



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American Commission

2014 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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Evelyn Tang

Karen Tseng

Larry Wong

One Ashburton Place

12th Floor

Boston, MA 02108

T: 617-367-9333 x662

www.aacommission.org

Dear Friends & Supporters,

Joining the Asian American Commission as their Executive Director in February, 2015 has been a unique and rewarding experience for me. In preparing for this 2014 annual report, I had to research what had been done last year. I discovered that the Asian American Commission (AAC) was quite busy in 2014! We were able to collaborate with numerous community organizations in implementing various programs to benefit the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities in Massachusetts.

The AAC promotes the welfare of the dynamically diverse and complex Asian American population within our Commonwealth. We are fully committed to dedicating our time and resources to advocate on behalf of Asian Americans throughout Massachusetts. We proudly recognize and highlight the outstanding contributions of Asian Americans to the social, cultural, economic, and political life of the Commonwealth and also identify and address the needs, challenges, and hardships facing residents of Asian ancestry.

This report will highlight the Young Leaders Symposium, which gave students and young professionals an opportunity to understand the operations of government, and to network and learn about internship and job opportunities; the Health Care Forum, which was dedicated to focusing on issues of behavioral health affecting the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities of the Commonwealth; and the Resource Fair, where partnering federal, state, and nonprofit agencies attended local festivals hosted by various Asian American organizations in Massachusetts. These events create a junction for residents and officials to come together and discuss issues of importance in Asian American communities in Massachusetts. In addition, we introduced new initiatives to address the needs and challenges facing a disproportionate number of Asian Americans. This year AAC established a new Financial Literacy program to help our elders learn about the financial and banking system.

As I am documenting and preparing this report, and am seeing the many accomplishments of the Asian American Commission, I am left feeling profoundly proud to have been selected as the new Executive Director this year. I would like to thank our outstanding Commissioners for their inspiring hard work, commitment, dedication, and leadership of the Asian American Commission. Special thanks to the Asian American community for their generous support and continued collaboration. I am excited for the rest of 2015 and beyond, and I look forward to engaging everyone in achieving our goals in the coming year.

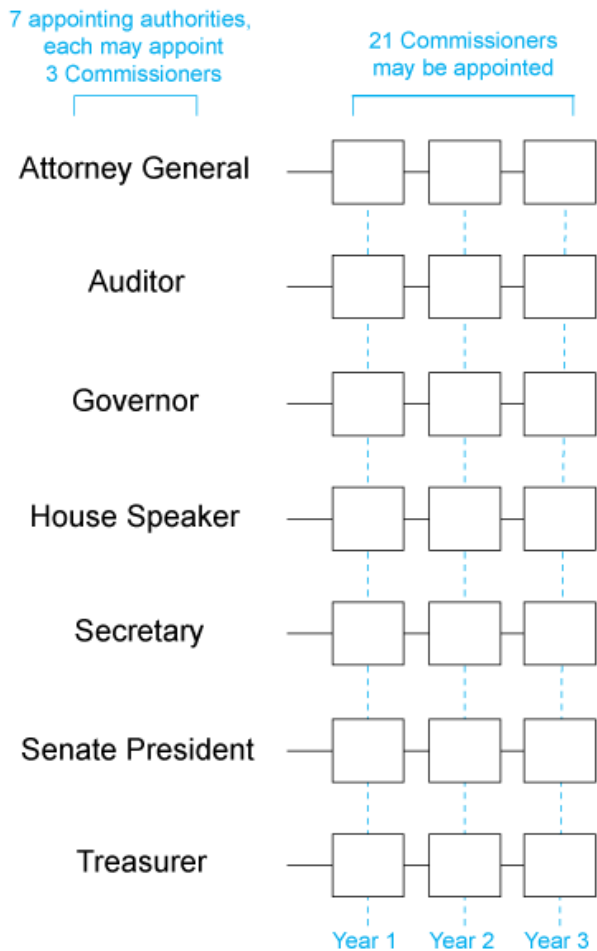
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bora Chiemruom".

Bora Chiemruom
Executive Director

Commission Memberships

First	Last	Career Field	Appointing Authority	Term Ends
Kenneth	An	Government	Senate President	2016
Joel	Buenaventura	Law	House Speaker	2014
Yan Jennifer	Cao	Health	Auditor	2014
Chun-Fai	Chan	Education	Auditor	2015
Chris	Chanyasulkit	Public Health	Governor	2016
Kajal	Chattopadhyay	Law	Governor	2015
Nick	Chau	Real Estate	Attorney General	2015
Elisa	Choi	Health	Treasurer	2015
Tony	Dang	Law Enforcement	Treasurer	2016
Kay	Dong	Business	Secretary of State	2014
Ken	Fong	Government	Governor	2014
Om	Ganda	Health	Senate President	2014
Gilbert	Ho	Community	Secretary of State	2016
WingKay	Leung	Community	Secretary of State	2015
Evelyn	Tang	Law	Attorney General	2014
Sophy	Theam	Banking	Treasurer	2014
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.

