

Strategic Plan

2023-2026





**WASHINGTON STATE COMMISSION ON
ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS
2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN**

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Message

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Toshiko Hasegawa
Toshiko Hasegawa
Executive Director

Dear Community Partners,

The Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs is proud to present our 2023-2026 strategic plan. We advise state and local government and other institutions in Washington State on issues affecting the Asian American (AA), Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (NHPI) communities, which, according to the 2020 Census, is the states' second-largest and fastest-growing minority group. This document is our road map to address challenges and opportunities that continue to face our diverse communities, with focuses on civil rights, economic development, education, health and human services.

The Commission strives to approach each issue and challenge by applying a lens on equity, inclusion, and social justice. In the wake of Covid-19, the longstanding equity gaps have only deepened. Additionally, we've seen a resurgence of Anti-Asian sentiment plaguing our society, partly a legacy of the Trump Administration policy and rhetoric amplifying fear, distrust and displacement among immigrant and refugee community members.

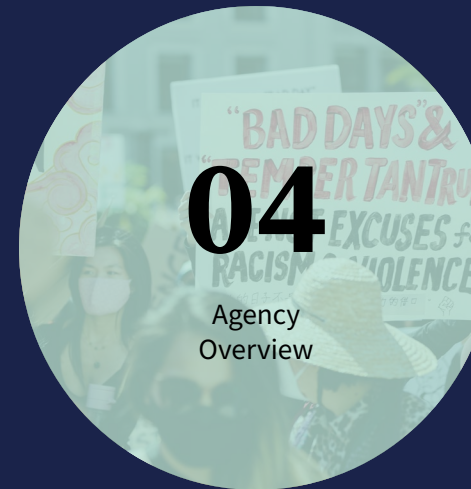
We recognize that advancing equity requires centering the people disparately impacted by oppression, bigotry and institutional racism. The Commission is dedicated to fulfilling its mission towards people-centered policies, with programs and projects that will uplift and empower the voices in our communities and also address the needs of our communities.

This strategic plan outlines our high-level goals organized by our committees, which oversees the Commission's work on priority issues defined by statute. Together, staff works with Commissioners to identify and examine these and other issues impacting AA & NHPI's and advise the governor, state legislature, and all other state agencies on how to address them.

Advancing equity is a collaborative process and we look forward to the work ahead to advance justice for all.



Nam Nguyen
Nam Nguyen
Chair



Agency Overview

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Agency Overview



History

Due to pervasive discrimination and barriers in accessing government services, a group of local Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders community members met with the Governor in 1971 to examine a broad range of issues facing the Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders population in the areas of employment, education, social services, community development, immigration, and civil rights.

In January 1972, Governor Evans created The Governor's Asian Advisory Council by executive order. On February 26, 1974, the 43rd Washington State Legislature formally created The State of Washington Commission on Asian American Affairs as a state agency. On April 17, 1995, Governor Mike Lowry signed a bill to change the Commission's name to The State of Washington Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs to include Pacific Islanders.

The Commission was formed by the Legislature over concern with the plight of those Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders who, for economic, linguistic, or cultural reasons, find themselves disadvantaged or isolated from

American society and the benefits of equal opportunity. The Legislature deemed it necessary to create the commission to carry out the following purposes:

- Improve the well-being of Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders by ensuring their access to participation in the fields of government, business, education, and other areas.
- Help all Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders achieve full equality and inclusion in American society.
- Aid Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders in obtaining governmental services in order to promote the health, safety, and welfare of all the residents of this state.

Mission

To improve the well-being of Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Washingtonians by ensuring their access to participation in the fields of government, business, education, and other areas.

Vision

To create a culture where full participation and social equality of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander are achievable.

Authority

CAPAA's statutory authority is established in RCW 43.117.010. Implementing regulations are contained in WAC 34-02.

Powers and Duties

The Commission examines and defines issues pertaining to the rights and needs of Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Washingtonians and makes recommendations to the governor, state legislature, and state agencies with respect to desirable changes in program and law.

The Commission advises state government agencies on the development and

implementation of comprehensive and coordinated policies, plans, and programs focusing on the special problems and needs of Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders.

The Commission coordinates and assists with statewide celebrations during the fourth week of Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Heritage Month that

recognize the contributions to the state by Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders in the arts, sciences, commerce, and education.

The Commission coordinates and assists educational institutions, public entities, and private organizations with celebrations of Korean-American day that recognize the contributions to the state by Korean-Americans in the arts, sciences, commerce, and education.

The Commission recommends potential commissioner candidates to the Governor for review and appointment.

The Commission establishes relationships with local governments and private industry to promote equal opportunity and benefits to Asian Americans, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders in government, education,

economic development, employment, and services.

