



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission



Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission

Annual Report | 2021

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission (AAPIC) is committed to advocating for the Asian American and Pacific Islander community throughout Massachusetts. To learn more, visit the AAPIC website at www.aapicommission.org.



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission
2021 Annual Report
Jan 2021 - Dec 2021

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Message from the Executive Director

Dear Friends & Supporters,

2021 marks the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission's (AAPIC) 15th year in the community and my first year with the AAPI Commission. This year we have faced extreme challenges dealing with our families falling sick and dying due to COVID and subjugated to anti-Asian hate crimes that rose by 339 percent in 2021 compared to 2020, as reported by the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism.

The AAPIC assisted our communities by translating critical health and vaccine information into Asian languages and targeting anti-Asian hate through our programs, outreach, and community building. Initiatives also centered around the Commission's policy endorsements in educational and data equity, language accessibility, inclusivity, and work and family mobility.

This year has been historic for the Commission as we introduced new programs and initiatives to address the needs and challenges facing many AAPIs and built allyship with other communities of color. These initiatives will continue to increase our geographic reach. We inaugurated our first Youth Council composed of 7 AAPI high school students across Massachusetts.

The Commission also welcomed two newly and highly qualified Commissioners dedicated to advancing AAPI issues across the Commonwealth. We worked with the House and Senate Representatives to further increase our budget appropriations to engage with AAPI communities.

We expanded our audiences on social media and built networks with the National Network of AAPI Serving Agencies, White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI), and the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (PACAANHPI). Furthermore, we held the Young Leadership Symposium and AAPI Women in Politics events, and many other signature events throughout the year to illuminate challenges facing the AAPI community and strengthen our relationships with AAPI serving community-based organizations.

In addition to the Commission's endorsed policy initiatives, mental health, LGBTQ+ visibility, and AAPI voter outreach in local municipalities were expanded. We also awarded \$15,250 in grants to AAPI organizations and small businesses.

In 2022, the AAPIC aims to develop programs in geographical remote regions such as Western Massachusetts and cultivate best practices to invest in building AAPI visibility throughout the Commonwealth. We will hold community listening sessions, strengthen partnerships, and focus efforts on collective impact to ensure voices in the community are

being heard. We also plan to expand our Youth Council and focus on developing connections with the elderly and immigrant adults.

As a Commission, the Commissioners, staff, and I will continue to pursue pathways to build solidarity and coalitions across various communities of color and work for racial and gender equity across the Commonwealth.

It has been a privilege to work alongside some of the most passionate, dedicated, and supportive Commissioners, community leaders, and elected officials. I would also like to thank our Commissioners who served on the AAPIC for several years, including Commissioners Bora Chiemruom and Vira Douangmany Cage, who have contributed immensely to the AAPIC's growth and success.

Thank you to the staff for their leadership in implementing various programs and events, especially Program Director Jay Wong, Communications and Marketing Manager Sheila Vo, Western MA Coordinator Kamalani Yuen, Research and Policy Intern Lily Tang, and Legislative Intern Sarah Lin for their hard work in the past year. I wish them the best in their following endeavors.

The AAPIC is incredibly grateful to the State Treasurer's office for housing the Commission over the years. In the past year, I believe we have made significant progress in moving the Commission forward to serve our community. I am committed to continuing the progress we've made and know that we will continue to build a better future for our community, state, and country with your support.

In service,
Yasmin Padamsee Forbes
(she/her)

About the Commission

The Massachusetts Asian American Commission formally rebranded its name to the [Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission \(AAPIC\)](#) to reflect our communities' diversity and celebrate the vibrant history and culture of Pacific Islanders across the Commonwealth. Governor Charlie Baker signed the name change into law on July 16, 2021, as part of the FY22 enacted state budget.

Established on October 29, 2006, the Massachusetts Asian American Commission (AAC) was a permanent statewide body dedicated to advocating for Asian Americans. With the name change, the Commission's goal is to recognize and highlight the vital contributions of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the social, cultural, economic, and political life of the Commonwealth; to identify and address the needs and challenges facing residents of Asian and Pacific Islander ancestry; and to promote the well-being of this dynamic and diverse community, thereby advancing the interests of all who call Massachusetts home.

