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Annual Report

THE CALIFORNIA COMMISSION ON
ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER
AMERICAN AFFAIRS



Commission on
Asian & Pacific Islander
American Affairs

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A message from our Commission Chair

Dear partners in community and public policy,

As we reflect on our work in 2021, it reminds us of the larger dynamics confronting our state and nation, and our Asian American and Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities in particular: Of untold tribulations from the triple pandemic of COVID-19, racism, and mental health concerns—and also of triumph — of our communities coming together and mobilizing into action, and entering into meaningful dialogue and coalition with other communities of color, forging a path towards justice.



Our Commission started the year with two urgent public hearings to learn about the health, education, and socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 on AANHPI communities, as well as the uptick in anti-Asian hate and violence. We heard from advocates, organizers, and service providers throughout the state.

We witnessed the rise in anti-Asian violence throughout California, and in March, the spa shootings of Asian women in Atlanta rocked the nation. Our hearts broke, and it nearly broke us. I can personally attest to the difficulty in being able to think straight, or to hold back tears during various Zoom meetings with community members as well as allies and supporters.

Even as we were mourning, we realized that it was time to spring into action. As leaders in a state we all hold so dear, we felt the importance of taking steps to ensure that everyone—including every single Asian and Pacific Islander person in the state—felt safe, validated, welcome, and valued.

I had the good fortune of having built strong rapport with Dr. Richard Pan, State Senator and Chair of the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (APILC), and our respective teams had met early in 2021 to discuss ways that we could more fruitfully collaborate. Within days of the Atlanta killings, I called Dr. Pan to discuss the various calls for action and drafted policy ideas that were circulating among legislators and community advocates alike. I asked him if we could take coordinated and strategic action, to maximize our chances for success.

Dr. Pan instantly agreed, and we soon met and built policy momentum among leaders of the APILC, Stop AAPI Hate, and almost 200 community-based organizations. The ideas we discussed, strengthened, and refined in a matter of weeks were transformative and powerful. And we were able to translate our collective ideas, relationships, and intentionality into strong and meaningful action.

Together, we helped pass a historic API Equity Budget that received the Governor's support, with \$166.5 million in investments over three years that would meaningfully

- Increase services for survivors of hate incidents and hate crimes,
- Increase resources for ethnic media to reach non-English speaking Californians,
- Increase reporting of hate incidents and hate crimes,
- Address AANHPI data equity,
- Advance equity for AANHPIs in higher education, and
- Address mental health concerns caused by incidents of hate and discrimination.

We have spent much of the remainder of the year ensuring that these various investments come to fruition. Our Commission has been entrusted with the important responsibility of helping various state agencies with implementing programs in a manner that ensures maximal impact, and we are grateful for the careful and timely attention that staff in key state agencies have provided to us and our communities. We are also fortunate to have the talent of Commissioner Serena Kirk, who joined us this year as an appointee of the Assembly Speaker.

Amidst all the achievements and advancements, however, we also encountered tragedy. Commissioner Cathering 'Ofa Mann, a Pacific Islander leader who served on our Commission for well over a decade, passed away suddenly in May. We sent condolences to her family and paid tribute to her various contributions in a public meeting.

And tragedies continue to befall our communities, with racism and xenophobia still rampant. However, even as we end the year with the resurgence of COVID and a new variant, I am reminded of all of the good that we accomplished this year, working in partnership with key partners and allies. I am so grateful that we were able to take rapid, coordinated action to correct the historical injustices of invisibility and underinvestment in our communities.

There is still so much work to do, but this year we all took a giant step forward in the march towards justice.

Thank you, as always, for your unwavering support, and we look forward to continuing our important work together in the year ahead.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karthick Ramakrishnan', with a stylized, flowing script.

Karthick Ramakrishnan
Commission Chair

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About Us

MISSION:

The California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs (CAPIAA) elevates the political, economic, and social issues of Asians Americans Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders by contributing to and strengthening how state government addresses the needs, issues, and concerns of the diverse and complex Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) communities.

WHAT WE DO:



Advise the Governor and Legislature on how to respond most effectively to views, needs, and concerns of the state's Asian and Pacific Islander Americans (APIA) communities.



Assist the state in being an effective liaison and conducting outreach with APIA communities through information dissemination about APIA communities concerning public and private programs beneficial to their interests.



