



# The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

2017 Annual Report  
[www.aacommission.org](http://www.aacommission.org)

Prepared by:  
Jenny Chiang, 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

## COMMISSIONERS

**Chairperson**  
Elisa Choi

**Vice Chairperson**  
Nick Chau

**Treasurer**  
Wingkay Leung

**Secretary**  
Vira Douangmany-Cage

Jonjy Ananth  
Yan Jennifer Cao  
Loan Thi Dao  
Kay Dong  
Gilbert Ho  
Pralhad KC  
Lianna Kushi  
Mabel Lam  
Nina Liang  
Chung Liu  
John Naranja  
Uyen-Sa Nguyen  
Dimple J. Rana  
Anil Saigal  
Sophy Theam  
Evelyn Tang

**Executive Director**  
Jenny Chiang

One Ashburton Place  
12th Floor  
Boston, MA 02108  
[www.aacommission.org](http://www.aacommission.org)

Dear Friends & Supporters,

I'm honored to have joined the Asian American Commission as the Executive Director in November 2017. Looking back to what was accomplished in 2017 is incredible. Thanks to a strong foundation set in place under the previous leadership of Bora Chiemruom, the AAC will continue building relationships and expanding programming throughout the Commonwealth. As the state's only Asian American dedicated government entity, the AAC works to leverage the voices of the AAPI community to promote visibility and influence to our state legislators.

This report will highlight the AAC's staple programming throughout the year including; the Sixth Annual Young Leaders Symposium, the Traveling Resource Fair, Economic and Financial Literacy Programming, and the Second Annual Asian American and Pacific Islander Civil Rights Forum. In 2017, the AAC's Health and Human Services Committee helped introduce our Annual Community Advisory Roundtable as well as our Annual Advocacy Day at the Massachusetts State House. These fundamental events throughout the year intrinsically help us reveal challenges within the community and deepen our partnerships to help us fuel new initiatives and understanding.

With over a decade in the community, the AAC has built a rich history of collective impact. However, as our community demographics shift throughout the Commonwealth, we understand that our communities are encountering new challenges and inequities. The AAC hopes to continue building our capacity and increasing our geographic reach to help ensure our communities are not left behind or overlooked. In 2018, the AAC plans to continue working on addressing compulsive gambling amidst casino development, implementing community hearing/listening sessions, and increasing efforts to bring AAPI visibility to the State House.

The AAC looks forward to further opportunities to engage our community members and community partners. It has been a privilege to work alongside some of the most passionate, dedicated, and supportive appointing authorities, Commissioners, community leaders, elected officials, and sponsors. We're incredibly grateful to the State Treasurer's office for housing the AAC over the years.

Sincerely,

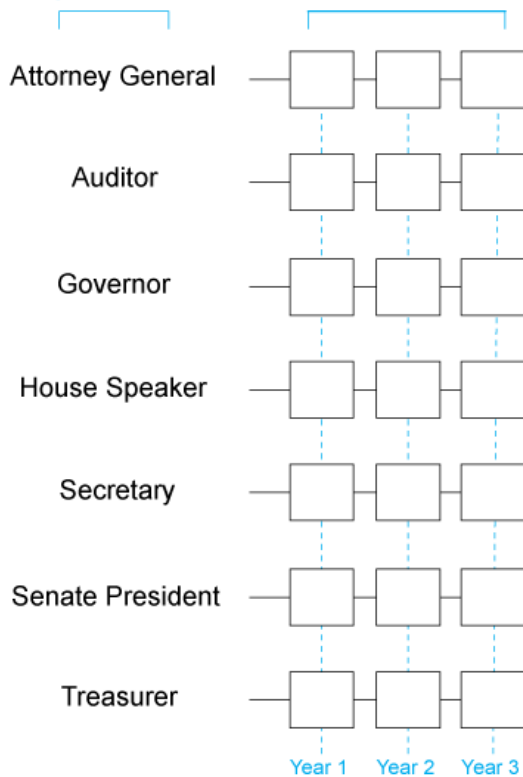
Jenny Chiang  
Executive Director

## Commission Memberships

First	Last	Career Field	Appointing Authority	Term Ends
Jonjy	Annath	Health	Senate President	2019
Yan Jennifer	Cao	Health	Auditor	2017
Nick	Chau	Real Estate	Attorney General	2018
Mary	Chin	Community	Governor	2019
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
Ivy	Ho	Education	House Speaker	2019
Pralhad	KC	Community	Governor	2020
Mabel	Lam	Health	Treasurer	2017
Wingkay	Leung	Community	Secretary of State	2018
Nina	Liang	Government	Auditor	2019
Chung	Liu	Community	Senate President	2019
John	Naranja	Law	Auditor	2019
Uyen-sa	Nguyen	Education	Governor	2019
Dimple J.	Rana	Community	House Speaker	2018
Anil	Saigal	Media	Treasurer	2020
Evelyn	Tang	Law	Attorney General	2017
Sophy	Theam	Banking	House Speaker	2017

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



The Asian American Commission, in partnership with Vietnamese American Community Center (VietAID) and the Boston Area Office of the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, held its 6th Annual Young Leaders Symposium (YLS) on Saturday, September 23, 2017.