Commissioner Membership ([Table](#))

Name	Appointing Authority	Term 1 (# Year)	Term 2 (# Year)	Terms Ends
Mary Chin	Governor	3	3	2022.08.31
Mary K. Y. Lee	Governor	3	2	2023.08.31
Pralhad KC	Governor	3	3	2021.08.31 (Holdover)
Meenakshi Bharath	Senate President	3	1	2024.12.31
Jonjy Ananth	Senate President	3	3	2022.12.31
Haniya Syeda	Senate President	3		2022.12.31
Richard T. Chu	Treasurer	1		2025.01.10

Ekta Saksena	Treasurer	2		2023.12.31
Danielle Kim	Treasurer	3		2022.12.31
Gary Chu	Secretary of State	1		2024.05.27
Samuel Hyun	House Speaker	3		2022.12.31
Betty King	House Speaker	3		2022.12.31
Dimple J. Rana	House Speaker	3	3	2021.12.31 (Holdover)
Nate Bae Kupel	Attorney General	3	1	2024.12.31
Megha Prasad	Attorney General	2		2023.12.31
Nina Liang	Attorney General	3	3	2022.12.31

Cinda Danh	Auditor	2		2023.12.31
Leo L. Hwang	Auditor	1		2025.01.28
Philjay Solar	Auditor	3		2022.12.31

Commissioner Membership ([Photos](#))

The 21 Commissioners of the AAPI Commission consist of citizens of the Commonwealth who have demonstrated commitment to the Asian American Pacific Islander community and have been appointed by the following authorities: The Treasurer, The Governor, The Speaker of the House of Representatives, The President of the Senate, The State Secretary, The Attorney General, and The State Auditor. Each authority may appoint three Commissioners.

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.

Meenakshi Bharath, 2022 Chair
 Nate Bae Kupel, 2022 Vice-Chair
 Ekta Saksena, 2022 Secretary
 Megha Prasad, 2022 Treasurer
 Jonjy Ananth
 Mary Chin
 Gary Y. Chu
 Richard T. Chu
 Cinda Danh
 Leo L. Hwang
 Samuel Hyun, 2021 Chair
 Pralhad KC
 Danielle Kim, 2021 Secretary
 Betty King
 Mary K. Y. Lee
 Nina Liang
 Dimple Rana
 Philjay Solar, 2021 Vice-Chair
 Haniya Syeda, 2021 Treasurer

Team of Staff ([Photos](#))

- Yasmin Padamsee Forbes, Executive Director
- Jessica Wong, Program Director
- Sheila Vo, Marketing & Communications Manager
- Bonnie Chen, Development & Communications Coordinator Intern
- Abdul Haseeb Hamza, Youth Coordinator Intern
- Ziyi 'Billy' Zeng, Policy Coordinator Intern

Financials / Budget

Calendar Year: January 1, 2021 - December 31, 2021

*Note: Government funding reflects FY2021 (July 1, 2020 - June 30, 2021)

*Expenses:

- Employees: \$130,404.17
- Employee expenses \$673.71
- Special Employees: \$9,408.00
- Insurance: \$3,315.88
- Operational services: \$4,638.50
- Community grants: \$15,250.00
- Educ Assistance: \$2,715.00
- **Total: \$166,405.26**

Revenue:

- Government FY 2020: \$170,000*
- Government FY 2021: \$250,400 (breakdown will be in Annual report 2022)

Reach

Programming: put on a total of 14 events/workshops

Granted funding: \$15,250 to 19 community organizations

Social Media Reach:

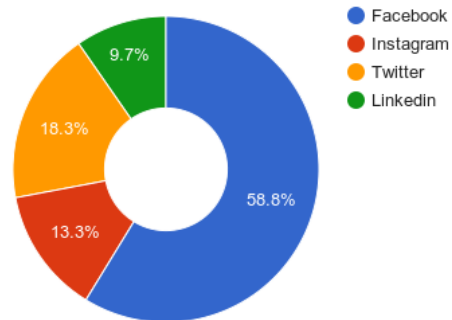
FB followers: 2115

IG followers: 1478

Twitter: 659

Linkedin: 348

Social Media Reach



Website:

Page visits: 34,144

Unique page visits: 28,917

Email Newsletter:

Average Opens: 378

Average Clicks: 34

FY2021 Initiatives

Policy Endorsements | [Webpage](#)

Legislation

As part of AAPIC's responsibilities under state statute, the AAPIC advised executive and legislative bodies on the potential effect of proposed legislation on the AAPI community. All bills endorsed by the AAPIC follow this process: (1) The AAPIC's Subcommittee on Government Relations, Civil Rights, and advocacy identifies, reviews, and recommends a bill; (2) The bill advances to the full AAPIC for deliberation and public comment; (3) The AAPIC takes a vote on whether or not to endorse the bill.

- An Act relative to the Commission on the Status of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders ([H.3116](#))
- An Act to reform the hate crime statutes ([H.1819 / S.1051](#))
- An Act to protect the civil rights and safety of all Massachusetts residents ([H.2418 / S.1579](#))
- An Act ensuring equitable representation in the Commonwealth ([H.3115](#))
- An Act relative to anti-racism, equity and justice in education ([H.584 / S.365](#))
- An Act relative to language access and inclusion ([H.3199 / S.2040](#))

- An Act relative to work and family mobility during and subsequent to the COVID-19 emergency ([H.3456 / S.2289](#))

Name Change Bill | [Website Blog Post](#) | [Press Release Link](#)

- An Act relative to the Commission on the Status of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders ([H.3116](#))

On November 23, 2021, the Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission (AAPIC) now better reflects all the communities we serve across the Commonwealth. Governor Charlie Baker signed the name change into law on July 16, 2021.

Native Hawaiian Kamalani Yuen said: "Even though the term AAPI is used commonly, it is vital to ensure that we as a Commission are intentional behind celebrating and supporting the diversity of what is encompassed behind the term AAPI. Representation matters, and there must be a seat at the table for Pasifika."

Voter Education for Local Elections | [Website Blog Post](#)

This project informed AAPI communities the duties of elected officials, how to register to vote, absentee voting, and where to vote. Information on local elections was translated into Chinese, Vietnamese, Khmer, and Hindi. Factsheets and graphics were made downloadable on our website. Translations were made by: Cross Cultural Communication Systems, Inc.

National Outreach

White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI)

AAPIC has been meeting with the WHIAANHPI and the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders to inform them about AAPIC programs and results. Read the full Executive Order [here](#) and a fact sheet on WHIAANHPI [here](#).

Asian American and Pacific Islander Liaison Agency Network

AAPIC is part of a network of AAPI commissions across the US that meet monthly to discuss opportunities, challenges and best practices.

Advocacy Initiatives

Formation of the Anti-Asian Racism Research & Response Advisory Committee

Commissioner Megha Prasad, Chair of the Anti-Asian Racism Research & Response Advisory Committee said, "The Anti-Asian Racism Research & Response Subcommittee was established in 2021 as a space to provide commissioners with space to discuss acts of anti-Asian hate that impact our communities throughout the Commonwealth. The Advisory Committee enabled us to assist the Programming

Director with programming surrounding bystander intervention training, mental health, and larger community spaces for conversation.”

AAPIC Small Grants for 2021

The Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission launched a small grants fund to support community efforts to fight for some of the most vulnerable communities and to provide support to organizations looking to continue relationships or begin new relationships dealing with Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) communities across the Commonwealth. These one-time grants ranging from \$300 to \$1,000 were awarded to the following organizations in 2021.