Population in Massachusetts

Asian American Subgroups	Population in 2000	Population in 2010	% Change 2000-2010	% of all 2010 Subgroups
Chinese	82,028	118,164	44.10%	33.8%
Indian	43,801	77,177	76.20%	22.1%
Vietnamese	33,962	42,915	26.40%	12.3%
Cambodian	19,696	25,387	28.90%	7.3%
Korean	17,369	24,110	38.80%	6.9%
Filipino	8,273	12,309	48.80%	3.5%
Japanese	10,539	9,224	-12.50%	2.6%
Pakistani	2,145	6,205	189.30%	1.8%
Taiwanese	2,364	4,502	90.40%	1.3%
Laotian	3,797	3,632	-4.30%	1.0%
Thai	2,141	3,529	64.80%	1.0%
Nepalese		2,580		0.7%
Bangladeshi	573	2,109	268.10%	0.6%
Sri Lankan	651	1,034	58.80%	0.3%
Hmong	1,127	992	-12.00%	0.3%
Burmese		923		0.3%
Indonesian	730	847	16.00%	0.2%
Bhutanese		425		0.1%
Malaysian	218	357	63.80%	0.1%
Other Asian, not specified	4,019	5,729	42.50%	1.6%
Other Asian, specified	614	275	-55.20%	0.1%
TOTAL ASIAN (one ethnicity)	234,047	342,425	46.30%	97.9%
TOTAL ASIAN IN MA	238,124	349,768	46.90%	100.0%

Source: 2010 Census & UMASS Boston Institute for Asian American Studies

Highest Population Densities of Asian Americans



The 2010 Census listed Massachusetts with a population of 6,547,629. People identified themselves as Asian was 349,768.

Asian American is a term that constitutes many subgroups. There are many commonalities across them as well as significant differences.

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

Young Leaders Symposium



On October 2, 2014, The Asian American Commission (AAC) in partnership with the University of Massachusetts Boston's Asian American Student Success Program hosted the 3rd Annual Young Leaders Symposium, which introduces young adults to leadership and service in the public sector and private sectors. The symposium featured speakers and workshops on topics such as running for office and representation in governments in all state and local governments, mentorship by professionals in both public and private sectors, and particularly encouraging participation of our current young leaders.

Over 100 students and young professionals participated in this half day event. Attendees listened to inspirational voices of current young Asian women leaders from the Asian American Women's Political Initiative and participated in Speed Mentoring Sessions with various community leaders, elected officials and organizations.

Asian Americans continue to be heavily underrepresented 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 alone. Through the symposium, the Commission seeks to identify and support the development of future Asian American leaders.

Treasurer Steven Grossman, Secretary Richard Davey of Massachusetts Department of Transportation, Commissioner Julian Tynes of Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination, Commissioner Geoffrey Why of Telecommunications and Cable, Mayor Lisa Wong of Fitchburg, and author Beverly Flaxington spoke on the subject of leadership. During the lunch session, over a dozen federal and state agencies took part in networking with the attendees to provide insights on internship and career opportunities.

At the end of the symposium, the AAC challenged the young leaders to do something significant for their community. A "Rising Star" award was presented to one individual who demonstrated outstanding achievement.

Health Care Forum



Closing remarks and event summary by Dr. Elisa Choi – Vice Chairperson, AAC, Chair of AAC Healthcare Subcommittee; and Event Moderator

“Breaking Barriers, Shattering Stigmas: Addressing AAPI Behavioral Health Issues and Disparities”

On November 1, 2014, the Asian American Commission (AAC) held its 2nd Annual Health Care Forum. In co-sponsorship with the Tufts Clinical and Translational Science Institute, the AAC presented a Health Care Forum dedicated to focusing on issues of behavioral health affecting the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities of the Commonwealth.

Behavioral health issues are relatively unrecognized, and largely stigmatized health disparities affecting the AAPI population. The Health Care Forum targeted clinicians, behavioral health practitioners, community health and social workers, and all community members.