The symposium featured speakers presenting information on building trust/credibility and teamwork, communication and networking skills, leadership qualities, and leading through conflict and negotiation. The speakers encouraged participants to stay civically engaged and connected with their communities.

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 “Finding Your Inner Leader.”

The event featured keynote speaker, Jessica Tang, President of Boston Teachers Union. The event also featured Kenneth An, Director of the Boston area Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, providing insight on implicit bias and employment discrimination.

The AAC was also excited to announce the second recipient of the AAC scholarship program, Ms. Saleena Som, a Cambodian-American third-year student working towards a degree in Law and Public Policy at Suffolk University.

## Health and Human Services Program



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 Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) communities; the coalition is composed of various state and national collaborators working to publicize the need for heightened screening for diabetes for AAPI communities at a lower body mass index (BMI) of 23. 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).

In 2017, the AAC had unanimously voted in support for House Bill H3361: An Act Requiring State Agencies to Collect Data on Asian American Aggregate Data. The AAC provided testimony in support of H.3361, which resulted in the bill moving forward to establish a study to expand statewide disaggregated racial and ethnic data collection.

On Wednesday, April 5, 2017, the AAC convened its first annual Health and Human Services Community Advisory Group Meeting. The AAC welcomed community leaders and healthcare professionals to convene and discuss health issues seen within the AAPI community. The space provided an opportunity for the AAC and its partners to collectively target and build a better understanding of health issues apparent in the community and strategize collaborative efforts to address them.

## Advocacy Day



On October 17, 2017, the AAC held the first Advocacy Day at the State House. The event featured a panel discussion moderated by AAC Chair Dr. Elisa Choi on topics such as health disparities, problem gambling, data disaggregation, and immigration policies and legislation impacting AAPI communities. It was a powerful discussion with panelists, Rep. Tackey Chan, Prof. Loan Dao (UMass Boston) and Dr. Carolyn Wong (UMass Boston). The event welcomed over 70 participants including, elected officials, AAPI community leaders, and residents from throughout the Commonwealth.

AAC's former Executive Director Bora Chiemruom remarked, "We are very fortunate as an organization to be at the State House holding our own Advocacy Day pulling in a broad spectrum of Asian Americans who live and work in the Commonwealth." She continued, "There is no better time to raise our voices and be visible."



### **National Asian Pacific American Caucus of State Legislators (NAPACSL)**

The AAC partnered with the MA Asian Legislative Caucus to host the National Asian Pacific American Caucus of State Legislators (NAPACSL), on August 5, 2017. The event brought together AAPI State Legislators from across the country for an evening of networking and discussion on AAPI leadership and the importance of data disaggregation.

## 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.

AAC participated in several Resource Fairs in 2017, including fairs held in Fall River, Lowell, Lynn, Quincy, 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. Over the years, the AAC has built a strong partnership with local banks and the Treasurer's office to offer free workshops focused on increasing access to financial education. We have conducted several workshops in various communities, partnering with local financial service providers who can speak the language of the community members.

The AAC was privileged to collaborate with State Treasurer Deborah B. Goldberg and Massachusetts State Treasury Office of Economic Empowerment to offer a wonderful presentation on Financial Education Seminar at Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center - BCNC Quincy on Wednesday, January 18, 2017.



Additionally, the AAC partnered with Eastern Bank to honor Asian Pacific Heritage Month and National Small Business Month in celebrating the Asian Small Business Communities of Massachusetts on May 16, 2017. The event featured remarks from State Treasurer Goldberg and workshops on how to start a business and how to grow and protect a business.

## 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 2nd Annual Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Civil Rights Forum on October 27, 2017. 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.

The forum continues to be the first of its kind on the East Coast focusing on AAPI Civil Rights issues. A combined message from 2017 co-chairs Mr. Ken An, Director of EEOC and Ms. Bora Chiemruom, former 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 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 three more years!

## Unity Dinner 2017

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, May 26, 2017, the Asian American Commission (AAC) highlighted the extraordinary work of individuals and organizations within the Asian American community of the state at our Eleventh Annual Unity Dinner: "Honoring Change Agents: Celebrating AAPI History, Progress, and Achievement."



In addition to the featured AAPI Pioneers, the Unity Dinner had local performing artists, Verge Dance Group. Master of Ceremonies featured 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.

The AAC honored and recognized the award recipients in the following three award categories:

**Leadership for Inclusion & Diversity Award:** *Eastern Bank*

**Lifetime Achievement Award:** *Mary Chin, Executive Director of Asian American Civic Association (ACA)*

**Community Hero Award:** *Boa Newgate and the Southeast Asian Coalition*

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

### 2017 Supporters

Asian American Civic Association  
Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts  
Boston College – Connell School of Nursing  
Bunker Hill Community College  
Chinatown Main Street  
East West Bank  
Eastern Bank  
Element Care  
Korean-American Citizens League of New England

Mabel Lam  
Santander Bank  
South Cove Community Health Center  
Southeast Asian Coalition of Massachusetts  
Tai Tung Pharmacy (Nick Chau)  
Thanh V. Tran  
Tufts Medical Center  
Vietnamese American Community of Massachusetts

