

Chris Steller

From: Her, Sia (CAPM) <sia.her@state.mn.us>
Sent: Thursday, February 22, 2018 2:25 PM
To: Chris Steller
Cc: Vang, Karina (CAPM)
Subject: FINAL _ Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans 2017 Report (M.S. Sect. 15.0145, Subd. 8)
Attachments: 2017 Report - Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans - FINAL.pdf; 2017 Report Inserts - Council Board - FINAL.pdf; 2017 Report - Emerging Communities Report Inserts - FINAL.pdf

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Chris,

Attached are the final drafts of our 2017 Report and its accompanying documents. I had sent you these documents in January, per the statutory due date; however, since then, I have made some minor editing changes to them. If possible, please replace the versions I sent to you on January 16, at 12:53 PM, with these final versions.

This year's report has an insert designed into the inside of the back page so that this report acts as a folder. The 2nd and 3rd attached documents are designed to travel with this 2017 report.

Thank you,

Sia



m COUNCIL ON ASIAN
PACIFIC MINNESOTANS
A STATE AGENCY SINCE 1985

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



A report to the Legislature as requested by Minnesota Statutes 2017, Chapter 15, Section 15.0145, Subdivision 8





Welcome...

Dear Community Member,

In the early 1980s, when the Council [on Asian Pacific Minnesotans] was created, our community was estimated to be about 26,000 strong, making up less than 1% of the total Minnesota population. Today, our community is estimated to be more than 260,000, about 5% of the total Minnesota population.

The Asian Pacific Minnesotan community is in many ways the state’s most diverse racial group, with members descended from more than 40 nations. We are majority refugee-experienced; this makes us unique in the United States. We are also the fastest growing minority group in Minnesota, and we reside in all eighty-seven counties. We have been responsible for providing enrollment stability for many school districts, and we are providing housing and business stability in many communities. We are an asset to Minnesota.

Asian Pacific Minnesotans are still seen by many as a novelty, however – we are still conveniently classified as the “model minority.” This stereotype of our community is inaccurate, and too often leads to many of our ethnic groups remaining invisible. The challenges that existed when our Council was established continue. As demographic trends continue to change almost exponentially, it is increasingly imperative that financial, political, and social resources are more strategically invested to ensure that all Minnesotans thrive.

The Council is working to weave our communities into the process by which the state makes its public policy decisions, and come to understand and view Asian Pacific Minnesotans as more than this national Asian American stereotype. Pursuant to Minnesota Statutes 2017, §15.0145, subdivision 8, we submit this report which speaks to the work of our Council during this calendar year.

Throughout 2017, the Council continued to actively advocate for policy and administrative changes on behalf of our communities. We engaged Asian Pacific Minnesotans through legislative updates, community forums, legislative visits, listening sessions, and our annual Leadership Awards Dinner.

Finally, we thank the 2017 Legislature and the Governor for providing us with the resources to do our work. As a result, we have been able to maintain our current staff team, and continue with the many projects we designed to ensure we fulfill our statutory obligations.

We look forward to continuing our work together in 2018.

Regards,

David Maeda,
Board Chair



LEGISLATIVE

Enacting public policy that advances the interests of Asian Pacific Minnesotans is at the core of our mission. Following the Legislature’s restructuring of the ethnic councils during the 2015 session, our board and staff recommitted to our strategic focus on legislative and administrative actions on behalf of our communities.

During the 2017 legislative session our advocacy focused on three main areas:

1. Equal access to education and closing the achievement gap;
2. Health disparities and coverage access; and
3. Economic development and employment





Research Achievements

In order to inform and advise policy makers, we continued to produce original research on the needs of our communities. Combined with our community engagement efforts, our research sheds light on developing issues and trends in Minnesota's Asian Pacific communities. In 2017, we continued with key research initiatives, including the following two reports.

Minnesota's Emerging Asian Pacific Communities Report: In early 2018, we will complete a study on our emerging communities in Minnesota: the Karen, Karenni, Bhutanese, Guyanese, and Chuukese. The report's findings will feature an overview of each community's resettlement history; an assessment of each community's current population in Minnesota; and an analysis of each community's trending issues. As the demographic numbers for these communities grow, it is critical that policy makers, school districts, and community organizations have a broad understanding of each group's communal history. The Emerging Communities Report will shape our efforts to support these growing populations as they build communities in Minnesota.

