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COUNCIL ON ASIAN PACIFIC MINNESOTANS • A STATE AGENCY SINCE 1985

ANNUAL REPORT 2016

2016 REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE AS REQUESTED BY MINNESOTA STATUTE 15.0145, SUBDIVISION 8



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Dr. Tsewang Ngodup*

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I. LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

Dear Community,

The staff and board of the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans are pleased to present our 2016 annual report.

In these pages you will read about the work of the Council in 2016 and how the Council has served Minnesota's diverse communities of Asian and Pacific Islander origin.

This past year saw many changes in the way the Council and the other ethnic councils function. We played a leading role in the 2015 legislation that restructured all three of the State's ethnic councils. The new enabling statute (Minn. Stat. 15.0145) focused the work of the councils on advising policy makers on issues, policies, and administrative practices that affect our communities and serving as a bridge between ethnic communities and policy makers and the Governor.

We stepped into that clarified role with enthusiasm and determination.

Our staff, board, and community members advocated at the Legislature for policies and programs designed to promote state services that are accessible to people who speak a variety of languages, that create employment training and educational opportunities, that make housing accessible, and that contribute to the understanding of violence against Minnesota's Asian Pacific women and children.

We gathered our communities at a variety of meetings, events, and celebrations.

We initiated two large original research projects designed to help policy makers more fully understand the needs and contributions of our communities in Minnesota.

We entered into new collaborative relationships with the other ethnic councils so that we can leverage our collective knowledge to help advance Minnesota's cultural communities.

In this work, we have amplified the voices of our communities on behalf of all and built bridges between lawmakers and the communities we serve.

Please look through these pages to get a sense of our accomplishments of the past year and how we are assisting our communities and state government with preparing to face the challenges and opportunities of the future.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve you this past year. We look forward to continuing our work together.

Regards,

Dr. Tsewang Ngodup, 2016 Chair



II. LEGISLATIVE ACHIEVEMENTS

Enacting public policy that supports Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities is at the core of our mission. Following the Minnesota Legislature's restructuring of the ethnic councils during the 2015 session, our board and staff recommitted to our strategic focus on legislative action on behalf of our communities.

Our Council's legislative priorities are laid out in our 2015-2016 Legislative Agenda. In order to inform these priorities, in 2014, Council staff convened meetings with our communities in the Metro Area and in greater Minnesota. The result was a legislative agenda that serves the goals of our communities in the following policy areas:

- Violence Against Women and Children
- Affordable Housing (Rental and Home-ownership)
- Employment and Training Programs
- Linguistically and Culturally Accessible Services
- Achievement Gap/Education

This section provides an overview of our progress on our legislative priorities during the 2016 legislative session.



COUNCIL-INITIATED LEGISLATION

- **Exploited Families Rental Assistance Pilot Program.** The Council led efforts to secure \$500,000 in funding for a rental assistance pilot program, administered by the Minnesota Housing Finance Agency, through the passage of House File (H.F.) 335/Senate File (S.F.) 311. The housing voucher pilot program is specifically designed for women and children from emerging communities, who are escaping gender-based violence and are at risk of becoming homeless.

The passage of this law is a critical first step in our Council's efforts to effectively address the exploitation of Asian women and children and allow them to equitably benefit from and give back to Minnesota.

Our work on this legislation began in 2015 when we conducted meetings to educate legislators about the importance of housing assistance for women with children from emerging communities who are at risk of becoming homeless due to gender-based violence. Asian Pacific women are particularly vulnerable to homelessness due to the linguistic and cultural barriers that prevent them from accessing mainstream support services. We worked with Senate and House members and research staff to draft the pilot program legislation. The bill is authored by Senator Alice Johnson and Representative Karen Clark; it was first introduced in the 2015 legislative session and then reintroduced in 2016.

As the chief advocate of this bill, our Council identified and supported a diverse coalition of stakeholders, including women from our Asian Pacific community and law enforcement officials, who were willing to testify in support of this legislation. These individuals bravely shared difficult and deeply personal stories in legislative committees and in individual meetings with policy makers.

Our chief authors argued that for the women and children we seek to serve with this proposal, traditional homeless shelters are not an option due to rigid eligibility rules, conflicting cultural values, and a lack of understanding of the mainstream system. Our gratitude goes out to Representative Clark and Senator Johnson for their leadership and all of the legislators who voted in support of the bill. The Exploited Families Rental Assistance Pilot Program was funded through the Finance Omnibus bill (Article 7).

OTHER LEGISLATION

Our Council advised legislators and testified on a wide array of proposed legislation that directly addressed our policy priorities.

Equity Bills

In the 2016 session, the Minnesota Senate took up equity through the establishment of the Equity Subdivision of the Senate Finance Committee. The Equity Committee was charged with reducing the growing economic and racial disparities across the state. A total number of 49 equity bills were heard by legislators. At the end of the session, the Legislature appropriated \$35 million for programs to address issues through an equity lens, including economic development, education, employment/job training, food accessibility and technical assistance for organizations. In addition to advising throughout the session, our Council worked to include an additional provision to the final equity legislation, encouraging the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) to consult with the ethnic councils to ensure that these funds are used effectively to address economic disparities in Minnesota's cultural communities.

Women of Color Opportunities Act (WOCOA)

The Women of Color Opportunities Act is a package of five bills seeking to address barriers that Minnesota's women and girls of color face in education, employment opportunities, and business ownership. Our Council coordinated meetings between legislators and community members, and advised the bills' chief authors as to how these proposals will impact Asian Pacific women. In addition, we provided guidance to community members who wished to testify.

Of the five bills, only H.F. 3098/S.F. 3056, a bill providing job grants to support women in seeking high-wage, high-demand, and non-traditional job opportunities, was included in the Finance Omnibus bill that was passed into law. As a result, the Women in High Wage, High Demand, Nontraditional Jobs Competitive Grant Program, administered by DEED, will fund organizations that provide services designed to close the gender pay gap and encourage women to enter nontraditional fields.

Asian Economic Development Association (H.F. 3544/S.F. 3178)

H.F. 3544/S.F. 3178 requested that the Asian Economic Development Association and other community-based organizations receive direct appropriation for the purpose of addressing

economic disparities in Minnesota’s refugee-experienced communities. We helped to facilitate meetings between our Asian-led nonprofits and legislators, and directly advised these stakeholders as needed during the session on this bill and several other bills seeking to specifically address disparities in the Asian community.

Although none of the proposals pertaining to the Southeast Asian community, including H.F. 3544/S.F. 3178, passed, the vision and language from these bills were adopted to establish and fund programs aimed at reducing economic disparities in the Southeast Asian community. As a result, the Southeast Asian Economic Relief Competitive Grants Program, administered by DEED, will fund organizations that provide services including workforce recruitment, job creation, capacity building, and outreach.

