



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

2016 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.

Contents

About the Commission & Contents	2
Letter from Bora Chiemruom, Executive Director	3
Commission Memberships	4
Programs	
Young Leaders Symposium	5
Health and Human Services	6
Resource Fair	7
Economic and Financial Literacy	8
White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders	9
Asian American Pacific Islander Civil Rights Forum	10
Unity Dinner	11



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 third year as the Executive Director of the Asian American Commission (AAC). This year marks the AAC's eleventh anniversary. In January 2016, the AAC set forth an ambitious agenda. We were determined to accomplish many new initiatives. Moving forward, we want to build on our successes in community partnerships, collaborations, and programming.

This report will highlight six highly successful programs: (1) the Health and Human Services programs with 4 community events in Quincy, Lowell, Worcester and Boston, which included the 7th Annual Mental Health Forum; (2) the Fifth Annual Young Leaders Symposium, which brought together area students and current AAPI leaders from a wide variety of fields to help guide our next generation of leaders; (3) the traveling Resource Fair program; (4) the very well-received Grant Writing Workshop 2.0 presented by the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAPPI); (5) the Economic and Financial Literacy; and (6) the First Annual Asian American Civil Rights (AAPI) Forum on Friday, October 21, 2016 that was a collaboration with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Boston Area Office.

With over ten years of experience under our belt, the AAC plans to launch new initiatives in 2017: a Policy and Advocacy Day at the State House, a Civic Participation/Engagement community program, a White Paper on AAPI Health Disparities, and an Online Resource Directory. We also plan to expand our partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health Problem Gambling Services, the Massachusetts Council on Compulsive Gambling and the Massachusetts Gaming Commission to address gambling addiction issues in Asian American communities.

Last year, I was honored to co-chair the 1st Annual AAPI Civil Rights Forum with Mr. Ken An, former Commissioner and current Director of the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission Boston Area Office. This all-day Forum drew close to 300 community members including Federal and State employees. We are fortunate to secure a restricted fund to continue with the 2nd Annual AAPI Civil Rights Forum on October 27, 2017 at Federal Reserve Plaza.

The AAC looks forward to further opportunities to engage our community members and community partners. Personally, I continue to be grateful for the partnership, the commitment, and the generous support by the commissioners, partners, sponsors, elected and legislative officials and appointing authorities, specially the State Treasurer's office for continuously supporting AAC over the years.

Sincerely,

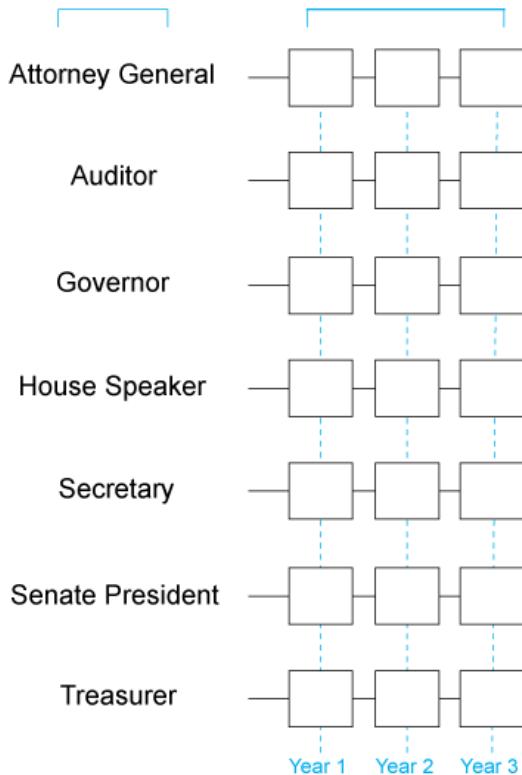
Bora Chiemruom
Executive Director

Commission Memberships

First	Last	Career Field	Appointing Authority	Term Ends
Jonjy	Annath	Health	Senate President	2019
Kenneth	An	Government	Senate President	2016
Yan Jennifer	Cao	Health	Auditor	2017
Chris	Chanyasulkit	Public Health	Governor	2016
Nick	Chau	Real Estate	Attorney General	2018
Elisa	Choi	Health	Treasurer	2018
Loan T.	Dao	Education	Auditor	2019
Kay	Dong	Business	Secretary of State	2017
Vira	Douangmany Cage	Community	Senate President	2018
Gilbert	Ho	Community	Secretary of State	2019
Pralhad	KC	Community	Governor	2020
Lianna	Kushi	Community	House Speaker	2016
Mabel	Lam	Health	Treasurer	2017
Wingkay	Leung	Community	Secretary of State	2018
Dimple J.	Rana	Community	House Speaker	2018
Uyen-sa	Nguyen	Education	Governor	2019
Anil	Saigal	Media	Treasurer	2020
Lydia	Schroter	Business	Auditor	2016
Evelyn	Tang	Law	Attorney General	2017
Sophy	Theam	Banking	House Speaker	2017
Karen	Tseng	Law	Attorney General	2016

7 appointing authorities,
each may appoint
3 Commissioners

21 Commissioners
may be appointed



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



“ANNUAL ASIAN AMERICAN COMMISSION CELEBRATES THE COMMONWEALTH'S YOUNG LEADERS.”

