



BIENNIUM REPORT

2021 – 2023

OCAPIA



Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs



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Letter from OCAPIA Chairs

January 16, 2023

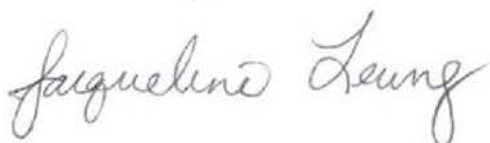
Dear Community Partners, Agencies, and Supporters:

What an exciting time. Despite the declaration of the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA) is proud to present our Biennium Report.

This report reflects the work we have completed over the past two years. From working on developing and maintaining relationships within our respective organizations or businesses to improve outcomes for the Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander communities and outreach and advocacy at the state legislature, OCAPIA's commissioners may have changed, but the work remains: to advocate and bring awareness, resources, and support for Oregon AANHPI communities.

On behalf of OCAPIA, as chair, I am excited to share with you the 2021-2023 biennium report. Several highlights include the work we did during covid-19 and how we continue to engage with our community. Continue onwards to read about the history and purpose of the commission, and learn about the work we continue to do, centered on equity, justice, diversity, and inclusion.

Sincerely,



JACKIE LEUNG

Introduction

Our vision:

We serve the people of Oregon to empower and support Asian and Pacific Islanders through our special roles as policy advisors to Oregon state policymakers and leaders. The OCAPIA is a catalyst that empowers partnerships between the state government and our communities in rural and urban areas to ensure success for all Asian and Pacific Islander Oregonians by addressing issues at the policy level.

Our mission:

The mission of the OCAPIA is to work for the implementation and establishment of economic, social, legal, and political equality for Asian and Pacific Islanders in Oregon and to maintain a continuing assessment of the issues and needs confronting Asian and Pacific Islanders.

Our Principles and Values:

- **Equity for Asian and Pacific Islander Oregonians in jobs and the economy, education, health, safety, family stability, environment, and civic engagement.**
 - **Equal treatment and protection against discrimination.**
 - **Access to helpful information on services and available resources.**
 - **Working in partnership on research and policy analysis of longstanding issues and barriers**
 - **to success within the API community statewide.**
 - **Inclusion of Asian and Pacific Islanders' viewpoints in policy making at the state level.**
 - **Celebration of and education about the contributions and achievements of Asian and**
 - **Pacific Islanders in Oregon.**
-

Our Statutory Goals and Strategic Priorities

- Advocate for equitable policies assuring the success of Asian and Pacific Islander Oregonians at the state level.
- Engage community and state partners to promote equity for Asian and Pacific Islanders across Oregon.
- Study and analyze issues affecting the Asian and Pacific Islander community statewide and recommend policy remedies to state policy makers.
- Grow and develop leaders among Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders at the state level in all branches.
- Increase the viability and visibility of the contributions and achievements of Asian and Pacific Islanders in Oregon.

OCAPIA is actively engaged in its statutory work focused on 7 Strategic Priorities each biennium.

These are:

- 1. Education**
- 2. Jobs and the economy**
- 3. Healthcare**
- 4. Justice, safety and policing**
- 5. Housing and stable families**
- 6. Civic engagement**
- 7. Environmental equity/justice**

Structure of Commission

The OCAPIA is comprised of eleven members, nine of whom are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Oregon Senate for three-year terms. The President of the Oregon Senate and the Speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives each appoints one Legislative member for two-year terms. All Commission members abide by the Commission's by-laws and the Oregon Code of Ethics set forth in ORS 244.050.

See OCAPIA member bios:

<https://www.oregon.gov/oac/ocapia/Pages/index.aspx>

The OCAPIA is supported by four full-time staff members in addition to three limited-duration positions. This very limited team is spread thin across four commissions: Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, Oregon Commission of Hispanic Affairs, Oregon Commission on Black Affairs, and Oregon Commission of Women. These staff members are responsible for all organizational needs of each of these commissions listed above. Task including but not limited to budgeting, political action, public meeting facilitation, outreach efforts, research efforts, public affairs, etc. These staff members must manage all of these efforts for a total of three other commissions all at the same time. As you can imagine, the workload of these staff members is not realistic. To fully accommodate the statutory (ORS.185) obligation of OCAPIA's efforts alone, 10-15 full time staff members are required. Every year, we are advocating for the increase of full-time OACO staff positions to the Governor's office. The work we are assigned will require more support staff. As for now, OCAPIA with this extremely small supporting staff, will continue to do the necessary work to uplift the APPI communities.

Meet The Commissioners



CHAIR JACQUELINE (JACKIE) LEUNG, SALEM

Executive Director, Micronesian Islander Community & Assistant Professor of Public Health, Linfield University.

As a public health advocate with a background in policy and advocacy, Jackie utilizes an equity lens in with a policy

perspective. She serves on boards and commissions, including maternal and child health, hunger, food insecurity, health equity, prenatal health, and Medicaid accessibility. While working toward her Ph.D. in public health & minors in ethnic studies and food and culture in social justice at Oregon State University, Jackie utilizes her law degree (from Willamette University) to help people navigate complex systems where citizenship status can present barriers.

SANG TZUN (SAM) PHAN, PORTLAND

Born Sang Tzun Phan (pronounced PAWN), Sam is a first-generation Asian-American. He is of Iu-Mienh descent, a minority group originating from China, and has lived in Portland his entire life. His family came to America as refugees of the Secret War. Throughout his life, he has continuously served his community directly which has led to him being a recipient of the Ford Family Foundation Scholars Scholarship. Sam



attended the University of Oregon where he received a Bachelor's in Political Science along with a Minor in Planning, Public Policy, and Management. Upon graduation, Sam worked at Trillium Family Services, a mental health non-profit for children and teenagers, as a Supervisor for their secure adolescent in-patient program. He then moved on to be a Program Coordinator for Multnomah County's Legal Resource Center where he assisted self-represented litigants in their cases. While at Multnomah County Courthouse, he founded the Presence of Color Employee Resource Group, an employee resource group dedicated to becoming a strategic partner with the management

COMMISSIONERS

of Multnomah County Circuit Court to promote a culture of diversity, equity and inclusion through continual learning, where he too served as the co-chair until he left to Oregon Emergency Management. Though he was only at OEM for a short time, he helped to finalize their Be 2 Weeks Ready Program and helped update their Community Emergency Response Team programs post-COVID pandemic. Currently, he works as a Legislative Aide for Oregon State Representative Thuy Tran and serves on the Iu Mien Association of Oregon board of directors. He also sits on the advisory council to the Asian Pacific Islander Family Center in Northeast Portland. In addition to this, he has also founded his own non-profit, Local Grown, and helped create accessible, community-funded scholarships and DACA grants.



JOHN IGLESIAS, EUGENE, OR

John D. Iglesias is President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Northwest Community Credit Union (NWCU). Headquartered in Eugene, Oregon, NWCU operates 15 branches throughout Oregon, serving approximately 110,000 members. NWCU has focused efforts in supporting, Asian, Black and Hispanic communities throughout Oregon.

Iglesias has had extensive experience in leadership roles for financial institutions and credit unions for more than 30 years.

Iglesias was born and raised on the beautiful island of Guam (U.S. Territory in the Western Pacific). He is an indigenous descendant of the Chamoru people who originally settled in Micronesia and Mariana Islands more than 4,000 years ago.

Iglesias joined the U.S. Air Force in 1983 and retired in 2010 from the U.S. Navy as an intelligence officer after more than 20 years of service. His area of support for much of his military career was in the Far East Theater of operations, where he worked extensively with South Korean and Japanese ground and air forces. He holds an AAS in intelligence from the Community College of the Air Force; a BS in education from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale; an MBA from Saint Martin's University. He is currently pursuing a PhD in leadership studies from Saint Martin's University.

Iglesias has also served on the boards of directors for the Greater Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce; Oregon Trail Council - Boy Scouts of America; Washington Business Week; Treehouse For Kids (foster child support); and Seattle Christian Schools.

His interests include traveling, hiking, golfing and biking in the Eugene-Springfield area where he lives with his family.

HIRAL PANDYA, BEAVERTON

Hiral Pandya, has been a resident of Beaverton Oregon for last 11+ years and living here with his wife and two sons. He has been working as an engineer employed by Intel since 2011. He is grateful to this country which gave him chance to pursue better life and have provided different opportunities to grow not only economically but also to be a better human being.



It is his firm belief that it is now my turn to giving back to the community and hence been involved in several community and cultural based activities and organizations mentioned below :

Diversity Advisory Board : DAB exists to advise the City on diversity, equity, and inclusion strategies that strengthen relationships among communities of color, immigrants, and refugees, and with city government. He has been member of Beaverton city council's Diversity Advisory Board since January 2021.

AAPI group at BSD School : He has been involved with AAPI group for Cooper Mountain Elementary School for last couple of years. It is a great effort initiated by one of the teachers and group has been growing every year.

WakeUp Beaverton! : WakeUp Beaverton! Strives to create a physical environment for racial, cultural, spiritual, and language diverse communities, in order to distribute assets, resources and to have spaces that provide educational opportunities and activities in partnership with the city of Beaverton.

Hindu Swayam-sevak Sangh (HSS) : HSS USA is voluntary, non-profit, social, educational and cultural organization which aims to coordinate the Hindu American community to practice, preserve, and advance ideals and values of Hindu Dharma.

SEWA : Lastly, Sewa international is a Hindu faith-based, humanitarian, nonprofit service organization which serves humanity irrespective of race, color, religion, gender or nationality. He has been involved in a food donation project named "SEWA Diwali" in the neighborhood for last three years which collects and donates food items to local shelters.

COMMISSIONERS



MARILYN MCCLELLAN PORTLAND, OR

Marilyn McClellan was born in the Philippines and grew up in the small town of Lakeview, Oregon. After graduating from High School she attended International Air Academy.

She has 17 years of Law Enforcement experience. She was employed with the Klamath County Jail/Klamath County Sheriff's office for eight years, the Oregon State Police for three years and the Oregon Department of Corrections for 6 years. She currently works at the Oregon Department of Human Services and is an active member of multiple diversity groups in Salem and Portland area.

She was involved in mentoring/volunteering for the Oregon State Penitentiary Asian/Pacific Islanders Club. This involved quarterly meetings with the Adult in Custody members of the club and working together on special projects. One special project was the grand opening of the Japanese Healing Garden at the prison. This was such a wonderful and emotional moment for the adults in custody, employees and invested members of the community. She hopes to see more Japanese Healing Gardens in our State. It's time for healing and a time to celebrate our cultures.




MICHAEL DEMBROW, PORTLAND, DISTRICT 23

Michael Dembrow is the state senator for District 23, covering portions of NE and SE Portland and the city of Maywood Park. First elected by voters in 2008 to the state house, he is serving his first term in the senate after being appointed to the seat in November 2013. Voters re-elected Michael to the senate in November 2014.

No stranger to public service, Michael is an English instructor at Portland Community College's Cascade campus in North Portland. He has been teaching writing and film studies at the college since 1981, and served as the President of the PCC faculty union for 16 years. He continues to teach one or two classes per term when the legislature is not in session.

Michael earned his undergraduate degree in English from the University of Connecticut and his Master's degree in Comparative Literature from Indiana University. Michael and his wife Kiki have lived in District 23 for over 30 years. They have a son, Nikolai and a daughter, Tatyana and two grandchildren. Michael is an avid runner and has completed the Portland Marathon multiple times. He and Kiki are proud parents of two whippets.



AANHPI Demographics for the State

AANHPI Demographics for the State

17.9%

combined AA & PI lack health insurance

AAPI residents increased by 48% between 2010-2020, including a growth of 65% for eligible AAPI voters ^[1]. AAPI youth (ages 18-29) comprise 28% of the AAPI Citizen Voting Age Population and Oregon AAPIs age 50 and up comprise 33% ^[1]. In the 2022 survey of registered voters, 37% of Asian Americans did not declare an identification with either political party ^[1]. Largest Asian American ethnic groups in Oregon include: Chinese, except Taiwanese (58,909), Filipino (43,735), Vietnamese (37,254), Asian Indian (33,745), Japanese (32,246) and Korean (25,664) ^[1]. Largest NHPI ethnic groups in Oregon include: Native Hawaiian (14,398), Other Micronesian (5,266) and Samoan (3,773) ^[1]. The counties with the highest AAPI populations (including multi-racial populations) include Washington (11%), Multnomah (14%), and Clackamas (7%) ^[1].

65%

growth for AAPI voters

There are about 50-80 Asian farmers in counties like Clackamas, Washington, Marion, Hood River, and Linn, and 10-30 Pacific Islander farmers in counties like Clackamas, Jackson, and Lane ^[2]. In 2012, Asians and Pacific Islanders owned businesses across Oregon, mainly in Clackamas, Washington, Multnomah, and Lane. The most common sectors of AAPI owned businesses include accommodation and food services, retail, and healthcare and social assistance ^[2]. Statewide, 5.7% of Asians and 12.2% of Pacific Islanders lack health insurance (compared to 6.2% of Whites). Multnomah, Washington, Lane, and Marion counties have the highest numbers of uninsured API people ^[2]. There are not many API childcare providers in Oregon, even in counties with high API populations ^[2]. Multnomah, Washington, Lane, and Marion have the highest number of API renters ^[2].