Examine issues of access and cultural language sensitivity by state agencies, departments, and commissions.



Provide assistance to policymakers and state agencies in identifying APIA communities' needs and issues and develop appropriate responses and programs.



Educate the public about hate crimes against APIA communities.

AANHPI Community Engagement

PUBLIC HEARINGS

February 25, 2021: COVID-19 Health Impacts on AANHPI Communities & Anti-Asian Hate



COVID-19 HEALTH IMPACTS ON AANHPI COMMUNITIES:

AANHPI health advocates discussed the COVID-19 health impacts on AANHPI communities. The life or death concerns included the following –

- Increased in COVID-19 cases in and outside of state prisons;
- Increased in death rates among AANHPI, especially in NHPI communities;
- Increased in mental health concerns for all ages;
- Lacked disaggregated AANHPI local and state COVID-19 data in order to know and target resources to hardest hit AANHPI communities; and
- Increased in community-based organizations (CBO) stepping in to address the immediate needs and concerns of the AANHPI communities.

CBOs partnered with county public health offices to provide on-going COVID-19 testing sites, culturally and linguistically appropriate outreach and education to AANHPI community members, creating local, statewide, and even national task forces among themselves to triage and provide appropriate rapid response care for all AANHPI communities.

SPEAKERS:

JoAnn Fields, API Initiative (San Diego), Hakteka Rich Han, Men with Meaning Messages (Long Beach), Vattana Peong, The Cambodian Family (Orange County), Thu Quach, Asian Health Services (Oakland), Bobby Roy, Site Coordinator with Tetteh Pediatrics (Sacramento), Nathaniel Tan, Asian Prisoner Support Committee (Oakland), Taunu'u Ve'e, Norcal Regional Pacific Islander Taskforce (Greater Bay Area), Pao Yang, The Fresno Center (Fresno), Kawen Young, SoCal Pacific Islander COVID Response Team (Greater Los Angeles)

FEBRUARY 25, 2021 PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED

ANTI-ASIAN HATE:

Stop AAPI Hate Coalition reported “where there are more Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders there are more incidents.” Fifty-six percent (56%) of victims and survivors of hate incidents who have reported to Stop AAPI Hate are from California and New York. Vulnerable community members, including women and elders, are more likely to be impacted. Stop AAPI Hate data shows an increase of 155% in depression among AAPIs who reported.



SPEAKERS:

Cynthia Choi, Co-Executive Director of Chinese for Affirmative Action (San Francisco) and Manju Kalkarna, Executive Director of A3PCON (Los Angeles)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Collect and report disaggregated AANHPI health data;
- Increase resources and services in housing and mental health;
- Increase resources and funding for CBOs to conduct culturally relevant and in-language outreach and education on COVID-19 awareness, access to governmental assistance and direct services;
- Stop Immigration Customs Enforcement (ICE) transfers from state prisons to ICE detention centers to prevent spread of COVID-19; and
- Fund CBOs to provide direct services, prevention and intervention programs to increase awareness and address hate incidents and hate crimes.

AANHPI Community Engagement

PUBLIC HEARINGS

March 30, 2021: COVID-19 Economic & Education Impact

COVID-19 ECONOMIC IMPACT ON AANHPI COMMUNITIES:

Community advocates, leaders and organizations saw major concerns and gaps in resources available to address the economic impact of COVID-19 on AANHPI families in California. These concerns included –

- Misinformation or lack of information regarding COVID-19 and the impact on various AANHPI ethnic communities;
- High rate of limited English proficient (LEP) community members;
- Increased in mental health concerns including worrying about family financial health, fear of anti-Asian hate;
- Increased of anti-Asian hate incidents in small businesses, work place, and neighborhoods; and
- Lack of in-language resources and services available for LEP Asian small-business owners to access appropriate assistance for economic recovery.

AANHPI CBOs quickly responded to meet the needs of local communities including providing the following –

- In-language support for community members to apply for unemployment services, small-business loans, accessing and distributing personal protective equipment (PPE), and other public assistance;
- Supported families to find housing and food security;
- Safety planning – addressing domestic violence cases to ensuring small-businesses had safety measures in place as they prepared to re-open;
- Trained youth and young adults to advocate for services, resources, and provided additional information for family members who did not speak English well.

