



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

2015 Annual Report
www.aacommission.org

Prepared by:
Bora Chiemruom, Executive Director

About the Commission

The Asian American Commission (AAC) is a Massachusetts Commission established under section 68 of chapter 3 of the Massachusetts General Laws, which went into effect on October 29, 2006. The AAC was formed in recognition of the General Court's findings that Asian Americans constitute the fastest growing minority population in both the Commonwealth and the United States, that they represent a diverse population within the Commonwealth, and that many members of the Asian American community have overcome great hardship and made outstanding contributions to the educational, economic, technological, and cultural well-being of the Commonwealth, but still face many challenges in their efforts for full social, economic, and political integration within the Commonwealth.

The AAC is a permanent body dedicated to advocacy on behalf of Asian Americans throughout Massachusetts. The Commission's goal is to recognize and highlight the vital contributions of Asian Americans to the social, cultural, economic, and political life of the Commonwealth; to identify and address the needs and challenges facing residents of Asian ancestry; and to promote the well-being of this dynamic and diverse community, thereby advancing the interests of all persons who call Massachusetts home.

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The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

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Bora Chiemruom
Executive Director

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Dear Friends & Supporters,

I'm very proud to be entering my second year as the Executive Director of the Asian American Commission (AAC). This year marks AAC's ten year anniversary. Together, over the past decade, the AAC has made a remarkable impact on the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities of Massachusetts.

When AAC was first established in 2006, it faced a daunting challenge of bringing the community together and establishing a recognized state government agency that advocates on behalf of Asian Americans in the Commonwealth. Stepping into AAC's tenth anniversary, we will build on our success by further expanding and strengthening our work, which will include a concerted focus on collaboration and partnership.

This report will highlight our third Health Care Forum with a Health Care Summit featuring Dr. Howard Koh; our successful Fourth Annual Young Leaders Symposium, which brings together area students with current AAPI leaders in a wide variety of fields to help guide our next generation of leaders; and our Ninth Annual Unity Dinner. We partnered with the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAPPI) to present a very well-received Grant Writing Workshop. In addition, in partnership with The East West Bank, as part of our Financial Literacy Series, AAC offered a Financial Literacy Seminar in Quincy, MA on July 20, 2015, targeting Quincy senior residences and new immigrants.

With the knowledge gained from our ten years of experience, AAC plans to launch some new initiatives in fiscal year 2017: Policy and Advocacy Day at the State House, Civic Participation/Engagement program, Community Listening/Hearing events, a White Paper on AAPI Health Disparities, AAPI Career Fair, Online Resource Directory, and an Asian American Civil Rights Conference in Massachusetts, that is free to the public and addresses various Asian American and Pacific Islander community civil right issues.

Even with the great progress made over the past decade, much remains to be accomplished. Looking ahead, we will expand our geographic network and increase our outreach effort into regions that have been previously underserved due to fiscal limitations. Throughout the year, we have endeavored to keep all community members informed through our multiple communication channels including emails, Facebook, Website, Twitter and in-person meetings.