The Health Care Forum featured presentations on PTSD and on self-esteem issues facing Southeast Asian Americans, on depression/suicidality and substance abuse, on problem gambling, and on cultural and linguistically competent behavioral health services. Speakers included: local and regional legislators; behavioral health experts, educators, and advocates; policy makers; and members of the AAPI communities in the state.

Workshops:

- "Human Resiliency - As Witnessed Among Southeast Asian Americans"
- "Depression, Substance Abuse, and Suicidality among AAPIs - Uncovering Disparities and Promoting Successful Strategies for Care and Prevention"
- "Lessons from Experience: Strategies for Surviving, Coping, and Thriving"
- "Hidden Addiction: Problem Gambling in the AAPI Community and Approaches to Culturally Sensitive Intervention"
- "Enhancing access to culturally and linguistically competent behavioral health services"

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. In 2014, over 1,000 tote bags were handed out with valuable MA State and Federal information regarding healthcare, telecommunications and cable, labor and equal opportunity employment.

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



In 2014, the Commission brought its Resource Fair to Boston, Lowell, Malden, & Quincy. Other targeted areas are Lynn, Springfield, and Worcester.

Financial Literacy



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.

With the great success in Lowell and because one of our Commissioners was actively involved in creating the pilot program, the Asian American Commission sought and received permission from the Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley, Inc. to replicate a similar workshop with Chinese residents in Boston. The workshop was co-sponsored by East-West Bank and was conducted in Chinese. Under the title, "Bank on the Right Knowledge", this financial literacy workshop was conducted in June 2014 covering the following topics:

- 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



華美銀行
EASTWEST BANK



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



The Asian American Commission continues to work with The White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI), which has established a task force to gather resources and information from around the nation. Our Commissioner Mr. Kenneth An is leading the Northeast Region efforts of the WHIAAPI.

On December 10, 2013, AAC put together an event where more than 50 Quincy youths gathered to network with members from the federal government. This was the first collaborative event between AAC and WHIAAPI. There are over a dozen state Commissions across the nation that provide services to and advocate on behalf of the AAPIs across the country. Under the direction of WHIAAPI, these state and local Commissions have begun working collaboratively with one another to work on regional and national initiatives.

Other initiatives and activities:



In February 2014, the Asian American Commission (AAC), among many other organizations, was in attendance at the AAJC/BCNC *Community of Contrasts* Report Launch and Panel, hosted at The Boston Foundation. The report findings reflect economic contributions, immigration, income, employment, education, health and housing statistics for AANHPI communities in the Northeast. Find out more

@<http://www.advancingjustice-aaic.org/.../A%20Community%20of%20...>

- In April 2014, Commissioner Kajal Chattopadhyay & Kenneth Fong spoke on a panel to address compulsive gambling problems in the Asian American communities.
- In June 2014, the AAC attended and supported the 2nd annual Hong Kong Day at the Massachusetts State House, which celebrated the close ties between Hong Kong and Massachusetts.
- In October and November 2014, the AAC was proud to support our community partner, the Boston Asian American Film Festival, for its final film screening of "To Be Takei", a film about AAPI actor and activist, George Takei ("Sulu" on Star Trek), and also for its screening of the documentary "Can" (about a Vietnamese immigrant's personal experiences with bipolar disorder).

In addition, many Commissioners had the honor and privilege to represent the AAC at many events for different Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders communities in 2014.

Unity Dinner



Keynote Speaker Professor Paul Watanabe



Ms. Helen Chin-Schlichte receiving an award from our Commissioners

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 16, 2014, the AAC was honored to feature keynote speaker Professor Paul Watanabe (Associate Professor of Political Science and Director of the Institute for Asian American Studies at the University of Massachusetts Boston) and performers (Lion Dance and Martial Arts demo; Triveni School of Dance, Neak Pean Khmer Traditional Music Ensemble, Nhu Thanh Dance Team) at the 2014 Unity Dinner. The event was attended by community partners, community organizations, state agencies, elected officials, and community members, who came to support the work that the Asian American Commission continues to do on behalf of the AAPI populations of the Commonwealth.

Leadership for Inclusion & Diversity Award

Individual: Dean Xiao-Li Meng, Harvard University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

Organization: Lowell Community Health Center

Lifetime Achievement Award

Individual: Ms. Helen Chin Schlichte, Founder and Past President of the South Cove Manor Nursing Home and Chair Emeritus of the Kwong Kow Chinese School

Community Hero Award

Individual: Mr. Kowith Kret, Bilingual Human Service Coordinator, Department of Developmental Services

Organization: Viet-AID

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