SPEAKERS:

Lisa Fu, California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative (statewide), Philip Nguyen, Vietnamese American Roundtable (San Jose), Naindeep Singh, Jakara Movement (statewide), Ellen Soakai, California Department of Industrial Relations, (statewide)

MARCH 30, 2021 PUBLIC HEARING CONTINUED

COVID-19 EDUCATION IMPACTS ON AANHPI STUDENTS AND FAMILIES:

AANHPI students and educators testified on the varying and increasing educational concerns of AANHPI student due to COVID-19. Education attainment concerns included the following -

- Increased distance and disconnect of students to the (virtual) classroom;
- Students, from low-income families and/or live in multi-generational households, are unable to focus during distance learning due to
 - Digital divide (lack of access to hardware, inadequate internet connection)
 - Lack of conducive learning environment at home
 - Balance supporting with family responsibilities and school (i.e. helping parents with babysitting, household chores, working to help with family bills, etc.);
- Loss of motivation;
- Increased fear from spike in anti-Asian hate incidents and crimes;
- Increased depression and mental health concerns; and
- Decrease in community college student enrollment.

SPEAKERS:

Dr. Timothy P. Fong, California State University of Sacramento (Sacramento), Davina Mey, AYPAL: Building API Community Power (Oakland), Leila Tamale, Student at the College of San Mateo (San Mateo), Dr. Rowena Tomaneng, San Jose City College and San Jose Evergreen Community College District (Santa Clara County)

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS:

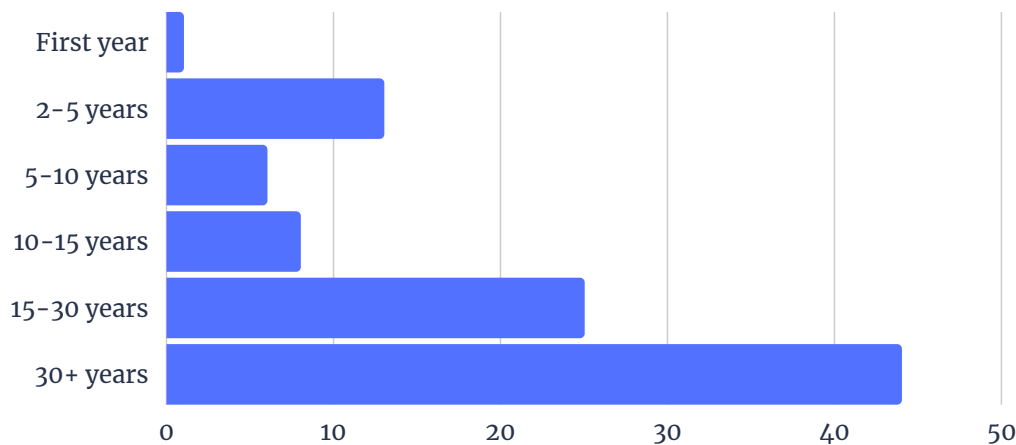
- Collect and report disaggregated AANHPI economic data;
- Collect and report disaggregated AANHPI education data from pre-K through attainment of Bachelor's Degree;
- Increase resources and services in housing and mental health;
- Increase resources, services and programs for AANHPI youth and young adults; and
- Invest in higher education programs to serve low-income / first-generation AANHPI students (i.e. state-funded AANAPISI funding).