The Commission holds public hearings, takes testimony, receives evidence, as the commission deems advisable.

The Commission secures directly from any department or agency of the state information necessary to enable it to carry out its purpose. Upon request of the chair of the commission, the head of such department or agency shall furnish such information to the commission.

The Commission has authority to receive such gifts, grants, and endowments from public or private sources as may be made from time to time in trust or otherwise for the use and benefit of the purposes of the commission.



Organization

Today, CAPAA is a cabinet-level agency consisting of three staff and 12 Commissioners appointed by the Governor who work collaboratively to identify and examine issues impacting community members and advise the Governor, State Legislature and all other state agencies and strategies to better serve them. CAPAA responds to concerns and brings about positive change with long-term solutions. Our staff and commissioners:

- Ensure community voices are heard in state government.
- Inform communities about laws and policies that affect their well-being.
- Advocate for policies and services that support the unique needs of our communities.

Priority Issue Areas

Commission priority issue areas as described in its enabling legislation are as follows:

- **Civil Rights & Immigration:** Advocate for civic engagement, civil rights, immigrants/refugee rights, environmental justice, promote tolerance
- **Education:** Develop strategies to ensure every child has access to a quality education that values diversity and mutual respect.



- **Health & Human Services:** Promote solutions to improve access to quality, affordable, and culturally-appropriate health and social services.
- **Economic Development:** Increase opportunities to participate in entrepreneurship and the workforce.

In order to meet its mission, the Commission serves several functions and roles. Among them are:

- **Research and analysis:** To examine and define issues pertaining to the rights and needs of AA & NHPs, and make recommendations to the governor, legislators, and state agencies with respect to desirable changes in program and law.
- **Advisory and Advocacy:** To advise the Governor and state and local public officials on the development and implementation of comprehensive and coordinated policies, plans, and programs focusing on the special problems and needs of AA & NHPs.
- **Education:** To educate AA & NHPs communities about laws, programs, and policies that affect its well-being.
- **Conduit and consultant:** To make government more accessible by serving as a conduit and consultant between AA & NHP communities and state agencies.
- **Resource:** To serve as a resource through research and educational materials, technical assistance, agency referrals, casework, and community forums.

Needs Assessments

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Needs Assessments



Each year, CAPAA conducts a statewide needs assessment of Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander communities, to identify and examine the population.

Most recently, in 2022, The Commission provided a demographic Snapshot of AA & NHPI's based upon Census 2020 and 2020 American Community Survey Data. CAPAA's Needs Assessments can be accessed [online here](#).

The goal is for this information to serve as a useful reference to partners in state government who often approach us with questions about AA & NHPI's and how to effectively engage. It is also intended to be a helpful tool to community-based organizations and members of the public who are looking for publicly available demographic information on AA & NHPI Washingtonians.

Today, AA & NHPI communities together comprise 12.3% of the state's overall population, making AA & NHPI's the state's second-largest and fastest-growing minority group. When disaggregated by race, population totals for Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander communities is as follows:

- 8.5% Asian population statewide
- 11% Asian Alone and in combination with another race

- .7% NHPI alone
- 1.3 % NHPI in combination with another race

AA & NHPI's are present in every county in the state. The majority of Asian populations are located in King (386,404), Snohomish (86,121), Pierce (55,571), Clark (21,752) and Thurston (15,832) counties. The majority of the Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander populations are located in King (16,944), Pierce (12,848), Snohomish (4,197), Clark (3,751) and Spokane (2,799) counties.

The Asian population has a poverty rate of 9.3%. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders have a poverty rate of 15.3%, which are higher than the white poverty rate at 8.1%.

The top spoken Asian languages are Chinese (89,549), Vietnamese (61,610), Tagalog (56,497), Korean (48,425) and other Pacific Islander languages (29,876). Vietnamese, Korean, Khmer-Cambodian and Chinese communities have higher rates of limited English proficiency while South Asian Indian communities including those that speak Hindi, Urdu and Gujarati tend towards having higher rates of speaking English "very well".

Pillars of Advocacy

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Pillars of Advocacy



The following are pillars of advocacy that can and should be applied across the board in all efforts. These pillars convey *how* the Commission strives to promote access and equity in state government.

Anti-Racism and Pro-Equity (PEAR)

internal practices: All three members of CAPAA staff serve as the agency’s PEAR team, where we will work in conjunction with the Office of Equity to improve internal best practices and live our own commitment of addressing systemic racism and proactively removing barriers to justice in order to achieve procedural and outcome fairness for staff and community stakeholders alike. CAPAA should work intentionally to engage the newly formed HAPPEN Business Resource Group on engagement and job opportunities, like AA & NHPI Heritage Month.