Good Food Access Program (H.F. 3363/S.F. 2958)

H.F. 3363/S.F. 2958 requested that the Minnesota Department of Agriculture provide financial and technical assistance to increase access to affordable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food, including fresh fruits and vegetables, for underserved communities in low-income and moderate-income areas. The Council assisted legislative staff and sponsor coalition members in building stakeholder support for this bill.

This bill was passed and is included in the Finance Omnibus bill (Article 6). As a result, the Good Food Access Program will fund grants to small food retailers for physical improvements, as well as grants to organizations that provide financial and/or technical assistance to small businesses in underserved communities.

Achievement Gap/Education Bills

Graduation Incentives Program Increase (H.F. 2447/S.F. 2517)

H.F. 2447/S.F. 2517 requested that the State of Minnesota extend high school graduation incentives for nontraditional students between the ages of 21 and 24. This proposal would greatly benefit our most vulnerable Asian Pacific Minnesotan students – especially our English language learners and those with limited or interrupted formal education – who experience substantial achievement gaps. Our Council provided legislators with data that demonstrates the need for this program and advised that they support this bill.

Although this bill was modified significantly during the legislative process, H.F. 2447/S.F. 2517 passed and was included in the Finance Omnibus bill (Article 27). As a result, it extended graduation incentives to students who are under 22 years old.

All Kids Count Act (H.F. 3042/S.F. 2597)

H.F. 3042/S.F. 2597 requested that the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) disaggregate data by multiple measures, including ethnicity and immigration status. In meetings with key legislators and before the House Education Finance Committee, our Council requested that several language provisions in the bill be changed, including the addition of refugee status and a deferred effective date, to ensure that meaningful and necessary data is collected and reported about our communities. This bill was passed and included in the Finance Omnibus bill (Article 25). As a result, MDE will collect aggregated and disaggregated data beginning in the 2017-2018 school year.



III. RESEARCH ACHIEVEMENTS

In order to advise policy makers to the best of our ability, we continue to conduct research to identify the current needs of our communities. Combined with our community engagement efforts, our research work helps our Council gather critical information about developing issues and trends in the communities that we serve. The following were our research priorities in 2016.

- **Violence Against Asian Pacific Women and Children Report.** In 2015, our Council advocated for legislation that created a working group to examine the prevalence, nature, and scope of violence against Asian women and children. This year, the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH), in consultation with our Council, the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Department of Human Services (DHS), established the 15 member Working Group on Violence Against Asian Women and Children. The Working Group members include research experts, advocates, law enforcement, and other stakeholders, that bring unique experiences and perspectives in serving victims and/or families who have or are experiencing gender-based violence. MDH awarded a contract to Rainbow Research to complete the study under the guidance of the Working Group and lead state agencies.

Rainbow Research distributed a statewide survey to better understand the prevalence of domestic violence, trafficking, international abusive marriage, stalking, sexual assault and other forms of violence in the Asian Pacific Minnesotan population. The data collected from the survey was supplemented with targeted focus groups and interviews with key informants to learn more about the nature and scope of gender-based violence in communities. The final report will provide guidance and recommendations to the Legislature on how to address violence against Asian women and children in Minnesota.

- **Emerging Communities Report.** As the numbers for our emerging Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities grow, it is critical that policy makers, school districts, and community organizations develop a broad understanding of each group’s needs and any barriers to their success. The Karen, Karenni, Bhutanese Lhothshampa, Chuukese, and Guyanese groups are among the emerging communities with growing populations that are either unknown to, or not well understood, by policy makers.

To develop a more complete understanding of these communities, we have finalized an in-depth literature review and begun meeting with community leaders and recruiting participants for interviews and focus groups. In addition to learning more about each community, our Council is using this as an opportunity to develop stronger relationships between state government and the individuals and families in these communities.

Our research initiatives will help guide our future work at the Council, with the goal of producing studies to inform decision makers and shape policies to address the challenges faced by Minnesota’s Asian Pacific communities.



IV. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Council’s strong commitment to serving the more than 40 cultural communities it represents is supported by our continued engagement across a broad range of community events. Creating an ongoing dialogue between our communities, organizations, legislators, and state agencies is a crucial step in fostering connections and ensuring accountability in the policy making process. As stated in law, the Council is an advisor to the Legislature and the Governor; an advocate on behalf of the Asian Pacific community; and a facilitator of relationships and information between community and state government.

In line with our ongoing commitments to building and maintaining a strong presence inside our communities, and ultimately building strategic partnerships with Asian Pacific Minnesotans, our Council hosted and participated in an array of events in 2016. Our board and staff value these unique opportunities to engage with our communities in various capacities. Our Council has engaged communities this year in many ways, including:

- **2016 Asian Pacific Leadership Awards Dinner.** In May, the Council hosted its annual Dinner, during which it recognized outstanding Asian Pacific leaders who have made significant



contributions to our communities and the state of Minnesota. The 2016 dinner celebrated “Community, Civic Engagement, and Change” by bringing together community organizations, businesses, and individuals who share in the vision of a more inclusive and vibrant Minnesota. This year’s awardees included a community leader from southwestern Minnesota, a DNR officer, and a former NFL football player turned musician. The 2016 keynote speaker, the Honorable Mayor Elizabeth Kautz of Burnsville, gave a stirring address on the importance of civic engagement in various capacities with the understanding that big steps are possible because they stand on the shoulders of seemingly small steps. In the end, the Council brought together community to recognize and honor the fact that we do not achieve any success on our own; we are supported by many others inside and out of government.

- **2016 Legislative Session Recap.** In June, for the first time ever, our Council co-hosted a legislative session recap with the Council on Minnesotans of African Heritage and the Council

on Latino Affairs. The session recap, which has been an annual event for our Council, is an opportunity for members of our community to learn about key legislative decisions made in a given session. This year’s recap featured two panels: one with the councils’ executive directors and the other with key legislators. Both panels spoke to their 2016 session priorities and achievements. Community members were encouraged to engage with panelists, ask questions, and share issues of importance to them. Key issues addressed during the evening included, housing, K-12 education, higher education, health and human services, and economic development. In attendance were Senators Fong Hawj, Roger Chamberlain, Carla Nelson and Patricia Torres Ray, and Representatives Karen Clark, Rod Hamilton, Rena Moran, and Carlos Mariani.

- **“Shaping Our Shared Future” Community Forums.** Our Council is in the middle of a strategic planning process to develop a new strategic plan to guide our work into the future. To prepare for this, we invited our communities to speak with us about the direction and long-term objectives for our Council over the next few years. When we complete the process, we will have hosted five community forums: three in the Twin Cities; one in southwest Minnesota; and another in northern Minnesota. As of November, we have hosted the following three forums:

- ◊ Forum 1: Karen, Karenni, and Bhutanese Communities
- ◊ Forum 2: West Metro Pan-Asian Community
- ◊ Forum 3: East Metro Pan-Asian Community

In the summer of 2017, we plan to host two community forums in greater Minnesota. The input we receive from members of the community will be critical as we identify a vision, priorities, strategies, and indicators of success to carry out our legislatively mandated mission.