AANHPI Community Engagement

AAPI ORGANIZATION SURVEY

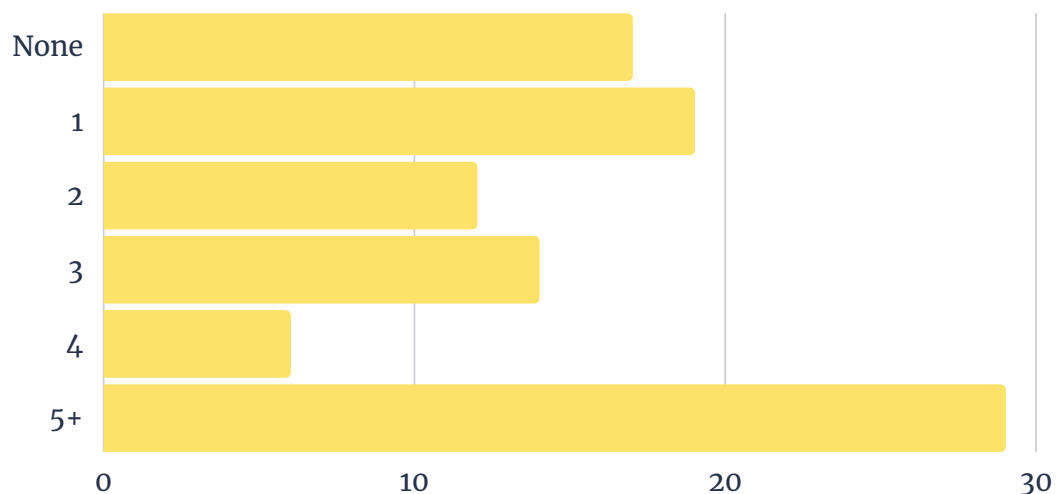
In collaboration with AAPI Data, the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs conducted an inclusive assessment of AANHPI CBOs concerns and needs in California. Approximately 100 AANHPI CBOs participated in the survey.

ORGANIZATION'S YEARS OF EXISTENCE



Approximately 70% of AANHPI organizations in California have existed for 15 years or more and 30% of AANHPI organizations have been in existence between 1-15 years.