Working Group Report on Violence Against Asian Women and Children: During the 2015 legislative session, our Council worked to establish the Working Group on Violence Against Asian Women and Children, within the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH). Under the guidance of our Council, MDH, the Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Department of Human Services (DHS), the Working Group produced an in-depth report on the prevalence, nature, and scope of gender-based violence in Minnesota's Asian communities. The Report highlights the specific cultural contexts that prevented Asian women from reporting violence or seeking help outside of their respective communities. Of those surveyed, only 12% reported violence to the police, 40% confided in a friend, and 28% talked to their mother or sister. These women did not report to law enforcement because they felt ashamed or stigmatized (15%), felt that the violence was not that bad (26%), or they believed that the abuse would have worsened had they spoken out (7%).

The Council presented the Working Group's findings and recommendations to the House and Senate chairs of committees with jurisdiction over public safety, health, and human services. These recommendations fall under the following three categories:

- Change social and cultural norms and practices relating to gender equity;
- Increase services, outreach and support for Asian women experiencing violence; and
- Strengthen mainstream organizations' knowledge, skills, and responses to the Asian community.

ACHIEVEMENTS

These focus areas are highlighted in our support of a number of bills, including the following:

Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers (TOCAIT) Bills: As a part of the Omnibus Higher Education bill (H.F. 2080/S.F. 943) and the Omnibus Education Finance bill (H.F. 2) that passed both the House and Senate, the TOCAIT bills sought to address the shortage of teachers of color and American Indian teachers in Minnesota. Our Council, along with many other partner organizations, engaged with the Governor's Office and key legislators to help them understand why these bills are important to our state's effort to closing the achievement gap.

Minnesota is experiencing a severe shortage of racially diverse teachers. Currently, only 4.2% of our teacher workforce are teachers of color or American Indian teachers. The shortage of teachers of color and American Indian teachers is a contributing factor to the persistent achievement gaps in Minnesota.

The TOCAIT bills propose to expand support for the Pathways to Teaching Program, increase the number of scholarships available to teacher candidates, and increase the amount of student loan forgiveness for teachers of color and American Indian teachers. These bills provide crucial incentives for teachers and teacher candidates from diverse

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communities to enter and complete teacher licensing programs, and stay in the teaching profession.

The Council successfully worked with partners to shape key policy and appropriation provisions in the TOCAIT bills. Consequently, the Legislature appropriated \$1 million in FY2018-19 for the Collaborative Urban and Greater MN Educators of Color Program, and an additional \$500,000 toward grants to student teachers to help them pay for tuition. In addition, the Legislature appropriated a one-time increase of \$500,000 toward loan forgiveness in the Omnibus Education bill. We believe that increasing the presence of diverse teachers will positively contribute to the academic performance of students of color, and enhance our overall school climate.

Spoken Healthcare Interpreter Registry

Bill: Continuing our work from the 2016 legislative session, our Council partnered with health care stakeholders to advocate for the establishment of a health care interpreter registry within the Minnesota Department of Health. The Spoken Language Healthcare Interpreter Registry bill (H.F. 2023/S.F. 1708) sought to establish minimum requirements for quality interpreting services for patients with limited English proficiency by creating a statewide standard of language proficiency and ethics for spoken language health care interpreters. The bill proposed establishing two standardized categories for professional interpreters: (1) registered interpreters and (2) certified interpreters. Registered interpreters must either pass a simplified written or oral exam, or successfully complete a minimum of forty hours of healthcare interpreter training from an interpreting agency. Certified interpreters must have a national certification in health care interpreting. The proposal also provided additional resources for health care interpreters, including the establishment of a Spoken Language Health Care Interpreter Advisory Council, financial aid for interpreter testing and training, and formalized protections and complaints processes.

Our Council met with key legislators to advocate on behalf of Asian Pacific language interpreters, and community members with limited English proficiency. The bill did not pass during the 2017 session; however, we will continue to engage stakeholders and legislators to support this bill in 2018 and beyond. We recognize that as Minnesota becomes increasingly diverse, the demand for well-trained health care interpreters will continue to grow.



Southeast Asian Economic Relief Competitive Grant Program (Jobs and Economic Growth Finance and Policy Bill):

During the 2017 session the Legislature reexamined §12 of Minnesota Statutes 2016, the Equity Article. This was an appropriation of \$35 million approved during the 2016 session as an on-going funding through the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) for the purpose of addressing economic disparities in cultural communities. The Equity Article included a provision for the Southeast Asian Economic Relief Grant Program, which appropriated \$2 million on a biennial basis for competitive grants to organizations providing services that address economic disparities in Minnesota's Southeast Asian communities. During the 2017 session, the House proposed to eliminate the Equity programs altogether, and reallocate these funds to the Pathways to Prosperity Grant Program; whereas, the Senate proposed cutting the available funds by half, making only \$1 million per biennium available for the Southeast Asian Economic Relief Grant Program.