- **Policy Advocacy Trainings.** Our Council believes that in order to change policies and/or practices within government, our communities must more fully engage in the policy making process at the state level. This participation is increasingly critical to our state because Minnesotans of Asian descent face challenges few in the public policy arena currently recognize or understand. To this end, we create and host annual policy advocacy trainings designed to strengthen our communities’ capacities to engage in the development of policies. This year, in anticipation of the 2017 Legislature’s priorities, we hosted our trainings on November 30, 2016; both sessions were led by expert trainers.

- **Community Events.** The Council was well represented at a number of cultural events throughout the year. From traditional new years’ festivities to community gatherings at the Capitol, we continued to support our communities in celebrating their rich and diverse ethnic heritages. We also invited state officials to participate in these events, helping to build relationships between them and our communities. More specifically, these occasions serve as opportunities for elected and appointed officials to interact with and learn through their own experiences how their decisions impact our communities. A few of the events that state officials took part in included the Little Mekong Night Market, the Hmong Lao Veterans Memorial, the Karen Martyr’s Day, IndiaFest, and the Cambodian New Year.

V. ONGOING WORK

The Council is an advisor, advocate, and facilitator within state government, for Minnesotans of Asian and Pacific Island descent. We advise policy makers, educate and empower our community members, and facilitate conversations between government officials and the communities we serve. Through this continued work, we foster public policy making and administrative practices that allow all Minnesotans – including members of our communities – to thrive.

Our ongoing priorities address challenges and issues that many members of our communities face on a daily basis. Passing legislation is only the first step in addressing these challenges; the careful implementation of policies and programs within state government is essential to increasing opportunities for Minnesotans of Asian Pacific descent. This section outlines the projects our Council will continue to work on into 2017, as we strive to more substantively deliver on our statutory duties.

We plan to focus our ongoing efforts on the following projects in 2017:

- **“Shaping Our Shared Future” Strategic Plan.** As highlighted earlier in this report, our Council is in the middle of a robust strategic planning process. The Office of the Legislative Auditor’s programmatic audit of the ethnic councils published in 2014, and the restructuring of the ethnic councils in 2015 led our Council board to launch a community-based strategic planning process in 2016. As of the end of 2016, our Council has hosted three forums in the metro area and deployed an online survey to gather input from key legislators and members of the Governor’s cabinet.

In 2017, the Council will host additional forums in greater Minnesota and engage in a series of board planning sessions. The findings from the community forums, survey, and board sessions will result in a strategic plan spanning four years.

- **Exploited Families Rental Assistance Pilot Program.** With the passage of the Exploited Women and Children Rental Assistance Program bill in 2016, the Legislature appropriated \$500,000 to the Minnesota Housing and Finance Agency (MHFA) to provide transitional housing assistance to victims of gender-based violence, including sex trafficking, domestic violence, and abusive international marriage. Our office is working closely with MHFA and API-led organizations to develop a program structure that will best support and benefit the women and children most vulnerable to homelessness.
- **Emerging Communities Report.** Scheduled to be released at the end of 2017, this report focuses on five emerging Asian Pacific communities in Minnesota, including the Karen, Karenni, Bhutanese Lhotshampa, Guyanese, and Chuukese peoples. The report will feature an overview of each community’s sociopolitical history, a snapshot of their population in Minnesota, and an analysis of current and trending issues. The findings will shape our efforts to help these communities succeed in Minnesota.
- **Violence Against Asian Women and Children.** Our work in our community indicates that Asian Pacific women and children across the state who are experiencing gender-based violence have few resources available to them. The 2015 Legislature passed the bill that



established the Working Group on Violence Against Asian Women and Children, and subsequently, our Council has actively advised the Minnesota Departments of Health, Public Safety, and Human Services as they provide oversight to a state contracted vendor to study the nature, scope, and prevalence of gender-based violence in our community. The findings of this report will serve as launching points for our Council’s legislative and administrative efforts in 2017 and beyond.

- **Policy Advocacy Training Program.** Our Council has partnered with the Dispute Resolution Institute (DRI) at the Mitchell Hamline School of Law to develop an intensive and comprehensive policy advocacy training program for individuals who want to learn more about the dynamics of the legislative process. Though we are collaborating with Mitchell Hamline DRI on the design, DRI will provide training and host it. To date, Mitchell Hamline DRI has completed an initial design of the training. Our Council will continue to be involved regarding stakeholders and when to host the training to ensure that it is robust and relevant to our communities and the state of Minnesota.

In addition to advising executive branch departments and legislative committees, we also plan to continue our partnerships within state government to advance equity in the following specific capacities:

- Governor’s Diversity and Inclusion Council, E.O. 15-02
- Minnesota Housing and Finance Agency, Inter-Agency Council on Ending Homelessness, Sr. Advisory Committee
- Department of Human Services, Cultural Ethnic Leadership Council, M.S.256.041
- Department of Public Safety, Violent Crime Coordinating Council, M.S. 299.642

VI. LEADERSHIP AT THE THE COUNCIL

The Council's achievements at the Legislature and in communities in 2016 would not have been possible without the efficient, effective, and dedicated efforts by our staff.

Along with public recognition for the Council's work and accomplishments, our executive director, Sia Her, was recognized for her leadership by multiple local news publications; along with receiving a prestigious award in 2016.

Ms. Her maintains a deep personal connection to the people that she advocates for. She and her family escaped from Laos and settled in a refugee camp in Thailand, and eventually resettled in California when Ms. Her was four years old. Ms. Her credits her personal, familial, educational, and community-based experiences as the main motivators for her work at the Council. These experiences have shaped Ms. Her's understanding of advocacy and policy development, but more importantly they have shaped her understanding about the importance of politics in people's day to day lives. Ms. Her's work at the Council reflects this understanding, and her belief that there is a place for government to assist Minnesotans in improving their lives.

With Ms. Her at the helm, the Council's work has been noticed. In 2016, Ms. Her was recognized for her leadership and achievements at the 14th Annual Humphrey School of Public Affairs' Public Leadership Awards Dinner. Ms. Her was honored for her "work to strengthen and build a more inclusive community across socioeconomic, gender, and generational lines."

About to begin her fifth legislative session as executive director, Ms. Her addressed some commonly raised questions about the Council.

What does the Council do?

The Council advises members of the Legislature and the Governor's Office on legislative and administrative policies and practices that will have an impact on the Asian Pacific Minnesotan community. In this role, we listen to the members of the communities we represent, understand their needs, and identify where public policy can have a positive impact. We pay close attention to ways that public policy can help create opportunities for members of our communities to thrive and contribute to Minnesota's success. The Council opens channels of communication between our communities and state government to promote collaboration and understanding. We conduct original research on the issues affecting our communities. This research has helped policy makers and others to better understand the realities of Asian Pacific Minnesotans.

