

# Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month

By Library of Congress et al

May is Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, also widely known as Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month in the United States.

A broad term, Asian/Pacific encompasses all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Guam, Marianas, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and the Federated States of Micronesia), and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, and Easter Island).

Like most commemorative months, Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month originated with congress. In 1977, Representative Frank Horton of New York introduced House Joint Resolution 540 to proclaim the first ten days in May as Pacific/Asian American Heritage Week. In the same year, Senator Daniel Inouye of

Hawaii introduced a similar resolution, Senate Joint Resolution 72.

Neither of these resolutions passed, so in June 1978, Representative Horton introduced House Joint Resolution 1007. This resolution proposed that the president should "proclaim a week, which is to include the seventh and tenth of the month, during the first ten days in May of 1979 as 'Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week.'" This joint resolution was passed by the house and then the senate and was signed by President Jimmy Carter on October 5, 1978, to become Public Law 95-419. This law amended the original language of the bill and directed the president to issue a proclamation for the "7 day period beginning on May 4, 1979, as 'Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week.'"

During the next decade, presidents signed annual proclamations for Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week until 1990, when congress passed Public Law 101-283, expanding the observance to a month for 1990. Then, in 1992, congress passed Public Law 102-450, which designated May as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month every year. The month of May was chosen to



commemorate the immigration of the first Japanese to the United States on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad on May 10, 1869. The majority of the workers who laid the tracks were

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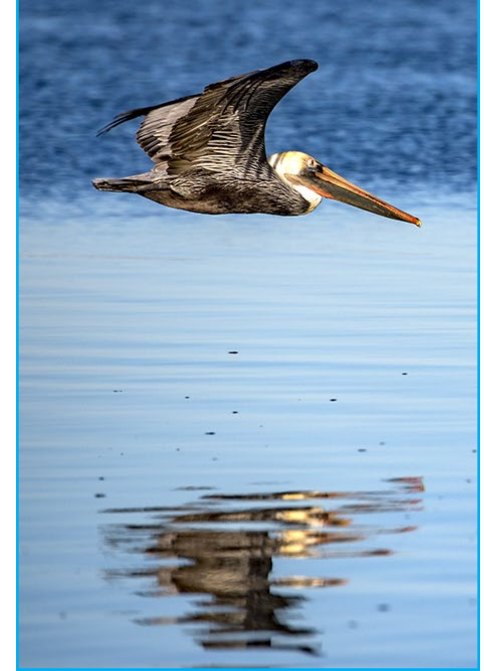
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**SBA 101: Introduction to SBA Programs Webinar Monday, May 18, 2026, 8:00 am-9:00 am CDT Online**  
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration, Rhode Island District Office  
Contact: Brian Hopkins, 401-528-4575, [brian.hopkins@sba.gov](mailto:brian.hopkins@sba.gov)  
Fee: Free; registration required

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**Federal Contracting for Small Businesses Webinar Tuesday, June 9, 2026, 11:00 am-12:30 pm CDT Online**  
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration  
Contact: Irene Gonzalez, 208-334-1673, [irene.gonzalez@sba.gov](mailto:irene.gonzalez@sba.gov)  
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Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration  
Contact: Patrice Dozier, [patrice.dozier@sba.gov](mailto:patrice.dozier@sba.gov)  
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SBA is creating a space for Woman-Owned Small Businesses, via WOSB certification! Are you a woman owner of a small business? The federal government's goal is to award at least five percent of all federal contracting dollars to woman-owned small businesses each year. Join us for training on how to register for SBA's Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) program, which helps eligible small businesses to qualify for federal contracting opportunities. The monthly sessions include an overview of the self-certification process, and a discussion of the NAICS codes that qualify as WOSB or EDWOSB. Register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/woman-owned-small-business-wosb-certification-program-tickets-1986913543896>

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