5%

**of the Oregon population
identify as Asian**

There has been a

119%

**AANHPI growth rate in
Oregon since 2000**

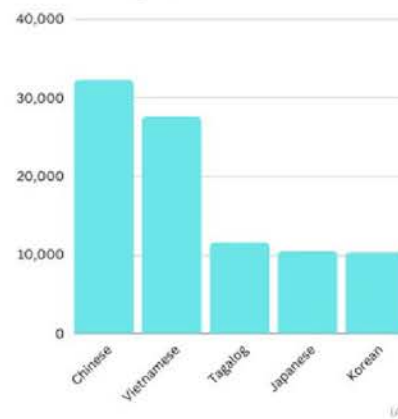
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As of the July 1st, 2022 Census, there are approximately 233,207 AANHPI (Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander) alone in the state of Oregon. They state that Asians alone represent 5.0% of Oregon's population. Where Asian is defined as, "A person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, India, China, the Philippine Islands, Japan, Korea, or Vietnam. It includes people who indicate their race as "Asian Indian," "Chinese," "Filipino," "Korean," [3]. The census went on to state that NHPI represents only 0.5% of Oregon's population. "Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander is defined as, "A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa, or other Pacific Islands. It includes people who indicate their race as "Native Hawaiian," "Chamorro," "Samoan," and "Other Pacific Islander" or provide other detailed Pacific Islander responses such as Palauan, Tahitian, Chuukese, Pohnpeian, Saipanese, Yapese, etc." [3]. The Oregon counties with the highest populations of AANHPI are Multnomah, Washington and Clackamas [1]. There has been a 119% AANHPI growth rate in Oregon since 2000 and a 48% growth rate since 2010. This number is only expected to continue to grow as AANHPI are the fastest racial groups in the US [1].

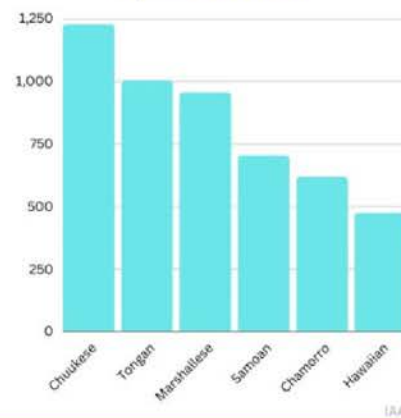
Oregon AANHPI demographic information below.

- The largest Asian American ethnic groups in Oregon includes: Chinese, except Taiwanese (58,909), Filipino (43,735), Vietnamese (37,254), Asian Indian (33,745), Japanese (32,246) and Korean (25,664) ^[1].
- The largest NHPI ethnic group in the state include: Native Hawaiian (14,398), Other Micronesian (5,266) and Samoan (3,773) ^[1].
- The top NHPI languages with more than 100 estimated speakers in Oregon are Chuukese (1,226), Tongan (1,002), Marshallese (954), Samoan (702), Chamorro (617) and Hawaiian (472) ^[1].

Top 5 Asian Languages Spoken in OR



The Top NHPI languages Spoken in OR

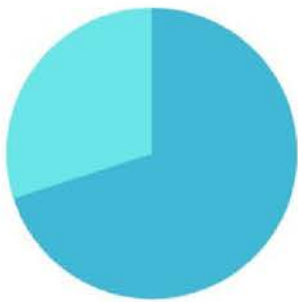


Important facts about current AANHPI population in Oregon provided by from AAPIA Vote and AAPI Data and the US Census.



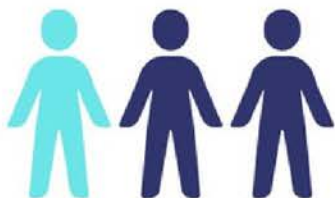
From 2010 to 2020, the number of AAPI voters in Oregon grew by

65%



70% of Asian American adults in OR speak a language other than English at home

(AAPI DATA)



33% of Asian American Adults in OR are Limited English Proficient

Voting:

- o From 2010 to 2020, the number of eligible AAPI voters in Oregon grew by 65% [1].
- o AAPI youth (ages 18-29) comprise 28% of the AAPI Citizen Voting Age Population (CVAP) in Oregon [1].

- o AAPIs age 50 and up comprise 33% of the AAPI CVAP [1].

- o In the 2022 survey of registered voters, 37% of Asian Americans did not declare an identification with either political party [1].

- o 70% of Asian American adults in Oregon speak a language other than English at home, and 33% are Limited English Proficient (speak English less than "very well") [1].

- o The top 5 Asian languages spoken in Oregon are Chinese (32,208), Vietnamese (27,550), Tagalog (11,527), Japanese (10,432) and Korean (10,246) [1].

- o In the 2022 Asian American Voter Survey, among Asian Americans that spoke a language other than English at home, 11% said that language has been a barrier in voting in previous elections and 42% said they would make use of voting assistance in their language (national-level data) [1].

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Economy:

Businesses:

- 118,927, Total employer establishments, 2020^[3].
- 1,664,087, Total employment, 2020^[3].
- 88,359,811 Total annual payroll, 2020(\$1,000)^[3].
- There are about 50-80 Asian farmers in counties like Clackamas, Washington, Marion, Hood River, and Linn, and 10-30 Pacific Islander farmers in counties like Clackamas, Jackson, and Lane^[2].
- In 2012, Asians and Pacific Islanders owned businesses across Oregon, mainly in Clackamas, Washington, Multnomah, and Lane^[2].
- The most common sectors of AAPI owned businesses include accommodation and food services, retail, and healthcare and social assistance^[2].

Housing:

- o Housing units - 1,837,079^[3].
- o 63.2% Owner Occupied housing unit rate, 2017-2021^[3].
- o \$362,200 is the medium value of owner-occupied housing units^[3].
- o Multnomah, Washington, Lane, and Marion have the highest number of API renters^[2].

Health:

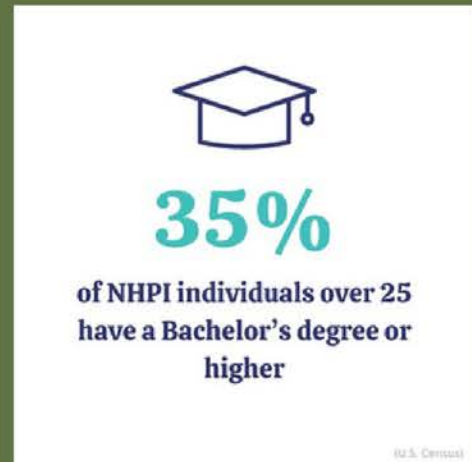
- About 9,556 Asian Americans in Oregon (5%) lacks health insurance.
- Multnomah, Washington, Lane, and Marion counties have the highest numbers of uninsured API people^[2].
- 7.3% Persons without health insurance, under the age of 65.
- 10.2% With disability, under the age of 65, 2017-2021^[3].
- About 1,802 NHPs in Oregon (11%) lack health insurance^[3].

Education:

- o 91% Asian are high school graduates, ages 25+, between 2017-2021 [3].
- o 31% Bachelor's Degree or higher, percent of persons ages 25+, 2017-2021 [3].
- o There are not many API childcare providers in Oregon, even in counties with high API populations [2].

§ NHPI specific

- 91.5% High school graduates or higher, percent of persons ages 25 +, 2017- 2021 [1].
- 35.0% Bachelor's degree or higher, percent of persons ages 25 year+, 2017-2021 [1].



AANHPI COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS

MARI WATANABE



After 11 years, Mari Watanabe retired as executive director of Partners in Diversity in April 2023. She remains at Partners in Diversity part time to help plan [Northwest Equity Summit](#).

As executive director, she oversaw all aspects of the nonprofit whose mission is to help employers diversify and retain their workforce in Oregon and southwest Washington. Up until November 2019, Mari split her time between Partners in Diversity and Leadership Portland, a 10-month civic engagement leadership program operated by the Portland Business Alliance.

Prior to Partners in Diversity, Mari was in the apparel arena for many years, working for corporations such as Nike, Nordstrom and Union Bay Sportswear. She is the first executive director of Oregon Nikkei Endowment, a Japanese American history and culture organization. Mari also served six years as the co-chair and chair on the Oregon Commission for Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, a governor-appointed commission to help create policies that support the Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Mari is the founding member of the City of Beaverton Diversity Advisory Board and serves on other nonprofit boards that support veterans, Japanese Americans, women, and the arts.

Mari has a diversity and inclusion certificate from Cornell University and an undergraduate degree from Washington State University in fashion merchandising.

Raised in Seattle, Mari moved to Portland in 2000.

Lee Po Cha



Lee Po Cha, MBA, became IRCO's Executive Director in April 2015. He has served IRCO since 1981 in a multitude of leadership roles, most recently as Associate Director and Director of IRCO Asian Family Center, which he helped found in 1994. A tireless advocate, Lee provides a voice for Oregon's increasingly diverse communities through his service on numerous commissions and boards, including the Governor's Commission on Senior Services, co-chair of the New Portlander Policy Council, the Home for Everyone Board, past president of the All Hands Raised Board, past president of the Hmong American Community of Oregon, and co-founder of the Coalition of Communities of Color.

A former Hmong refugee from Laos, Lee came to Oregon in 1978 and received his MBA from Marylhurst University. He embodies the vision of IRCO as an organization committed to helping each immigrant and refugee family achieve their full potential in their new home.

Bennie Moses-Mesubed



Bennie Moses-Mesubed is a daughter of the Republic of Palau, an island in the north Pacific within the Micronesian region. As a first-generation immigrant college student, she often experienced imposter syndrome and did not really understand how much the impacted of colonialism and its influence played in her conditioning and mindset. She

was taught that education was the most important choice that she could make to change her life and to have the future that will position her for success. She was not prepared for the many different experiences she would encounter as a racially diverse first-generation college student where often, she struggled to feel a sense of belonging and understanding. Her history, culture and lived experiences were not reflected in the textbooks, classroom discussions, practices, ideologies, in higher education, and places she resided at.

As an educator, Bennie is passionate in providing space for students to develop an understanding of these experiences as part of the intentionality of our systems in excluding certain groups from access to social mobility, support and resources that ensure success. She hopes to help reframe the conversation and ideology of exclusion in education to one that is inclusive and equitable for all people from different backgrounds and walks of life.

For over 20 years, she has been a resident of Eastern Oregon and an active advocate for equity and access for Pacific Islanders from the Freely Associated States (FAS)/Compact of Free Association (COFA) community in Oregon, and her students at Eastern Oregon University.

Bennie is currently the Associate Vice President for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Belonging at Eastern Oregon University. In this role, she serves as the senior diversity officer and a key advisor to university executive and senior leaders as well as collaborate with campus constituents to develop, integrate, and implement diversity, equity & inclusion best practices to processes, policies and practice. She also leads campus-wide efforts in developing sustainable diversity-centered initiatives, strategic and programmatic efforts on diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging, as well as cultural competence on campus. The work also includes developing relationships and engaging with key stakeholders to implement, and operationalize the University diversity strategic plan (including obligations under

HIGHLIGHTS

Oregon House Bill 2864); leadership with the DEI Response Advisory Team and Diversity Advisory Committee; and oversees the Center of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging.

Prior to Eastern Oregon University, she served as the Dean for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion at Columbia Basin College. As a member of the college leadership team and the President's Cabinet, she served as the co-chair for the college Inclusive Strategic Plan implementation team. Using an equity framework, she provided support for campus constituents to develop equity centered strategies to align with CBC's mission, vision, goals, and initiatives. Bennie also served as a co-chair for CBC's diversity committee and worked to support campus members in applying equity minded practices in their daily work, mindsets, practices, and general operations. She also served as a member of the Diversity Officers Commission and the Financial Aid Audit Committee for the Washington State Board of Community and Technical Colleges.

Bennie has over 20 year's experience working in higher education from Academic Support to University Advancement & Alumni Relations, Student Affairs and in the Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. She has also served in several Oregon boards including the Oregon Governor's Racial Justice Council, Oregon Commission on Asian Pacific Islander Affairs, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, COFA Alliance National Network, Oregon Community Foundation Eastern Oregon Leadership Council as well as local Eastern Oregon boards such as Shelter from the Storm Domestic Violence program and Art East.

She earned her bachelor's degree in philosophy, politics & economics and a master's degree in business administration from Eastern Oregon University in La Grande, OR. Bennie is passionate about diversity, equity, and inclusion as a foundation to building an inclusive community/society where everyone matters, feels dignified, and thrives.



Purpose

What We Do:

The Commission members work collaboratively to raise awareness and address challenges facing Asian and Pacific Islander (API) populations across the state. We do this by researching issues, informing discussions and providing advice for state policy makers, including the Governor, legislators and departmental leaders, on ways to improve the success of our communities throughout Oregon. We promote leadership of Asian and Pacific Islander Oregonians in state decision-making around issues that affect our lives and our success by recommending API leaders to the Governor for appointments to boards and commissions, to the legislature for participation on taskforces and workgroups, and fundraising to provide scholarships to leadership training for API youth and emerging leaders from our communities.

Each legislative session OCAPIA commissioners go to the capitol and work with our community partners and legislators to support equitable policymaking. OCAPIA's 7 priority areas guides our efforts during the session. We track and testify in support of bills that level the playing field for AANHPI success. Our activeness during the session results in the passing of bills that advance the current standing of the AANHPI community. OCAPIA will continue participating in policy making to ensure our population are not forgotten.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & ENGAGEMENTS

Oregon's Governor signed the proclamation supporting AANHPI Heritage Month. This act helps to bring notice to the importance and presence of the AANHPI community within this state. The US Department of Agriculture notes that "AANHPI Heritage Month is a time to reflect upon and celebrate the remarkable role of the AANHPI community in our nation's history".^[4] The AANHPI community respects and appreciates this act done by the Governor. Oregonians need to know what significant part the AANHPI community plays in the world today. We are stronger together! Let us continue to support the advancements of AANHPI residents in Oregon.

AANHPI Heritage Month

STATE OF OREGON
PROCLAMATION
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

- WHEREAS:** Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders have lived and worked in Oregon for more than 200 years, with a history marked by a struggle for freedom, equity, and justice, prevailing over the adversity of exclusion, persecution, incarceration, and disparities; and
- WHEREAS:** Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have advanced Oregon's prosperity through their contributions to all fields of education, business, the arts, economic development, science, healthcare, and technology; and
- WHEREAS:** Asian and Pacific Islander communities, as well as the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, are dedicated to achieving full participation and inclusion in the social, economic, and political decisions that affect their families, building stronger alliances across all communities in Oregon; and
- WHEREAS:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, long-term health and economic disparities have widened, and hate and bias incidents against Asian and Pacific Islanders have increased. Oregonians must denounce xenophobia, discrimination, and stigma against Asian and Pacific Islander communities, and commit to solidarity and healing; and
- WHEREAS:** The vibrant history and diverse cultures of Oregon's Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are here to be honored and respected as a central part of our state's story. This month, Oregon celebrates contributions of Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders to our society and collective history.