	Name	Funded
1.	Boston Chinese Family Support organization	\$500
2.	Chinese Friends of Needham, Inc.	\$500
3.	Greater Malden Asian American Community (GMAAC)	\$500
4.	RMD MA	\$500
5.	Springfield Vietnamese Cultural Community	\$500
6.	Boston Little Saigon	\$750
7.	Ekal USA	\$750
8.	India Society of Worcester	\$750
9.	NOVA Boston	\$750
10.	Sharon Chinese Association	\$750
11.	Chinese Americans of Lexington (CALex)	\$1000

12.	Chinese Americans of Massachusetts	\$1000
13.	Chinese Cultural Connection	\$1000
14.	Community Upliftment Program, Inc.	\$1000
15.	Federation for Children with Special Needs	\$1000
16.	Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center	\$1000
17.	India Association of Greater Boston (IAGB)	\$1000
18.	National Federation of Filipino American Associations Massachusetts Chapter	\$1000
19.	Urban Edge	\$1000
	Total	\$15,250

Boston Chinese Family Support organization (BCSFO) | [Photos](#)

BCFSO continued to collaborate with Project Able Advocates Inc. to run Social and Life Skills Project remotely for the young and the old, their siblings, and the children with or without disabilities. BCFSO ran the IXL program remotely during the school year of 2020-2021 and collaborated with HYanArt Studio to help homebound children to use drawings to express their feelings and thoughts.

Chinese Americans of Massachusetts | [Photos](#)

CAMA hosts events for the community to advance understanding of Asian culture and identity. They hold events related to youth performing arts such as dance, modern and classical, musical such as instrumental and voice, and poetry, both in Chinese and English. CAMA has hosted and organized webinars showcasing the artistic achievements of the children and youth in our communities.

Chinese Americans of Lexington (CALex) | [Photos](#)

CALex sponsored LexYouth, a youth platform to provide free tutoring and other volunteer work. The events that CALex organized include 1) having a potluck with the Lexington Historical Society in July last year and 2) hosting a celebration event for LexYouth volunteers who won the President's Volunteer Service Award.

Chinese Culture Connection (CCC) | [Photos](#)

Recognizing the longing for social activity, CCC held an event: “Exploring Malden River”, an outdoor event that could engage entire families of all ages. The event was a collaboration with Friends of Malden River to learn about climate change and the Malden River development, while having a great outdoor experience with Tai Chi practice, games and contests, and stories of race and diversity.

Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center | [Photos](#)

Greater Boston Chinese Golden Age Center through their virtual senior center had delivered over 60 tech workshops and provided 40 one-on-one support sessions both virtually and in-person. Over 130 elderly participants have benefitted.

RMD MA | [Photos](#)

From June to August, RMD MA hosted the Eisa Pageant, aimed at providing an opportunity for the worldwide community to connect and about 4,000 people participate in this event each year.

Sharon Chinese Association | [Photos](#)

On the weekend of September 12th, 2021, Friends and Families from Sharon Chinese Communities gathered in the Francis William Bird Park. On November 12th, 2021, together with IAAS, Sharon Public Schools and Sharon Chinese Association hosted The 4th Sharon Chinese-Indian Culture Day. On February 6th, 2022, Sharon Chinese Association sponsored the Chinese New Year Celebration 2022.

Springfield Vietnamese Cultural Association (SVCA) | [Photos](#)

During the year 2021, SVCA supported the community during Covid-19 pandemic, by providing masks, clothes, hand sanitizers, helping with unemployment, heating assistance, health insurance assistance, safety training, meeting every weekend to discuss, and training including health support. SVCA worked closely with local authorities such as the Mayor’s office, health department, local FBI, SPD to help the community to deal with Asian hate.

Urban Edge

Urban Edge is dedicated to providing programs and classes that are focused on building affordable housing and vibrant, prosperous neighborhoods. Urban Edge’s online homebuyer education courses provide participants with a thorough understanding of the home purchasing process, including an introduction to the mortgage process, understanding credit standards, conventional lending criteria and preparing for the loan closing.

COVID-19 Vaccine Campaigns

AAPIC also implemented a strategic communication plan to increase awareness about the vaccine and encourage individuals to be vaccinated. The following projects were

created under the leadership of the Health & Human Services Subcommittee with Chair, Commissioner Haniya Syeda and member Commissioner Ekta Saksena.