The Council monitored the decision-making process on the Equity Article, and ensured that our community-based organizations were

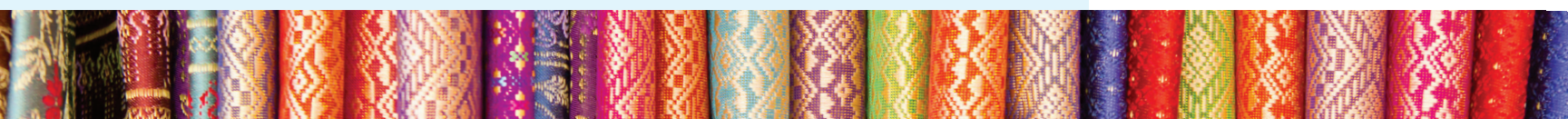


informed, and that they could take action as they saw fit. We communicated with key legislators, and provided them with the information we believed that they must have in order to make decisions in the interest of Minnesota's Southeast Asian communities. In the end, our work on behalf of our communities and our partnership with the Legislature resulted in the Legislature's decision to only cut the biennial funding for the Southeast Asian Economic Relief Program in FY2018-19 down to \$1 million (a 50% cut), and then restoring the Program to its initial FY2018-19 base appropriations of \$2 million, beginning in FY2020-21.



“In the next decade, we envision that the younger Karenni community members will be completing higher education, and have the ability to take part in advocacy on social and economic issues. We hope the emerging communities research report will help raise awareness of our community [the Karenni] in Minnesota, and contribute to more opportunities for newly arrived populations.”

WAI LINN, KARENNI COMMUNITY LEADER



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Council is proud of the progress we have made in delivering on our statutory duties. The ethnic origins of our communities, our geographic separation across the state of Minnesota, and the cultural and linguistic differences between our communities, may divide us as Minnesotans, and even Asian Pacific Minnesotans. Using our unique platform within state government, throughout 2017 the Council continued to serve as a unifying force between our many Asian Pacific communities, and between these communities and the legislative and executive branches of state government. We engaged with communities and state government through a number of carefully designed and implemented initiatives, including the following:

Strategic Planning “Shaping our Shared Future” Community Forums:

As a critical beginning to our strategic planning process, the Council co-convened with our community-based organizations forums in Rochester, Walnut Grove, and the 7-county Metro Area to help shape the future work of our Council. Altogether, approximately 150 individuals from our diverse community actively participated in facilitated community forums about the Council’s statutory duties, performance, and priorities. Their input has helped the board to set the course for the Council’s strategic plan for the next four years. We will adopt this strategic plan, and begin deployment in 2018.

Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Day at the Capitol:

API Day 2017 comprised of two components: legislative advocacy trainings on November 30th for more than 80 community and youth leaders who wished to learn and acquire advocacy basics, followed by the Day at the Capitol on February 8th. This year’s API Day at the Capitol attracted more than 600 members of our communities. Of these 600 attendees, well over 500 high school and college students, educators, and cultural and nonprofit leaders participated in 25 visits with key legislators in both the Senate and the House.

Legislative Session Recap:

On July 13th, the Council hosted our annual session recap during which we and key members of the Legislature reported to the community on the most relevant legislative decisions made during the 2017 session. The recap comprised of a bipartisan panel of members from both

the House and the Senate, followed by issues-oriented group conversations between these legislative members and about 80 members of our communities.

Asian Pacific Minnesotans Leadership Awards Dinner:

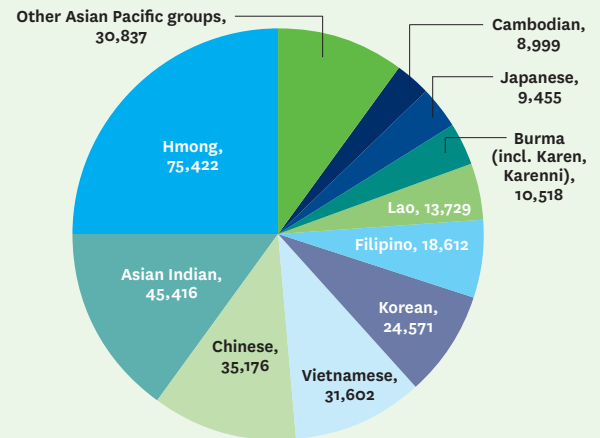
The Council brought together more than 450 community members for our annual Leadership Awards Dinner on October 19th, themed “Toward a More Perfect Union” in recognition of the 75th Anniversary of Executive Order 9066, and the 50th Anniversary of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights. Organizational and cultural leaders, legislators, judges, and representatives from more than a dozen of our Asian Pacific ethnic groups gathered to recognize five outstanding community members and/or organizations whose lives and work exemplify the best of our pan-Asian community. This year’s keynote speakers were Commissioner Kevin Lindsey of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights, and Judge Jamie L. Cork of the First Judicial District Court.