**NOW,
THEREFORE:** I, Kate Brown, Governor of the State of Oregon, hereby proclaim **May 2022** to be

ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH

in Oregon and encourage all Oregonians to join in this observance.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I hereunto set my hand and cause the Great Seal of the State of Oregon to be affixed. Done at the Capitol in the City of Salem in the State of Oregon on this day, April 13, 2022.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Brown".

Kate Brown, Governor

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Shemia Fagan".

Shemia Fagan, Secretary of State

National AA and NHPI Data Equity Summit



On May 24th 2022, OCAPIA attended the National AA(Asian Americans) and NHPI (Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander) Data Equity Summit ^[5]. This summit showcased and discussed the progress made on data and research involving AA and NHPI populations with a focus on racial equity. AANHPI are the fastest-growing racial groups in the United States ^[1]. Accompanying this rise is a growing interest in these populations from journalists and public officials. There is also a growing number of data sources, reports by government agencies, and academic studies on AAPI needs and concerns. AAPI Data seeks to make policy research and demographic data on AAPIs more accessible ^[5]. And AAPI strives to keep its information current and useful, with data and research that are as rigorous and accurate as possible. They also regularly help journalists, community organizations, and decision-makers make better sense of data and research. OCAPIA attend this event on a yearly basis in order to learn and retrieve concrete data that influences their priorities for their community.

Denise Ross, Chief Data Scientist of the US, shared the parameters around the studies conducted which includes:

- Work to ensure more equitable measurement of the people of this country
- Identifying inadequacies in our existing federal data infrastructure and laying out a strategy for improving data practices in the federal government.

- To build equitable strategies in communities of practice around specific domains like health, criminal justice, and the economy by leveraging existing networks tackling these challenges
- How the US government can more effectively provide assistances to the AANHPI residents who life's have been impacted by catastrophic weather-related events.
- Shine a light on the progress or lack thereof, towards serving marginalized population including baselines of current conditions. This includes inventorying and publishing of existing data, increasing usability of disaggregated federal statistics, and building community capacity to use such data.

It is very clear that the US government is taking the livelihood of the AANHPI populations seriously. This summit brought to us a thorough walked through of these topics. Creating a complete picture of the current state of AANHPI in the US. The growing pains of the AANHPI communities are highlighted by studies such as this one and many others conducted around the US. Complete studies help guide OCAPIA in our mission and statutory responsibility's. OCAPIA will remain active and vigilant in supporting acts surrounding the transparent collection of data of the AANHPI population. In addition to promoting the significant of this data.

Rise Above Hate



On May 14th, OCAPIA Sponsored Oregon's "Rises Above Hate" Event. As AANHPI Hate continues to grow, this event shines a light on the community encouraging them to stay strong. For this daylong event, thousands of community members including countless organizations stood in support of the AANHPI community. Celebrating Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month and the AANHPI communities' resilience against these attacks. In addition to highlighting commitment to combat the continued rise anti-Asian hate. These community leaders and elected officials attended: State US Senator Jeff Merkley, Metro Councilor Duncan Hwang, Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal, Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, ORAH organizer & Philanthropist Anne Naito-Campbell, The Pacific Islander Community Coordinator for Immigrant & Refugee Community Lute Richards, Multnomah County Commissioner Lori Stegmann. We will continue to support the efforts of "Rises Above Hate" because our lives depend on it.

AANHPI Hate crimes have fluctuated over the past decade. However, the visibility of these events is now more prevalent in the public eye. On March 16th, 2022 a devastating mass shooting resulted in eight lives lost, six of whom were Asian American women. This tragic hate crime took place in Atlanta, Georgia by a 22-year-old white man who was motivated by race and gender, stated by Frances Kai-Hwa Wang. This is only one instance of the growing hate against the AANHPI community.



Photo By: theSkimm'



Photo By: ajc.com

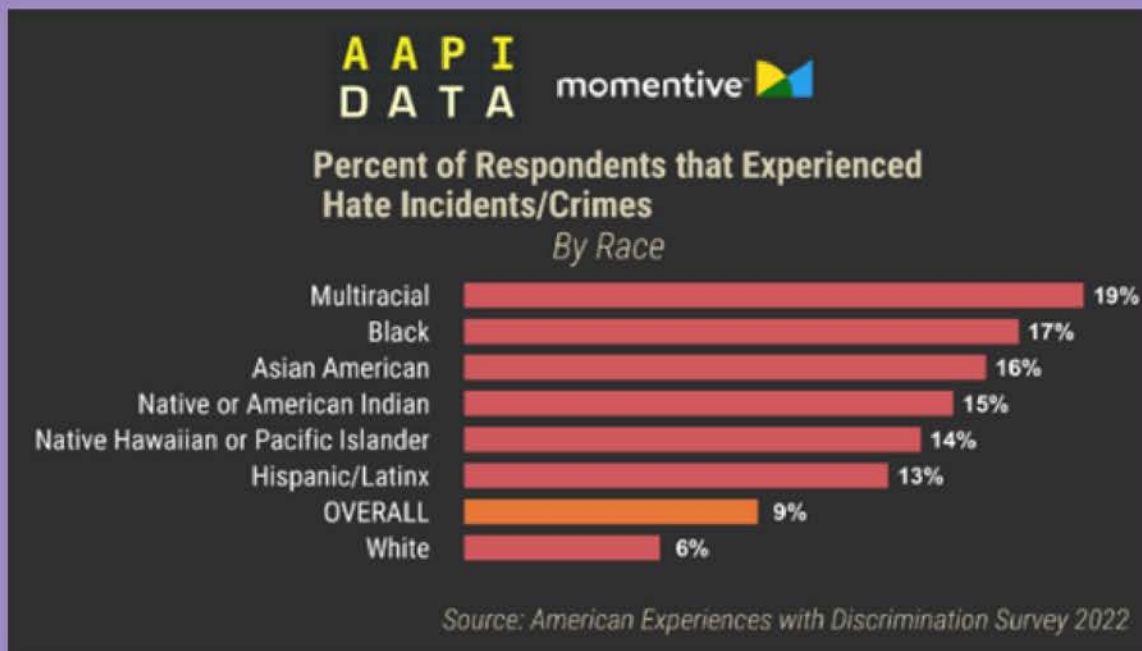


Photo By: vox.com

“Since 2020 over 10,000 hate crime have taken place across the US.” – Fox 12 News [7]

In cities around the nation there are records tracing these heinous crimes. The findings are very alarming.

- “anti-Asian hate crime increased by 339 percent last year compared to the year before, with New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and other cities surpassing their record numbers in 2020” - Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism [8].
- In California alone “Anti-Asian bias events increased 177.5% from 89 in 2020 to 247 in 2022” - ROB BONTA (Attorney General) [9].
- Over the past 5 years Oregon has AAPI have over 5% of hate crimes were against AANHPI [10].
- AAPI Data reports, 30% of AAPI have experienced Hate incidents/Crimes in 2022 alone [11].

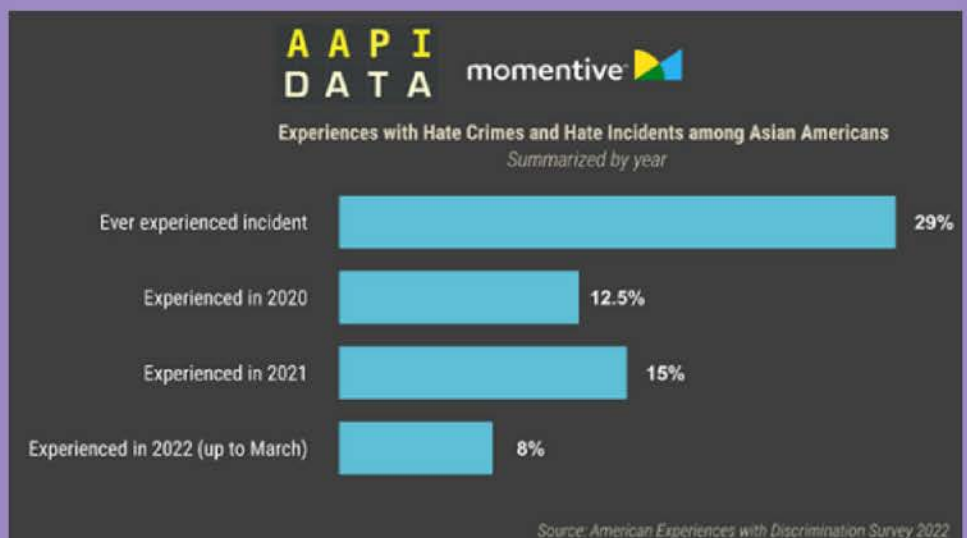
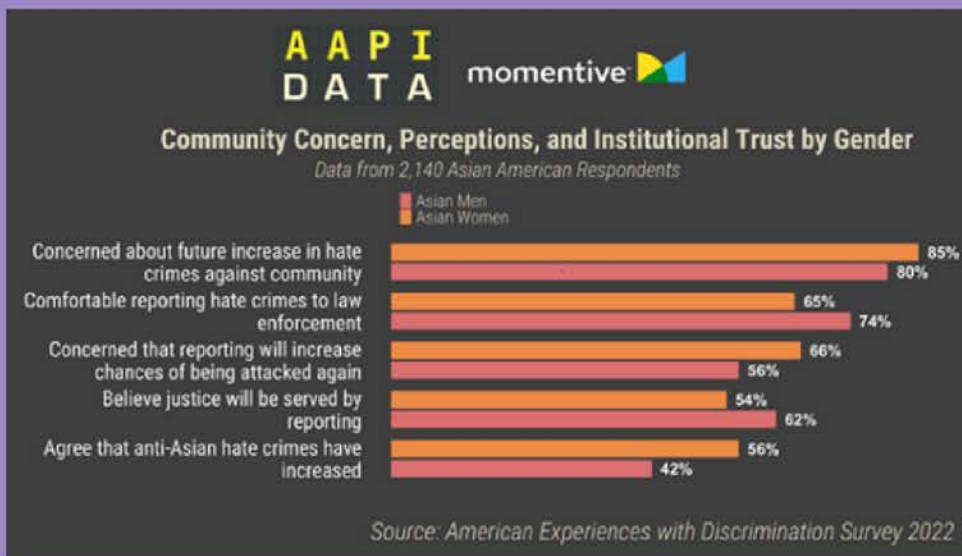



In a survey conducted by AAPI DATA, “Asian residents believed that these hate crimes will continue against our community” [11]. They are not comfortable reporting hate crimes to law enforcement and approximately only half believe justice will be served as a result of reporting [11]. These feelings are not new to our community. One of the biggest issues that AANHPI face today is the treatment of our children. How they will be treated in the coming years? Therefore, it is vital that OCAPIA continues to support initiatives that uplift the AANHPI community.

“Hatred can be overcome only by love.” - Mahatma Gandhi

AANHPI Hate is having a tremendous impact on the mental health of the AANHPI population, reported by AAPI Data [12]. Higher levels of stress and anxiety were reported over the past 12 months due to discrimination, harassment/or violence. Having a sense of safety as you and your children leave the house every morning is not the reality for the majority of AANHPI. “East Asian women (51%) were significantly more likely to report feeling more unsafe today compared to other AANHPI subgroups”. The mental health of AANHPI has increasingly worsened in the past 12 months. This has also caused a reported 20% of AANHPI to make modifications to their behavior and advised their children to do the same. Even going to the extent of advising their families to stay away from public areas. Living in this constant fear has certain AANHPI community members contemplating returning their kids to in-person learning due to bullying and the like. This is no way to live.

This is not a new phenomenon; the AAPI community has been dealing with these issues for decades. However, that does not make it ok. The growing mistreatment of the AANHPI community is having a lasting impact on the youth and future generations of AANHPI. These fears and mental health issues will not get better if we do not push for legislation to make AANHPI hate in all forms a high priority.



The background features a dark blue field with vibrant, expressive brushstrokes in shades of purple, green, and red. Two large, overlapping circles are positioned in the center: a white one on the left and a yellow one on the right. A blue rectangular box is centered over the intersection of these circles, containing the title text.

Response to North Medford High School

On November 18th 2021, a discriminatory act towards a minor student took Oregon by storm. Discrimination takes on four main forms including but not limited to: direct, indirect, harassment, and victimization^[13]. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission list these protected characteristics: Age, Disability, Equal Pay/Compensation, Genetic Information, Harassment, National Origin, Pregnancy, Race/Color, Religion, Retaliation and Sex ^[14].

The NMHS incident involves one or more of these protected characteristics. This unapologetic incident stirred up much controversy and concern regarding the NMHS School district and the treatment of all culturally diverse students and working populations.



Photo By: ed.week.org

Summary of incident from the OACO (Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office)Memorandum ^[15].

“On November 18, 2021, an incident occurred between a NMHS(North Medford High School) staff member and members of the NMHS Pacific Islander Club (PIC), where a cultural and traditional dance, tausala, was equated to sex work. Students attempted to educate the staff member about the Samoan fundraising tradition. The staff member was not satisfied with the explanation and repeated the statement to minor students. The staff member attempted to instruct students to modify their cultural tradition in a manner that would conform with dominant culture. The staff member then reportedly discussed the incident with school administrators without including the students. Students were distressed and marginalized by the incident and sought resolution with the principal. The response from the principal did not convey urgency or gravity to the affected students. The principal scheduled a 15-minute meeting for the students and faculty advisor to discuss the incident two weeks after the PIC’s complaint and request for a meeting and did not immediately respond to the letter presented by the students, faculty advisor, and community advocate at that meeting. The delayed response and lack of prioritization of affected students’ well-being violated Medford School Policy Code ACB-AR “Bias Incident Complaint Procedure” (see Appendix A).