“Did You Know” Translation Project | [Webpage](#)

Individuals with limited English proficiency do not have meaningful access to COVID services (e.g., testing, vaccines, treatment, contact tracing) during this ongoing public health emergency. For many immigrants, language access is a major barrier to the COVID-19 Vaccination. These translations address the protection of vaccination records, immigration status, undocumented immigrants, not needing insurance, an ID, or a social security to get the vaccine, common side effects, and more!

By debunking common myths of the vaccine in nine different Asian languages, we wanted to encourage individuals to get the vaccine if they have not done so already.

Fact sheets and graphics were translated into Simplified Chinese, Nepali, Khmer, Arabic, Tagalog, Hindi, Urdu, Gujarati, and Vietnamese, and are downloadable on our website.

COVID-19 Testimonial Project

This was a campaign to promote vaccine uptake and address vaccine hesitancy in the AAPI community. Testimonials were taken from Commissioners and Staff.

Commissioner Ekta Saksena, member of the Health & Human Services Subcommittee said, “The COVID-19 pandemic was a dark time for many families. When the vaccine was developed, it felt like there was a light at the end of the tunnel. While many people were relieved at the thought of a vaccine, many had questions and concerns about its safety and efficacy. We saw an opportunity to respond to an immediate need. Access, whether it is language access or access to COVID-19 testing or treatment, continues to be a barrier for many in the AAPI community. By developing these campaigns, we hoped to give individuals the tools and information they needed to keep themselves, their loved ones, and their community safe and healthy.”

Featured Commissioners and Staff:

- [Haniya Syeda](#)
- [Vira Douangmany Cage](#)
- [Meena Bharath](#)
- [Philjay Solar](#)
- [Megha Prasad](#)
- [Nate Bae Kupel](#)
- [Dimple Rana](#)
- [Ekta Saksena](#)
- [Lily Tang](#)

MA Mutual Aid Network | [Webpage](#)

Developed a comprehensive list of Massachusetts mutual aid network websites, pages, and forms for the community for audiences to decide how to volunteer time and resources.

- Mass Mutual Aid Network
- Allston-Brighton Mutual Aid
- Boston COVID-Tutoring
- COVID-19 Resources for Students
- Dorchester Community Care Network
- Greater Lawrence Mutual Aid Network
- Malden Neighbors Helping Neighbors
- Mission Hill Mutual Aid
- Muslim American Society Mutual Aid
- Mutual Aid Brookline
- Mutual Aid East Boston
- Mutual Aid Lynn
- Mutual Aid Jamaica Plain & Roxbury
- Mutual Aid Worcester
- Quincy Neighbors Mutual Aid
- Roslindale Cares
- South Boston Neighborhood Aid Network
- South End Coronavirus Support
- Southcoast Mutual Aid: Fall River / New Bedford
- South Shore Mutual Aid
- Western Massachusetts Community Mutual Aid

Community Organization of the Month

AAPIC featured community organizations each month to highlight their contributions, initiatives, and upcoming events to uplift our partner organizations. Organizations that were featured:

- [Chinese Association of Western Massachusetts](#)
- [Commonwealth Seminar](#)
- [Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence](#)
- [Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association](#)
- [Greater Malden Asian American Community Coalition](#)
- [Massachusetts Asian Pacific for Health](#)
- [Asian & Asian American Studies Certificate Program](#)
- [Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center](#)
- [Asian Community Development Center](#)
- [Saheli](#)
- [Asian American Women's Political Initiative](#)

2021 Scholarship Winners

Seven students have been presented scholarships of \$1000 and \$500 for Young Leaders, COVID-19 Relief, and Community Activism. The following recipients exemplified outstanding qualifications, commitment to the community, and vision to advance the Asian American and Pacific Islanders in the Commonwealth of MA. A total of \$4500 was awarded.

