

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Lakshmi Sanmuganathan

212-809-4675 x102

lsanmuganathan@cacf.org

PRESS RELEASE

Teach-in on COVID-19 and its Impact on the APA Community

13TH ANNUAL ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN CITY ADVOCACY

New York, NY - Over 100 community members, service providers, advocates and elected allies will virtually gather today at 1 PM EST for a **Teach-in on COVID-19 and its Impact on the APA Community**. This event is a part of the **13th Annual Asian Pacific American City Advocacy**, led by the Coalition for Asian American Children & Families (CACF) under the **15% & Growing Campaign**. As a collective voice demanding equitable funding for the APA community, the 15% & Growing Campaign unites over 45 Asian-led and serving organizations across New York City to advocate for a fair budget.

Over the past year, COVID-19 has devastatingly impacted APA New Yorkers by exacerbating the systemic inequities that were already facing our communities prior to the pandemic. Asian Americans have experienced the largest increase in joblessness of all major racial groups in NYC, with an unemployment rate of 25.6% as of May 2020. Asian Americans are also 2x more likely to test positive for COVID-19 than their white counterparts, yet less likely to be tested at all. In 2020, Asian-related hate crimes also increased by 867% in New York City.

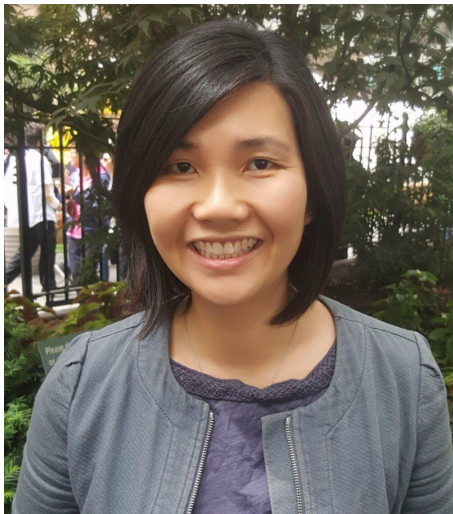
Alongside these rising challenges, APAs face barriers to healthcare, education, employment, housing, food security, violence prevention and civic participation that are critical to becoming contributing members of this City and State. These issues vary across communities and rely heavily upon Asian-led and serving organizations to fill in the gaps of services through culturally inclusive and language accessible services that have the most impact on addressing the needs of our communities. Yet our community based organizations never receive adequate funding to support their vital services. **In FY 2022, APA organizations received only 4.65% of City Council discretionary dollars and less than 1.5% of social service contract dollars.** Current levels

of public funding for the APA community also remain disproportionate to our community's expansive needs and growing population, which now exceeds over 15% of New York City. Now more than ever, providing equitable funding to the APA community is necessary in the recourse and revitalization of New York City. The 15% and Growing Campaign's FY 2022 Budget Priorities are to restore and expand funding to initiatives that address the following issue areas:

- 1) Communities of Color Nonprofit Stabilization Fund (CCNSF)**
- 2) Children and Youth Services**
- 3) Older Adult Services**
- 4) Immigrant Services**
- 5) Health and Well-being**
- 6) Housing and Economic Security**
- 7) Violence Prevention and Intervention**
- 8) Immigrant Workforce Development**



Anita Gundanna, Co-Executive Director of the **Coalition for Asian American Children and Families** said, “This week, we stand united as an APA community with our allies in City Council to demand fair funding for our robust and diverse communities. Asian American-led and serving organizations provide culturally and linguistically competent services that have been critical life-lines for our vulnerable community members amid the pandemic. Even before the pandemic, being underfunded has led our organizations to experience growing wait lists, rising costs, and inadequate resources to fully support our communities in sustaining vital services. We look forward to working together with the City Council and building stronger APA communities.”



Vanessa Leung, Co-Executive Director of the **Coalition for Asian American Children and Families** said, “Given the pandemic, there are dire circumstances facing APA New Yorkers, including job loss, food insecurity, and lack of health access. With nearly 50% of APA New Yorkers being Limited English Proficient, our community based organizations have had to critically step up to fill in gaps of services where our government has failed. We as a united campaign of nearly 50 Asian-led and serving organizations are calling for NYC Council to adopt a fair and inclusive budget that supports the culturally and linguistically competent services that our community based organizations continue to provide to our most marginalized APA New Yorkers.”



