



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Asian American Collaborative to Host Mayoral Forum May 4th**

*Forum will host at least 7 leading candidates for mayor to discuss issues of concern of diverse Asian American New Yorkers as they recover from the pandemic and face rising reports of anti-Asian hate incidents*

New York, NY - The Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF) is leading a collaborative with 35 Asian American community based organizations to host an Asian American community mayoral candidates' forum starting at 5:15 PM on May 4, 2021, at the beginning of Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. PIX 11 is the official media sponsor for the event.

The highly anticipated 2021 mayoral race is set against a backdrop of an Asian American community traumatized by both a global pandemic and rising reports of anti-Asian hate incidents. Asian American unemployment grew over 6,900%, the highest of any racial group. Asian Americans also were hit harder by the COVID-19 pandemic, with Chinese New Yorkers having the state's highest COVID-19 mortality rate at 35.7%. At the same time bias-based incidents against Asian Americans rose 933% in New York City alone in the last year, the highest of any city in the US, according to recent reports. Stop AAPI Hate reported 3,800 incidents in 2020 alone, and many more incidents have gone unreported.

“For too long, the model minority myth and the lack of accurate and disaggregated data accounting for our ethnic diversity, have rendered the needs of our community invisible. Community-based organizations on the ground have had to stretch to meet growing community needs exposed by the pandemic. Asian American New Yorkers are expecting the next mayor of New York City to be prepared to lead the recovery of New York City with an understanding and a commitment to address the inequities that the pandemic had exacerbated across NYC, but particularly faced by the diverse Asian American community” **said Anita Gundanna and Vanessa Leung, Co-Executive Directors of the Coalition for Asian American Children and Families (CACF).**

The following candidates have confirmed attendance: **Eric Adams, Art Chang, Shaun Donovan, Kathryn Garcia, Ray McGuire, Dianne Morales, Scott Stringer, Maya Wiley, and Andrew Yang.** Participants will be part of one of two 50 minute panels to answer questions prepared by the collaborative around issues related to pandemic recovery and social inequities that will bookend a presentation on rank choice voting. The forum will be simultaneously interpreted into Bengali, Cantonese, Korean, and Mandarin. A recording of the forum will be released in additional Asian languages following the event. Award-winning journalist and **PIX 11 reporter Shirley Chan** will moderate.

"CPC is excited to work with CACF and community partners in sponsoring this mayoral forum. The Asian American community has the highest increase in voter turnout in New York, but two-thirds of Asian American voters have never heard from an electoral campaign. This forum is an important opportunity for mayoral candidates to make their case to New York City's fastest growing and most diverse community. We look forward to learning more about the mayoral candidates' platforms to improve the economic, social, and health conditions faced by the Asian American community. We hope that the new mayor will follow-through on any commitments to make our community more visible and voices better heard," said **Wayne Ho, President and CEO of the Chinese-American Planning Council.**

"During these difficult times when Asian Americans are having to confront disproportionate impacts of coronavirus as well as racist and xenophobic attacks, it is critically important for our communities to hear directly from the candidates for New York City mayor," said **Thomas Yu and Jennifer Sun, co-executive directors of Asian Americans for Equality.** "For many years, we have been advocating for sufficient affordable housing, access to good jobs, educational opportunities, senior services and small business resources. Our community will be listening closely to the candidates to learn how they intend to address these important issues."

"Women for Afghan Women, like so many of our partner community-based organizations has been closely standing alongside community members through this pandemic. Countless families are experiencing desperate financial conditions, a lack of resources and technology for our young people, an uptick in gender-based and intimate partner violence, housing and food security, and so much more. We are deeply invested in ensuring that NYC's Mayoral Candidates are prepared to respond to these challenges and are truly committed to understanding the needs of our diverse APA communities," said **Roshni Ahmed, Advocacy and Outreach Coordinator at Women for Afghan Women.**

"The Chinese community was hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic on many fronts. The next mayor will face a continuing challenge of getting New York City through the recovery. When our community goes to the polls, we will make our choices by ranking all candidates on the ballot. We look forward to hearing directly from candidates seeking to be the next mayor, their plans on how they will address our economic, social, and health issues in the next four years," said **Mae Lee, Executive Director of the Chinese Progressive Association.**