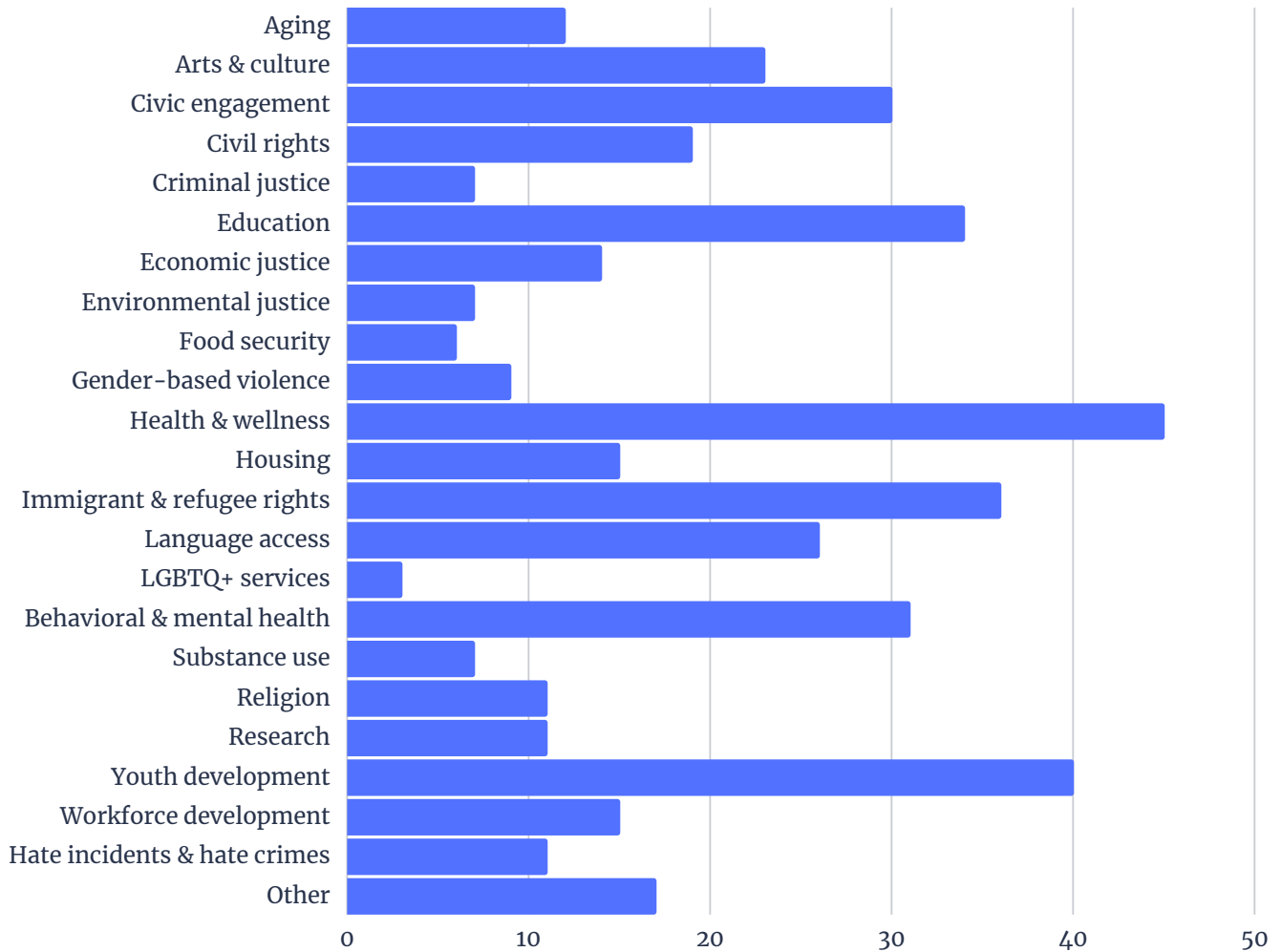
NUMBER OF ASIAN / PACIFIC ISLANDER LANGUAGES ORGANIZATION PROVIDE SERVICES IN



Approximately 82% of the respondents provide services in one (1) or more AA or NHPI languages.

AAPI ORGANIZATION SURVEY CONTINUED

ORGANIZATION'S PRIMARY AREA OF FOCUS / PRIORITY ISSUE



AANHPI organization respondents range in area of focus / priority issue with the highest concentration in health and wellness, youth development, immigrant and refugee rights, education, and behavior and mental health.



Lack of cultural competency of AA&PI communities

Barriers to achieving organization's mission

Lack of funder knowledge of AA&PI communities



Lack disaggregated AA&PI data



Lack of mentorship



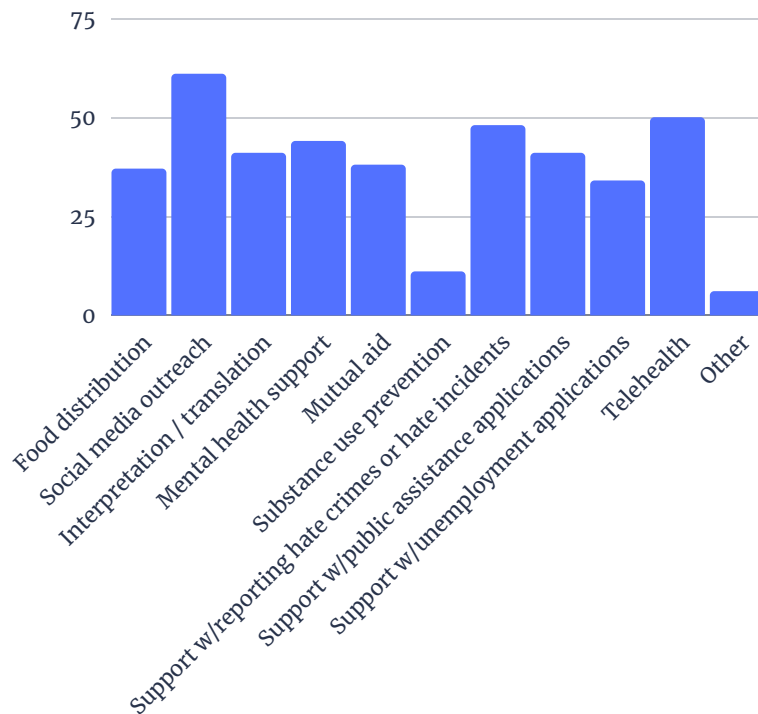
Lack of prioritizing AA&PI community needs and concerns