Community members were appalled by the sexualization of their minor children, the disparaging remarks against their culture, and the negative impact it has on their children's self-identity and self-worth. Students and community members attempted to resolve the issue by inviting the staff member and principal to attend an event with community. Neither attended the event held on December 12, 2021. Community members felt a lack of support and dismissal of the harm they and their students incurred. They did not feel that school leadership took their bias incident concerns seriously. Students and community members filed a formal complaint with the superintendent, after the response window to their complaint closed with no action by the principal.

Photo By: sdgresources.relx.com



A community advocate sent an “open letter” email to their Pacific Islander network and allies describing the November incident and the unsuccessful attempts by the PIC students, advisor, and their families to resolve the issue. The advocate sought support to raise awareness of the issue and to garner a satisfactory response from NMHS and the Medford School District (MSD). They included school and district administrators’ contact information and an invitation to support the Pacific Islander community at the Medford School Board Meeting on December 16. Responsiveness by MSD increased as external parties, including the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators (COSA), the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO), and others began inquiries on the Incident.

OCAPIA partnered with IRCO in drafting a response to the incident and their shared concerns. The OACO kept various interested state actors apprised of the situation and the actions contemplated by OCAPIA. The OACO reached out to community members and school administrators on December 15, to inform them that an OACO representative would attend the school board meeting on December 16 and requested a meeting with school leadership.”

OCAPIA along with IRCO (Immigration and Refugee Community Organization) followed up on December 16th, 2021 with a signed Letter to NMHS Superintendent Dr. Bret Champion and NMHS Principal Gregg O'Mara. On this day, the Executive Director of OACO, Albert Lee, met with NMHS Equity Coordinator, the principal, the superintendent, and the school board chair. Director Lee attended this meeting on behalf of OCAPIA and IRCO. Here he presented this joint letter and expressed their concerns of this bias incident and the alleged lack of an adequate response.

On December 17th, 2021, Director Lee met with the NMHS PIC students and community members for three hours. During this meeting personal stories shared amongst the attendees created an immediate bond. Students expressed their past and present experiences and concerns on how to make Medford's environment more inclusive. After being introduced to OCAPIA's purpose by Director Lee, he shared the joint letter with IRCO in support of the students. They spoke of cross-state networks and connections for PIC students. "Director Lee engaged students in a discussion on navigating dominant culture while maintaining identity, codeswitching, and support."^[15]. The significance of this meeting spoke to the critical impact that OCAPIA plays in the lives of Pacific Islander Communities in Oregon. This meeting concluded with Director Lee being sent off with a Samoan Hymn, UfiUfi, a bid of safe travels and farewell.

Conclusion of Memorandum,

“Conclusion OCAPIA played an integral role in partnership with IRCO to support a subset of the community for which they serve. Coordinated actions by OCAPIA produced a positive influence on actions of relief for community members. Community members feel supported and feel encouraged to remain civically engaged” [15].



Photo By: Ke Alaka'i.byuh.edu

The result of OCAPIA's actions created space for AANHPI confidence to grow and room for community building in Medford. Without OCAPIA's presence, there is no telling what the result of this incident would have been. Would things have truly been addressed? Would the Pacific Islander communities' voices have been heard? Would it have gotten worse? OCAPIA is honored to be a vital asset to the AANHPI community that helps strengthen their position of resilience in every county of Oregon. As a result of Director Lee's meeting with NMHS representatives and community members, the superintendent began collaborating with community members on a letter of apology to the students and community.



Advocating for Equity and Diversity
throughout Oregon
421 SW Oak Street
Portland, OR 97204
O: 503.302.9725
E: oaco.mail@oregon.gov

December 16, 2021

North Medford High School
1900 N Keene Way Dr
Medford, OR 97504

To Gregg O'Mara and Dr. Bret Champion,

The Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA) and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) are standing with Pacific Islander students at North Medford High School and applaud their advocacy and efforts to speak up around the incident of discrimination and derogatory remarks towards their cultural traditions. It is not the responsibility of students to educate school administration on the diversity of cultural traditions, rather it is the responsibility of school administration to not continue perpetrating feelings of otherness and degradation of students' cultures. Students face many pressures from peers, family traumas, and the greater community to assimilate, which already causes great harm on student confidence and success within education systems, as well as creates greater harm to preservation of culture within communities.

Furthermore, we denounce the lack of accountability and timely support towards the students by the school administration, even when the students bravely reached out and asked for reconciliation. Our students deserve better, they deserve to feel seen, to feel heard, and given space for healing and restorative justice within their community.

As immigrant, refugee, and Pacific Islander cultural organizations and individuals from all over the state, we hear the students and feel the struggle of North Medford High School's Pacific Islander Club. We invite the club's students and advisors to connect with us and know that we are a resource to them, whenever they need. We also invite the district's administration to seek support from us on restorative justice practices.

In Oregon, our Black, Indigenous, immigrant, refugee, and students of color face many challenges of visibility and support within schools that have detrimental effects on their educational success. We acknowledge that this harm is a greater reflection on systemic hate and bias that needs



**Oregon Commission on
Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs**

Chair:
Mohamed Alyajouri

Vice-Chair:
Jessica Asai

Commissioners:
Susan Soonkeum Cox
John Iglesias
Jacqueline Leung
Toc Soneoulay-Gillespie
Neha Subramanyam

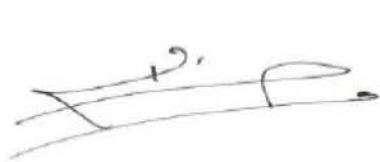
Legislative Members:
Senator Michael Dembrow
Representative Khanh Pham

**Oregon Advocacy Commissions
Office Staff**
Albert Lee, Executive Director
Nancy Kramer, Policy Research
Advocacy
Dr. Kyl Myers, Community
Engagement Liaison

support from all our community institutions, groups, and individuals. For immediate response, we request that the Medford School District provide:

- A written public apology that addresses this incident and acknowledges the effects on students.
- Immediate action, to respond to this incident and create prevention for future incidents, following Oregon Department of Education's [Every Student Belongs](#) and the [Resolution Encouraging Solidarity and Support for Student Identities](#).

Signed,



Mohamed Alyajouri,
OCAPIA Chair



Toc Soneoulay-Gillespie
Commissioner



Susan Soonkeum Cox,
Commissioner

Djimet Dogo
IRCO

Mark Kajitani
IRCO



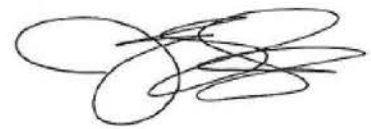
Jessica Asai
OCAPIA Vice Chair



Jackie Leung
Commissioner

Neha Subramanyam
Commissioner

Bryna Cortes
IRCO



John Iglesias
Commissioner



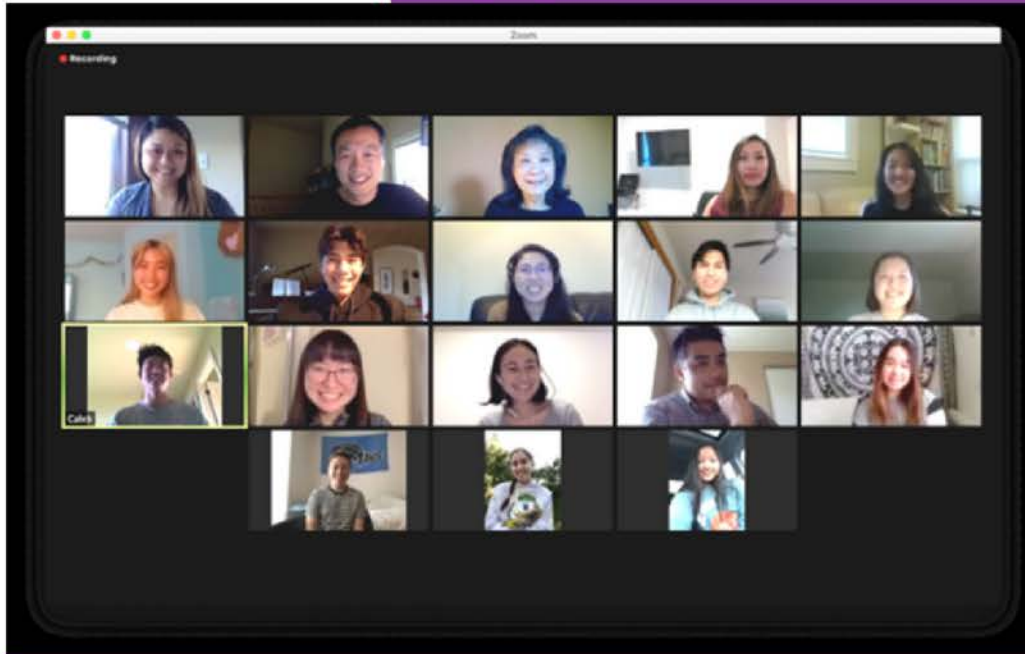
Senator Michael Dembrow
Legislative Member

Lee Po Cha
IRCO Executive Director

Jenny Bremner
IRCO



PANEL WITH IRCO'S AAPI YOUTH GROUP




IRCO (Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization) serves the holistic needs of Oregon's immigrants, refugees and mainstream community members. Since 1994, "IRCO Pacific Islander and Asian Family Center (PIAFC) was the very first culturally and linguistically specific one stop community center focused on the diverse needs of Pacific Islanders and Asians" ^[16]. For years, OCAPIA has done work with IRCO to help further the advancement of the AANHPI community. Great headways for our communities have been the product of IRCO and OCAPIA's actions. For example, the Medford incident above. OCAPIA will continue to support and partner with IRCO in future years to come.

Every year OCAPIA supports IRCO's and Asian American Youth Leadership Alliance. Their mission is, "Helping Asian American youth rise above the obstacles before them to achieve their potential by promoting education, instilling self-confidence, and developing leadership skills" ^[17]. They successfully gather students from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Cambodian, Chinese, Filipino, Hmong, Indian, Iranian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Mien, Pacific Islander, Pakistani, Thai, Tibetan, and Vietnamese. At this gathering held on April 23rd, 2021, with Keynote speaker Katherine Ho. The theme this year was "Together in Solidarity".

The events workshops include

- "Gerrymandering and Voting"*
- "The Context of Asian American Mental Health"*
- "Telling Your Own Story and Why it is Important"*
- "Mental Health and Asian Youths"*
- "Vote with your voice - ACTivism, Turn your voice into a hundred votes"*
- "Befriending your emotions"*
- "Fighting AAPI Mental Health Stigma"*



The variety of workshops allowed students to explore topics that have played critical roles in their community for generations. Opening the minds of the youth and giving them a platform where their voices are heard is important. Events like this give AANHPI students validity in their feelings and emotions that sometimes go overlooked. IRCO's efforts and dedication continues to create safe spaces for the AANHPI community. OCAPIA will continue to support the expansion and growth of the young minds of the AANHPI populations via events like this.

Local Grown

On Oct 15th 2022, OCAPIA partnered with Local Grown, a Portland based non profit, to host a community dinner in NE Portland. This event was in collaboration with multiple AAPI groups in Oregon as well as Texas organization, Laotian American National Alliance, to promote voter participation amongst the SE Asian community in Portland. At this event, community members were able to register to vote and update their registrations, while also enjoying cultural meals from e-San Thai and cultural performances.

In partnership with Laotian American National Alliance


Local Grown

COMMUNITY DINNER

15 OCTOBER 2022
5:30 PM - 8:00 PM

IRCO Community Center
10323 NE Glisan St, Portland, OR 97220

Brought to you by:



Music provided by
DJ SangPeezy

Videography by
Jerrell Waddell

Photography by
Chanh Saechao

Food provided by:

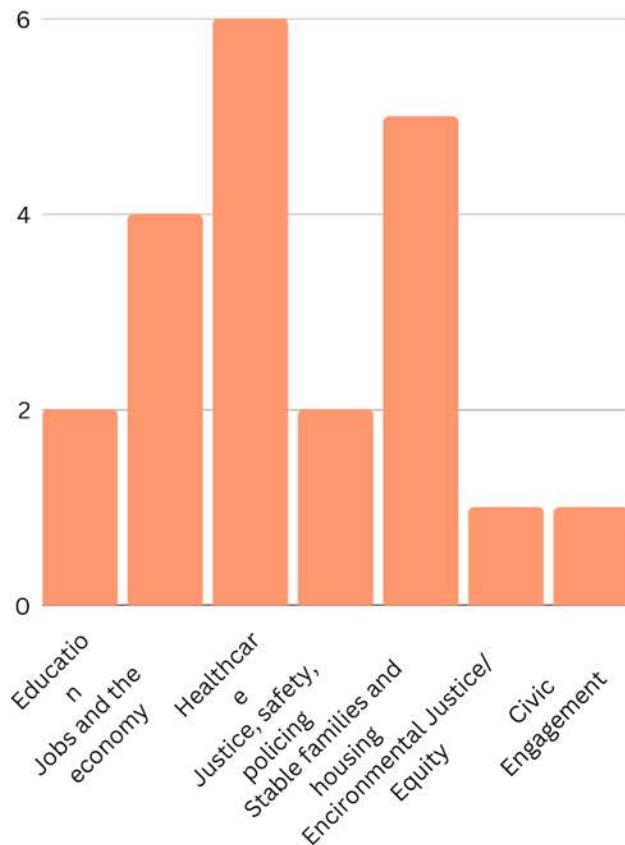


Flyer By: Local Grown

2022 SUPPORTED LEGISLATION

According to OCAPIA's bylaws, the legislative committee proposes legislative concepts and coordinates testimony. During the 2022 legislative short session, OCAPIA testified on 22 bills with 8 passing. All bills supported dwell within one of our 7 Strategic Priorities:

- 1. Education
- 2. Jobs and the economy
- 3. Healthcare
- 4. Justice, safety and policing
- 5. Stable families and housing
- 6. Environmental Justice/Equity
- 7. Civic engagement



A List of Bills supported:

HB 4058- Directs Oregon Health Authority to create program to acquire and distribute air conditioners and air filters on emergency basis to individuals eligible for medical assistance.