Gender-based Violence Stakeholder Engagement:

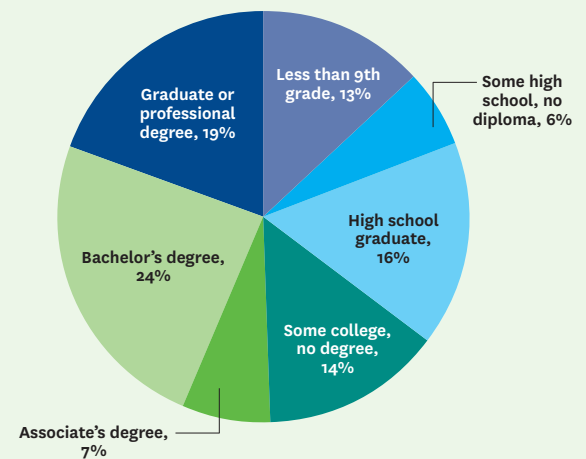
In preparation for the 2018 legislative session, we are engaging our Asian Pacific community-based organizations, subject matter expert mainstream organizations, local government offices, and law enforcement agencies in conversations about possible legislative proposals on gender-based violence. Input gathered from these conversations will shape the Council’s legislative initiative(s) during the upcoming legislative session, including a proposal that the State of Minnesota establishes a gender-based violence prevention program.

Total Population of Asian Pacific Minnesotans: 304,517¹

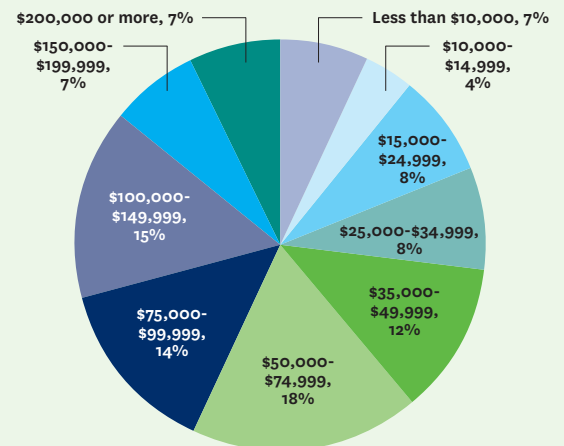
I. POPULATION BY COMMUNITY.¹



II. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT, ADULTS OVER AGE 25.²



III. HOUSEHOLD INCOME.²



1 U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey.
2 U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey.



Looking Ahead...



Dear Community Member,

Our staff at the Council looks forward to 2018 with great excitement. Great excitement because our work in our communities and at the Legislature indicates that when government and the people work together, we are much more likely to succeed in our individual and collective pursuits. Our enthusiasm is tempered by our knowledge of the challenges facing our society, and our democratic institutions from the local to the federal level. To achieve our statutory

obligations, the Council must make the case for both celebrating and honoring our differences, and maintaining our shared sense of American-ness.

We thank the Legislature and the Governor for the significant increase to our base budget in this current biennium. This increase allowed for us to maintain a functioning, cohesive, and consistent team at our Council, supported by the Small Agency Resource Team (SmART) in the Department of Administration. As a result, we have continued to maximize the significant ground work that we have put in place over the last four years, as guided by our biennial legislative agenda. This includes our plan to work with the 2018 Legislature to pass a bill that will further address gender-based violence in our state. We also plan to complete our Emerging Communities Report, begin implementation of our four-year strategic plan, and deploy our biennial community survey to gather input on our FY2020-21 legislative agenda.

We are proud of the progress our Council has made since 2013 in better serving the Legislature and our Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities. In our interactions with members of the Legislature and our communities, we have been humbled by the confidence they have in the leadership that our Council has been providing.

In 2018, we look forward to continuing our work to help the legislative and executive branches of state government more effectively serve all Minnesotans, in particular those descended from Asia and the Pacific Islands.

