



# 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



**Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO  
Institute for APA Leadership & Advancement**

815 Black Lives Matter Plaza NW, Washington, DC  
[www.apala.org](http://www.apala.org) | [@apalanational](https://twitter.com/apalanational)

# APALA At a Glance

**1,927**

APALA Members

**109**

Lifetime Warriors

**22**

APALA Chapters

**79**

Media Mentions

**450**

Labor leaders and allies  
reached by our Anti-Asian  
violence resources

**63**

AAPI activists trained to  
organize their workplaces  
and tackle white supremacy

**4**

Fellows trained to increase  
organizing capacity and  
leadership in the field

**\$100K**

Fundraised to support 240  
workers and their families

**120**

Lobby visits organized for  
immigrant & worker policies

## WHAT WE DID

- Hosted the largest convening of AAPI unionists and allies in the nation where members democratically drove the AAPI progressive worker agenda
- Provided critical thought leadership in the national movement on stopping anti-Asian violence and white supremacy
- Grew grassroots community advocates to hold decision-makers accountable and mobilize for a progressive agenda
- Increased the opportunities and abilities of AAPI workers to organize in their workplaces and communities
- Empowered workers to see their role as co-conspirators against U.S. imperialism and capitalism by coming together on global worker campaigns
- Trained AAPI workers to run strong electoral campaigns and empower their communities
- Organized for AAPI priorities in legislation and advocated for AAPI political leadership



# About APALA

**Founded in 1992**, the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance (APALA), AFL-CIO is the first and only national organization of Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) union members and allies advancing worker, immigrant, and civil rights.

Backed with strong support of the AFL-CIO, APALA has 22 chapters and pre-chapters in 16 states and a national office in Washington, D.C. In 2011 to ensure broader education, civic engagement, and capacity building for our communities, APALA established the Institute for Asian Pacific American Leadership & Advancement (IAPALA) as a 501(c)3.

## To achieve our mission, we build power by:

**Organizing** members into unions, developing a pipeline of labor leaders, and building political power for our community

**Educating** AAPI workers and allies about the labor movement, principles of trade unionism, and collective bargaining, as well as provide a vehicle for AAPI issues and concerns

**Activating** our chapters across the country to advance social, racial, and economic justice through state-based campaigns

**Representing** the voice of AAPI workers on coalitions within the labor movement and more broadly in the civil rights, AAPI, and racial justice communities

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# Letter from the Executive Director

*Dear APALA supporter,*

*As we entered into the second year of a global pandemic and witnessed the growing national focus on Anti-Asian racism, APALA's 1,927 members and 22 chapters across the country came together to do what we do best - mobilize support networks and mutual aid funds, advocate for progressive local and national legislation, demand justice for fellow workers abroad, and all the while take the time to build community with one another.*

*APALA's national and local impact on advancing pro-worker and pro-immigrant legislation and building AAPI worker power comes directly from our worker and member centered approach. Since our founding in 1992, APALA has been a space for people to connect and find community.*

*No matter the issue, APALA members were emboldened to show up and fill in the gap for workers who often fall between the cracks. We invested in and trained 63 AAPI activists to organize their workplaces and take on white supremacy. We developed 4 fellows into effective labor leaders who expand the capacity of APALA chapters to run electoral and worker campaigns. We reached over 450 labor leaders and allies on how to address anti-Asian racism. We managed to rest, recharge, and take whole weeks off in between.*

*National, local, and ethnic media reached out to APALA in unprecedented numbers for our expertise on the state of AAPI workers and how we can protect them. Workers and labor leaders reached out to APALA for guidance because of our integrity to show up for our members and authenticity in representing AAPI workers. Our worker centered approach comes from knowing that we cannot win without those who make up the backbone of our communities.*

*As the national voice of Asian American and Pacific Islander workers, APALA is committed to building AAPI worker power and fighting against our nation's exclusive and discriminatory labor policies. We are proud of the work our members and chapters have accomplished this past year and present to you APALA's 2021 Annual Report.*