What are the biggest challenges facing the Council?

We have to meet the needs of two very different constituencies.

One of our constituencies are state-level policy makers. Part of our job is to help policy makers understand the needs of a diverse group of communities, many of whom are refugees from very difficult circumstances in their home countries. Policies, programs, and public investments that help our communities contribute and thrive in Minnesota will benefit all of us. To craft those policies, legislators need to know, understand, and act on the specific needs in a way that will be effective both for our constituents and the state at large.

The other constituency are the members of the communities that we represent. By statute, we are mandated to help members

of our communities solve specific problems. In practice, this may mean connecting an individual with their state legislator. It may mean identifying ways to build better understanding between members of our communities and their local communities. It may also mean hosting events that bring our communities together.

We respond to requests for information from both policy makers and our communities. The Council staff serve as subject matter experts to the Legislature on a wide array of issues that affect our communities.

In meeting the needs of both constituencies, our communities and the Legislature, the Council strives to help each understand how the other operates. The Council believes this mutual understanding will create potential policy that positively impacts Asian Pacific Minnesotans and allows these Minnesotans to positively impact our state.

What do policy makers need to know about the communities the Council represents?

There is not a single Asian Pacific community. The groups we represent are diverse in experience, in ethnic origin, in belief systems, and in their expectations of life in America. Many of the groups that are represented by the Council contain members who are struggling to adapt to life in America.

Our communities are working hard to adapt to their new circumstances. The majority of our communities are refugee-experienced. These communities are grateful for the opportunities available in Minnesota; however, they see government through the lens of people who have had few to no positive experiences engaging with government in their native countries. Thus, they are cautious in their approach to



working with government and sharing their deep knowledge and expertise.

Here in the United States, our communities have long had distant, and sometimes distrustful relationships with government. Many of us in Minnesota, however, have come to see that government can, and should, interact with us and play a positive role in our development. These interactions have to be two sided – we have to overcome our distrust of institutions, and government, at all levels, has to indicate by its actions that it wants to honor our communities by caring enough to reach out and interact with us.

VII. OUR MISSION, STAFF, AND BOARD

MISSION

The Council [on Asian Pacific Minnesotans] was created by the Minnesota State Legislature in 1985 to advise the Governor and the Legislature on issues pertaining to Asian Pacific Minnesotans; to advocate on behalf of this community on these issues; and to act as a broker between the Asian Pacific community and the rest of Minnesota. The Council represents a diverse community estimated to be about 244,470 Asians and 3,397 Pacific-Islanders. This community is descended from over 40 nations including India, Tibet, the Philippines, Laos, and Burma.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the Asian American community is the fastest growing minority population in Minnesota, mirrored nationally. In Minnesota, the Asian population grew from 4.1% in 2010 to 4.5% in 2013, an increase of 12% change in population within three years. Minnesota's Asian American community is diverse, encompassing communities who have been established for many decades, more recent immigrants, and a significant population of refugees and asylees.

VISION

Serving as a conduit to state government for Asian Pacific Minnesotans, the Council advises the Governor and the Legislature, and recommends bills designed to improve the economic and social conditions of all Asian Pacific Minnesotans.

STAFF



Sia Her, Executive Director

Sia has been executive director of the Council since 2013. Before joining the Council, Sia served as Education and Training Department Manager at the Hmong American Partnership and as campaign manager for the successful Saint Paul Public Schools' "Strong Schools, Strong Communities" levy referendum. She holds a master's degree in public policy from the Hubert H. Humphrey School of Public Affairs and a bachelor's degree in political science from Macalester College. *Contact: sia.her@state.mn.us*



Anjali Mishra, Research Analyst

Anjali joined the council in 2016. Anjali has previous experience conducting research in low-income communities for major universities and has worked with the Council's community-based organizations in Minnesota in the past. She has a bachelor's degree in neuroscience from Carleton College and a master's degree in biomedical sciences from the Rosalind Franklin University of Medical Sciences. *Contact: anjali.mishra@state.mn.us*



Karina Vang, Office Manager

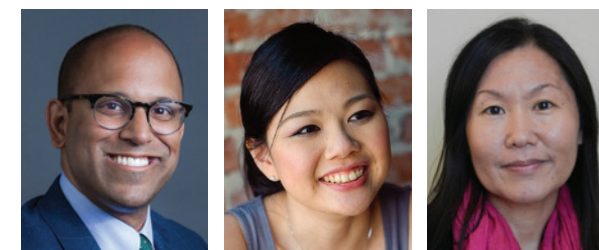
Karina has been with the Council for three years. She has more than a decade of professional experience in providing high-level administrative support to managers and vice presidents within the insurance industry. *Contact: karina.vang@state.mn.us*

COUNCIL MEMBERS

Under Minn. Stat. 15.0145, the Governor appoints 11 members from the diverse Asian Pacific communities in Minnesota. Of these, five members must be from each of the five largest ancestry Asian Pacific populations, with no more than one member from each of the state's many Asian Pacific communities. Four legislative members – two State Representatives and two State Senators – are chosen by legislative leaders from each of the two major political parties. The Council must include at least five women.

The Council meets six times each year, with special meetings as needed.

A community Council member may serve no more than eight non-consecutive years. A legislative Council member may serve no more than eight consecutive years or twelve non-consecutive years on any one council.



GOVERNOR APPOINTEES

| Governor Appointees | Ethnicity | Term Expiring |
|---------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Tsewang Ngodup | Tibetan | Jan 2017 |
| David Maeda | Japanese | Jan 2018 |
| Thaoke Her | Hmong | Jan 2020 |
| Anil Hurkadli | Asian Indian | Jan 2020 |
| Melissa Kwon | Chinese | Jan 2017 |
| Grace Lee | Korean | Jan 2019 |
| Amy Nop | Cambodian | Jan 2020 |
| Saengmany Ratsabout | Laotian | Jan 2017 |
| George Thawmoo | Karen | Jan 2018 |
| Faamati Winey | Polynesian/Samoan | Jan 2019 |

LEGISLATIVE APPOINTEES

- Sen. Fong Hawj (DFL, SD-67, St. Paul)
- Sen. Roger Chamberlain (Republican, SD-53, Lino Lakes)
- Rep. Carolyn Laine (DFL, HD-41B, Columbia Heights)
- Rep. Rod Hamilton (Republican, HD-22B, Mountain Lake)

(L to R) 1st row: Tsewang Ngodup, David Maeda, Thaoke Her; 2nd row: Anil Hurkadli, Melissa Kwon, Grace Lee; 3rd row: Amy Nop, Saengmany Ratsabout, George Thawmoo; 4th row: Faamati Winey, Sen. Fong Hawj, Sen. Roger Chamberlain; 5th row: Rep. Carolyn Laine, Rep. Rod Hamilton



VIII. PROFILES OF COMMUNITIES

TIBETAN COMMUNITY

Minnesota is home to the second largest Tibetan community in the United States. While this may surprise some, Minnesota is attractive to our Tibetan community for a number of reasons, including our climate, strong nonprofit sector, and the Mayo Clinic. These reasons, among others, contribute to why Minnesota’s Tibetan community is thriving.