Centering Community Voice: CAPAA’s role is to identify and examine issues impacting AA & NHPI community members, and our twelve appointed Commissioners representing some of the state’s geographic and cultural diversity have a role in conducting meaningful engagement towards community-centered solutions to issues. In this way, community engagement with the public at-large is integral to the agency living its mandate. The Commission complies with all Open Public Meeting Act rules, and strives to being “barrier-free” through creating as many avenues as possible for inclusion into public meetings: traveling to be in-

person while still offering remote options for participation to members of the public, and providing reasonable accommodations to those who request it in a timeline matter.

Cultural Humility: As a state agency, the Commission recognizes significant cultural and institutional barriers that inherently exist in attempting to reach AA & NHPI stakeholders. The Commission must practice humility - acknowledgement that the state government’s norm of operations is not always the most appropriate or effective when serving communities of color, immigrants, and refugees. The Commission embraces a “trusted messenger model” of community engagement, working collaboratively with Commissioners, community-based organizations, community gatekeepers and other grass-roots leaders with credibility to effectively conduct its work. The Commission intentionally embraces opportunities to participate in community events as a guest or exhibitor to build relationships and raise public awareness of CAPAA and its work. Partner with community-based organizations and state agencies to hold public informational opportunities virtually and in person.

Serve as a Resource: The Commission should seek out and embrace opportunities to participate in events, workshops, conference, symposiums, panels and news interviews as subject matter experts. In addition to hosting five public board meetings each year, the Commission should also hold public community meetings, forums and focus groups in person and virtually in conjunction with other state entities to provide education to community members and solicit public input.

Workgroups, committees, taskforces: Each year, the Commission is named to serve upon a number of state workgroups, committees and taskforces. Recognizing that subject matter expertise on specific issue areas exists within the community at-large, the following is a process for identifying and appointing community members as CAPAA designees.

Advertise appointment opportunities via CAPAA Commissioners and formal CAPAA communications channels including the newsletter and social media. Connect with potential appointees for a preliminary Q & A. Host a formal interview with representatives of the relevant standing committee. Ensure the final appointee is publicly listed on CAPAA's website with a summary of their role. Invite the appointee to report back to committee to provide updates, and invite opportunities for institutional support from CAPAA to advance their voice and work in advocacy. Publicly publish the final work product upon the CAPAA website.

The Commission will continue to advocate for inclusion upon state work groups and

task forces to ensure community perspective and voice is formally accounted for on a wide range of issues, especially priority issue areas.

State Partnerships: The Commission act as a liaison between AA & NHPI communities at-large, agencies, the legislature and the governor's office. CAPAA meets with elected and appointed policy makers to educate them about AA & NHPI community member experiences, and advises on opportunities to support them. It also assists other actors at the state to conduct culturally appropriate engagement with AA & NHPI communities. Additionally, CAPAA strategies should strive to address goals identified by Results Washington and the Governor's Office and work collaboratively towards those goals.

Robust Communications: The Commission can maximize its reach by continuously managing contacts and growing the agency's listserv. It should aim to have a concerted, consistent social media presence and amplify AA & NHPI social media pages to expand the agency's network and communications reach. Maintain the agency's webpage to be simple, concise and intuitive - a easy-to-navigate, one-stop-shop for community members. Strive for ADA compliance in the production of all materials, and lean on use of visuals in lieu of words when able. Utilize ethnic media including print and radio outlets, and distribute culturally and linguistically-appropriate informational materials compiled by CAPAA or others.

Promote Language Access: Work with the ethnic Commissions and Office of Equity to

promote language access throughout the enterprise. Work to ensure all state agencies utilize the Washington State Language Access Plan and make vital information idiomatically available to all community members. Share information about commonly spoken AA & NHPI languages and dialects to inform agencies on how to prioritize translation and interpretation services. Advise on the development and distribution of culturally and linguistically-appropriate informational materials.

Promote Disaggregated Data and Consistent Data Collection: Work with the Ethnic Commissions and Office of Equity to promote the disaggregation of data across state government, and to break down the silos between state agencies and offices by prompting consistency of data collection fields. Partner with Results Wasihngton when conducting public performance reviews and provide input on interagency projects. Conduct an annual Needs Assessment assessing AA & NHPI demography by race, ethnicity, language, location in order to identify evolving needs, issues and opportunities.



Priority Issue Areas

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Priority Issue Areas



Civil Rights and Immigration

Goal: Examine and define issues of systematic or widespread discrimination, bias, disadvantage or harm against Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander peoples, including immigrants and refugees, and proactively work with institutional actors and communities to undo oppression and advance equity.