AAPI ORGANIZATION SURVEY CONTINUED

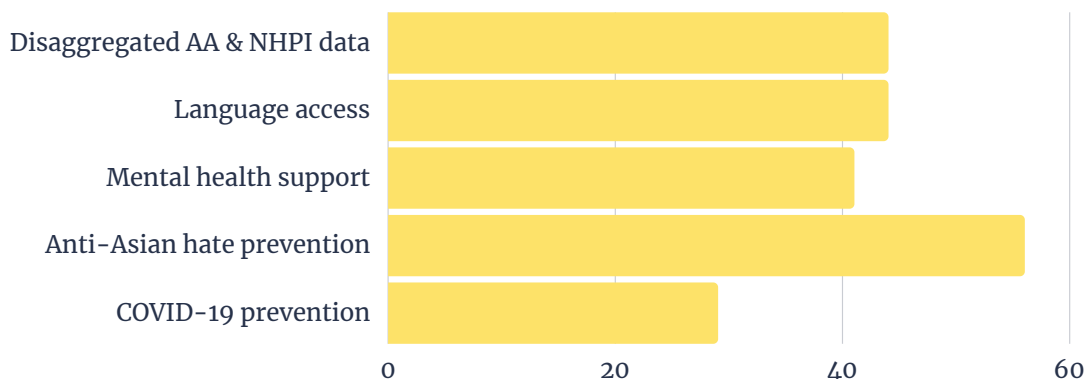
INCREASE IN SERVICES PROVIDED BY ORGANIZATION DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

AANHPI organizations reported an increase in services they have had to provide to community members due to the COVID-19 pandemic, including food distribution, social media outreach, interpretation and translation, mental health support, mutual aid, substance use prevention, reporting hate crimes and hate incidents, support with public assistance and



unemployment applications, telehealth and others. Approximately 60% of respondents indicated increase in utilizing social media to outreach to their base, approximately 50% of respondents moved to telehealth to serve patients, 48% of respondents supported community members with reporting hate crimes / hate incidents, and 44% of AANHPI organizations provided some form of mental health support to their constituents.

ORGANIZATION IDENTIFY HIGHEST PRIORITY FOR STATE & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO PROVIDE AANHPI COMMUNITIES



56% of respondents identified anti-Asian hate prevention has the highest priority for state and local government to address issues faced by AANHPI communities, followed by disaggregated AANHPI data, language access, mental health support and COVID-19 prevention.

AANHPI Community Engagement

STATEWIDE PANELS

ADVANCING ACCESS & EQUITY FOR ASIAN AMERICANS IN CALIFORNIA



Julia Liou
Asian Health Services
Oakland



Duc Ta
API RISE
Los Angeles / Orange
County



Matthew Vang
Hmong Innovating
Politics
Sacramento / Fresno

A CALIFORNIA AAPI CENSUS BRIEFING



Tavae Samuelu
EPIC
Statewide



Timmy Lu
AAPI FORCE
Statewide



Mandy Diec
SEARAC
Statewide



Karthick
Ramakrishnan
AAPI Data
National

Policy Advocacy

BILL PRIORITIES

ADVANCING HEALTH ACCESS

[Health Profession Career Opportunity - AB 1306](#), authored by Assemblymember Joaquin Arambula, would update existing Health Professions Careers Opportunity Program code to address the shortage of healthcare professionals in California and provide recommendations to address barriers for underrepresented, low-income students.

[Health Data Equity - AB 1358](#), authored Assemblymember Bonta (Maratshuchi), would require key state agencies to collect and release standardized and disaggregated data, add additional ethnic groups to the data collection, and require language and race (disaggregated) in the state's Health Equity Metric of the CA Healthy Places Index (HPI) to ensure the targeted allocation of resources needed for vulnerable communities of color.

[Office of Racial Equity - SB 17](#), authored by Dr. Richard Pan, would declare racism a public health crisis and establish the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) and the Racial Equity Advisory and Accountability Council, in order to address systemic and institutional racism that has resulted in poorer health outcomes and disparities in Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC).

IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE RIGHTS

[Language access at EDD - AB 401](#), authored by Assemblymember Chiu, would move towards ensuring all Californians seeking services provided by the Employment Development Department (EDD) have the language support required to access services they are entitled to.

[The VISION Act - AB 937](#), authored by Assemblymember Carillo, would protect community members already deemed eligible for release from being funneled by local jails and state prisons to immigration detention centers for deportation.

ADMINISTRATIVE ADVOCACY

Inclusion of AA and NHPI Studies curriculum, as well as adoption of the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum by the California Department of Education State Board of Education.

#API Equity Budget

BUDGET ADVOCACY

To begin addressing historic inequities, lack of investment, and the recent attacks adversely impacting AANHPI communities in California, the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs worked closely with the leadership of the Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus (APILC), budget and caucus staff, partnered with Stop AAPI Hate Coalition, and engaged over 150 CBOs to secure the [#APIEquity Budget](#) and begin strengthening state programs to serve the needs of AANHPI communities.