The Tibetan community, an estimated 4,800 strong, mostly resides in Minneapolis suburbs including Richfield, Columbia Heights, Fridley, and New Brighton. Along with affordable housing, the suburban communities allow for easy access to major employers, quality hospitals, the international airport, and good public school districts.

Today, leaders in the Tibetan community are raising funds to build a Tibetan Community Center. This Center would serve people of all ages by offering a language and culture school for young people, as well as an adult day care for senior and disabled Tibetan Americans.

Sherab Tsomo, treasurer of the Tibetan American Foundation of Minnesota (TAFM), says the community center would help to “preserve their rich Tibetan language, values, and culture” for future generations.

The importance of cultural preservation for Tibetan Americans is underscored by the continued hardships and persecution still faced by some Tibetans outside of the United States.



“The [Tibetan] community center would help to ‘preserve their rich Tibetan language, values, and culture’ for future generations.”
Sherab Tsomo

CAMBODIAN COMMUNITY

Many of today’s estimated 12,000 Cambodian Minnesotans came when the state opened its doors through the federal refugee resettlement process in the 1980’s. War and violence pushed them from their native country, and they arrived in the United States as refugees. Many were received by the city of Rochester, making Olmstead County home to the single largest concentration of Cambodians in Minnesota. Rochester’s economic landscape allowed new refugees to obtain entry-level jobs at companies like IBM, Mayo Clinic, and meat production plants. These opportunities made it possible for families to experience upward mobility.

It has been several decades since the first Cambodian families arrived to Minnesota. Since then, many have found new opportunities in Farmington, Faribault, and the suburbs of the Twin Cities.

Sam Ouk, the ELL Coordinator for the Faribault Public Schools and Chair of the Faribault Diversity Coalition, arrived in Rochester in the late 1980’s. When asked what community members want for themselves and for the future, Ouk stated that Cambodians aspire to call America “home”, which he defines as a place of acceptance where people are looked at as human beings deserving of rights belonging to other Americans.

“What Cambodian families are looking for is not different from people of any race, culture, or creed. We want our families and the people we care about to be able to live happy, healthy, and free. We want opportunities to better ourselves and pave the way for a better life for our children and grandchildren,” said Ouk.



“What Cambodian families are looking for is not different from people of any race, culture, or creed... We want opportunities to better ourselves and pave the way for a better life for our children and grandchildren.”
Sam Ouk

BHUTANESE COMMUNITY

The Bhutanese Minnesotan community is Minnesota’s newest refugee group from Asia. With approximately 1,400 members, it is a small but growing community.

When asked what community members hope for, board co-Chair of the Bhutanese Organization of Minnesota (BOM), Parmananda Khatiwoda and BOM Program Director, Til Pokwal stated that the elders dream of economic independence for their families, and hope that their children will have the opportunity to become educated and integrated into mainstream socioeconomic American life, while still preserving their cultural heritage and identity. Additionally, Khatiwoda and Pokwal shared that the community currently faces several issues, one of which is the alarming number of mental health cases. Despite the establishment of a non-profit organization that provides culturally appropriate services and advocates for the community, obtaining the resources needed to maintain these services is a challenge because the community is still so small relative to other immigrant communities.

Mr. Khatiwoda asserted that though the Bhutanese population “may be small, we hope to be a vibrant community contributing to the growth of Minnesota as one of the most vibrant states – socially, economically, and culturally.”

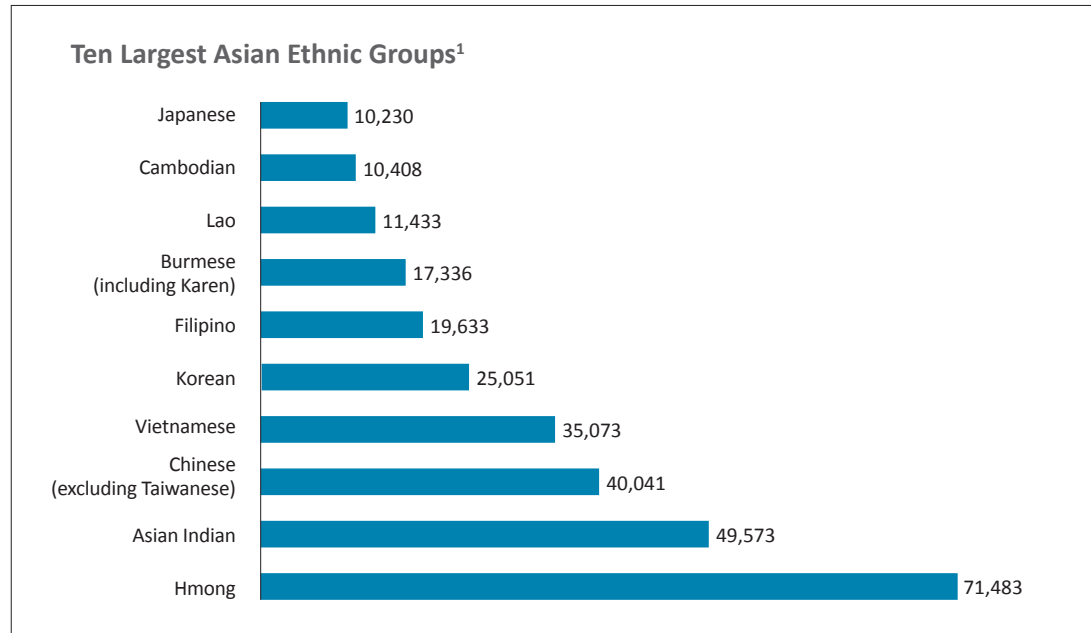


“The Bhutanese population ‘may be small, we hope to be a vibrant community contributing to the growth of Minnesota... socially, economically, and culturally.’”
Parmananda Khatiwoda