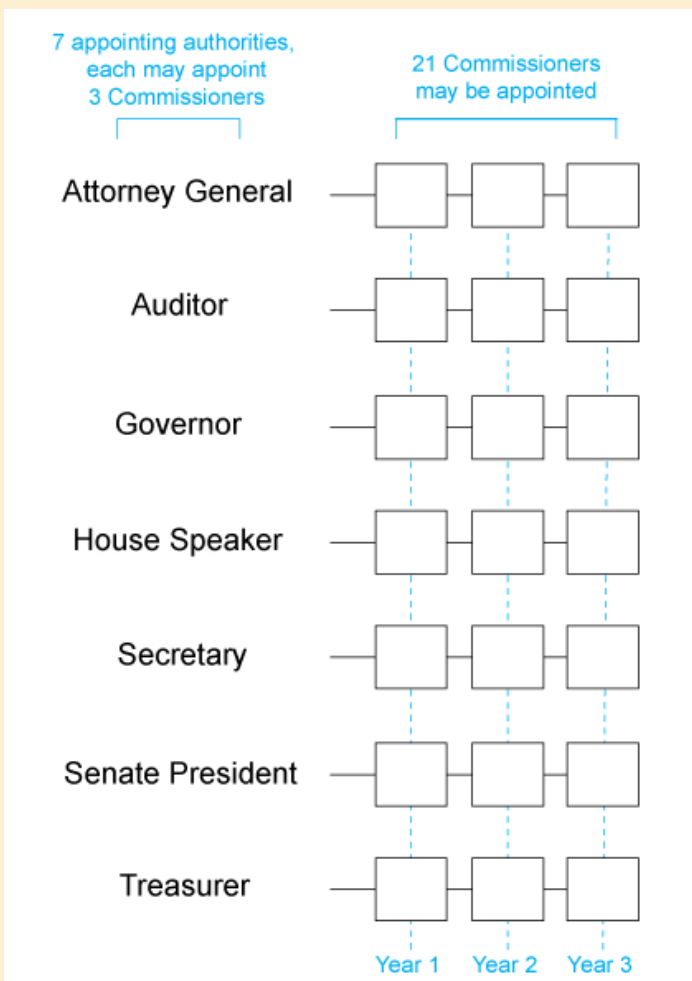
I am profoundly grateful for the partnership, commitment, and generous support of our Commissioners, partners, sponsors, elected and legislative officials, and appointing authorities. Especially grateful to the State Treasurer's office for all their support of the AAC over the years.

Sincerely,

Bora Chiemruom
Executive Director

Commission Memberships

First	Last	Career Field	Appointing Authority	Term Ends
Kenneth	An	Government	Senate President	2016
Yan Jennifer	Cao	Health	Auditor	2017
Chun-Fai	Chan	Education	Auditor	2015
Chris	Chanyasulkit	Public Health	Governor	2016
Kajal	Chattopadhyay	Law	Governor	2015
Nick	Chau	Real Estate	Attorney General	2018
Elisa	Choi	Health	Treasurer	2018
Tony	Dang	Law Enforcement	Treasurer	2016
Kay	Dong	Business	Secretary of State	2017
Gilbert	Ho	Community	Secretary of State	2016
Lianna	Kushi	Community	House Speaker	2016
Mabel	Lam	Health	Treasurer	2017
Wingkay	Leung	Community	Secretary of State	2018
Lydia	Schroter	Business	Auditor	2016
Evelyn	Tang	Law	Attorney General	2017
Sophy	Theam	Banking	House Speaker	2017
Karen	Tseng	Law	Attorney General	2016
Larry	Wong	Business	House Speaker	2015



Commissioners are appointed by the following appointing authorities: Attorney General, Auditor, Governor, House Speaker, Secretary, Senate President, and Treasurer. Each may appoint three individuals for a total of 21 Commissioners.

At the end of each year, seven Commissioners' terms will expire. They may be renewed or be replaced. Each Commissioner is limited to two consecutive terms with a maximum of six years of service. This staggered system ensures that many have the opportunity to serve.

Nominations for members are solicited by the appointing authorities and the Commission from August 1 to September 16 of each year. Appointments are ultimately decided by the seven appointing authorities.

Young Leaders Symposium



The Asian American Commission (AAC), in partnership with the University of Massachusetts-Boston's Asian American Student Success Program and the New England Regional Network of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders held its 4th Annual Young Leaders Symposium on September 24, 2015.

Over 100 students and young professionals participated in this half day event to hear topics on running for office, careers in government, Asian American representation in politics, nonprofit initiatives, and more. Asian Americans continue to be heavily under represented in government. At the same time, there are over 15,000 Asian American college students, and more than 1,500 Asian American members of young professional networks, in the Greater Boston area.

Through the symposium, the AAC seeks to identify and support the development of future Asian American leaders. Boston City Councilor Michelle Wu, Entrepreneurs Ian So and Vienne Cheung, and so many more industry leaders spoke at a number of breakout sessions and served as speed mentors. During the event, over a dozen federal and state agencies, non-profit organizations, and for-profit industries took part in networking with the attendees to provide insights on internship and career opportunities.

