer fellowships each year to law students who take unpaid internships with public interest organizations that benefit the Asian Pacific American community or the Washington, DC area.

Throughout her work with APALRC, Amy has lived up to the goals and expectations of the Robert E. Wone fellowship, created for a law student “who most embodies what Robert wanted to be as a lawyer: a trusted member of the community who makes a difference in public policies and sees the effects of his efforts improve the situation of those around him.”

Amy began volunteering with APALRC during her first year of law school. Her past experience working with immigrants, youth, and people with disabilities prepared her well for assisting the low-income and limited English proficient individuals who contact APALRC for legal help. As a hotline volunteer, Amy spoke with clients regularly in Hindi, Punjabi, and Urdu, about a range of legal issues including immigration and family law.

One example of Amy’s commitment to public service and the Asian Pacific American community, is the story of Ms. N, a woman of Afghani descent. Ms. N is the mother of four. She is disabled. She has refugee status, and therefore is eligible to receive public benefits. However, her receipt of benefits was time-limited, and Ms. N was concerned about nearing end of her eligibility period. Upon becoming a permanent resident, she would be eligible to

naturalize immediately, which would enable her to continue to receive benefits. However, Ms. N has encountered great difficulty obtaining permanent resident status. Amy helped Ms. N with her immigration case, which resulted in Ms. N finally receiving permanent resident status after years of struggle. Amy also put Ms. N in contact with attorneys who are litigating the issue of time limits on refugees’ eligibility for public assistance. Further, Amy, who is now working with an immigration firm, has persuaded the firm to allow her to help Ms. N to apply for naturalization on a *pro bono* basis.

Amy has not been content to help only those people who come to APALRC for assistance, but has worked with APALRC to reach out to the local South Asian community. She was instrumental in getting APALRC involved in helping a South Asian woman who was the victim of human trafficking. When Amy discovered that the woman’s native language is not the one covered by APALRC’s interpreter corps, Amy recruited volunteers to provide interpretation. She also mobilized a network of advocates to provide the woman with much-needed support. In addition, Amy has been a key part of the APALRC’s efforts to improve access to immigration services. She assisted with organizing a free immigration clinic for the South Asian community, and also helped implement APALRC’s first citizenship clinic. Amy continues to be involved in APALRC’s efforts to reach out to Asian domestic workers as part of an organizing campaign in support of a bill of rights for domestic workers.

### APALRC LAW CLERKS

Dennis Chong, William & Mary School of Law; speaks Korean  
 Ji Kim, William & Mary School of Law; speaks Korean  
 Myung Kim, Catholic University of America Columbus School of Law; speaks Korean  
 MinhChau Nguyen, George Mason School of Law; speaks Vietnamese  
 Amy Randhawa, American University Washington College of Law; speaks Hindi, Urdu & Punjabi  
 Palak Sheth, Case Western Reserve University School of Law; speaks Gujarati and Hindi  
 Ricky Yan, The George Washington University School of Law; speaks Mandarin

## Funders

**Altria Group, Inc./National Network to End Domestic Violence**

**Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps\*VISTA)**

**DC Bar Foundation**

**DC Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs**

**DC One Fund**

**District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, Office of Victims Services**

**Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation**

**Exxon Mobil Corporation**

**Fannie Mae Foundation**

**Freddie Mac Foundation**

**Legal Services of Northern Virginia**

**MARPAT Foundation**

**Maryland Legal Services Corporation**

**Montgomery County Community Foundation's Community Fund**

**Montgomery County Maryland Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Division of Community Development**

**Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services**

**Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation**

**Public Welfare Foundation**

**Starbucks Memorial Fund**

**Target Stores**

**The Common Ground Fund: Investing in Racial Justice and Social Change, a funding collaboration of The Community Foundation for the National Capital Region**

**The Pew Charitable Trusts**

**The United Methodist Church**

**United Way of the National Capital Area/CFC**

**Virginia Law Foundation**

**The Washington Post**

## Bowling for Justice Sponsors

The APALRC hosted its 6th annual *Bowling for Justice* Fundraiser on October 25 at Lucky Strike Lanes in Washington, DC. We wish to acknowledge the following 33 sponsors who helped us with another successful event:

### DIAMOND LEVEL

*Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, LLP*  
*Kirkland & Ellis LLP*  
*Latham & Watkins LLP*  
*Wiley Rein LLP*

### PLATINUM LEVEL

*Alston & Bird LLP*  
*Crowell & Moring LLP*  
*Legal Times*  
*Mayer Brown LLP*

### GOLD LEVEL

*Arnold & Porter LLP*  
*Howrey LLP*  
*Spriggs & Hollingsworth*  
*WilmerHale*

### SILVER LEVEL

*Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP*  
*Blank Rome LLP*  
*Cohen, Milstein, Hausfeld & Toll, P.L.L.C*  
*Deloitte & Touche LLP*  
*Dickstein Shapiro LLP*  
*DLA Piper*  
*Greenberg Traurig, LLP*  
*Heller Ehrman LLP*  
*Hogan & Hartson LLP*  
*Marriott International, Inc.*  
*McDermott, Will & Emery LLP*  
*White & Case LLP*

### BENEFACTOR

*American University Washington College of Law*  
*Asian American Justice Center*  
*Curtis Lu*  
*DiMuroGinsberg, P.C.*  
*Lucky Strike*  
*The George Washington University Law School*

### ADVOCATE

*Seward and Kissel LLP*

### FRIENDS OF APALRC

*Nueva Vista Group*  
*Wake Law Office*

1600 K Street, NW, Mezzanine Level  
Washington, DC 20006

- In 2007, the APALRC provided legal advice, representation, and referrals to over 450 clients;
- The APALRC provided legal interpreter support on 100 case assignments;
- The APALRC conducted Know Your Rights presentations to hundreds of workshop participants; and
- The APALRC assisted nearly 300 victims of crime.

## APALRC Challenge Campaign

**Help Us Advance the Legal and Civil Rights of Asian Americans in Greater D.C.**

**YES, I/We want to help meet the APALRC Challenge Campaign with a tax-deductible contribution of:**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$5,000 per year for 3 years—Campaign Cabinet | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 per year for 3 years—Sponsor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$2,500 per year for 3 years—Benefactor       | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 per year for 3 years—Leader  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$1,000 per year for 3 years—Patron           | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 per year for 3 years—Friend  |

Other amount\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_ per year for 3 years      One time gift\* \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*\*A minimum \$100 gift is required to qualify for challenge match funds. Please mail this form to the APALRC's D.C. address.*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

The Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC) is tax exempt under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and gifts to the APALRC are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

**Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC)**

**D.C. Office:**  
1600 K Street, NW, Mezzanine Level  
Washington, D.C. 20006  
Tel: (202) 393-3572; Fax: (202) 393-0995

**Maryland Office:**  
11141 Georgia Avenue, Suite 515  
Silver Spring, MD 20902  
Tel: (301) 942-2223/ 2263; Fax: (301) 942-9222