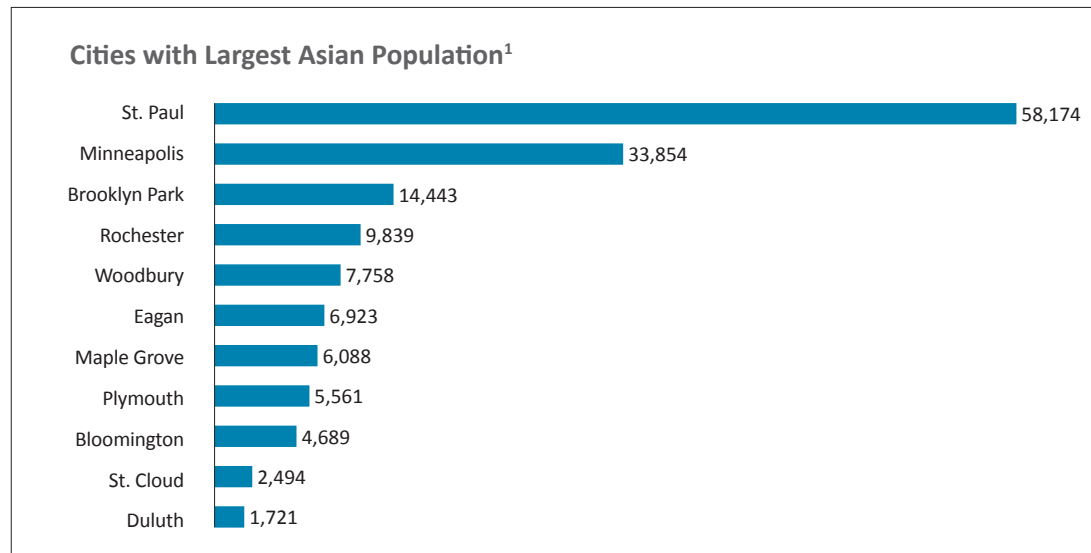
By the Numbers

OUR COMMUNITY AT A GLANCE

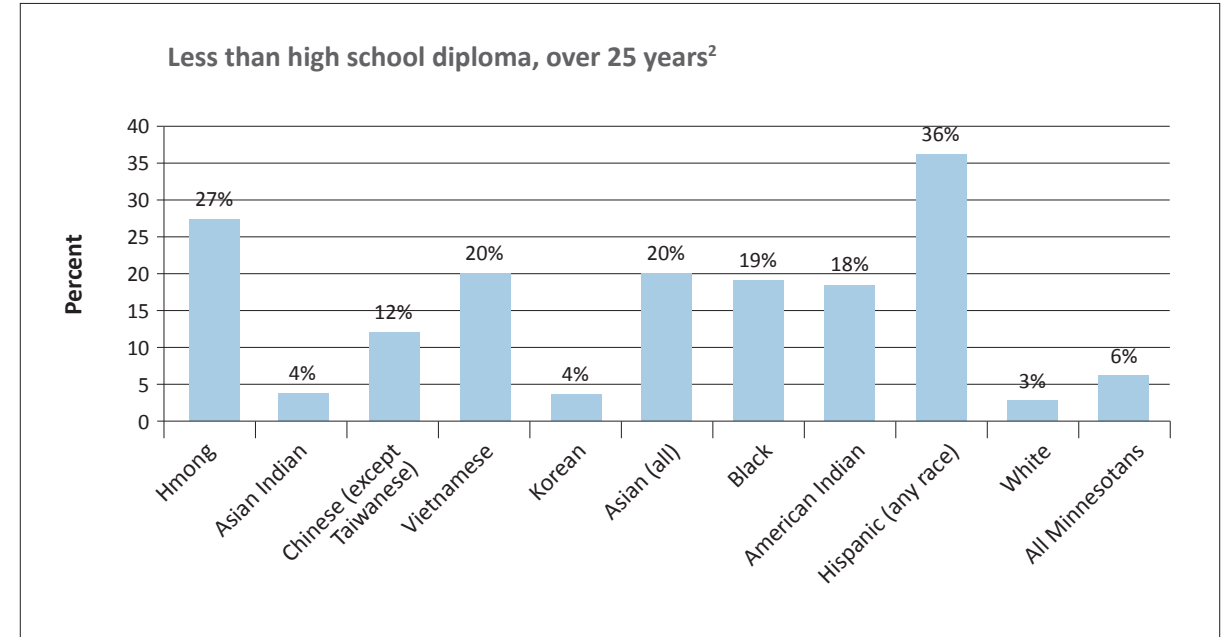
1. 10 Largest Asian Ethnic Groups in Minnesota¹



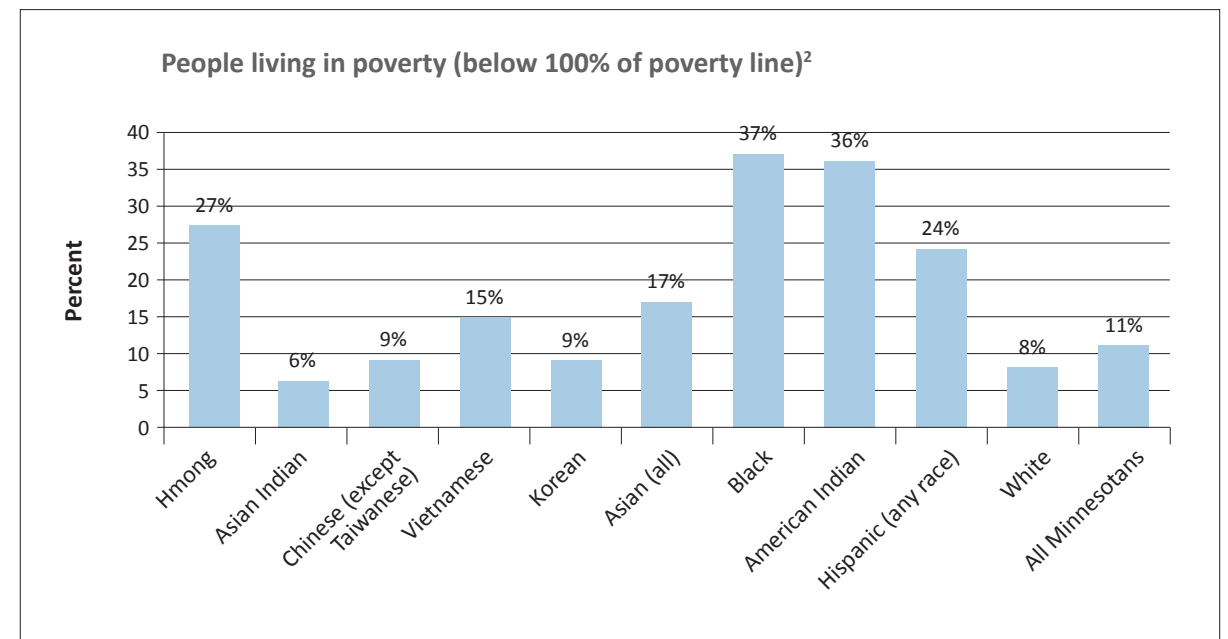
2. Minnesota Cities with the Largest Asian Population¹