Background: Washington State has a painful history of exclusive laws impacting communities of color and immigrants, from colonization of Hawaiian and Pacific Islands, nuclear testing in the COFA islands, to chinese exclusion, japanese american incarceration, redlining, segregation, and laws banning interracial marriage. Communities led the fight to justice, and, over time, earned rights and freedoms bit by bit that were granted to their white counterparts. This very history lives at the inception of CAPAA, for racism and discrimination against non-whites is embedded in our systems, structures, cultural norms and practices, and requires vigilance. As well as strategies for Pro-Equity and Anti-Racism. Still today, disparities as a result of a history of exclusion lives on in our institutions. AA & NHPI's continue to be underrepresented in the electorate,

with barriers to participating in electoral processes, including as voters, candidates, and elected officials making laws. AA & NHPI's are underrepresented in elected and appointed office. There has never been a Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander or COFA Islander elected official in the State of Washington. While the community has been in Washington for over a century, endemic systemic erasure and oppression has significantly compromised the development of the NHPI Political Voice.

The legacy American immigration enforcement of unconstitutionally, indefinitely detain undocumented immigrants and target lawfully resettled refugees leaves a legacy of fear, displacement and social disorganization among communities of color. Heightened fear among immigrant and refugee



communities grew, as ICE raids increased. The Trump Administration announced an effort to forcibly remove and deport lawfully resettled Vietnamese refugees, potentially displacing thousands of Washingtonians and sewing deep fear and mistrust among community members. This required many efforts at the state level to express support for community members and lend our voice against these xenophobic policies. Meanwhile, many members of the Cambodian community facing imminent deportation for having committed crimes in the past sought clemency from Governor Inslee. CAPAA was asked to weigh in and explored ways to expand capacity for the clemency board and expedite review of cases for people facing exigent circumstances, including imminent deportation.

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit Washington first, the flames of anti-asian sentiment were fanned from political leadership, who used the terms “Chinese Virus”, “China Virus” and “Kung Flu”,

which led to a significant increase anti-asian sentiment. Chinese businesses were hit hard before statewide shutdowns, as business plummeted due to racist impressions and acts of vandalization. Across Washington State, incident reports of hate crimes, including acts of violence, grew. Reports of acts of discrimination in public schools and higher education which required swift responses from CAPAA in conjunction with political leadership and school administrators to ensure students of asian ancestry were not be unconstitutionally segregated, separated, or excluded.

Meanwhile, the climate crisis intensified with more extreme seasons, devastating wildfires, unbearable heat without access to cooling stations for many communities of color, and many vulnerable people, especially the elderly, casualties. Communities at home observe from afar climate disasters impacting their countries of origin, and scramble to provide access to much needed relief

resources: the sweltering heat in India, the sinking Islands of Tuvalu, the tsunami in Tonga, are three primary incidents just to name a few. We anticipate more climate refugees arriving in Washington State in the years to come. AA & NHPI communities that have been here for generations live in historically POC neighborhoods and, due to redlining laws, are clustered around industrial and transportation hubs. This increased exposure to industrial activity directly correlates to higher incidence of asthma, cancer, infant mortality, and significantly lower life expectancy.

Community activism and mobilization in response to compounding crises has voiced the need for justice and political voice. The Commission understands its role in advancing justice by promoting voice, visibility, access to democracy and policy change in State Government.

Objective: Increase civic engagement of AA & NHPI community members in elections and legislative processes.

- Work collaboratively with the Secretary of State to empower the AA & NHPI electorate by addressing the high rates of ballot rejections as well as promoting translated voters guides and ballot boxes;
- Promote awareness of how to access the capital budget to build affordable housing and community spaces;
- Assist planning the annual POC Legislative Summit statewide in conjunction with legislative members of color;
- Regularly participate in meetings of APIC-WA and assist in its organization of AA & NHPI Lobby Days in Olympia, WA. Assist communities in their organization of other cultural lobby days, including, but not limited to, COFA Lobby Day and Vietnamese Lobby Day;
- Support a pipeline for political voice and advocacy for Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

Objective: Promote community safety and a culture of inclusion, tolerance



and fairness against acts of bias, discrimination, hate and violence.

- Work with the Attorney General’s Office, OSPI, the Human Rights Commission, law enforcement, and community-based organizations to address the rise in discrimination, bullying and hate crimes;
- Examine and define issues of systematic or widespread discrimination, bias, or disadvantage against Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander immigrants and their families;
- Support the development of coalitions to address unmet needs and increase the voice of underrepresented communities;
- Work proactively with ethnic commissions to bridge the divide between black, latino and asian communities and address the stigmas and biases that exist between communities of color.

Objective: Promote safety, stability and support for immigrants and refugees living in Washington State.