HB 4088- Requires Department of Human Services to develop plan, with advice from work group, to implement Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Restaurant Meals Program in Oregon and report plan to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to human services no later than January 31, 2023.

*SB 1538- Establishes COFA Dental Program in Oregon Health Authority to provide dental care to low-income citizens of Pacific Islands in Compact of Free Association who reside in Oregon.

*SB 1543- Provides for nonprofit organization that addresses and executes worker relief to serve as fiscal agent to award grants to organizations to provide services related to immigration matters through universal representation program.

*SB 1545- Establishes grant programs in Higher Education Coordinating Commission to provide funding for workforce development activities that aim to increase access for priority populations to training opportunities in technology, health care and manufacturing and to workforce development services and benefits.

*SB 1579- Directs Oregon Business Development Department to develop and implement Economic Equity Investment Program to award grants to organizations that provide culturally responsive services to support economic stability, self-sufficiency, wealth building and economic equity among disadvantaged individuals, families, businesses and communities in Oregon.

HB 4147- Allows persons convicted of felony to register to vote, update voter registration and vote in elections while incarcerated.

*SB 1560 A- Updates statutory references to individual who is not citizen or national of United States to replace "alien" with "noncitizen." Directs state agencies to use "noncitizen" in rules and regulations to reference individual who is not citizen or national of United States and to update rules and regulations that use "alien" to use "noncitizen." Authorizes agencies to amend rule without prior notice or hearing for purpose of changing term or phrase in order to conform with change made by law.



HB 4088 A- Requires Department of Human Services to develop plan, with advice from work group, to implement Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Restaurant Meals Program in Oregon and report plan to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to human services no later than January 31, 2023.

HB 4094- Exempts receipts from sales of prescription drugs and medical supplies or from provision of medical services from commercial activity subject to corporate activity tax.

*SB 1536- Limits restrictions on portable cooling devices in residences by landlords, homeowners associations, condominium associations and local governments.

SB 1539- Establishes pilot program to provide funding to school districts for purposes of increasing access to schools by homeless students and improving academic achievement of homeless students.

SB 1507- Exempts receipts from sales of prescription drugs, feminine hygiene products, diapers and baby formula from commercial activity subject to corporate activity tax.

HB 4091- Directs Department of Education to develop and implement statewide education plan for students who are Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

*SB 1521- Authorizes district school board to terminate superintendent without cause only if certain conditions are met.

HB 4111- Directs University of Oregon to conduct study on prevalence of child abuse in this state and to submit report regarding study to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to human services.

*HB 4117- Directs Department of Human Services to adopt by rule grant program to provide funding to culturally specific and responsive organizations, tribal governments and under-resourced rural community service organizations to conduct outreach regarding federal earned income tax credits and other tax benefits and to provide tax navigation and preparation services to low-income Oregonians.

*HB 4045- Directs Oregon Department of Administrative Services to distribute moneys to nonprofit organization to provide grants to organizations for community violence prevention and intervention measures.



*HB 4150-Requires Health Information Technology Oversight Council to convene one or more groups of stakeholders and experts to explore options to accelerate, support and improve secure, statewide community information exchanges.

HB 4111- Directs University of Oregon to conduct study on prevalence of child abuse in this state and to submit report regarding study to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to human services.

HB 4099- Establishes Racial Equity and Justice Youth Collaborative.

HB 4011- Creates qualified mental health associate incentive program within Oregon Health Authority.

*HB 4067- Amends law governing urban flood safety and water quality district.

HB 4122 A- Directs Department of Human Services to establish program to distribute funds to community-based organizations to provide financial assistance to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals status recipients for specified purposes.

HB 4123-Requires Oregon Department of Administrative Services to provide grants for certain coordinated homeless response systems.

*HB 4031- Establishes state goal that percentage of diverse employees employed by Department of Education reflects percentage of diverse students in public schools.

*SB 1565- Makes unlawful practice for place of public accommodation to refuse to accept United States coins or currency as payment for goods and services.

*HB 4133 A- Requires electronic voter registration system to allow qualified individual to register to vote if individual has Social Security number.

*SB 1554- Directs Oregon Health Authority to study public health system response to COVID-19 pandemic.

*SB 1556- Requires Department of Human Services to establish certification process for direct care providers of home or community-based services and implement online registry of direct care providers of home or community-based services.



SB 1545- Establishes grant programs in Higher Education Coordinating Commission to provide funding for workforce development activities that aim to increase access for priority populations to training opportunities in technology, health care and manufacturing and to workforce development services and benefits.

SB 1556- Requires Department of Human Services to establish certification process for direct care providers of home or community-based services and implement online registry of direct care providers of home or community-based services.

SB 1554- Directs Oregon Health Authority to study public health system response to COVID-19 pandemic.

SB 1538- Establishes COFA Dental Program in Oregon Health Authority to provide dental care to low-income citizens of Pacific Islands in Compact of Free Association who reside in Oregon.

HB 4035- Requires Oregon Health Authority, in collaboration with Department of Human Services and Department of Consumer and Business Services, to develop and implement process for conducting medical assistance program redeterminations, when federal public health emergency ends, consistent with stated goals of Legislative Assembly.

SB 1579- Directs Oregon Business Development Department to develop and implement Economic Equity Investment Program to award grants to organizations that provide culturally responsive services to support economic stability, self-sufficiency, wealth building and economic equity among disadvantaged individuals, families, businesses and communities in Oregon.

SB 1543- Provides for nonprofit organization that addresses and executes worker relief to serve as fiscal agent to award grants to organizations to provide services related to immigration matters through universal representation program.

HB 4123- Requires Oregon Department of Administrative Services to provide grants for certain coordinated homeless response systems.

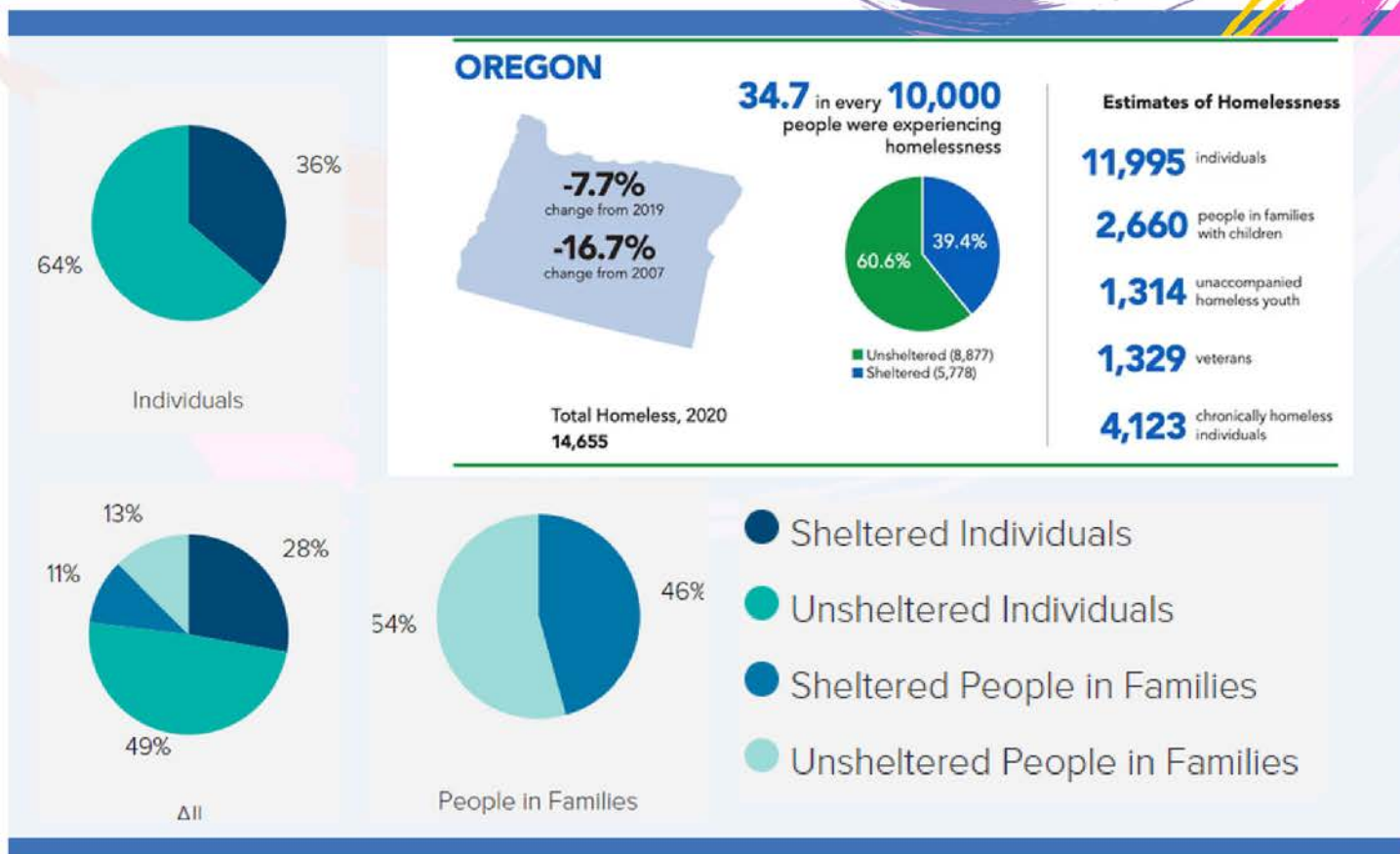
Short-Term & Future Focus

SHORT-TERM FUTURE FOCUS

OCAPIA will remain active and vigilant in the passing of legislation that will promote improvements for our communities around Oregon. During the 2023 legislative session, OCAPIA will focus mainly on these three topics: Stable Housing, Education and the Student Success Act for Pacific Islanders, and Anti-Asian Hate and Bias. OCAPIA will look to support additional legislation as pressing topics are revealed. The current state of AAPI in Oregon will only worsen if we do not participate in the fight for equitable legislation.



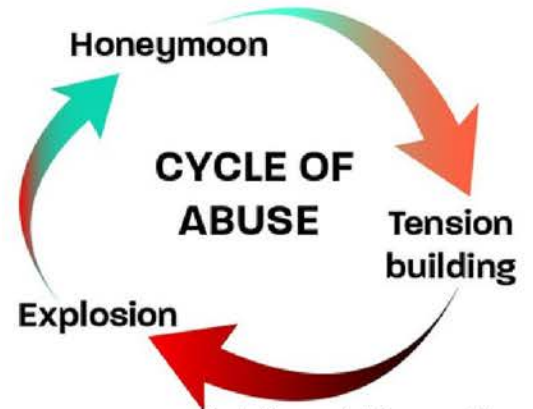
Homeless Population Living Sheltered and Unsheltered, 2018



Oregon's homeless population is a growing issue that prevails every year. In 2021, 35 in every 10,000 people in Oregon experienced homelessness. "Oregon also had one of the highest rates of unhoused people who were living unsheltered" [18]. Where unsheltered individuals and families represent over 54% of the homeless population in Oregon. With rising housing prices and inflation consistently on the rise, OCAPIA sees the pain deepening in the eyes of the community. With extreme weather on the rise, having permanent housing is vital to the maintenance of life. Homelessness is not a new issue in Oregon, yet no real solution has resulted in the conclusive end to homelessness. Parents and children suffer in silence in 2020, 2,660 people with children experienced homelessness. No child should have to go to school and worry about where they are going to sleep that night. Oregon must do better for its youth and its unhoused population. OCAPIA will continue to stand up for stable housing.

2024 LEGISLATIVE FOCUS

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE LEGISLATIVE CONCEPT



The (OACO) Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office provides administrative support to four Oregon Advocacy Commissions (OACs): Commission on Asian and Pacific Island Affairs, Commission on Black Affairs, Commission on Hispanic Affairs, and the Commission for Women. The mission of these four commissions are expanded in ORS.185. The OACs are four independent commissions that advocate, conduct public policy research, collaborate on leadership development, and engage with external partners to advance the economic, social, legal, and political equity for their constituents. They often collaborate amongst themselves in areas of shared concern. Domestic Violence is one such area. DV impacts the communities of each commission. OCHA intends to continue collaboration with initiatives as led by the Oregon Commission for Women.



If you need help call 1(800) 799- SAFE(7233) or text "Start" to 88788.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Domestic Violence (DV) is a universal issue. Some would even call it a “taboo topic”^[19]. Domestic Violence is not bound by age, race, gender, sexuality, or economic status. DV can harm anyone. Oregon Coalition Against Domestic & Sexual Violence define DV as, “a pattern of coercive and/or violent tactics perpetrated by one person against a family member or intimate partner, with the goal of establishing and maintaining power and control over that person”^[20].”

The US Department of Justice identifies the different types of Domestic Violence^[21]:

Physical Abuse: Hitting, slapping, shoving, grabbing, pinching, biting, hair pulling, etc. are types of physical abuse. This type of abuse also includes denying a partner medical care or forcing alcohol and/or drug use upon him or her.

Sexual Abuse: Coercing or attempting to coerce any sexual contact or behavior without consent. Sexual abuse includes, but is certainly not limited to, marital rape, attacks on sexual parts of the body, forcing sex after physical violence has occurred, or treating one in a sexually demeaning manner.

Emotional Abuse: Undermining an individual's sense of self-worth and/or self-esteem is abusive. This may include, but is not limited to constant criticism, diminishing one's abilities, name-calling, or damaging one's relationship with his or her children.