The Asian American Commission, in partnership with the Brookline Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Community Relations, and the Boston Area Office of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, held its 5th Annual Young Leaders Symposium (YLS) on Saturday, October 15, 2016.

The symposium featured speakers presenting information on running for offices, experiences in all state and local governments, with an immigrant and refugee non-profits panel. The speakers encouraged participants to engage in civic participation and community involvement by our current young leaders.

With approximately 100 people in attendance, the event provided students and young professionals a dynamic opportunity for first-hand information and networking that revolved around the theme of Youth and Civic Engagement, particularly “What can you do today.” The event was moderated by Dr. Chris Chanyasulkit, and featured two keynote speakers: Former City of Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong and Former Governor Michael S. Dukakis. The event also featured Kenneth An, Director of Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of Boston area, who talked about the Federal Civil Rights Initiative.



One important highlight from the 2016 YLS for our youths was the impressive panel of Asian American leaders of non-profit organizations such as Giles Li from the Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC), Anh Vu Sawyer and Boa Newgate from Southeast Asian Coalition, and Sovanna Devin Pouy from Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA). Another important highlight was the announcement of the recipient of the 1st Annual Asian American Commission Scholarship Awardee, Jennifer Tran.

A special thank you to former Commissioner Chris Chanyasulkit for her exemplary leadership in organizing a very successful event.

***Health and Human Services Program**



Asian Traditional Medicine in Quincy, April 30, 2016



Asian Traditional Medicine in Lowell, November 5, 2016

The AAC's Health and Human Services (HHS) Committee continues its advocacy efforts this year, to raise awareness about AAPI health disparities. The AAC is part of the Asian American Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Diabetes coalition, and supports this coalition's efforts to increase awareness about the "diabetes disparity" affecting AAPIs, and is working with various state and national collaborators to try and further publicize the need for heightened screening for diabetes screening at a lower body mass index (BMI) of 23, for AAPIs. The AAC continues its work on advocating on behalf of various behavioral health issues, including depression and suicide prevention, problem addictions (such as compulsive gambling), and other conditions affecting the AAPI community disproportionately (post-traumatic stress disorder in Southeast Asians).

AAC held three highly successful community events in Quincy, Lowell, and Worcester. Two workshops and a community listening sessions were held on Asian Traditional Medicine perspectives. These 2 events brought together local and statewide expertises, attracting healthcare providers and consumers alike. Our third event was a film screening of "Being Hmong Means Being Free" followed by a post film discussion and community listening session with youth and community leaders on the topics of school, the generation gap, violence, immigration and assimilation. The last event was made possible in partnership with the Southeast Asian Coalition of Central Massachusetts.

We also raised awareness about behavioral and mental health issues affecting the Asian American community, in partnership with a consortium of organizations: MA Department of Mental Health; Action for Boston Community Development, Inc.; Asian Women for Health; Lowell Community Health Center; The Breaking Silences Project; The Transformation Center; and Massachusetts General Hospital. We sponsored and organized the 7th Annual Asian American Mental Health Forum, which was held on May 20, 2016 at the DMH Solomon Carter Fuller Mental Health Center. The focus was on "Weaving Our Many Identities into Well-Being".

*In 2016 calendar year, we changed our "Healthcare Summit" to "Health and Human Services Program" with four featured community events spread out across Massachusetts.

Resource Fair



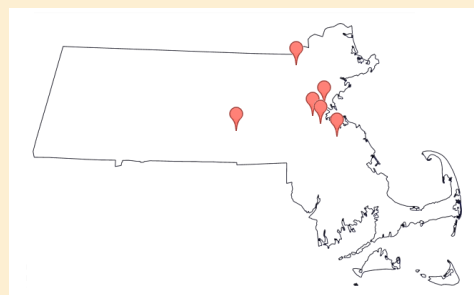
The traveling Resource Fair program, launched on February 12, 2012, serves to bring information about state and federal resources to Asian American residents around Massachusetts. These resources include information and support on topics such as transitional assistance, consumer protection, career planning, 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 also 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 agencies: translations of agency brochures, onsite interpreters, table booths, tote bags, and promotional materials. AAC participated in several Resource Fairs in 2016, including fairs held in Quincy, Lowell, and Worcester. Over the last five 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.