- Raise awareness of the impact of federal immigration laws and policies, including federal immigration enforcement and detention facilities, on AA & NHPI communities;
- Partner with community based organizations (CBOs), legal aid and state agencies who are trusted by, and currently serving our AA & NHPI communities in immigration

and naturalization services to serve families in need;

- Continually partner with the Governor’s Office, Washington State Patrol and the Criminal Justice Training Center to raise awareness of policies related to non-compliance with federal immigration enforcement, as well as cultural competency;
- Advocate for the preservation and expansion of state-level programs providing a social safety net to immigrants and refugees, including undocumented residents.

Objective: Empower AA & NHPI communities as subjects impacted by and actively involved in the fight against climate change to advance environmental justice.

- Center AA & NHPI community stories and experiences as climate refugees

and residents of historically redlined areas clustered around transportation hubs and concrete deserts who are disparately impacted by climate change and inclement weather, including heat, drought and food;

- Identify opportunities for AA & NHPI communities to gain mastery in skills and science necessary to mitigate environmental harm, transform carbon fuel-based industries, reduce our carbon footprint and restore the health of the planet and communities. This includes educational opportunities, job readiness into clean energy, maritime and transportation industries, forestry, and other historically white industries and careers;
- Advocate for inclusion in state workgroups and task forces focused on environmental policy to ensure Asian and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander representation.

Economic Development

Goal: Support Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander businesses and workers with the knowledge, tools, and resources, and changes to state law and policy necessary to be successful.

Background: Asian Americans, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders are generally among both the highest income and the lowest wage earners in Washington State. Immigrant entrepreneurship and the role of small businesses are particularly important for AA & NHPI households and communities. However, many communities are unable to access mainstream resources offered by American financial institutions due to their lack of knowledge and experience with credit—making culturally and linguistically-appropriate technical assistance a critical need.

The Covid-19 pandemic severely and disproportionately affected Asian American, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders economically. AA & NHPI businesses were hit earliest - as members of the public stopped patronizing asian-owned businesses due to the racist perception of them being unclean. Asian-owned businesses were vandalized due to anti-asian racism, though many did not have insurance to cover the costs associated with destruction or vandalism. AA & NHPI business owners heard of grant or relief opportunities last, as they were not released in-language at the same time as they were released in English. And AA & NHPI businesses resources to apply for government assistance when applications themselves were not translated.

The Commission advised the Department of Commerce and Governor Inslee on the creation of the Washington State Small Businesses Resiliency Network, whereby small, minority owned businesses could receive culturally specific support in accessing business resilience resources offered by the State of Washington.

The Commission also leaned on information gathered via the Census 2020 Strategic Work Plan, which listed all known AA & NHPI-

owned businesses in Clark, Whitman and Thurston Counties, and conducted phone banks reaching out to these known AA & NHPI-owned businesses and steering them towards The Small Business Resiliency Network.

During the height of the pandemic, layoffs caused instability compelling communities to rely on unemployment assistance. Barriers arose with the Employment Security Department caused by an influx of requests, lack of language access, and COFA citizens' unique status preventing them from finishing their applications. These complications in our institutions exacerbated already apparent gaps in equity in our society. The state also observed a "the great resignation" with thousands of community members resigning from their employment.

Recognizing the challenge of dismantling systemic inequities that cause AA & NHPI communities to face persistent barriers to business opportunities, the commission must take on the role of first identifying the barriers to entry for Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander business owners and then educating the community on the vast number of resources available to them. The commission must also stay vigilant and continue to identify potential barriers to achieving economic equity in business opportunities for AA & NHPI's, as well as to promote new pathways to equity.

Objective: Examine and define economic development issues that impact Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander businesses and workers.

- Collaborate with state partners and stakeholder groups to form listening sessions to identify top issues of concern for AA & NHPI business community;
- Collaborate with OMWBE, Commerce,

and participate as members of the Governor's Subcabinet on Business Diversity in order to advance state initiatives, programs, and opportunities;

- Develop a culturally and linguistically-appropriate resource guide for business owners about access to capital, technical assistance, etc.

Objective: Advise Commerce and other state partners on programs to provide small businesses with technical support needed to survive and thrive.

- Support WA state business network to ensure continued and expanded to access to technical support and resources;
- Work with state agencies and ethnic chambers, and business owners directly to improve understanding of state regulations and policy changes.

Objective: Promote diversity in contracting at the State of Washington by partnering with OMWBE, the Governor's Subcabinet on Business Diversity, the Office of Equity and others.

- Work to fully implement Executive Order 2022-01;
- Promote certification of AA & NHPI-owned businesses and examine feasibility of consolidating certification for local, state, and federal requirements;
- Develop a centralized resource with all state contracting opportunities that is also accessible to LEP communities;
- Strive for 100% WMBE utilization at CAPAA.