Young Leaders Scholarship:

- Cassandra Kuechler
- Shubhecchha Dhaurali

COVID-19 Relief Scholarship:

- Grace Lee
- Josephine Kuo

Community Activism Scholarship:

- Jessica Chen
- Ka Man Hau
- Kimi Nguyen

AAPI Women in Politics Reports | [Website Blog Post](#)

Both reports compile key statistics/quotes that illustrate the current state of AAPI women's political representation across the Commonwealth and the United States. Research was conducted by Legislative Intern Sarah Lin, booklet design by Marketing & Communications Manager, Sheila Vo.

- National Report:
https://aapicommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AAPIWomeninPolitics_National.pdf
- Massachusetts Report:
https://aapicommission.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/AAPIWomeninPolitics_Massachusetts.pdf

Programs & Events

Youth Council | [Youth Council Instagram](#)

This program was envisioned by Education Committee Chair, Meena Bharath, with support from various commissioners and staff, including Sam Hyun, Lily Tang, Haniya Syeda, Betty King, Pralhad KC, amidst others. based on the concerns heard from AAPI students related to racism and lack of concrete actions in their school districts. The intent is to elevate young people's voices, and promote leadership values among AAPI youth across Massachusetts. As part of the program, we selected a diverse group of 7 AAPI high school students interested in influencing social change and policy. These young people have been given training and mentorship, networking and opportunities to exercise their voice. We received 35 applicants for only seven spots and look to expand this program in future years. Our Council Members include:

- Akshay Dhavala (he/him) - Ashland, Indian, 11th Grade

- Sea Kay Leung (she/her) - Belchertown, Chinese, 11th Grade
- Lillyanna Yim (she/her) - Lowell, Cambodian, 11th Grade
- Deekshita Madhalam (she/her) - Quincy, Indian, 11th Grade
- Lila Yoon (she/they) - Brookline, Chinese/Korean, 11th Grade
- Maria-Isabela Campos (she/her) - Salem, Filipino, 12th Grade
- Samaga Pokharel (she/her) - Everett, Nepali, 12th Grade

Our Youth Coordinator, Abdul Haseeb Hamza said, “The Youth Council here at the AAPIC has greatly inspired and excited me since I started working with them. Seeing their leadership, charisma, and passion in action has allowed me to learn and grow with them. Whether it was their orientation, an event with other AAPI organizations, or their meeting with the AAPI caucus members, the Youth Council members have found unique and meaningful ways to uplift AAPI voices for the youth and everyone else in our community. This work has shown itself to be loud and infectious as many of us at the Commission as well as leaders in general have paid attention to our Youth Council and have been delighted to work with them. The meeting with Rep. Chan and Rep. Howard was a great example of this as our Youth Council members came prepared with a list of questions and requests for these leaders which inspired thoughtful discussion. Additionally, the YC Instagram page (@aapicommission_yc) also uplifts their voices by highlighting important cultural holidays and other affairs. I hope we at the Commission can continue to advocate for the youth in our community through this program as well as by providing other opportunities.”

Below is a list of some of the events attended by AAPIC Youth Council members:

- Youth Council Orientation featuring Representative Vanna Howard as the keynote speaker
- [Ethnic studies panel led by the Coalition for Anti-Racism & Equity in Education \(CARE\)](#)
- AAPIC Black History Month Event with Dr. Gloria Ayee
- Bridging Cultural Gaps: Solidarity and Allyship for API and Black Communities led by Leadership for Asian Pacifics (LEAP)
- Asian American History is American History led by North Carolina Asian Americans Together (NCAAT)
- MA Statehouse visit and meeting to connect the Youth Council with AAPI caucus members Rep. Tackey Chan and Rep. Vanna Howard

Young Leadership Symposium | [Webpage](#)

The 10th Annual Youth Leadership Symposium went virtual for the second year due to COVID-19. This year's theme was "Amplifying AAPI Voices through Education, Identity Building and Advocacy." We were joined by educators, community activists, and advocates from around the state that will share their experiences and expertise.