*We hope you'll support us in this movement for liberation!*

*In Solidarity,  
Alvina Yeh  
Executive Director*



# Collectively Shaping the Future of the AAPI Labor Movement: **APALA's 16th Biennial Convention**

*"30 years ago, the first national Asian American Pacific Islander worker organization in the U.S. labor movement was founded. APALA has spent the last three decades developing AAPI labor leaders and building a more inclusive labor movement. Especially under Alvina's steady excellent leadership, and Monica, and all the AAPI union leaders, and the visionary Kent Wong."*

*U.S. Deputy Secretary of Labor Julie A. Su shared with APALA's Convention attendees in August 2021*

800 attendees shared their vision, discussed, and voted on the priorities and course of action APALA will take to improve the lives of AAPI workers and working families in our communities over the next two years and beyond.

With the help of interpreters, translators and chapter leaders running pre-convention workshops, delegates were prepared to be informed voters and active participants at the Convention. Together we voted in diverse leadership to APALA's board and passed 20 strong resolutions.



Brady Calma, SEIU from Alameda Chapter has been elected to the APALA National Executive Board as National President.

Other officers elected include Steven Moy, IBEW from New York Chapter as 1st Vice President; Ligaya Domingo, SEIU from Seattle Chapter as 2nd Vice President; Sandra Engle, UAW from Michigan Chapter as Secretary; and Jessica Tang, BTU from Massachusetts Chapter as Treasurer.



# APALA's biennial conventions remain to be one of the largest convenings of AAPI unionists and allies in the nation where members democratically drive a progressive AAPI worker agenda.

Ten resolutions were passed by APALA delegates during the convention to advocate for progressive policies and programs. Ten more resolutions were debated and voted on at a town hall in September. The resolutions that were passed include calling for:

- global vaccine equity
- a just economic recovery for all hospitality workers
- APALA's solidarity with abolitionist organizations and work
- opposition to the prison-to-deportation pipeline
- a renewed commitment to humanitarian intervention at the southern border
- immigration reform, and a fair and efficient immigration system
- solidarity with Burmese workers by resisting the military junta in Myanmar

Read the full list of passed resolutions at [www.apalaconvention.org/for-voting-delegates](http://www.apalaconvention.org/for-voting-delegates).



Convention highlights include speakers Julie Su, Deputy Secretary for the Department of Labor; Pamela Tau Lee, Founder of Asian Pacific Environmental Network; Maung Maung, President of the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar; and April Sims, Secretary Treasurer of the Washington State Labor Council; Bella & Cassandra Quinto-Collins also spoke about the death of Angelo Quinto due to police brutality.

# Anchoring the Movement Against Anti-Asian Racism

*"Calling for policing, offering cash rewards, asking for hate crime-related legislation or stricter punishments, [doesn't] solve the problems of violence in our community and only creates more racial division ...the safest communities don't have more police. They don't have more surveillance. They are abundantly resourced [so that] all members of our community are thriving, and that's the community safety plan we should all be working towards."*

*Executive Director Alvina Yeh quoted in the Massachusetts Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Report on Hate Crimes Against Asian American Pacific Islander Communities in August 2021.*

Building off the groundwork in 2020 when APALA released *Guidance on Addressing Anti-Asian Violence* and members built strong multi-racial organizing and mutual aid networks, APALA was well positioned to anchor the growing movement against anti-Asian racism. Members asserted a strategy that was grounded in Asian American history and the principles of the Black Lives Matter movement. More than 48 reporters and 450 labor leaders and allies looked to APALA as a resource in 2021.



**APALA provides critical thought leadership in the national movement on stopping anti-Asian violence and white supremacy.**



Executive Director Alvina Yeh was requested to speak at a Massachusetts legislative hearing on hate crimes, where her position on hate crimes bills was recorded for the final advisory report. APALA is part of several Asian American and Pacific Islander leadership coalitions, including the Asian American Leaders Table, that work to align our communities on progressive values and build multi-racial movements. Our contributions to this table supported a set of policy recommendations for community-centered solutions to hate violence intervention, violence reduction, and community well-being with recommendations to strengthen workers and increase the power to organize.



After the devastating murders of Asian spa workers in Georgia in March 2021, APALA created the *Labor Toolkit on Anti-Asian Racism*: a guide for unions, state federations, central labor councils, and rank-and-file members to take substantive actions against racism. More than 150 labor leaders pledged to stop treating Asian American workers as invisible, disposable, or perpetual foreigners, and instead committed to a vision of justice for all workers.