Economic and 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".

In 2015, 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.

In 2016, we partnered with State Treasurer Goldberg - (OEE) Office of Economic Empowerment, Boston Chinese Neighborhood Center (BCNC) - Quincy Center, US Trust/Bank of America/Merrill Lynch Pierce Fenner & Smith, and East Boston Savings Bank to host a Financial Literacy Education workshop primary focus to new Asian immigrants especially young women. Some were starting their family, learning English as their second Language, searching for jobs and starting their career. We hope with this economic empowerment series would help many of them to be more understanding and preparing their children's future education, and planning their personal financial matters.

Also in 2016, in partnership with Eastern Bank and the U.S. Small Business Administration with support from the State Treasurer's office, we held "A Breakfast Celebrating the Asian Small Business Communities of Massachusetts" on Monday, May 16th, 2016 @ 7:30am at Newton Marriott Hotel.

White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders



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 former 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.

On July 26, 2016, the AAC and the WHIAAPI offered another Grant Writing Training 2.0, “Grant Your Wish: How to Apply for Federal Resources,” an intermediate Grant Writing skills training to assist Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander organizations in the greater Boston area better understand and utilize federal resources. The event also included small group-level activities and training on grant writing skills, project planning, and the management cycle.



Asian American Pacific Islander Civil Rights Forum



The Asian American Commission of Massachusetts (AAC) and the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission of Boston Area Office (EEOC) held the 1st Annual Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Civil Rights Forum on October 21, 2016. The event brought together over 50 distinguished speakers from federal and local governments, and more than 200 community leaders, including over 15 panels engaged in conversations.

This was the first ever forum, on the East Coast, focusing on AAPI Civil Rights issues. A combined message from co-chairs Mr. Ken An, Director of EEOC and Ms. Bora Chiemruom, Executive Director of AAC: "Welcome to the Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders Civil Rights Forum! The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Boston Area Office and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission are excited to bring you this program to engage our community in a dynamic and energetic conversation about important Civil Rights topics affecting Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders. The goal of this forum is to facilitate learning, promote cultural awareness, and breakdown myths and stereotypes. We hope to advance partnerships between the government, advocates, media, educators and community based organizations so that we can flourish and prosper, together, as a community. We want to thank our amazing volunteers, moderators and speakers who have devoted their time and energy to make this program a success. We want to thank all of the participants for taking the time from your busy schedule to join us in making history as we engage in these vital conversations. Today, let your voice be heard!"

We are committed to continuing the Civil Rights Forum for many years to come. Thanks in part to a unique and wonderful support from the EEOC. We have been funded for four more years!

Unity Dinner 2016



2016 AAC's Unity Dinner at Boston University



AAC Commissioners and Executive Director

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 Friday, June 3, 2016, the Asian American Commission (AAC) highlighted the extraordinary work of individuals and organizations within the Asian American community of the state at our Tenth Annual Unity Dinner: "Celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander Pioneers. The evening featured an Asian American Pacific Islander Pioneers Panel with MassChallenge co-Founder and Entrepreneur Akhil Nigam, former Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong, and Boston City Council President Michelle Wu. Moderated by Professor Paul W. Watanabe.

In addition to the featured AAPI Pioneers, the Unity Dinner had local performing artists, Ms. Vivian Luo and Bolly X. Former Commissioner Grace Lee served as Honorary Chair. Master of Ceremonies was Ms. Liz Cheng, WGBH's General Manager for Television, overseeing local channels WGBH 2, WGBX 44, 'GBH Kids, Create, and Boston Kids & Family TV as well as the national public television multicast channel World.

We honored and recognized the award recipients in the following three award categories:

Leadership for Inclusion & Diversity Award for an organization: MassMutual Financial Group

Lifetime Achievement Award for an individual: Selina Chow

Community Hero Award for an individual: Sidney Liang

These **pioneers** and leaders have made significant contributions by working tirelessly to promote positive change and to ensure a greater livelihood for the communities they serve.

2016 Supporters

Asian American Lawyers Assoc. of Mass. /Holland &
Knight LLP /MAP for Health
Asian Community Development Corporation
Chinatown Main Street
Eleanor and Frank Pao
Fish Family Foundation
John Hancock Financial Services
Korean-American Citizens League of New England

People's United Bank, N.A.
Selina and Joe Chow
South Cove Community Health Center
Sara's Serendipity Floral Design
Tai Tung Pharmacy (Nick Chau)
The Boston Foundation
The Philippine Medical Association of New England
Vietnamese American Community of Massachusetts

