

REDRESS

Rafu

Claimants Urged to Apply by Jan

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By TAKESHI NAKAYAMA
RAFU ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Redress Administration urged potential recipients of redress to send in their claims by January 1998.

Speaking at a redress workshop attended by an estimated 150 persons on Tuesday night at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in Little Tokyo, DeDe Greene, ORA's administrator for redress, reminded everyone that the reparations program, intended to compensate those whose freedoms were curtailed by the government's evacuation orders during World War II, would end either by Aug. 10, 1998, or when the allocated money runs out.

Leading the workshop/meeting were Greene and ORA staff members Emlei Kuboyama, Joann Chiedi and Lisa Vickers Johnson, who provided answers to questions on individual case statuses and required documentation.

ORA said it has delivered payments to more than 80,000 eligible individuals since the payments began in 1990.

"We started with 120,000 unknowns, and we located everybody except the 3,300 'unknowns,'" Greene said. "Only 1,500 have been denied—less than 2 percent. And some of them will become eligible under [the *Ishida* case]."

The ORA executive director added, "We will continue our outreach in the community. We're basically doing everything we can."

Greene urged potential recipients to apply as soon as possible because the time it takes to process claims—from the time one applies until payments are made—averages around six to eight weeks.

Greene said under the regulations of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the oldest eligible claimants get paid first.



Photos by MARIO G. REYES/Rafu Shimpō

(Above) Kay Ochi, left, vice president of the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations, makes a point during a redress meeting and workshop held Tuesday in Little Tokyo. (Left) Some of the 150 interested spectators listen intently as staff members of the Office of Redress Administration give an overview of recent events and current redress statistics at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center Tuesday night.



ORA also asked the community to let them know of any potentially eligible people whose whereabouts are now unknown and whose names are being published in *The Rafu Shimpō*.

"Based on what we now have—including [those covered under] *Ishida*, the minors, the Peruvian Japanese and the railroad workers, we should have enough money," Greene said.

Kay Ochi, vice president of the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCRR), the group organizing the meeting, said the purpose of the workshop was to update the community about the progress of the ORA, to provide an opportunity for the community to speak to ORA staff members in person, to expedite claims, and to outreach to the community.

Ochi said she has reservations

about ORA's outreach efforts only because "the 'sunset date' is a big issue for them. On Aug. 10, 1998, the door slams shut."

"That's very distressing to me because we still have a lot of claims that have not been processed, people with appeals, and 3,300 unknowns," Ochi stated. "Unless they show me a very concerted and very complete outreach plan, I won't be satisfied with [ORA's] efforts ... I don't think it's as comprehensive as I would like to see."

She added, "There need to be



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She added, "There need to be more press releases, not just to the vernaculars, but to the major newspapers too, to get the word out and to locate people. I think perhaps our sense of urgency is not shared by [ORA]."

The community can do their part by requesting more community outreach from ORA, calling and keeping in touch with ORA, and staying involved, Ochi said.

Potentially Eligible

Two categories previously de-

nied by ORA are now potentially eligible for redress because of court victories in the Ishida and *Consolo* cases.

These cases involve children born in interior states (such as Utah) whose parents "voluntarily" relocated from their West Coast homes and were never interned in concentration camps; and children of parents who were interned but had left camp before they were born.

People in this class of people may be eligible for redress, if ORA proposals are implemented. However, ORA is proposing that the date of birth should be changed from June 30, 1946 (as stated in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988) to Jan. 2, 1945.

Darlene Camacho, one of those who were denied redress, attended the meeting in hopes of that her case may be reversed due to the outcome of the Ishida case.

Her family "voluntarily" evacuated to Utah to work on a sugar beets in March 1942. Her father, who injured his back, drove the family to Minnesota, where she was born in 1943. Her youngest brother was born in Chicago in 1946.

Her mother and sister, who was born in 1939, were found eligible, but her father did not receive reparations because he died in 1984, four years before the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 was enacted into law.

Camacho said she was denied when she first applied for redress, and her appeal was also denied. "With the Ishida and Consolo cases, I've been told I might be one of the 900 or so who are eligible."

"My case might be weaker than others because my father moved to Minnesota," she said. "But he didn't have the freedom of movement to go back to his domicile in Baldwin Park, California."

Ochi said other individuals who deserve redress but have been denied include Japanese Peruvians, the railroad workers who were fired after Pearl Harbor, residents of certain parts of Arizona who lost their freedom of movement, and some people who "voluntarily" evacuated from their West Coast homes before the government's evacuation orders in March 1942.

Nikkei who were taken from Latin American nations against their will and detained in U.S. camps during World War II have been denied redress by the ORA and have filed a lawsuit seeking an apology and reparations.

The government does recognize that the abductions happened, but officials with the ORA say the Latin American Nikkei detainees are not covered by the 1988 reparations law.

NCRR is committed to fighting for redress, even after the sunset date, Ochi announced. "Given there are 3,300 unknowns, we will pursue that. ORA has already reversed about a half a dozen class of people."