"The Academy of Medical & Public Health Services (AMPHS) looks forward to co-hosting this mayoral forum with CACF and our community partners. Our Asian-American community is the fastest-growing population in New York City, yet faces disproportionate challenges that often go ignored, including the highest poverty rates, highest COVID-19 fatality rates, and historical increases in anti-Asian hate crimes. During the pandemic, many of our communities were left behind as the last to receive critical resources like PPE and business assistance. AMPHS has been filling the gaps where our government has not been able to do so by offering free mental health services, linguistically appropriate vaccine assistance, and cash assistance. We will ensure that our next NYC Mayor centers on an equitable recovery and empower our diverse APA communities to make an informed choice for a people's mayor," said **Mon Yuck Yu, Executive Vice President of the Academy of Medical & Public Health Services.**

"As one of the fastest growing and newer immigrant communities within the Asian-American population, Nepali-speaking communities were also hit the hardest by the COVID pandemic, further exacerbating their economic and social conditions. In this moment especially, we look to the elections as an opportunity to raise the issues of substandard working conditions, precarious immigration statuses, lack of health access and

language justice needs for diverse immigrant workers like those in the Nepali-speaking community. Adhikaar looks forward to hearing from candidates on the details of their firm commitments to these communities of New Yorkers and their families,” said **Pabitra Khati Benjamin, Adhikaar.**

“Despite the APA communities being among the fastest growing groups in the city, we have not seen commensurate investment in APA-led and APA-serving CBOs. There is insufficient data on our communities and our needs are too often ignored. Sapna NYC and other CBOs have been on the ground throughout this pandemic filling in where NYC has failed its most vulnerable residents whether it’s distributing food, helping get people vaccinated, or addressing the spiking anti-Asian hate crimes. We deserve a mayor who is committed to a recovery that centers our most vulnerable communities and doesn’t leave the APA community behind,” said **Diya Basu-Sen, Executive Director of Sapna NYC.**

“The next elected Mayor of the City of New York must approach hate crimes as a national emergency and create and implement strategic, structural and systemic changes that can serve to abate hate crime against Asian, Sikh and all minority communities. As a first step, the new administration must fund programs that provide fulsome hate crimes and hate incident reporting. Over the next four to eight years, the new administration must implement measures that significantly address the lack of diversity, equality and inclusion and expand participation in government, business and civic life for all groups,” said **UNITED SIKHS.**

"Last week, MinKwon and other local organizations and community members around Flushing organized a healing vigil at Bowne playground, entitled "No Longer Invisible." It is indicative that although Asian Americans comprise almost 15% of the City, our communities today still feel compelled to proclaim and demand we are not invisible--because invisibility leads to under resourced communities and false model minority narratives, lack of representation and self-representation, racism , anti-immigrant scapegoating, trauma, and doors being closed on our community's suffering. The next mayor and NYC administration will play a large role in not only the next phase of recovery, but a type of recovery that will correct many of the long-existing fault lines of inequity and deep barriers that have existed in our communities long before the pandemic" said **John Park, Executive Director of MinKwon Center for Community Action.**

"Community Inclusion & Development Alliance (CIDA) strongly believes that our common goal of inclusion and equality can be achieved when all community members work collectively. CACF’s work on the Community Mayoral Forum effort will bolster our common goals, new opportunities and a better future for New York City," said **Dr. Young Seh Bae, President and Executive Director of CIDA.**

CACF brought together the following **host organizations** to plan the forum and develop a candidates’ survey to understand the priorities and plans of candidates.

Academy of Medical & Public Health Services, Inc.

Adhikaar\*\*

Apex for Youth\*

Arab-American Family Support Center, Inc

Asian American / Asian Research Institute - CUNY\*

Asian American Arts Alliance\*\*

Asian Americans For Equality\*

Chhaya CDC

Chinatown YMCA  
Chinese Progressive Association\*  
Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)\*  
CMP\*  
Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans (CAPA)  
Community Inclusion & Development Alliance (CIDA)\*  
Damayan Migrant Workers Association  
GAPIMNY—Empowering Queer & Trans Asian Pacific Islanders  
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Immigrant Social Services, Inc.  
India Home  
Japanese American Association of NY\*\*  
Japanese American Social Services, Inc.\*\*  
Korean American Family Service Center (KAFSC)\*\*  
Korean Community Services of Metropolitan NY (KCS)\*\*  
Mekong NYC\*\*  
MinKwon Center for Community Action\*  
NAPAWF  
OCA-NY\*\*  
South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS)\*\*  
Sakhi for South Asian Women  
Sapna NYC  
South Asian Youth Action (SAYA)\*\*  
United Chinese Association of Brooklyn  
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