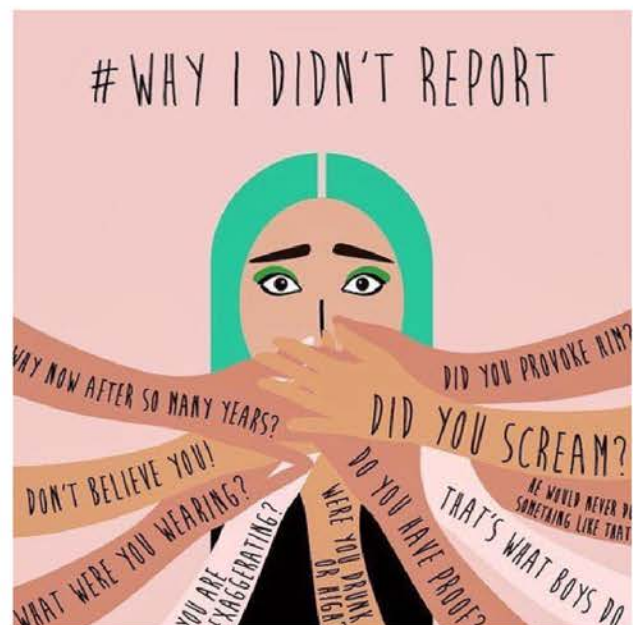


Photo By: Medium.com



If you need help call 1(800) 799- SAFE(7233) or text “Start” to 88788.

Psychological Abuse: Elements of psychological abuse include - but are not limited to - causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, or partner's family or friends; destruction of pets and property; and forcing isolation from family, friends, or school and/or work.

Technological Abuse: An act or pattern of behavior that is intended to harm, threaten, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, extort, or monitor another person that occurs using any form of technology, including but not limited to: internet enabled devices, online spaces and platforms, computers, mobile devices, cameras and imaging programs, apps, location tracking devices, or communication technologies, or any other emerging technologies.



Photo By: Change.com


Economic Abuse: Controlling or restraining a person's ability to acquire, use, or maintain economic resources. This includes:

- using coercion, fraud, or manipulation to restrict access to finances or financial information;
- using economic resources without consent or exerting undue influence over financial decisions,
- exploiting powers of attorney, guardianship, or conservatorship against interest.

Psychological Abuse: Elements of psychological abuse include - but are not limited to - causing fear by intimidation; threatening physical harm to self, partner, children, or partner's family or friends; destruction of pets and property; and forcing isolation from family, friends, or school and/or work.

Technological Abuse: An act or pattern of behavior that is intended to harm, threaten, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, exploit, extort, or monitor another person that occurs using any form of technology, including but not limited to: internet enabled devices, online spaces and platforms, computers, mobile devices, cameras and imaging programs, apps, location tracking devices, or communication technologies, or any other emerging technologies.

If you need help call 1(800) 799- SAFE(7233) or text "Start" to 88788.



As the President of the “Women of the World” festival stated, “It is characterized by silence – silence from those that suffer – silence from those around them, and silence from those who perpetrate abuse. This silence is corrosive; it leaves women, children and men carrying the burden of shame. It prevents them from speaking out about the abuse and it prevents them from getting help. And at its worst it can be fatal^[19] .”

DV is a dreadful reality for countless Oregonians. National Coalition Against Domestic Violence states, “39.8% of Oregon women and 36.2% of Oregon men experience intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner violence and/or intimate partner stalking in their lifetimes^[22].” OCHA has been partnering with the Oregon Commission for Women in a joint mission to combat DV. There are many misconceptions about DV, but its severity and the tragic aftermath can be understood in every culture. DV is not a partisan issue; it is a human issue. DV remains a forbidden or taboo topic in many cultures. This plays a part in perpetuating the silencing of survivors.

Without significant changes and a concerted effort from the state, DV will remain a significant social ill. While DV impacts all survivors and witnesses, the impact on children is life shattering with a cascade of negative externalities. OCHA will continue to press on this issue until it is a major priority for all Oregonians. The National Domestic Violence Hotline is available for use 24 hours a day. Here you are able to speak to a live advocate to help DV survivors navigate their options. Contact information: Call 1(800) 799- SAFE(7233) or text “Start” to 88788.

DV is a silent epidemic. In 2018, 128,786 calls for help were received by community based organizations and 8,414 requests for shelter could not be met by Oregon DV service (NCADV). The current structure of services relies on CBOs to advocate and help with these needs. Survivors are prioritizing support systems outside of the criminal justice system, making this issue one not as widely recognized in the public. However, during the pandemic, the reports of DV fell drastically. The general consensus counter this claim. The drop in reporting was due to cohabitation with abusers and the inability to report. OCFW is currently working on a report to show the increase in DV during the pandemic and how these incidents were handled by CBOs rather than by legal services. OCHA intends to continue to partner with OCFW.



If you need help call 1(800) 799- SAFE(7233) or text “Start” to 88788.

Words from Commissioner Angela Rico,

The Oregon Commission for Women has historically been a strong voice for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. OCFW acknowledges the fact that the pandemic created immense inequities. It created an environment where the previously available avenues for help to victims and survivors were limited and

oftentimes shut down. In an effort to inform the Governor's office, the Oregon legislature, and all other interested parties, OCFW is undertaking a study into the effects that the pandemic had on these services. Additionally to uncover what we need to do to remedy these deep issues created during the last few years, and some that have been there for a long time, but became even more deeply apparent during the last few years. We are still working on gathering the data, and creating both a quantitative and qualitative analysis of case loads, both in law enforcement and at district attorney offices, and that of community based providers. We are excited to share our findings in the hopes that we can fix what has been broken. We aspire to create enduring structures that will be permanently available to victims and survivors, regardless of their location or identity. We hope to partner with other government entities and community-based organizations to achieve this goal.

In prior years, passing legislation regarding domestic violence has been unsuccessful. In 2021, bills regarding emergency housing funds for victims ([SB 271 A](#)) and funding positions for DV specific government positions ([HB 2754](#)) failed. That same year, bills were passed that indirectly aided victims of domestic violence including [SB 70](#) that requires Oregon Health Authority to consult regional health equity coalitions. Last year, no legislation regarding domestic violence was introduced. In 2023, 11 bills were introduced regarding domestic violence. This includes bills asking for mandatory DV training ([SB 1029](#)), researching DV in Oregon ([SB 389](#), [HB 2344](#)), and funding for DV victim housing and projects ([HB 3018](#), [HB 2933](#)). OCHA hopes these bills succeed over this session and efforts continue to combat DV in the next legislative session.

Domestic Violence is a silent epidemic that needs to be cured. OCHA is partnering with OCFW among the other Oregon Advocacy Commissions (OACs) to put forward policy and legislation to combat DV in our state. The OACs are in partnership with state agencies and external groups in an effort to unite organizations and stop DV and its detrimental impact. OCHA is committed to continuing in efforts to eradicate this social ill from all communities.



Graphic By: Voice Media

If you need help call 1(800) 799- SAFE(7233) or text "Start" to 88788.

Education and the Student Success Act for Pacific Islanders

During the 2019 Legislative session, OCAPIA stood with HB 3427. This bill established the Student Success Act which targets student success plans to help improve the experiences and outcomes of specific underserve student populations. The underserved population originally included the African American/Black Student Success Plan, Latino/a/x and Mesoamerican Indigenous Student Success Plan, as well as the American/Indian Alaska Native Education Plan. In 2020, ODE (Oregon Department of Education)received consent to expand these efforts statewide equity initiatives. This entailed expanding into adding a LGBTQ2SIA+ Student Success Plan.

Being involved in the improvement of access and sustainability of education of AANHPI communities run dear to OCAPIA. More equitable education for our community helps improves the all-around well-being of Oregon. AANHPI needs a Students Success Plan. In the 2022 regular session version of this bill, HB 4091, there was a push to add Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders to the Student Success plan. Unfortunately, the bill did not make it out of “Ways and Means”. Going forward OCAPIA will continue our efforts to get AAPI added to the Student Success Plan. AAPI's pertinent education needs should not be overlooked again. Therefore, it is critical that we have bipartisan support for this cause. It is only right that ODE provides the same resources to AANHPI as it has done to other underserved populations.

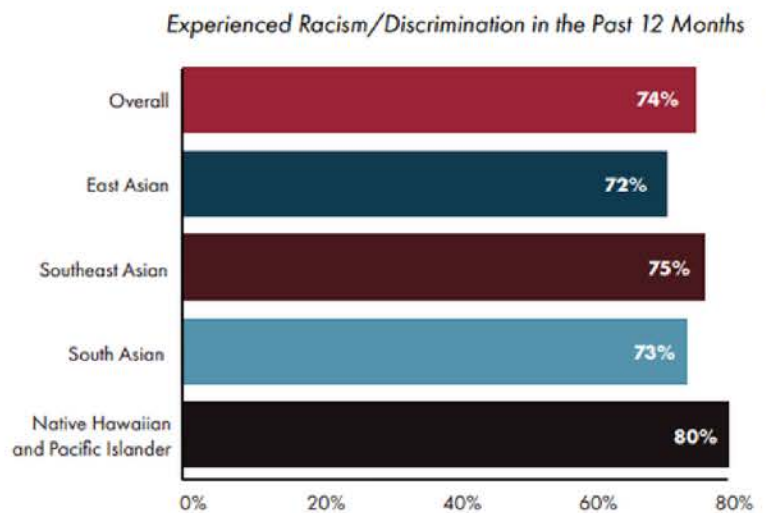




Fight Against Anti-Asian Hate and Bias

In 2022, President Joe Biden makes a clear statement, “Condemning and combating racism, xenophobia, and intolerance against Asian Americans, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders in the United States^[6].” Hate in this country has continued to plague the AANHPI community. OCAPIA will continue to fight for justice and equity. Many organizations across the US are mobilizing against the rise of AANHPI hate. A survey done by the National Asian Pacific American women's forum found:

Figure 1. Racism and/or Discrimination in the Past 12 Months

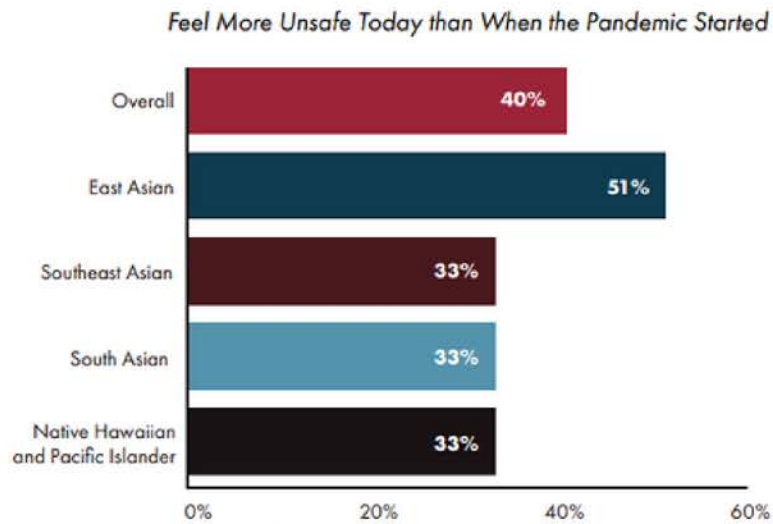


*Differences between subgroups not statistically significant.

Graph By: napawf.org

Overall 74% of AANHPI women spread across the US have experienced racism and/or Discrimination in the past 12 months. The locations where the majority of these acts took place were grocery stores, shopping centers, mass transit, and even their places of work.^[23]

Figure 4. Perceived Level of Safety Since the Start of the COVID-19 Pandemic



*Differences between subgroups statistically significant at $\alpha=0.05$

Graph By: napawf.org

OCAPIA divers commissioners understand what this specific hate looks and feels like. Hate to anyone is wrong and AAPI should not be silent or be overlooked. This is why during the 2023 regular session OCAPIA will support all legislations pushing for tougher laws and regulations surrounding AANHPI Hate in all areas. Ranging but not limited to how hate is addressed in the school system to how AANHPI are harassed in the workplace. All acts of hate are a form of violence! Living in fear is no way to live. It is time for AANHPI to stand and say no more! OCAPIA will continue to say no more!

2023 & 2024 LEGISLATIVE FOCUS

Education



Healthcare



Photo By [unicef.org](https://www.unicef.org)

Stable Families and
Housing

STABLE HOMES
for **OREGON**
FAMILIES



Conclusion

How the State may assist OCAPIA in its success

In conclusion of this report, the OCAPIA has three ask that will help aid us in our mission for equality for our community.

- 1) Advocate for the increase of full-time staffing members to help aid us in our fight for justice.
- 2) Help support the new form of HB 4091 in the 2023 legislative session which will add AANHPI to the Student Success Plan.
- 3) Stand with us against AANHPI Hate. Be adamant about passing legislation surrounding accountability for offenders of hate crimes.

OCAPIA's efforts will continue to fight for equitable treatment and access for the AANHPI community. As our population in Oregon continues to rapidly grow access to adequate resources are necessary for our wellbeing. AANHPI communities are combatting homelessness, Domestic Violent and unaddressed mental health issues. It is time for Oregon to step up for the lives of its AANHPI population. To enact laws to help protect them from the vicious increase of hate crimes done in this great state. We ask for your support.

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THANKS!

MEMORANDUM

TO: The Oregon Commission on Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA)

FROM: Albert Lee, Executive Director of the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office

CC: Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization (IRCO);
Micronesian Islander Community (MIC Oregon); and
All other interested parties

DATE: December 23, 2021

SUBJECT: Joint OCAPIA & IRCO Response to North Medford High School Bias Incident

Commissioners, this is an after-action report on the support trip to North Medford High School (NMHS). Detailed below is a report of the timeline of actions and events completed on your behalf and in support of the greater Pacific Islander (PI) community in Medford, Oregon. Please feel free to contact me for clarification or any additional inquiry.