Sincerely,

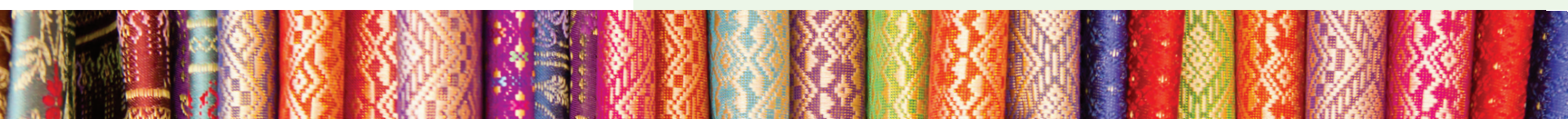
Sia Her
Executive Director



“Incorporating the values and aspirations of Asian Pacific Minnesotans into our policies at all levels of government will create goodwill, mutual understanding, health, and security for all.”

DR. ASHOKAKUMAR M. PATEL, M.D.
(PULMONOLOGIST, MAYO CLINIC, ROCHESTER)

FY17 Receipts and Expenditures	
General Fund	\$ 425,421.57
Revenue Funds	
(Annual Dinner Registration Fees)	\$ 524.01
	\$ 425,945.58
Expenditures	
Full-Time	\$ 280,585.75
Part-Time	\$ 7,708.56
Over-Time and Premium Pay	\$ 3,348.19
Other Employee Cost	\$ 4,185.00
Space Rental, Maintenance, and Utilities	\$ 22,359.76
Repairs, Alterations, and Maintenance	\$ 1,294.00
Printing and Advertising	\$ 4,189.11
Professional/Tech Services Outside Vendor	\$ 8,643.75
Communications	\$ 929.63
Travel and Subsistence-INST	\$ 1,321.66
Supplies	\$ 2,766.07
Employee Development	\$ 1,410.00
Other Operating Costs	\$ 5,487.93
Equipment-Non Capital	\$ 2,654.65
Centralized IT Services	\$ 21,702.59
State Agency Other Services	\$ 14,715.00
Annual Dinner Expenses	\$ 2,076.89
Total Expenditures	\$ 385,378.54
Net Balance	\$ 40,567.04



Council Staff Members



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. *Sia manages all operations and projects, and develops and implements strategic and well-informed plans to ensure that the Council delivers on its statutory duties. Contact: sia.her@state.mn.us*



Anjali Mishra Cameron, *Research Director*

Anjali joined the Council in 2016. Prior to her work at the Council, Anjali conducted public health research at the University of Minnesota and the University of Chicago, and worked with community-based organizations in Minnesota on advancing health equity. She has a bachelor's degree in neuroscience from Carleton College and a master's degree in biomedical sciences from Rosalind Franklin University. *Anjali conducts original research, assists the executive director with advancing the Council's major initiatives, and produces research reports to inform the Council's key constituencies about the state of Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities. Contact: anjuli.cameron@state.mn.us*



Karina Vang, *Office Manager/Executive Assistant*

Karina joined the Council in 2013. Prior to her time at the Council, Karina spent more than a decade in the private sector, providing high-level administrative support to managers and vice presidents. *Karina manages the office of the Council; administers and monitors the Council budget; assists with supervision of the Council's support staff; and performs and coordinates numerous administrative functions as the assistant to the executive director. Contact: karina.vang@state.mn.us*



Tou Xiong, *Legislative Liaison*

Tou joined the Council in 2017. Before joining the Council, Tou was an executive director for a neighborhood association, where he worked on community engagement and policy development. Tou holds a J.D. from Mitchell-Hamline School of Law and a bachelor's degree in economics from Saint Cloud State University. *Tou educates, informs, and engages Asian Pacific Minnesotans on issues of importance to these communities; assists in developing the Council's policy positions and legislative initiatives; and maintains close connection between the Council and other stakeholders. Contact: tou.xiong@state.mn.us*



Dave Sukharan, *Research Assistant*

Dave started out at the Council in 2016 as an intern while he was a student at the University of Minnesota. At the University, Dave assisted other nonprofit organizations such as the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program and the Center for Urban and Regional Affairs. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in microbiology, Dave is leveraging his experiences to delve deeper into public policy research. *Dave assists with research projects and community outreach; drafts social media content, graphic content, and community newsletter; and assists with support tasks as necessary. Contact: dave.sukharan@state.mn.us*

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 individuals and ethnic groups from over 40 nations.



“We are proud of the progress our Council has made since 2013 in better serving the Legislature and our Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities. In our interactions with members of the Legislature and our communities, we have been humbled by the confidence they have in the leadership that our Council has been providing.”

SIA HER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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MINNESOTA STATUTES 2017, CHAPTER 15, SECTION 15.0145 — ETHNIC COUNCILS

Subd. 2. Membership.