3. Percent with Less than High School Diploma (age 25 and over)²

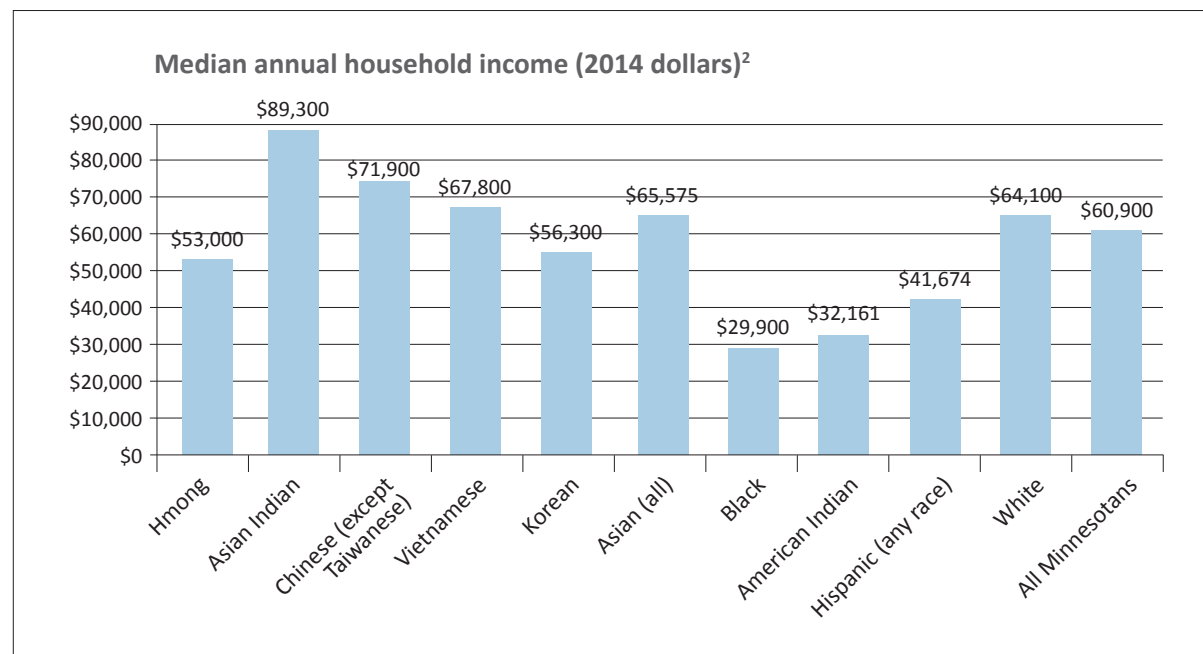


4. Percent of Individuals Living in Poverty (below 100% of poverty line)²

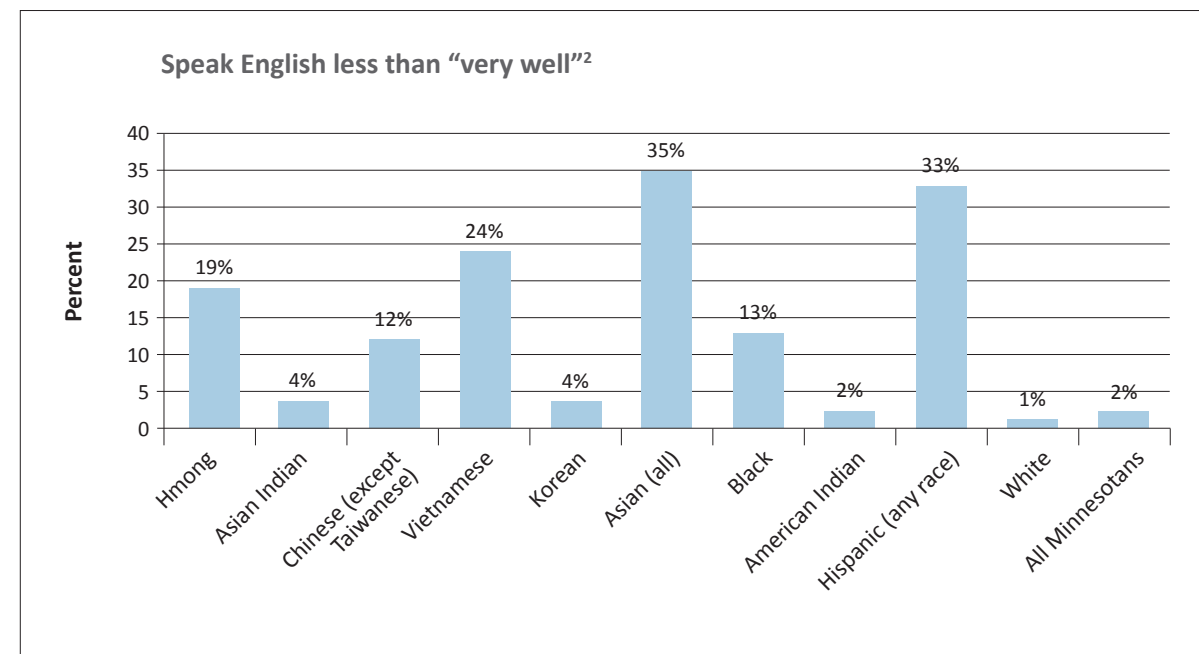


1. U.S. Census Bureau, 2014-2015 American Communities Survey.
 2. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Communities Survey.
 Note: Data collected from the American Communities Survey are estimates of real population totals, and include margins of error. Due to limitations in sample estimates, only the five largest Asian ethnic groups (alone or in any combination) are included. For additional information, please contact the Minnesota State Demographic Center.

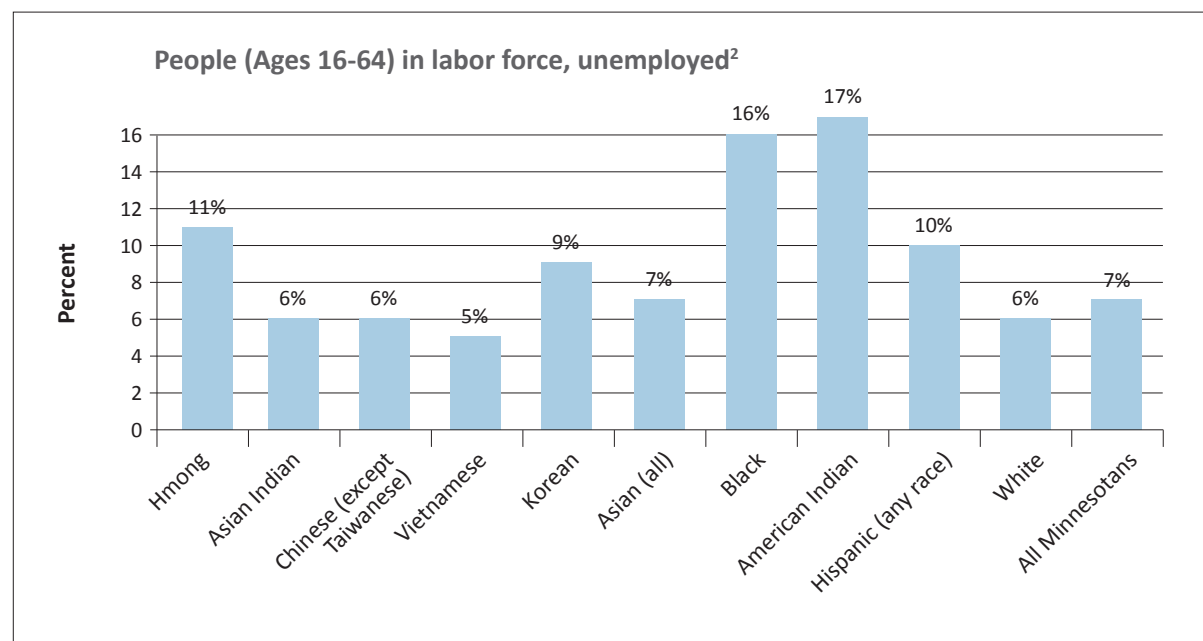
5. Median Household Income (2014 Dollars)²