Stella Yi, Assistant Professor in the **Section for Health Equity** in the **Department of Population Health, Center for the Study of Asian American Health** at **NYU Grossman School of Medicine** said, “There is an urgent need for data, and specifically disaggregated data for Asian American communities, to better advocate for inclusion in public health response efforts. We have yet to receive timely and quality data at the local and national level.”



Lan Doan, Postdoctoral Fellow in the **Section for Health Equity** in the **Department of Population Health, Center for the Study of Asian American Health** at **NYU Grossman School of Medicine** said, “Data to characterize the state of the pandemic for Asian American communities and by disaggregated Asian ethnic group are not available to us. Without data and disaggregated data to quantify the impact of COVID-19, we are not able to advocate for the Asian American community. Without data, Asian American communities will remain invisible and ignored by the government during this pandemic.”





Annetta Seecharran, Executive Director of Chhaya Community Development Corporation said, “Community and individual well-being starts with having a safe roof over one's head. Yet, huge swaths of our communities have no means to pay rent or meet mortgage obligations, and are only one step away from homelessness. We are witnessing a catastrophic crisis that can only be solved with substantial rent and mortgage relief.”

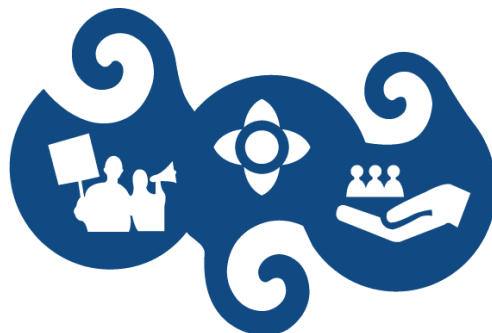


chhaya

Community Development Corporation



Chhaya Chhoum, Executive Director of Mekong NYC, said, “Challenges aren't new to our community. This pandemic has forced us to go deeper into isolation and deeper into poverty; compounding more trauma on already unresolved trauma. Community based organizations and organizers are often left to do the work of addressing failed programs and responses, while receiving no resources. This is unacceptable in "the greatest city in the world.”



MEKONG



Diya Basu-Sen **দিয়া বসু সেন**, **Executive Director** of **Sapna NYC, Inc** said, “Immigrant communities have been devastated by the pandemic and low English proficiency, coupled with low digital literacy and access, make our communities particularly vulnerable. With the sudden and complete shift to the virtual space, our staff has had to help complete applications for SNAP, rent relief, financial assistance, and so much more. The sheer volume of need has tested our capacity, with requests for help coming from all sides - phone, email, even social media. In addition, every week we get at least ten new families coming to Sapna NYC asking for food assistance. There simply aren’t enough food pantries in the Bronx and those that do exist aren’t able to provide culturally appropriate groceries.

Sapna’s pantry, created in response to the pandemic, helps meet the basic needs of our community. But what starts with a simple bag of groceries, grows into a relationship where families have a trusted resource that can provide culturally competent in-language help for benefits applications, financial assistance, COVID-19 information, domestic violence survivor support, workforce development programming and so much more.”

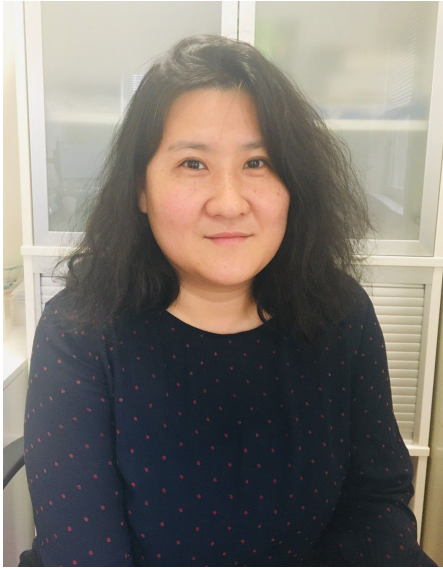


S A P N A N Y C



Hong Shing Lee, **Executive Director** of **CMP** said, “In our mini-survey, 41% of the Chinese American small business respondents had reported laying off employees as a result of the economic impact of the pandemic, compared to national average of 25.7%, and New York State average of 34.8%”, said Hong Shing Lee, Executive Director of Chinatown Manpower Project (CMP), a workforce and economic development organization. “Since March 2020, CMP had helped over 1,000 unemployed workers and small business owners to access Federal CARE Act relief programs, unemployment benefits, SNAP, free health care services, and emergency cash assistance.”