At the end of the symposium, students, young professionals, and speakers were able to connect and network over a catered meal. Ian So, CEO of The Chicken and Rice Guys, noted "For how educated and how hard Asian Americans work, we are still under represented in the highest levels of politics, corporations, science, academics and entrepreneurship. As an entrepreneur that has chosen a very non-traditional Asian career path, I am living in the reality of that under representation. That is why I find this symposium so important to help the next generation of Asian leaders achieve success with no ceilings."

Health Care Summit



The Asian American Commission (AAC) held its third annual Health Care program on September 10, 2015, a Health Care Summit, "A Conversation with Dr. Howard Koh", which featured a talk by Dr. Koh on the state of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) health issues and disparities. We received support from The Boston Foundation, and its Chief of Staff Mr. Stephen Chan. The Boston Foundation graciously offered the use of its conference room space for this occasion. This supportive collaboration helped to make the event a success. We had over 150 community leaders and members in attendance.

This Health Care Summit provided a unique opportunity for all the attendees of the event, from which included community members, leaders of AAPI organizations, and health care professionals, to have an informal dialogue with Dr. Koh. Health Care Summit attendees asked compelling questions and shared personal stories, all of which Dr. Koh graciously answered and received. Dr. Koh spoke eloquently about health issues and disparities in the AAPI population, and kept the "full house" audience completely engaged before, during, and after his terrific talk. The Asian American Commission would like to thank Dr. Howard Koh for a truly wonderful Health Care Summit event. The AAC thanks ALL the Health Care Summit attendees for their interest and engagement in AAPI health issues and disparities, and for making the event such a memorable and successful occasion. The Asian American Commission looks forward to future opportunities to collaborate with community members and partners, in our efforts to eliminate health disparities and to promote health advocacy for our Commonwealth's AAPI populations.

Resource Fair



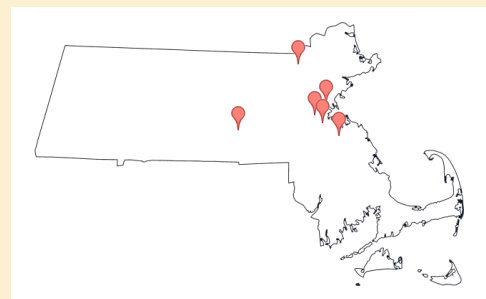
The traveling Resource Fair program, launched on February 12, 2012, serves to bring information about state and federal resources to Asian American residents around Massachusetts. These resources include information and support on topics such as transitional assistance, consumer protection, career planning, health awareness, small business administration, housing opportunities, veterans' services, and more. The Asian American Commission (AAC) developed its replicable Resource Fair model to bring our government closer to the people it serves. Resource Fairs are held regularly throughout the year in locations with large Asian American populations. Over the past few years, many of these events hosted over 15,000 attendees.

Representatives from various agencies were in attendance to provide information on available services and programs, and to answer questions. Interpreters were available to help with any language needs. The Resource Fairs were an opportunity for Commissioners to meet members of the community and to hear their concerns so that they can bring those concerns to the attention of our elected officials.

The Commission provides the following free services to the agencies: translations of agency brochures, onsite interpreters, table booths, tote bags, and promotional materials. AAC participated in several Resource Fairs in 2015, including fairs held in Quincy, Lowell, and Worcester. Over the last four years, the AAC has also brought government representatives to the Lowell Southeast Asian Water Festival and plans to continue our attendance this year and in future years as the event brings in over 50,000 attendees.

List of partnering agencies:

- Department of Correction
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Telecommunications & Cable
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
- Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling
- Office of Consumer Affairs & Business Regulation
- US Citizenship and Immigration Services



Six cities with the highest number of Asian Americans are Boston, Quincy, Lowell, Cambridge, Malden, and Worcester.