Executive Summary

On November 18, 2021, an incident occurred between a NMHS staff member and members of the NMHS Pacific Islander Club (PIC), where a cultural and traditional dance, tausala, was equated to sex work. Students attempted to educate the staff member about the Samoan fundraising tradition. The staff member was not satisfied with the explanation and repeated the statement to minor students. The staff member attempted to instruct students to modify their cultural tradition in a manner that would conform with dominant culture. The staff member then reportedly discussed the incident with school administrators without including



the students. Students were distressed and marginalized by the incident and sought resolution with the principal. The response from the principal did not convey urgency or gravity to the affected students. The principal scheduled a 15-minute meeting for the students and faculty advisor to discuss the incident two weeks after the PIC's complaint and request for a meeting and did not immediately respond to the letter presented by the students, faculty advisor, and community advocate at that meeting. The delayed response and lack of prioritization of affected students' well-being violated Medford School Policy Code ACB-AR "Bias Incident Complaint Procedure" (see Appendix A).

Community members were appalled by the sexualization of their minor children, the disparaging remarks against their culture, and the negative impact it has on their children's self-identity and self-worth. Students and community members attempted to resolve the issue by inviting the staff member and principal to attend an event with community. Neither attended the event held on December 12, 2021. Community members felt a lack of support and dismissal of the harm they and their students incurred. They did not feel that school leadership took their bias incident concerns seriously. Students and community members filed a formal complaint with the superintendent, after the response window to their complaint closed with no action by the principal.



A community advocate sent an “open letter” email to their Pacific Islander network and allies describing the November incident and the unsuccessful attempts by the PIC students, advisor, and their families to resolve the issue. The advocate sought support to raise awareness of the issue and to garner a satisfactory response from NMHS and the Medford School District (MSD). They included school and district administrators’ contact information and an invitation to support the Pacific Islander community at the Medford School Board Meeting on December 16. Responsiveness by MSD increased as external parties, including the Coalition of Oregon School Administrators (COSA), the Oregon Department of Education (ODE), the Oregon Advocacy Commissions Office (OACO), and others began inquiries on the incident.

OCAPIA partnered with IRCO in drafting a response to the incident and their shared concerns. The OACO kept various interested state actors apprised of the situation and the actions contemplated by OCAPIA. The OACO reached out to community members and school administrators on December 15, to inform them that an OACO representative would attend the school board meeting on December 16 and requested a meeting with school leadership.

Director Lee traveled to Medford to deliver the joint OCAPIA-IRCO letter in person (see Appendix B), attend the school board meeting, and meet with community members and school leaders. Director Lee participated in six meetings:

1. Closed meeting with the school board chair, NMHS and MSD administrators
2. Open meeting with the school board chair, NMHS and MSD administrators, and community members



3. Two joint phone calls with the Equity Coordinator to parents of students directly impacted
4. Public comment at the [MSD school board meeting](#)
5. Informal dinner with community members
6. Structured meeting with the PIC students

School and district leadership had direct conversations with community members, culminating with an in-person, sincere apology by the superintendent and concrete steps for restorative justice to include a public written apology and attendance by the staff member and leadership at a cultural event on January 11, 2022. Community members detailed a list of requests to help facilitate systemic change. District leadership welcomed continued conversation on how to better collaborate and include community members. District leadership acknowledged the concerns raised and earnestly seeks to partner with community to build stronger and better connections.

OCAPIA indicates a desire to meet with community members either in-person or virtually and seeks to follow up on the resolution of the incident.

Background

December 14, 2021 Contact to OCAPIA and OACO

On December 14, 2021, at 12:15 PM, an OCAPIA Commissioner reached out to the OACO, the state agency that provides the administrative support to OCAPIA, with an inquiry as to how OCAPIA may support the NMHS PIC. At 11:58 AM on the same day, the Commissioner had



been forwarded the “open letter” email sent by the community advocate on 12/12/2021, mentioned on page 3 in the Executive Summary.

The open letter was addressed to “our community leaders, allies, partners, friends, and most of all, to our family.” The letter included the following allegations, statements, and details:

- On November 18, 2021, youth in the PIC were verbally offended and degraded by a staff member at NMHS when they prepared a customary Samoan dance, tausala, for a school fundraiser in support of another NMHS student club
- The NMHS staff member wanted the PIC to perform the tausala but discouraged the customary act of money thrown in the air, and likened the tausala to “pretty much a titty club”
- The NMHS PIC students attempted to educate the staff member about the traditional tausala. The staff member repeated the offensive remarks a second time.
- The staff member took the issue up to school administration without providing an opportunity for students or their advisor to speak on their own customs as Samoan-identified individuals
- Many different PI groups share similar cultural customs and the bias incident had been felt beyond the PIC and into the broader PI community
- PIC student officers filed a complaint against the staff member to the NMHS principal
- The principal’s response was to allocate 15 minutes to speak with PIC student officers, their faculty advisor, and a community advocate two weeks after the incident occurred
- At the meeting with the principal, a letter was delivered to supplement the oral statements of the PIC student officers. The letter included specific requests along with detail of the incident from the students’ perspective
 - Requests included:
 - A formal and in-person apology from the NMHS staff member
 - Attendance at a PIC event by the staff member and the principal (or a delegated administrator), where,
 - The apology could be given;
 - A conversation with students and parents could be had to unpack the comments; and
 - Resolution of the issue could be agreed upon
- The principal’s response was that he would review the letter and respond



- A follow up email was sent to the principal
- The principal responded that he would not be available to address the letter for at least another two to four weeks
- The accused staff member issued a letter denying saying “titty club” to describe the tausala, but within the same letter admitted using the term but stated that the students took the words out of context
- The PI community invited the principal and staff member to a community event held on December 12, 2021
- Neither the principal nor staff member attended the event
- The letter closes with a request for community and ally presence and support at the school board meeting and specifically noted that is not okay to sexualize underaged students because of ignorance nor choose what cultural customs may be displayed to appease the norms of administrators

Agency and Commission Action

December 14, 2021

At 3:54 PM, OACO Policy Research Advocate, Nancy Kramer, responded to the OCAPIA Commissioner by forwarding the request to all OCAPIA Commissioners. Public Affairs Specialist, Kyl Myers then coordinated with Commissioners to schedule a Zoom call to discuss the incident and response for the following afternoon.

December 15, 2021

Advocate Kramer reached out to ODE administrators to inform them of OCAPIA’s receipt of a request of support and the Commission’s deliberated response and action. ODE’s Director provided information and hotlinks to share and proffered to join a meeting with NMHS or MSD and OCAPIA.



Senator Dembrow relayed information from inquiries made by COSA to the superintendent, while outreach to IRCO was made by the OACO. IRCO was invited to the December 15, 2021 Zoom call. That call concluded with the decision to craft a joint letter to the superintendent and the principal regarding the incident, the concerns of the organizations, and an offer of assistance in supporting restorative justice and repair, based on the accounts of the PI Community.

An IRCO staffer took the lead in drafting the letter with support by Specialist Myers. With no Commissioner nor IRCO staffer available to attend the school board meeting in support of the NMHS PIC students and community on the following day, Director Lee offered to attend on behalf of both organizations and to also deliver the letter to school administrators and the school board. Director Lee then informed the Governor's Communication Director and the Governor's OACO attached Policy Director on OCAPIA's decisions and planned actions.

Later that evening, Specialist Myers and Director Lee met over Zoom with PI community leaders to inform them of the receipt of information and actions decided by OCAPIA and IRCO. PI community leaders recounted the events. They noted with frustration that with nearly a month passing, they have had little opportunity to meet with administration and they did not feel that leadership had taken the matter seriously. Director Lee informed the PI community leaders that he would be available to meet with them after the school board meeting or on the following day. He further informed them that he would attempt to meet



with school leaders prior to the school board meeting to gain a better understanding of their stance. The PI community leaders were happy to coordinate a time to meet with Director Lee.

During the meeting at 6:22 PM, Director Lee reached out via email to NMHS and MSD administrators to inform them that he would be traveling to attend the school board meeting on behalf of OCAPIA and IRCO and to request an opportunity to hand deliver the joint OCAPIA-IRCO letter and meet. At 7:23 PM, the principal responded warmly that he and the superintendent would be available upon Director Lee's arrival in town in the afternoon. The Zoom meeting with community members closed at about 7:45 PM with a promise by Director Lee to meet with them either before or after the school board meeting.

At 7:55 PM, Director Lee replied to the principal's email with his approximate arrival time and coordinated with the principal via email. At 7:58 PM, Director Lee shared the positive response from school administration and confirmed a meeting with community members after the meeting with school administrators.

December 16, 2021

IRCO and OACO on behalf of OCAPIA continued to edit the draft letter as Director Lee traveled to Medford. The letter was finalized and approved by both organizations and sent to Director Lee at 3:09 PM to print.



While en route to Medford, a community advocate contacted Director Lee to ask whether community members should join the meeting with school administrators. Director Lee responded that there could be advantages either way. On the one hand, having all interested parties in the same room would help expedite a process of resolution. On the other hand, the meeting was informal and more of a delivery and inquiry. Ultimately, Director Lee stated that if community members would like to join the meeting, he had no objections. The community advocate replied that community members would join the meeting and invited Director Lee to dinner with community members after the school board meeting.

After printing the letters, Director Lee met community members in person at the NMHS administrative offices. There, the superintendent greeted community members and Director Lee and noted that he did not expect to meet with community members but was willing to have a larger meeting after a closed meeting between administration and Director Lee. Community members agreed and the superintendent escorted Director Lee to a small conference room where he met with the Equity Coordinator, the principal, the superintendent, and the school board chair. After introductions, Director Lee expressed the concern held by OCAPIA and IRCO regarding the November 18 bias incident and the alleged lack of an adequate response. He noted that the purpose of his presence was not to admonish school administrators. Director Lee further defined his presence as an emissary for the two organizations to carry their message and to extend an offer of assistance in helping administration in facilitating restorative justice with PIC students and community members.



The superintendent acknowledged that the incident impacted students and community members. He thanked Director Lee for making the trek down, acknowledging that the gesture was immense. He noted that while they regularly make the trek North, it is rare to see the same in reverse. Director Lee discussed how the focus of the situation should be on the impact on the students and community rather than the intent of the staff member. Director Lee stated that given how the incident reached OCAPIA the impact was severe and deeply affected students and community members. He then shared copies of the joint OCAPIA-IRCO letter. School leadership intimated a desire to find resolution and the smaller meeting was closed in order to open it up to community members.

In a larger conference room, community members joined school leadership and Director Lee. The superintendent facilitated the meeting and started with introductions. After introductions, the principal said that missteps were made and that he wanted to correct them through restorative practices. He thanked community members for coming and for helping to find resolution. The superintendent opened the floor to hear from community members. Community members shared that the incident was unfortunate, noting the pride that the students have in themselves and their culture. They expressed disappointment that when they sought support from administrators, they did not receive a satisfactory response. They detested having to escalate the situation outside the NMHS community. They stated that students need to be heard. They questioned what other incidents and situations may have been missed and/or dismissed. They inquired why the staff member was not present in the meeting. They expressed dissatisfaction with the non-apology by the staff member, the lack of



a sincere apology, and the absence of the principal and staff member from a community event which they were invited to attend on Sunday. They expressed a desire to see systemic changes within the school.

The superintendent noted that the staff member was not present nor called to what was thought to be a closed meeting with Director Lee but acknowledged that the community sought a full apology directly from the staff member. He further inquired for a better understanding of what systemic change they envisioned. They expressed a desire to be present and invited to participate in decisions and actions from the beginning and not just invited to react to decisions after the fact.

The Equity Coordinator wanted to summarize and stated that all were on the same path, but that everyone is at a different spot within the process of healing. She noted that there were individual and collective needs to repair harm, acknowledging that it started as an incident with some students that grew to negatively impact the greater community. She stated that there was an agreement to attend a community event to apologize. She stated that the date of the event that the principal and staff member were invited to simply didn't work, implying conflicts within their schedules. She further acknowledged that a letter was insufficient and entertained thoughts of breaking bread. She went on to share her perspective as an Asian-American identified individual.



Community members returned to defining systemic change by requesting that culturally responsive training be implemented annually. Additionally, they suggested that a campus guide on mental health for PI students be created and even suggested a specific candidate for the role. They further requested that funds be allocated for PI students to attend statewide conferences and educationally-based visits.

The Equity Coordinator started to explain that they have a DEI team to assist in training and the Board Chair asked what “DEI” meant. The Equity Coordinator explained DEI (diversity, equity, and inclusion) and the Board Chair said she understood what it was but simply had too many acronyms in her head between her day job and school board duties.

Community members returned to systemic changes and acknowledged that they were not seeking to elevate PI students and their needs above any other students, but were simply seeking equity, cultural sensitivity, awareness, responsiveness, and for their voices to be heard.

They further expressed that an apology is more than a letter, that it looks like a gathering of those impacted with the abettor to discuss and resolve. They expressed collective pain and impact. They noted that the lack of response discourages their students from speaking up. They shared their personal stories about their lives growing up in the environment in Southern Oregon. They expressed sadness in how their community is stereotyped as performers and entertainers and stated that they are not one-dimensional. They are not



caricatures but complete beings. They took umbrage with the apology by the staff member that began with “let me be clear,” and denials of using the phrase, followed by admission and claims that the students misconstrued what was meant. They expressed disappointment in the non-apology. the superintendent acknowledged that he too played into the some of the stereotypes, citing how earlier in the meeting he talked about going to “the last dance.”

Director Lee requested to speak from his observations of the meeting to this point and was granted permission to do so. He acknowledged that everyone in the room was there out of care and concern for the students. He stated that he observed how this all started during an attempt by a subset of students to do a good act in support of the greater school community in a manner of sharing from their culture to help raise funds for the school. A harm occurred that othered them and distinguished them from the greater NMHS community of which they are an integral part. That harm caused negative impact to the immediate students and then had a ripple effect throughout their community. Community and students are at different levels of resolution. Concerns arise around the verity and authenticity of the apology. Ultimately, it is not about the intent of the staff member, but the rather it’s about the impact on the students and community members and how to resolve the harm. The impact was severe as evident by the presence of community members at the meeting and the sharing of the incident throughout their networks.