Education: Goal & Strategies

Goal: Minimize barriers and close the educational opportunity gaps impacting Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islanders students, families & educators in early learning, K-12 and higher education.

Background: The Commission acknowledges that significant disparities exist in experiences and educational outcomes for Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific islander students.

When race data is aggregated together, these disparities are often veiled, as large numbers of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino and Indian students with more favorable outcomes shield the extent of

the inequities and impacts upon other ethnic subgroups. AA & NHPI cultures are not embraced in public education spaces, systemically, socially, or in the curriculum itself. Furthermore, Asian language courses offered in public schools have been reduced.

In 2008, the Washington State legislature funded a study for the Ethnic Commissions to examine the educational opportunity gap affecting students of color, which led to the establishment of the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) in 2009. Over the years, the legislature established several committees, task forces and workgroups to address existing inequities in public education. The following is a list of education-related committees, workgroups and task forces upon which CAPAA has participated in the past three years:

- Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) Review Subcommittee
- Family Engagement Framework Work Group
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Advisory Committee
- Ethnic Studies Curriculum Advisory Committee
- AAPI English Learner Data Disaggregation Grant
- Early Learning Advisory Council (ELAC)
- Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC)

- Every Student Succeeds Act
- Family Engagement – Reopening Washington Schools Workgroup
- Language Access Advisory Committee.

The Covid-19 pandemic exacerbated existing equity issues in education, early learning, K-12 and higher education, for students and families of color, as well as those who are low income, limited English speaking, rural, differently abled, immigrants, and refugees. The pandemic also highlighted the growing issue of digital access (in)equity as having a key role in a students performance and ability to succeed. This includes (in)access to service and devices. Meanwhile, ongoing issues of racial discrimination and bullying have intensified due to the rise in anti-Asian sentiment.

The Commission must stay vigilant to identify and address barriers to achieving equity in public education for AA & NHPI students, families and educators, and proactively work to dismantle systemic failures, build new pathways to advance equity, and actualize anti-racism in public education.

Objective: Conduct a renewed study of Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander students examining the educational disparity gap and comparing findings to the baseline study conducted by the Ethnic Commissions in 2008.

- Work collaboratively with the EOGOAC and other Ethnic Commissions to identify a contractor,

- and define the study purpose and scope, develop research methods, advise on tool development and distribution;
- Ensure agreement in data fields between the baseline study and renewed study so that trends may be observed;
- Heed feedback from 2008 survey by supporting efforts to collect and examine demographic data on an ethnic basis;
- Engage community stakeholders to ensure robust participation in the study.

Objective: Promote the cultural capital of AA & NHPI's, including language diversity & cultural abundance, in public education spaces.

- Language access and cultural competency should be incorporated into systems, curriculum, policies, practices;
- Promote robust ethnic studies funding at the state and support local jurisdictions in implementing ethnic studies curriculum;
- Examine/define workforce education and opportunities and support efforts to diversity faculty and staff.

Objective: Promote a culture of inclusion and safety for AA & NHPI people in public education spaces.

- Promote anti-bullying campaigns;
- Work collaboratively with OSPI and the Attorney General's Office to implement recommendations formulated in the Hate Crimes Task

- Force (2020);
- Work to address the disparate discipline of students of color in public schools;
- Advocate against the passage of laws that aim to criminalize youth, and advocate in support of rehabilitative models of addressing misconduct behavioral issues.

Objective: Advocate for and advise on strategies to promote equity in public education.

- Monitor and advise on proposed laws introduced in the legislative session and advocate for dual inclusion for both the AA & NHPI communities as a Commission;
- Monitor and advise the work of task forces and committees that are working to address the opportunity gaps;
- Work to implement milestone pieces of legislation related to Language Access, Social Emotional Learning, Disaggregation of Data, Ethnic Studies, and Digital Equity;
- Work with OSPI to set state standards and work with local jurisdictions to ensure implementation of curriculum principles at the local level;
- Advise OSPI on the structure, requirements and application review of community grants, particularly those intended to serve communities of color;
- Create a publicly available toolbox for Education stakeholders (parents, instructors, administrators) to promote AA & NHPI equity in public schools.

Health & Human Services

Goal: Advance policies and conditions to promote the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellness of Asian American, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander communities.

Background: The Covid-19 pandemic had severe physical, mental, and emotional health impacts upon AA & NHPI communities. Across the board, community mental health suffered with higher reports of substance abuse, depression and domestic violence. Pacific Islander and COFA islander community members experienced significantly higher rates of contraction, hospitalization and death from Covid-19. Access to unemployment for limited English proficiency individuals was sparse. Although the system impacted everyone, our communities were not able to communicate with service





representatives when they got through.