Thank you to APILC's leadership, the State Legislature, Governor's Office, and active engagement of community organizations and advocates across the state. \$166.5 million is secured for the next three (3) years.

- [\\$110 million appropriated to California Department of Social Services \(CDSS\)](#), in consultation with the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs, for grants to CBOs to provide victim services, community healing, and prevention;
- [\\$10 million appropriated to Stop AAPI Hate Coalition](#) to track, respond, and prevent incidents of racial bias and harm;
- [\\$10 million appropriated to AAPI Data](#) project at the University of California, Riverside to increase accurate data collection and data equity on AANHPI needs, challenges, and barriers;
- [\\$10 million appropriated to California Department of Education \(CDE\)](#) for an anti-bias education grant program to local education agencies (LEAs) to address hate and macroaggressions;
- [\\$10 million appropriated to the California State Library \(CSL\)](#), in consultation with the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs, for an ethnic media grant program;
- [\\$5 million appropriated to Mental Health Services Accountability and Oversight Commission \(MHSOAC\)](#) to support a peer social media network project addressing bullying and mental health for youth;
- [\\$1.5 million appropriated to the CAPIAA](#) to create a workgroup to address higher education attainment of low income first generation AAPI college students; and
- [\\$10 million appropriated to the Department of Fair Employment and Housing \(DFEH\)](#) to develop and implement a statewide hotline.

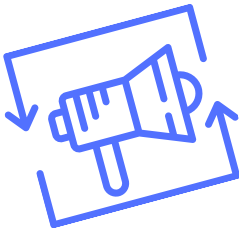
Looking Ahead



With the increased capacity of the commission and the momentum in both community engagement and advocacy, we look forward to the following in the new year -



Strategic planning.



On-going community engagement and collaboration.

Administrative and policy advocacy to improve the following -

- Data equity,
- Access to quality culturally and linguistically appropriate mental health services,
- AANHPI higher education attainment of low-income, first generation college students,
- Language access,
- Immigrant and refugee rights, and
- Anti-AANHPI hate and violence.



Communication strategy(ies) to increase AANHPI narratives, including AANHPI LGBTQ+ community.



Increase staff capacity and strengthening internal infrastructure.

Finance Report

FISCAL YEAR 2020-2021

During FY 2020-2021, the Commission only began to expense funds starting November 2020, when the executive director was hired. Director Nkauj lab Yang came on and began standing up the commission as its own state department, contracted services with the Department of General Services, and launched the commission's website on the state server.

The commission expects to hire additional staff, secure office space, enhance communications strategies, conduct research, and more in FY 2021-2022.

2021 EXPENDITURES

Personnel Expenses	\$121,000
Operating Expenses	\$21,000
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Total Expense	\$142,000

HONORING OUR LONG TIME NHPI CHAMPION

THE LATE COMMISSIONER CATHERINE 'OFA MANN



*The California Commission on Asian Pacific Islander American
Affairs*

*Honors the Public Service
Of
Commissioner Catherine 'Ofa Mann*

*Appointed by California Governor in 2004
Served from 2008–2021*

*“Love isn’t about what we did yesterday; it’s about what we do
today and tomorrow and the day after. – Grace Lee Boggs*

Commissioners

Karthick Ramakrishnan, Chair

Professor of Public Policy and Political Science
University of California, Riverside

Helen Lee, Vice Chair

Leadership roles in Human Resources
Retired from Kaiser Permanente, City and County of Los Angeles

The late Catherine 'Ofa Mann

Founder and President
To'utupu 'oe 'Otu Felenite Association (TOFA)

Christopher Punongbayan, Secretary

Executive Director
California ChangeLawyers

Cirian Villavicencio

Professor of Political Science
San Joaquin Delta College

Janani Ramachandran

Workers' Rights Attorney
Centro Legal de la Raza

Kirin Macapugay

Associate Professor
San Diego Community College

Lance Toma

Chief Executive Officer
San Francisco Community Health Center

Polly Low

Mayor
City of Rosemead, California

Rajan Gill

Professor of History
Yuba College

Raymond Buenaventura

City Councilmember
Daly City, California

Serena Kirk

Chief Executive Officer
Souldier LLC

Simon Pang

Executive Vice President & Co-Founder
Royal Business Bank

STAFF

Nkauj Iab Yang, Executive Director