- (a) Each council has 15 voting members. Eleven members of each council are public members appointed by the governor. Four members of each council are legislators.
- (b) The governor shall appoint 11 members of each council as follows:
- (c) The Council on Asian-Pacific Minnesotans must include one member from each of the five ancestries with the state's highest percentages of Asian-Pacific populations, as determined by the state demographer. The other six members must be broadly representative of the rest of the Asian-Pacific population, with no more than one council member from any one ancestry. The council must include at least five women. For purposes of this clause, ancestry refers to heritage that is commonly accepted in Minnesota as a unique population.
- (d) Four legislators are voting members of each council. The speaker of the house and the house minority leader shall each appoint one member to each council. The Subcommittee on Committees of the senate Committee on Rules and Administration shall appoint one member of the majority caucus and one member of the minority caucus to each council.

Subd. 7. Duties of council members.

A council member shall:

- (1) attend and participate in scheduled meetings and be prepared by reviewing meeting notes;
- (2) maintain and build communication with the community represented;
- (3) collaborate with the council and executive director in carrying out the council's duties; and
- (4) participate in activities the council or executive director deem appropriate and necessary to facilitate the goals and duties of the council.



DAVID MAEDA
Term start: 6/16/2014
Term Expire: 1/1/2018
Ethnic community representing: Japanese



ANIL HURKADLI
Term start: 3/5/2016
Term Expire: 1/6/2020
Ethnic community representing: Asian Indian



GRACE LEE
Term start: 9/13/2015
Term Expire: 1/7/2019
Ethnic community representing: Korean



THAOKE HER
Term start: 3/5/2016
Term Expire: 8/31/2017
Ethnic community representing: Hmong



DAI HOANG
Term start: 2/2017
Term Expire: 1/6/2020
Ethnic community representing: Vietnamese



SHARON LIM
Term start: 2/2017
Term Expire: 1/4/2021
Ethnic community representing: Malaysian



HAFIZ MUNIR
Term start: 2/2017
Term Expire: 1/04/2021
Ethnic community representing: Pakistani



TSEWANG NGODUP
Term start: 2/2017
Term Expire: 1/4/2021
Ethnic community representing: Tibetan



GEORGE THAWMOO
Term start: 1/8/2014
Term Expire: 1/1/2018
Ethnic community representing: Karen



FAAMATI WINEY
Term start: 9/13/2015
Term Expire: 1/7/2019
Ethnic community representing: Polynesian/Samoan



ZOE ZHI
Term start: 2/2017
Term Expire: 1/4/2021
Ethnic community representing: Chinese



REPRESENTATIVE ROD HAMILTON (R)
Term start: 2/2017 Term Expire: N/A



REPRESENTATIVE CAROLYN LAINE (D)
Term start: 2/2017 Term Expire: N/A



SENATOR ROGER C. CHAMBERLAIN (R)
Term start: 2/2017 Term Expire: N/A



REPRESENTATIVE JOANN WARD (D)
Term start: 2/2017 Term Expire: N/A

1 OF 5 Communities in the “MINNESOTA’S EMERGING ASIAN PACIFIC COMMUNITIES” Report

Who are the Bhutanese?

The Nepali-speaking Bhutanese families in Minnesota are Bhutanese citizens of Nepalese origin. Beginning in the late nineteenth-century, large groups of Nepali migrants came to southern Bhutan for work and economic opportunities, eventually staying to raise families. These families became known as the “Lhotshampas,” which translates to the phrase “people from the south.” The Lhotshampas integrated into Bhutan and attained citizenship following the Citizenship Act of 1958, and by the 1988 census the Lhotshampas made up over 1/6th of the total population of Bhutan.

Estimated Population in Minnesota – 1,142

Major Religions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Kirat, and Christianity

Why did they leave Bhutan?

Beginning in 1985, the Buddhist Drukpa majority became concerned about the growing economic power of the Lhotshampas, who were majority Hindu. By the late 1980’s, the government census branded the Lhotshampa population as illegal immigrants, despite their ability to demonstrate citizenship and land ownership. The Bhutanese government adopted a “One Bhutan, One People” policy, mandating uniform language, clothing, and cultural practices. Individuals who were unwilling, or unable, to comply with new laws to match the culture and language of the North Bhutanese, were severely punished. The Lhotshampas protested, and in response, the government further restricted resistant efforts. As a result, many Bhutanese were arrested, detained, and tortured. In 1992, the UNHCR built camps in Eastern Nepal that housed more than 105,000 refugees, while others fled to the neighboring nation of India or other regions of Nepal.

The Bhutanese in Minnesota.