CAPAA held the *Asian Community Statewide Listening Forum* in conjunction with Asian Counseling and Referral Services. Results were formally presented to the Governor’s Safe Start Social Support Advisory Group, which identified the following common themes:

- Racism, Xenophobia, Bias & Hate
- Language Access
- Unemployment
- Economic Instability/Need for Resources
- Mental Health Care
- Impact of Isolation Upon Elders

- Dangers for Frontline Workers
- Digital Divide

The Pacific Islander Community Association of Washington also led on convening the *Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Covid-19 Town Hall*. The results were reported back to the Governor’s Safe Start Social Support Advisory Group and identified the following primary themes:

- Unemployment
- Food Insecurity
- Housing Insecurity
- Gender Diverse Community Disparities
- Pre-existing Health Disparities

- Mental, Cultural, & Spiritual Health Struggles
- Access to data, funding & policy

Community members experiencing challenges and barriers to relief/justice leaned into community-based organizations (CBO’s) to help them navigate systems and advocate for change. This puts strain on the organizational capacity of CAPAA and CBO’s to meet the demand for service. In both listening sessions, the message was loud and clear:

“**Diverse communities will care for their own, but they need financial assistance because private donors and volunteers can’t do all the lifting.**”

— Precy Tamaki, Yakima County

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, COFA Islander Health Care and COFA Dental Care were established. Today, recruitment and retention of program participants remains a challenge, and will require specialized outreach strategies on an ongoing basis. The program also faces the risk of de-funding.

English Language Proficiency and poverty are strong social determinants of health and are strong barriers to accessing care. Southeast Asian elderly have some of the highest rates of limited English proficiency (LEP) of any ethnic group, and are more likely to live in poverty. Southeast Asian communities, and refugees in particular who have survived the trauma of war, genocide, and displacement, suffer physical and mental health challenges (SEARAC, 2022).

The Compact of Free Association (COFA) provided that the United States may conduct nuclear testing on the Marshall Islands, Mariana Islands, the Island of Palau, and Federated States of Micronesia, in return for certain rights. Although there are residual, intergenerational health and environmental impacts from nuclear decimation, the United States did not make good on its guarantee to health care access for COFA citizens.

Health disparities are complex and specific to ethnic group, generation, and level of access to care. Addressing health disparities will require coordination among communities of color, state agencies, and the health care system. The Washington State Department of Health released its [Transformational Plan](#) (2022) to holistically improve the “health ecosystem” to ultimately strengthen communities through meaningful engagement of countless partners.

The legislature has established several committees, task forces and workgroups to address existing inequities in public health. The following is a list of health-related



committees, workgroups and task forces upon which CAPAA has participated over the past three years:

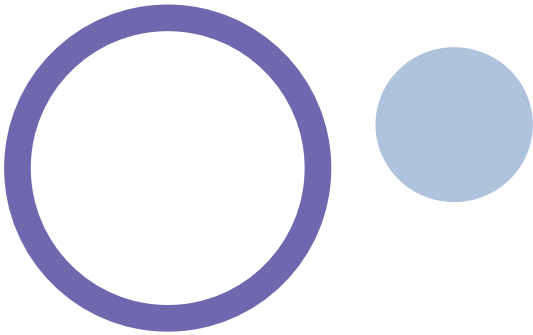
- Pandemic After Action Review Task Force
- Sexually Transmitted Infections Work Group
- Physical Activity Task Force
- Universal Basic Income Feasibility Study Strategic Advisory Team
- COFA Healthcare Advisory Committee
- COFA Dental Care
- Governor’s Interagency Council on Health Disparities
- Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention

Objective: Advocate for resources for Community Based Organizations to have sufficient capacity to continue providing direct services to community members.

- Highlight the work CBO’s do on the front line to identify, examine and address issues impacting AA & NHPI communities;
- Advocate for expanded funding for community-based, non-profit organizations providing culturally competent and idiomatically specific care;
- Support the Department of Health to make equity-centered plans to address crises.

Objective: Advocate for Unemployment, WA Apple Health, COFA Health Care, COFA Dental Dental, and other critical programs to offer accessible services to community members.

- Ensure they offer fully translated materials and routinize providing interpretation services;
- Advocate for funds for ESD to translate the portal and forms into all languages needed.
- Advocate that they prioritize hiring customer service staff with language skills and provide a direct line for the



- public to access those staff;
- Promote the use of Navigators, as used by WA Health Plan Finder, and partner with CBO's serving immigrant communities providing language assistance and cultural appropriate assistance;
- Establish a "Trusted Partner" program with CBO's, similar to DSHS's Washington Connection Purpose program, to help Washington residents complete applications and carry out other activities designed to help them maintain eligibility;
- Promote access for undocumented residents and people of diverse immigration status, including those seeking asylum, to qualify for state services and programs.