- Keynote speaker, Dr. Phitsamay Uy, Ed.D.
- Followed by a panel called “Amplifying Diverse AAPI Voices in the Movement for Ethnic Studies” featuring Sue J. Kim, Ph.D., Mai Du, Billy Zeng and moderated by Commissioner Meena Bharath.

- Concluded with a workshop called “Being Grounded in Your Powers as a Youth Leader” led by Gabriel Cenizal.

AAPI Women in Politics Events

- **Asian American Women in Advocacy:** Through this panel discussion, we hoped to amplify the Asian American women’s voices in Massachusetts, highlight their achievements and impact and have them share about their community engagement and public service journey. [WATCH HERE](#)
- **AAPI Commissioners & Public Service Pathways:** This seminar was geared towards young people interested in public service but was also open to anyone interested. Several Commissioners shared their varied experiences as women in public service. Attendees had the opportunity to learn about public service pathways such as community organizing, serving as an elected official, working in government, and more. They were also able to engage with Commissioners and pick up key skills in interactive breakout sessions. The seminar featured Commissioners: Bora Chiemruom, Haniya Syeda, Meenakshi Bharath, Danielle Kim and was moderated by Helena Berbano. [WATCH HERE](#)
- **Asian American Trailblazers in Local Politics:** In this talk, panelists offered reflections on the unique challenges and opportunities associated with being Asian American women "firsts," as well as discuss the future of AAPI women's political representation and the importance of local politics in effecting change. The panel featured: Mehreen Butt, Vira Douangmany Cage, Vivian Nguyen, Lisa Wong, and Terry Kwan. [WATCH HERE](#)

1-Day Session with Commonwealth Seminar (3 Sessions)

1-Day Session with the Commonwealth Seminar was an intensive training session focused on teaching Asian American leaders how the legislative process really works. By giving an insiders' view of the process, our goal is to encourage diverse leaders to become effective advocates and to pursue careers in public service.

- Session 1: The Legislative Process & Advocacy Best Practices
 - [Recording of The Legislative Process w/ Subtitles/CC in English, Mandarin, Hindi, Korean, Khmer, and Vietnamese](#)
 - [Recording of Advocacy Best Practices w/ Subtitles/CC in English, Mandarin, Hindi, Korean, Khmer, and Vietnamese](#)
- Session 2: Press and Media & Fundraising for Nonprofit Organizations
- Session 3: The Budget Process & Applying the Foundations of Advocacy

Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month

- **Indigenous Cultures in the AAPI Community: Igorot Youth in New England**
This panel featured a discussion about the experiences of Shannon Macalingay, Shadra Tiden, and Shania Ambros, three Igorot youth living in

New England, about how they navigate their identities as Indigenous peoples of the Philippines. [WATCH HERE](#)

- **Stories in Diaspora: Centering the Biracial Asian American Women**
This panel featured a discussion about the multifaceted experiences and identities of biracial Asian American women. [WATCH HERE](#)

Pride Month

- **AAPI LGBTQ Activist Panel:** In celebration of Pride Month, we collaborated with the MA Commission on LGBTQ+ Youth for a discussion with our panelists about the multifaceted experiences and identities of queer AAPIs. The objective of this panel was to create a safe space for education and conversation. [WATCH HERE](#)
- **AAPI LGBTQ+ Film Festival:** We celebrated queer API creatives through a virtual short film festival. We showed PFLAG's A Place to Call Home. This short film was followed by a Q&A with Director Stephanie Tran. A Place to Call Home features four PFLAG mothers of AAPI descent, sharing their journeys with their LGBTQ children. We also showed AFTEREARTH, a short film is about four queer and trans Asian diasporic, indigenous, and Pacific Islander femmes who imagine a decolonized and sustainable earth for future generations. This was followed by a Q&A with Producer Kit Yan.