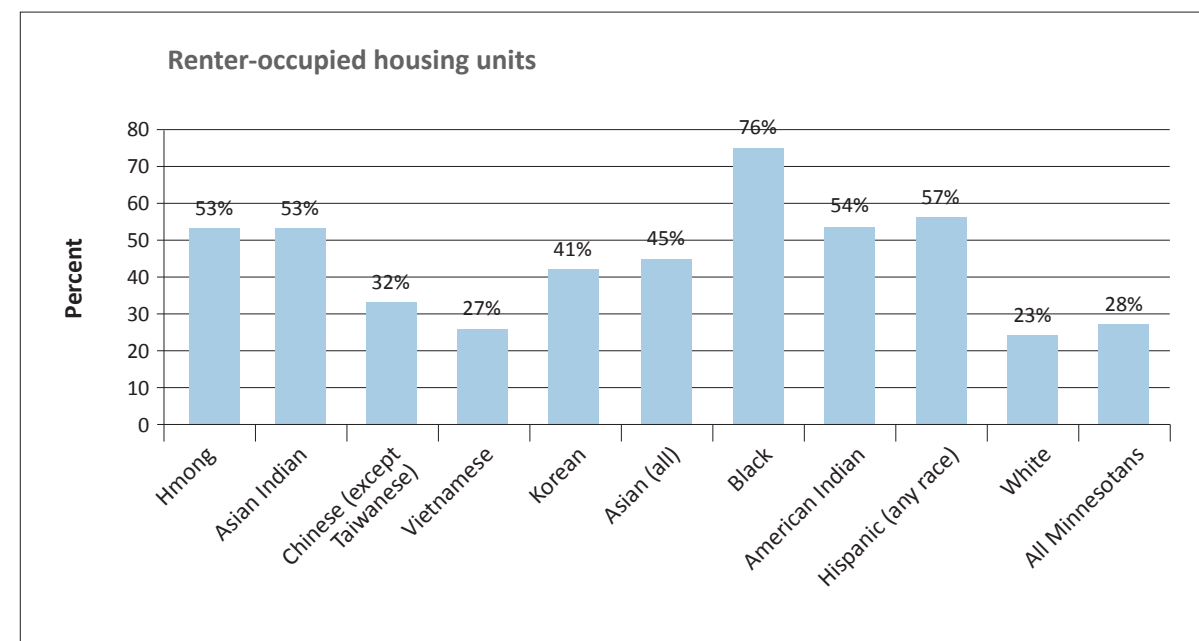
7. Percent with Limited English Proficiency²



6. Percent in Labor Force (age 16-64 years), Unemployed²



8. Percent of Households Renting Their Home²




2. U.S. Census Bureau, 2010-2014 American Communities Survey.
 Note: Data collected from the American Communities Survey are estimates of real population totals, and include margins of error. Due to limitations in sample estimates, only the five largest Asian ethnic groups (alone or in any combination) are included. For additional information, please contact the Minnesota State Demographic Center.

APPENDIX: RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES

| Lists Receipts | FY 16 |
|---|----------------------|
| General Fund | \$ 359,000.00 |
| | |
| Revenue Funds | |
| Annual Dinner Registration Fees | \$ 6,185.88 |
| | |
| | \$ 365,185.88 |
| | |
| Expenditures | |
| Full-Time | \$ 222,783.42 |
| Part-Time | \$ - |
| Over-Time and Premium Pay | \$ 5,322.81 |
| Other Employee Cost | \$ 2,920.00 |
| Space Rental, Maintenance, and Utilities | \$ 20,311.04 |
| Repairs, Alterations, and Maintenance | \$ 1,425.31 |
| Printing and Advertising | \$ 2,990.90 |
| Professional/Tech Services Outside Vendor | \$ 11,326.25 |
| Communications | \$ 616.71 |
| Travel and Subsistence—INST | \$ 2,135.27 |
| Supplies | \$ 3,990.13 |
| Equipment-Capital Leases | \$ 1,635.54 |
| Employee Development | \$ 1,075.00 |
| Other Operating Costs | \$ 6,018.74 |
| Statewide Indirect Costs | \$ 675.00 |
| Equipment-Non Capital | \$ 154.98 |
| Centralized IT Services | \$ 14,197.33 |
| | |
| Total Expenditures | \$ 297,578.43 |
| Annual Dinner Expenses | \$ 5,975.81 |
| | \$ 303,554.24 |
| | |
| Net Balance | \$ 61,631.64 |





“I think it is important to keep the ethnic councils. I personally value the opportunities that are possible when people work together on shared values. This can be “messier,” but the end result is often deeper and richer; and can actually build community. When our councils engage with the Legislature on issues and collaborate on solutions, something more happens than the work they get done – their communities find a place in our democratic processes. Minnesotans of Asian, African, and Latino descent trust government more when they are engaged with it AND as a result of that engagement, they become more a living part of it.”

– Senator-elect Carolyn Laine (SD-41), Chief Author of H.F. 1353

(2015 legislative proposal that passed, and restructured the Councils on Asian Pacific Minnesotans, Minnesotans of African Heritage, and Latino Affairs)

“Retaining the ethnic councils is important to the health and vitality of the state of Minnesota. There are still too many disparities in our society and I strongly believe that we need the help of all Minnesotans as we work together for more equitable communities. The communities that the ethnic councils represent include immigrants that benefit from our support in becoming integrated not only into our society, but also into our democratic process which is very different from what they have known. We in government must believe in the power of collaboration and the personal empowerment it helps our communities to achieve. I truly believe that together with the ethnic councils, state government will be more effective in addressing the disparities Minnesota’s cultural communities are experiencing.”

– Senator Sandra Pappas (SD-65), Chief Author of S.F. 1419

(Senate version of H.F. 1353)



COUNCIL ON ASIAN PACIFIC MINNESOTANS
A STATE AGENCY SINCE 1985

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