# Advancing AAPI Engagement in Marine Protected Area Conservation



## Centering Equity and Partnership for Conservation Success

### GROWTH OPPORTUNITY FOR ORGANIZATIONS

Authentic AAPI engagement strengthens equity, organizational sustainability, public trust, climate resilience, and conservation impact. Centering inclusive partnerships and culturally responsive approaches ensures Marine Protected Area (MPA) conservation reflects and benefits the diverse AAPI communities who share deep connections to the ocean.

**7 - 7.5%**
of the U.S. population identify as AAPI. That's 24 million people.

U.S. Pacific territories include some of the world's largest Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

### AAPI ENGAGEMENT STRENGTHENS CONSERVATION

The diverse AAPI population—encompassing hundreds of ethnicities, languages, and cultures—represents approximately 7 to 7.5% of the U.S. population, or 23 to 24 million people. Many AAPI communities have longstanding ties to coastal and island environments and play vital roles in stewardship. U.S. Pacific territories include some of the world's largest and most biologically diverse MPAs, offering unique opportunities for collaboration, learning, and leadership.

### BENEFITS OF ENGAGING AAPI COMMUNITIES

#### STRATEGIC FUNDING

Invest in AAPI-led and serving organizations and initiatives that advance ocean stewardship, build capacity, and drive community-centered conservation outcomes.

#### INCLUSIVE VOLUNTEERISM

Create accessible, welcoming pathways for AAPI communities to participate in conservation through volunteering, education, and experiential engagement.

#### TARGETED ADVOCACY

Elevate AAPI voices in policy, planning, and decision-making to ensure equitable representation and advocate for ocean policies that reflect community priorities.

#### INTEGRATION OF TRADITIONAL ECOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE & INNOVATION

Honor and integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge with scientific research and innovation to strengthen climate resilience and conservation effectiveness.

**By advancing authentic AAPI engagement, we build stronger, more inclusive partnerships that protect ocean ecosystems and create a more just, resilient, and thriving future for current and future generations.**


SOURCES
MPACN Tides of Belonging (2026)
California climate investments (Proposition 4)
U.S. Census 2020/2021 estimates