A Virtual Town Hall w/ State Senator Gomez

This forum offered an opportunity for AAPI Western MA residents to meet, speak, and ask questions with Senator Gomez. [WATCH HERE](#)

The Overcome Agenda: The Starting Point of a Healthier Mindset

Between a global pandemic and a national conversation on racism, our community struggled to find healthy means of coping with moment-to-moment stresses brought up by constant change and even emotional and physical threat. Dr. Marga Zarraga led a training to assist people to develop a healthier mindset. [WATCH HERE](#)

‘Imi No Kona Pono’ī: Kānaka Maoli College Experiences on the East Coast

In this panel a few Kānaka Maoli (Native Hawaiians) shared their lived experiences and challenges of identifying as Native Hawaiian choosing and attending college on the East Coast. ‘Imi No Kona Pono’ī translates to Finding Their Own in ‘Ōlelo Hawai’i (the Native Hawaiian Language). [WATCH HERE](#)

FY2022 Expectations

During FY2022, the Asian American Pacific Islander Commission will continue its successful and well-received events from the previous year, including the Young Leaders Symposium and Youth Council, AAPI Leaders in Politics & Advocacy, building allyship with other communities of color, and cultural celebrations.

The AAPIC will continue to address the traumas and struggles that the COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated within the Asian American and Pacific Islander community by working with different communities across the Commonwealth to promote a sense of unity and solidarity, and build connections across various ethnic groups and communities. Particularly, the AAPIC is interested in expanding opportunities for the high school students through our Youth Council by providing opportunities to meet legislators, officials, and leaders in the community. The AAPIC will also develop programs for our senior citizens who have faced tremendous challenges during the last few years. As a Commission, we will continue to build back better and forge innovative programs for the AAPI population in Western Massachusetts.

The AAPIC looks forward to representing the interests of and advocating on behalf of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders throughout the Commonwealth! Commissioners and Staff are looking forward to expanding the Commission's connections with various communities across Massachusetts and focusing on empowering as well as uplifting local initiatives spearheaded by AAPI organizations.

Special thank you to our supporters & partners

Organizations

- Asian Caucus
- APIs CAN
- Asian & Asian American Studies Certificate Program
- Asian American Civic Association
- Asian American Women's Political Initiative
- Asian Women for Health
- Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence
- Association of Independent Colleges & Universities in Massachusetts
- Angkor Dance Troupe
- Bayanihan Association of America
- Bhutanese Society of Western Massachusetts
- Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center
- Boston Road Runners
- Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association
- Chinese Association of Western Massachusetts
- Commonwealth Seminar
- Cross Cultural Communication Systems, Inc.
- DotHouse Health
- Enterprise Bank
- Fil-lennials of New England
- Greater Malden Asian American Community Coalition
- House Ways & Means
- Indra Dance Group

- Madlove LLC
- Massachusetts Asian & Pacific Islanders for Health
- Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth
- Middlesex Community College
- New England College of Optometry
- Saheli
- Springfield Vietnamese Cultural Association
- State Treasury
- The Chinatown Project
- The Royal Thai Consulate of Boston
- UMass Amherst
 - UMass History Department
 - UMass Asian/Asian American Studies Program
 - Five College Asian/Pacific/American Studies Program
 - UMass Commonwealth College
 - UMass Civic Engagement and Service Learning Program
 - UMass Office of Equity and Inclusion
 - UMass Fine Arts Center Asian and Culture Program
- UMass Dartmouth
 - Asian Pacific Student Association
 - Chinese Student Scholar Association
- UMass Lowell
 - Center for Asian American Studies
- Women Who Win
- Yuri Kochiyama Cultural Center

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- Bora Chiemruom
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- Sheila Vo
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- Sarah Lin

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Translators for **“Did You Know”**:

- Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association
- Chinese Association of Western MA
- Springfield Vietnamese Cultural Association
- Bayanihan Association of America
- Bhutanese Society of Western Massachusetts
- Dr. Syed Irfan Makhdoom Nayyar, Syeddah Ghazal, Syed Armughan
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Annual Report 2021



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Asian American and Pacific Islanders Commission (AAPIC) is committed to advocating for the Asian American and Pacific Islander community throughout Massachusetts. To learn more, visit the AAPIC website at www.aapicommission.org.