In 2008, approximately 6,000 Bhutanese refugees arrived in the United States, scattered through a number of different states. Ninety-eight percent of Bhutanese refugees in Minnesota are of Lhotshampa ethnicity. Bhutanese refugees tend to have higher English proficiency rates compared to other new refugee groups, because of higher quality language classes taught in Nepali refugee camp schools. It is estimated that thirty-five percent of Bhutanese refugees speak English upon arrival to Minnesota.

Many of Minnesota’s Bhutanese population are clustered in the suburbs of Roseville, Lauderdale, and East Saint Paul. Unlike other new immigrant communities, many Bhutanese are vegetarians, and therefore do not seek employment in the meat packing industry. Instead, community members rely on English proficient community leaders for assistance with job placement opportunities.



Minnesota Statutes 2017, Chapter 15, Section 15.0145 — Ethnic Councils.

Subdivision 6. Duties of council. (f) A council shall perform or contract for the performance of studies designed to suggest solutions to the problems of the constituency of the council in the areas of education, employment, human rights, health, housing, social welfare, and other related areas.

The Emerging Communities Report focuses on five emerging Asian Pacific communities in Minnesota, including the Karen, Karenni, Bhutanese Lhotshampa, Guyanese, and Chuukese peoples. The report's findings will feature an overview of each community's resettlement history; an assessment of each community's current population in Minnesota; and an analysis of each community's trending issues. As the demographic numbers for these communities grow, it is critical that policy makers, school districts, and community organizations have a broad understanding of each group's communal history. The Emerging Communities Report will shape our efforts to support these growing populations as they build communities in Minnesota.

Reference List

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University of Maryland. (2006). Assessment for Lhotshampas in Bhutan.

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Zander, D. (May 6, 2008). The other face of Bhutan: a report on the latest refugee arrivals in the U.S. Twin Cities Daily Planet.

2 OF 5 Communities in the “MINNESOTA’S EMERGING ASIAN PACIFIC COMMUNITIES” Report

Who are the Chuukese?

The Chuukese population come from the Chuuk Islands located in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), a nation composed of 607 islands in the Pacific Ocean. While Chuuk is one of four states within FSM, the Chuukese constitute almost fifty-percent of the total national population of Micronesia. The Chuuk language is primarily an oral traditional that is heavily rooted in music.

Estimated Population in Minnesota – 1,003

Major Religions – Christianity, specifically Catholic and Protestant

Why did they leave Micronesia?

Many Chuukese are practitioners of the traditional trades on the island, surviving on subsistence farming and fishing for their extended families. There are limited opportunities for higher education and employment on the Chuuk islands. In addition, the agricultural environment on their native islands is being compromised by increasing ocean water levels, which has led to island erosion, flooding, and crop degradation.

Immigration to the United States from the Federated States of Micronesia began in 1986, when the Pacific Island state signed a Compact of Free Association. Provisions in the Compact included aid for economic development, and the ability for citizens of Micronesia to freely move between the United States and their native islands. Under the Free Association Compact, Micronesians may work and reside within the United States, but are limited in options to attain citizenship, leaving them unable to fully integrate into a community. Without a pathway to citizenship, most do not qualify for federal loan programs or other federal support services.

The Chuukese in Minnesota.

The Chuukese migrated to Milan, Minnesota, in Chippewa County, after a local Minnesota banker lived with a host family on the Romanum Island of the Federate States of Micronesia. He helped this first family migrate to Milan, and many more families have come since that time. Religious service attendance is generally very high, and congregations support their churches, and are majority Christian.

Today, Micronesians are estimated to makeup over seventy-five percent of the Milan population. Approximately, 420 Chuukese reside in Chippewa County and the surrounding areas, working in poultry production facilities.



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3 OF 5 Communities in the “MINNESOTA’S EMERGING ASIAN PACIFIC COMMUNITIES” Report

Who are the Guyanese?

The Indo-Guyanese population come from the country of Guyana, located between Venezuela and Suriname. Guyana is a small nation in South America, covered with dense jungle on its southern border. As a result most Guyanese citizens live in settlements along the coast, and are heavily influenced by Caribbean culture. The population of Guyana is approximately fifty-percent Indian ancestry (Indo-Guyanese) and thirty-percent African (Afro-Guyanese). Guyana’s official language is English, but residents also speak a creolized version of English which heavily mixes in African languages and Hindi.

Estimated Population in Minnesota – 1,939

Major Religions – Hinduism and Christianity

Why did they leave Guyana?

From 1840 to 1920, the British government brought about 250,000 Asian Indians from northern India to Guyana to become indentured servants on the colony’s sugar plantations. Unlike indentured servants migrating from Western Europe, these Indian indentured servants were treated brutally by land-owners. The Indian populations were used to replace the African slave labor force, which had been outlawed within the British Empire.