Objective: Promote access to state services for COFA citizens based upon their unique immigration status.

- Remove barriers preventing COFA citizens and undocumented residents from accessing unemployment benefits, COFA Health Care, COFA Dental, and employment opportunities;
- Partner with DOH to promote enrollment into Health and Dental programs
- Advocate for continued funding for

- programs, and expanded funding for community support;
- Advocate at the federal level to improve access to obtaining their I-94 and I-102.

Objective: Increase awareness of physical, mental and social health conditions disparately impacting AA & NHPI's including: alzheimers, diabetes, dementia, heart disease, hypertension, obesity, stomach cancer, Covid-19, addiction, anxiety, depression, substance abuse, and domestic violence.

- Promote accurate information about health issues by meeting with public health agencies across the state;
- Participate in awareness month campaigns;
- Host and participate in public events with health officials, service providers and community members;
- Promote the professional advancement of AA & NHPI's into the medical and public health fields;
- Convey community perceptions of public health issues to public health entities and service providers to overcome obstacles preventing access to care;
- Engage community organizations on providing culturally competent care and work with state agencies to ensure public health initiatives are accessible to LEP communities;
- Develop and advocate for targeted strategies, including culturally-appropriate wellness and prevention approaches that will address health disparities;
- Promote education and awareness of mental health to destigmatize the need for mental and behavioral health care.

Organizational Capacity

Goal: Build the agency's organizational capacity to fulfill its mission and sustain its operations for the next 50 years.

Background: CAPAA, at its peak, had four staff in two offices in Olympia and Seattle. Unfortunately, they were defunded by the legislature and threatened to be combined with the other ethnic commissions. Additionally, the Commission's scope has been encroached by other state agencies. As we see population increase, it demands more engagement from staff and commissioners. When Covid-19 pandemic arrived in King County and spread throughout Washington State, Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order resulted in total shutdown of in-person operations and, effectively, all operations went completely virtual. As we return to in-person operations,

the “new normal” requires agencies to support hybrid operations, supported by updated technology and equipment.

Objective: Obtain resources necessary to conduct meaningful engagement statewide.

- Convene community forums on emerging and pressing issues impacting AA & NHPI communities;
- Establish a presence in rural communities and border counties with hard-to-reach populations, and build upon those relationships with consistency and intentionality;
- Develop linguistically-appropriate materials, including CAPAA’s website, for limited English proficient populations;
- Utilize interpretation services at public forums and in the office to better receive community input from Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations;
- Acquire technology necessary to accommodate virtual and hybrid settings in the post-pandemic “new normal”;
- Conduct research, produce reports and distribute materials related to AA & NHPI demography and issues.

Objective: Support the state legislature in engaging and honoring community perspective, voice and input by participating in all legislative committees.

- Advocate for two appointees to each work group, to ensure representation



of both Asian and NHPI perspectives, respectively;

- Advocate for special funding to meaningfully engage both Asian and NHPI communities;
- Protect the Office of Equity against being named in legislation to do outwards facing work, as warned against in the Equity Office Task Force Recommendations.

Objective: Obtain resources necessary to support professional development of staff and Commissioners.

- Maintain a competitive, diverse workplace by offering performance-based salary increases, professional development trainings and certifications, participation in professional conferences, and offer tuition reimbursement to staff;
- Support Commissioners by offering commissioner compensation in public board meetings, facilitating mentorship to new Commissioners, in-person onboarding and orientation, team building opportunity among Commissioners and with staff, trainings in DEI, business writing and Robert’s Rules of Order, participation in professional conferences, reimbursement for travel and participation in state activities;
- Re-launch the Ruth Woo fellowship program and potentially expand the program to facilitate a pipeline for eager AA & NHPI youth and students to enter the pipeline into Washington State service.



Objective: Routinize the process for Commissioners and other CAPAA appointees to coordinate in advocacy.

- Routinize the recruitment and appointment of members of the public at-large for state opportunities;
- Support report-backs of appointees to appropriate committees and the full Commission.
- Conduct regular check-ins and follow ups to those who represent CAPAA in an official capacity;
- Support engagement efforts with community members and policy makers, including the State Legislature, Governor, and Lt. Governor, to increase advocacy capacity of appointees and Commissioners.

Objective: Implement and routinize emerging state initiatives and mandates impacting organizational capacity.

- Ensure cyber security of CAPAA and its website domain;
- Ensure proper administration over mobile device management;
- PEAR plan formulation and implementation by PEAR Team Members.



**Washington State Commission on Asian
Pacific American Affairs**
www.capaa.wa.gov