Financial Literacy



The goal of the Asian American Commission’s Economic Development Subcommittee is to provide resources to our Asian American communities – both consumers and business owners in the Commonwealth so they can safeguard their hard-earned money and use it to benefit their future needs. We have conducted several workshops in various communities, partnering with local financial service providers who can speak the language of the community members.

In January 2014, a financial literacy pilot program was conducted for Khmer elders in Lowell, Massachusetts. This was a partnership between Enterprise Bank and Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc., who received funding through the state Treasurer’s office. The workshop was titled: “You and Your Bank: Choosing What’s Right for You”. Attendees learned to choose a bank, compare checking accounts, open a checking account, complete a check, and keep records. They also learned about types of accounts and fees.

In 2015, The Asian American Commission (AAC) collaborated with East West Bank on a Financial Literacy workshop aimed at helping limited English speaking Chinese consumers understand how a bank will help them in thinking about how their money can be managed safely and securely. On July 20, 2015, in partnership with East West Bank, AAC offered a seminar in Quincy, MA targeting Quincy senior residences and new immigrants. The topics included:

- Sound management, Safety & Security
- Comparing different account types
- Money Market Account
- Comparing different types of consumer loans
- What are the be Safe Deposit Services
- Benefits to MA 18-65?
- Foreign Exchanges Services



White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI)



The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI) established a task force to gather resources and information around the nation. WHIAAPI assigned Commissioner Kenneth An to lead the Northeast region.

On June 12, 2015, the Asian American Commission hosted a How to Apply for Federal Resources Grant Writing Workshop with the White House Initiative on Asian American Pacific Islanders [WHIAAPI] and the Asian Pacific Islander American Health Forum. At capacity, more than 60 individuals from various not-for profit organizations throughout Massachusetts attended the one-day workshop, which was held at the District Hall.

Dr. Paul Watanabe, Presidential Appointee for the WHIAAPI; Susie Sands, Vice President of the Asian American Program for Wallace H. Coulter Foundation; Doua Thor, Senior Advisor for the WHIAAPI; and, Dr. Elisa Choi, Vice Chairperson for the Asian American Commission kick-started the program with welcoming remarks and discussions on important AAPI issues.

Ms. Bora Chiemruom, Executive Director of the Asian American Commission closed the event with a few remarks. She thanked the audience for attending and shared AAC's upcoming events. The audience gave the co-presenters, Pedro Arista and Marianne Chung, both from the Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum excellent reviews.



Unity Dinner



2015 AAC's Unity Dinner at UMass Boston



Keynote Speakers: Dr. Howard Koh and Mr. Daniel Arrigg

The Unity Dinner serves to celebrate the achievements of Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders (AAPI) around the Commonwealth and to raise the funds to carry out the Commission's advocacy work. Each year's theme explores a trend that heavily influences our economic, political, and social standings.

On October 15, 2015, AAC hosted the Ninth Annual Unity Dinner at UMASS Boston. Keynote Speakers, Dr. Koh and Mr. Arrigg Koh wonderfully represent last year's Unity Dinner theme of "Honoring Our Heritage, Celebrating Our Diversity", as a father-son team who are each individually distinguished, but who together represent our AAPI heritage and diversity in a powerful way. Our Asian American Commission was also excited to recognize and honor the unsung community heroes, the lifetime achievers, and the leaders of inclusion and diversity.

Dr. Howard Kyongju Koh is the Harvey V. Fineberg Professor of the Practice of Public Health Leadership at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health and The Harvard Kennedy School, and is the former United States Assistant Secretary for Health for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, after being nominated by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the U.S. Senate in 2009. Mr. Daniel Arrigg Koh is the Chief of Staff for the Mayor of the City of Boston. He advises Mayor Martin J. Walsh on key issues and helps Mayor Walsh execute his vision for the city and its 18,000 employees.

Leadership for Inclusion & Diversity Award Organization: MassMutual Financial Group

Lifetime Achievement Award: Organization: Saheli

Community Hero Award: Individual: Dr. Ed Wang

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