Jeehae Fischer, Executive Director of the **Korean American Family Service Center** said, “Our survivors are faced with inconceivable challenges during this unprecedented time — many are undocumented and working hourly at local restaurants, nail salons, and supermarkets, living paycheck to paycheck. Enforcement of social distancing and other safety measures such as shutting down schools and businesses means that our survivors and their children are trapped at home and face additional violence and challenges. Financial difficulties compounded with social isolation exacerbate existing abusive relationships. Even without a public health crisis, economic shutdown, and racial unrest, immigrant survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse, and child abuse, suffered alone with little to

no resources available to them. The disparities and inequity always existed. The COVID-19 pandemic merely exploited those gaps and exposed the magnitude of the vulnerability of our survivors and their children.”



Linda Lee, President & CEO of the **Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc. (KCS)**, said, “When the pandemic hit, it immediately became clear that the disparity in accessing health care and economic opportunities was only growing wider for our community. Language access and tech assistance with cultural sensitivity became a lifeline for many of our clients. We also sensed a great need to address mental health issues across generations of our community. Through various outreach events, we have been exploring ways to bring generations together to talk about and destigmatize mental health together. We need to ensure that our communities stay healthy, both physically and mentally, in order to thrive and recover from this pandemic.”





Sudha Acharya, Executive Director of the South Asian Council for Social Services (SACSS) said,

"The pandemic has brought sharp focus on how vulnerable and food insecure our communities are. It is now vitally important to find innovative ways of responding to these needs."



Wayne Ho, President and CEO of the Chinese-American Planning Council said, "Asian American communities have experienced the economic devastation of COVID-19 months before New York State shut down in March 2020. Asian American businesses were already struggling from COVID-19, threatening the livelihoods of workers and business owners since January 2020. Unemployment claims by Asian Americans have spiked 6,900%, by far the largest percentage increase experienced by any racial group. Among families served by CPC, nearly 70% reported they had lost their jobs, had their hours cut, had their income reduced, or had a change in employment. Asian American community members, especially seniors, continue to report

increased incidents of public assaults, harassment, and hate crimes. Despite these challenges, Asian Americans have been serving on the front lines for a year, risking their own health as doctors, nurses, human services workers, early childhood teachers, grocers, delivery workers, and more."



The 15% & Growing Campaign is supported by over 45 Asian-led and serving organizations in New York City that aim for the State and City governments to adopt fair and equitable budgets to protect our most vulnerable Asian Pacific American New Yorkers. Campaign members employ thousands of New Yorkers and serve hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers.

Academy of Medical & Public Health Services • Adhikaar • Alliance of South Asian American Labor • Andolan - Organizing South Asian Workers • Apex for Youth* • APICHA Community Health Center* • Arab American Family Support Center • Asian American Arts Alliance • Asian American / Asian Research Institute - CUNY • Asian American Federation • Asian Outreach Clinic, The Child Center of New York • Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund • Asian Americans for Equality • Center for the Integration and Advancement of New Americans • Chhaya CDC* • CMP* • Chinese-American Planning Council* • Chinese Progressive Association • Coalition for Asian American Children & Families (lead) • Council of Peoples Organization • Damayan Migrant Workers Association • DRUM – South Asian Organizing Center • Filipino American Human Services, Inc. • Greater Chinatown Community Association • Hamilton Madison House • Homecrest Community Services • Indo-Caribbean Alliance • Indochina Sino-American Community Center • Immigrant Health and Cancer Disparities, MSKCC • Immigrant Social Services* • Japanese American Association of New York* • Japanese American Social Services Inc. • Korean American Family Service Center* • Korean American League for Civic Action • Korean Community Services of Metropolitan New York, Inc*. • Korean Family Counseling and Research Center • Leviathan Lab • Lower East Side Family Union • MAAWS for Global Welfare, Inc. • Mekong NYC* • MinKwon Center for Community Action* • New York Coalition for Asian American Mental Health • NYU Center for the Study of Asian American Health • SAKHI for South Asian Women • Sapna NYC* • Sikh Coalition • South Asian Council for Social Services* • South Asian Youth Action* • Turning Point for Women and Families • United Chinese Association of Brooklyn • United Sikhs • Womankind* • Women for Afghan Women* • YWCA of Queens* (*Steering Committee)