In the late 1960’s, the People’s Progressive Party took control of the country for 20 years after independence. Guyana became a soviet, socialist state with 75% of businesses under government control. Indo-Guyanese residents were discriminated against under the People’s Progressive Party. An estimated 500,000 Guyanese have immigrated to the United States in the past 40 years, to escape Guyana’s corrupted government control.

The Guyanese in Minnesota.

The Indo-Guyanese have immigrated to the United States since the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965, searching for better economic prospects and a safer standard of life. The largest population resides in New York where they make-up the third largest minority group.

The majority of Minnesota’s Indo-Guyanese population reside in Hennepin County. Many are devout Hindus and attend regular religious services at Guyanese temples in Minneapolis and Farmington. The first wave of Guyanese Minnesota residents came from New York state, however, more populations are arriving to Minnesota directly from Guyana.



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4 OF 5 Communities in the “MINNESOTA’S EMERGING ASIAN PACIFIC COMMUNITIES” Report

Who are the Karen?

The Karen came to Minnesota from the mountain border state of Kayin, in Burma. In 2011, estimates for the worldwide population ranged from five to ten million. “Karen” is an English pronunciation of the Burmese word “Kayin”. While the Karen people may speak one of at least 12 different dialects, the Karen language has three main branches: Sgaw, Pwo, and Pa’o.

Estimated Total Population in Minnesota - 12,000

Major Religions - Christians, Buddhists, Animists, and very few Muslims

Why did they leave Burma?

Since 1949, many Karen populated areas have been subject to government insurgency and often persecution. Tens of thousands of Karen villagers have been forcibly relocated from their homes and many have fled to the neighboring nation of Thailand. In their native Burma, the Karen have suffered executions, forced labor, forced relocation, confiscation of land, human minesweeping, sexual violence and the burning of entire villages, in addition to open discrimination.

Nearly all Karen fled from the fighting and oppression, beginning in 1996. The United States made an open-ended offer in 2005 to resettle those Karen refugees residing in camps in Thailand.

The Karen in Minnesota.

An estimated twelve thousand Karen refugees and immigrants live in Minnesota. Most families reside in Ramsey County, with Saint Paul having the highest and fastest-growing Karen population in the United States. In Greater Minnesota, there are smaller populations of the Karen community in Marshall, Worthington, Austin, Albert Lea, and Faribault.

Secondary migration from other states is growing as families reunite with relatives who have already settled in Minnesota. Many Karen refugees choose Minnesota as their new home because of the social services and support infrastructure offered to refugees exceeds those offered in other parts of the country. The Karen are quickly replacing other immigrants in meat processing centers in Worthington, Albert Lea, and Austin.



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5 OF 5 Communities in the “MINNESOTA’S EMERGING ASIAN PACIFIC COMMUNITIES” Report

Who are the Karenni?

Karenni (-ni means “red”) refers to approximately 9 different ethnic groups, speaking many different languages and dialects, all residing in the Kayah state of Myanmar (Burma). The largest group in the Kayah state are the Kayah Li Phu people. The major language spoken by the Karenni people is Kayah Li. The Kayah state is also frequently referred to as the “Karenni” state.

Estimated Population in Minnesota - over 2,000

Major Religions - Mostly Christians, Buddhists, and Animists

Why did they leave Burma?

The Karenni are the ethnic majority from the Karenni state, a mountainous region in Burma, bordering Thailand to the east, Shan state to the north, and the Karen state to the south. There are an estimated 250,000 people living in the state. The Karenni state is one of Burma’s poorest, with weak infrastructure, poor healthcare, malnutrition, few educational opportunities, and very little economic development.

Like the Karen and other Burmese minority ethnic groups, the Karenni allied with the British forces during World War II. Upon the independence of Burma in 1948, the Karenni did not agree to sign the Panglong Agreement, which would have acceded their state to form the Union of Burma. Since that time, the Karenni population has experience Burmese occupation and suppression.

The humanitarian situation in the Karenni state has continued to deteriorate. The Burmese government does not permit foreign individuals to travel into the Karenni state. Therefore no access is granted to any third party impartial observers or humanitarian aid organizations. Suspected human rights violations include forced labor, land confiscation, torture, arbitrary executions, and sexual violence.

The Karenni in Minnesota.

Due to their small numbers, it is uncertain exactly how many Karenni live in Minnesota at this time. Based on aggregate data from community organizations, an estimated one to two thousand Karenni individuals reside in Ramsey County, and other areas of the state with high Karen populations. Many Karenni refugees find work in the meat processing industry or work in agriculture and manufacturing in Southwestern Minnesota.



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