The Board Chair interjected that she hopes that we can at some point simply think of each other as human. She goes further to share that she is not from privilege and that she grew up



poor and on welfare. Community members countered that equivocating her past to their present hurts and that her comments on simply thinking of each other as human dismisses their individuality and culture. They further noted that the level of severity of the staff member's comments was not taken as seriously as the impact that it made.

The board chair rebutted and re-centered herself stating that she could talk about her struggles. She then turned to a community member who challenged her and said that she was sorry if they felt that way and that it was not what she intended.

Director Lee interjected that the Chair's intent again is not where the focus should lay, but at the impact felt by the community member. Director Lee then stated that the Board Chair's statement on why we can't all just think of each other as human is akin to saying, "I see no color." He reinforced community members' position that it dismisses and diminishes individuals and people of non-dominant culture. He further stated, referring to the described apology of the staff member and the apology by the Board Chair, that a true apology cannot have preparatory or qualifying clauses in the beginning, nor can they be followed by an "if" or conditional clause. Effectively those are non-apologies that do not admit a wrong, all while implying hypersensitivity by the person who takes offense. The Board Chair apologized to the community member and stated that she would like time with the community member.

The principal admitted his missteps were always seeking immediate solutions and trying to fix things before listening. He discussed the idea of an affinity group, seeing students in



leadership roles, and bringing community in. He confirmed that the staff member will attend a community event.

The superintendent echoed jumping to solutions instead of listening and speaking. He stated that an apology was clearly a next step and appreciated the intent vs impact discussion. He acknowledged the point that community members feel like they are viewed as one-dimensional and supported the notion of an affinity group. He vowed to work with the community advocate and asked whether a next step is a collective gathering.

Community members expressed that they want their children to be able to exist and be free and that this cannot just stop with resolving this one incident. There is a need to develop and build out better collaboration.

The superintendent then apologized, “On behalf of the North Medford High School, I am sorry that harm has occurred. For me as leader of this organization, I take personal responsibility that community and kids have been harmed.”

Community members expressed, “That’s all we wanted.” The meeting concluded with plans to put the apology in writing with a community event to be organized for January.

The superintendent, board chair, and community members departed for the school board meeting. Director Lee and the Equity Coordinator made calls to the parents of the two



students directly impacted. Director Lee listened to one parent and her desire to have the school have equal concern for her child and all other children in the school. She also expressed that she did not want her child to face any retaliation for reporting and simply to be able to enjoy completing her senior year. Director Lee was unable to connect with the other parent and left his contact information.

The Equity Coordinator and Director Lee then traveled to join the school board meeting in progress. Director Lee spoke during public comment on behalf of OCAPIA and IRCO, sharing the joint letter to the school board and the desire and need for a safe environment for all community members and respect for the cultures of all students. Director Lee decided not to read the letter but rather submit the letter because of the Bias Incident Complaint Procedure (see Appendix A). The process must go through the superintendent in Step 3 and only escalate to the school board in Step 4 after conclusion of Step 3. The superintendent apologized openly and publicly just prior to the break at the close of the public comment period of the school board meeting.

After public comment and recess, Director Lee joined community members in a dinner, where community members spoke openly and freely about their concerns, hopes, fears, and aspirations. Community members expressed feelings of relief in seeing movement on the incident and feelings of empowerment in joining collectively to right a wrong. They expressed immense gratitude to OCAPIA and IRCO and were stunned by the rapid and immediate



response from the two organizations. Community requested a meeting with Director Lee and the youth for the following day.

December 17, 2021

Director Lee met with the NMHS PIC students and community members for three hours. He shared personal stories regarding childhood experiences, connection, and his academic and professional experience. He introduced the students and community members to the OACO, OCAPIA, and provided a brief civics introduction. He shared the joint OCAPIA-IRCO letter in support of the students. Students and Director Lee discussed youth networks and connections throughout the state. Students and community members shared in conversation on environment at school and the greater Medford environment. Director Lee engaged students in a discussion on navigating dominant culture while maintaining identity, codeswitching, and support. This was followed up with discussions on transitions from high school to work, higher education, trade schools, and alternative pathways. The youth meeting concluded with maintaining connections, mentoring, leadership, and feedback. The community sent Director Lee off with a Samoan hymn, UfiUfi, and a bid of safe travels and farewell.

Director Lee took a call from the second directly impacted student's parent while traveling home. He listened to her and provided her with his email address to send additional concerns.



The superintendent began collaborating with community members on a letter of apology to the students and community. To date, the community has settled on January 11, 2022 for a community event for listening and healing.

Community members are considering applying to join OCAPIA as commissioners. Community members are also asking questions on legislation including a specific request on repairing an omission from SB 553 regarding the Samoan Community.

Conclusion

OCAPIA played an integral role in partnership with IRCO to support a subset of the community for which they serve. Coordinated actions by OCAPIA produced a positive influence on actions of relief for community members. Community members feel supported and feel encouraged to remain civically engaged.



APPENDIX A
Medford School District 549C
Code ACB-AR
Bias Incident Complaint Procedure

Medford School District 549C

Code: ACB-AR
Adopted: 12/17/20

Bias Incident Complaint Procedure

The term “bias incident” is defined in policy ACB. Persons impacted by a bias incident shall be defined broadly to include individuals at whom an incident was directed as well as students in the larger school community likely to be impacted by the incident, such as a witness, observer or otherwise indirectly affected party.¹

When a student, family member, staff member, or community member is impacted by a potential bias incident, they will report the incident to a trusted adult at the school and/or to the Bias Incident Coordinator. The complaint process will be clearly advertised on the district website and through various communication channels.

- Step 1: When a staff member learns of a potential bias incident, the staff member will prioritize the safety and well-being of all persons impacted and without unreasonable delay report the incident to the building administrator and/or to the Bias Incident Coordinator. The building administrator will ensure the Bias Incident Coordinator is notified.
- Step 2: The Bias Incident Coordinator shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint and investigate any complaint of a bias incident. The Bias Incident Coordinator will recognize the experience of all persons impacted, acknowledge the impact, commit to taking immediate action, and prevent further harm against those persons impacted from taking place. Redirection procedures, if any, will include:
- Educational components that address the history and impact of hate;
 - Procedural components to ensure the safety, healing, and agency of those impacted by hate;
 - Accountability and transformation for people who cause harm; and
 - Transformation of the conditions that perpetuated the harm.

The Bias Incident Coordinator must consider whether the behavior implicates other district policies or civil rights laws, and if so, respond accordingly.

The Bias Incident Coordinator will use their best efforts to determine an outcome within 10 school days of receiving the complaint; provided, however, that the time frame may be extended upon written agreement between the Bias Incident Coordinator and the complainant where the circumstances surrounding the investigation reasonably require additional time to complete a thorough investigation.

¹ The term “complainant” in this administrative regulation includes persons filing formal complaints and persons reporting bias incidents, regardless of whether the complainant is a victim. Similarly, the term “complaint” includes any report, information or complaint.

All persons impacted will be provided with information relating to the investigation and the outcome of the investigation. At a minimum, the information provided must include:

- That an investigation has been initiated;
- When the investigation has been completed;
- The findings of the investigation and the final determination based on those findings; and
- Actions taken with the person or persons who committed the harassing behavior to remedy the behavior and prevent reoccurrence when the actions relate directly to a person impacted by the event.

If any of the above information cannot be shared, a citation to the law prohibiting release and an explanation of how that law applies to the current situation will be provided.² The district will track all complaints pertaining to violation of this policy and monitor the responses to ensure effective implementation and application of this policy districtwide.

Step 3: If the complainant or a respondent wishes to appeal the decision of the Bias Incident Coordinator, the complainant or respondent may submit a written appeal to the superintendent or designee within five school days after receipt of the Bias Incident Coordinator's written findings and final determination.

The superintendent or designee shall acknowledge receipt of the appeal and may meet with all parties involved. The superintendent or designee will review the merits of the complaint and the Bias Incident Coordinator's findings and decision. The superintendent or designee will respond in writing to the complainant or the respondent, as the case may be, within 10 school days after receipt of the appeal.

The superintendent or designee will ensure that the requirements in Steps 1 and 2 (redirection procedures, notice, etc.) are continued to be met through Step 3, as appropriate.

Step 4: If the complainant or respondent is not satisfied with the decision of the superintendent or designee, a written appeal may be filed with the Board within five school days of receipt of the superintendent or designee's response to Step 3. The Board may decide to hear or deny the request for appeal at a Board meeting. The Board may use an executive session if the subject matter qualifies under Oregon law. If the Board decides to hear the appeal, the Board may meet with the concerned parties and their representative at a Board meeting. The Board's decision will be final and will address each allegation in the complaint and contain reasons for the Board's decision. A copy of the Board's final decision shall be sent to the complainant or the respondent, as the case may be, in writing within 10 days of this meeting.

The Board will ensure that the requirements in Steps 1 and 2 (redirection procedures, notice, etc.) are continued to be met through Step 4, as appropriate.

² Refer to policies GBL - Personnel Records, JOA - Directory Information and JOB - Personally Identifiable Information and district legal counsel for guidance in these situations. Possible laws include, but are not limited to, Title 34 C.F.R. § 99.31 and ORS 342.850.

Complaints can be filed with or communicated directly to the Bias Incident Coordinator, in which case Step 1 will be skipped. Complaints against the Bias Incident Coordinator can be directed to the superintendent or designee and will begin at Step 3. Complaints against the superintendent or a Board member(s) can be directed to the Board and will begin at Step 4. If complaints begin later than Step 1, the individuals reviewing the complaint will ensure that all requirements are met.

The complainant, if a person who resides in the district or a parent or guardian of a student who attends school in the district or a student, is not satisfied after exhausting local complaint procedures, the district fails to render a written decision within 30 days of submission of the complaint at any step or fails to resolve the complaint within 90 days of the initial filing of the complaint, may appeal³ the district's final decision to the Deputy Superintendent of Public Instruction under Oregon Administrative Rules (OAR) 581-002-0001 – 581-002-0023.

Complaints may also be filed directly with the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.⁴

Building administrators and district administration will develop and implement instructional materials to ensure that all school employees and staff are made aware of this procedure and related practices. The materials will include reporting procedures, educational processes, and possible consequences.

When necessary, timelines may be adjusted by the district by communicating to all parties in writing. This communication must include a new timeline and an explanation of why the timeline must be adjusted.

APPENDIX B
Joint OCAPIA-IRCO Letter
to
Superintendent of Medford School District
and
Principal of North Medford High School

December 16, 2021

North Medford High School
1900 N Keene Way Dr
Medford, OR 97504

To Gregg O'Mara and Dr. Bret Champion,

The Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA) and the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO) are standing with Pacific Islander students at North Medford High School and applaud their advocacy and efforts to speak up around the incident of discrimination and derogatory remarks towards their cultural traditions. It is not the responsibility of students to educate school administration on the diversity of cultural traditions, rather it is the responsibility of school administration to not continue perpetrating feelings of otherness and degradation of students' cultures. Students face many pressures from peers, family traumas, and the greater community to assimilate, which already causes great harm on student confidence and success within education systems, as well as creates greater harm to preservation of culture within communities.

Furthermore, we denounce the lack of accountability and timely support towards the students by the school administration, even when the students bravely reached out and asked for reconciliation. Our students deserve better, they deserve to feel seen, to feel heard, and given space for healing and restorative justice within their community.

As immigrant, refugee, and Pacific Islander cultural organizations and individuals from all over the state, we hear the students and feel the struggle of North Medford High School's Pacific Islander Club. We invite the club's students and advisors to connect with us and know that we are a resource to them, whenever they need. We also invite the district's administration to seek support from us on restorative justice practices.

In Oregon, our Black, Indigenous, immigrant, refugee, and students of color face many challenges of visibility and support within schools that have detrimental effects on their educational success. We acknowledge that this harm is a greater reflection on systemic hate and bias that needs

**Oregon Commission on
Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs**

Chair:

Mohamed Alyajouri

Vice-Chair:

Jessica Asai

Commissioners:

Susan Soonkeum Cox

John Iglesias

Jacqueline Leung

Toc Soneoulay-Gillespie

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Senator Michael Dembrow

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Oregon Advocacy Commissions

Office Staff

Albert Lee, Executive Director

Nancy Kramer, Policy Research

Advocacy

Dr. Kyl Myers, Community

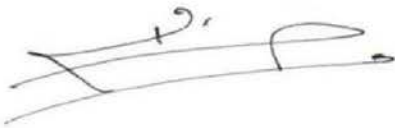
Engagement Liaison



support from all our community institutions, groups, and individuals. For immediate response, we request that the Medford School District provide:

- A written public apology that addresses this incident and acknowledges the effects on students.
- Immediate action, to respond to this incident and create prevention for future incidents, following Oregon Department of Education’s [Every Student Belongs](#) and the [Resolution Encouraging Solidarity and Support for Student Identities](#).

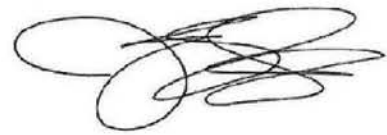
Signed,



Mohamed Alyajouri,
OCAPIA Chair



Jessica Asai
OCAPIA Vice Chair



John Iglesias
Commissioner



Toc Soneoulay-Gillespie
Commissioner



Jackie Leung
Commissioner



Senator Michael Dembrow
Legislative Member



Susan Soonkeum Cox,
Commissioner

Neha Subramanyam
Commissioner

Lee Po Cha
IRCO Executive Director

Djimet Dogo
IRCO

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Jenny Bremner
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Mark Kajitani
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Contact Us

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