This toolkit was paired with ongoing actions APALA leaders are taking to hold the labor movement accountable to racial justice. This includes Philadelphia Chapter being an early voice to condemn the head of the Delaware labor federation for his racist and misogynist remarks towards Asian women (Gerald Brady has since resigned from his position at the state office); and Executive Director Alvina Yeh holding steadfast positions on the AFL-CIO Racial Justice Task Force to center the safety needs of Black and communities of color.

**Our movements were confronted with how to respond to anti-Asian violence, and APALA was able to provide a clear voice and vision for how we can unite on our values against white supremacy.**

# Relentlessly Advocating for ALL Immigrants

*"I immigrated to the United States when I was two, but as an undocumented immigrant I never felt like I belonged: not American enough, not Korean enough. I was told I was a criminal for living in my home. But the U.S. has always been my home. It's time to fix our broken immigration system. It's time for a #PathwaytoCitizenship."*

APALA Intern Rachel Jeong shares her story in an Instagram post to fight for a pathway to citizenship in October 2021.

In 2020, we successfully mobilized our communities to vote and elected a new president and Congress. We knew the work wasn't over, but it marked a new era under which we fought for citizenship and resources for all immigrants. We built early momentum during the first hundred days of the Biden Administration and pushed for a pathway to citizenship for all 11 million undocumented immigrants, and for greater support for TPS holders and DACA recipients.



In partnership with the Value Our Families Coalition, we hosted a third annual week of action for immigration reform to support family reunification and restore family-based visas. This year, we trained an all-time high of 100 advocates to lobby 120 Members of Congress: APALA members from Pennsylvania, Michigan, Hawaii, Nevada, and Delaware joined these efforts and are now better equipped to fight for immigration reform.



# APALA grows grassroots community advocates that hold decision-makers accountable and mobilize for a progressive agenda.



When the Senate Parliamentarian ruled against federal immigration reform, we joined partner organization NAKASEC to demand that the Biden-Harris Administration overturn the ruling and commit to keeping a pathway to citizenship in the budget reconciliation package. APALA members raised their voices and shared their own stories to keep immigration at the forefront of the public consciousness. By changing hearts and minds, paired with powerful organizing, we will win the struggle to keep all immigrant families together.

In addition to legislative advocacy, we had to keep supporting our communities that were still hurting during this pandemic. That's why we ran APALA's COVID-19 Community Fund for the second year where we provided mutual aid to workers and families. By raising more than \$100,000 this year, we were able to multiply our assistance to workers as the pandemic raged on. We partnered directly with UNITE HERE Local 8 and Local 26 to support their members as well as workers in other industries impacted by COVID-19 like retail, food, and transportation. The COVID Community Fund provides a critical lifeline to workers and their families: if you would like to donate, please go to [bit.ly/giveinmayapala](https://bit.ly/giveinmayapala).



**APALA continues to be an unwavering voice for the most vulnerable members of our community.**

# Raising Up AAPI Leaders and Worker Actions

*"From 6 AM to 2:40 PM, I work in a giant cooler helping break down boxes, keeping the assembly lines clean, and making sure people have what they need to make thousands of HelloFresh meal kits a day. After going to school and accumulating a lot of student debt, I am almost 30 and have not saved anything for my future. It is my dream to buy land and a house in the Philippines and be able to make money and provide for myself on my own. I believe that I can achieve my goals if I have a union job. Our workplace is 90% people of color and there's a group of AAPI immigrant leaders from the Philippines, Laos, Vietnam, Nepal, and China and it is an honor to have APALA's support."*



*Jegy Sering, porter at HelloFresh in California shared about organizing his co-workers for a union in October 2021*

## **APALA increases the opportunities and abilities of AAPI workers to organize in their workplaces and communities.**

2021 was an exciting year for labor as workers organized an unprecedented number of actions and strikes across the country. Young people reached out to APALA asking for support to organize their workplaces. APALA's monthly chapter leader huddles were a reporting ground for worker action updates.

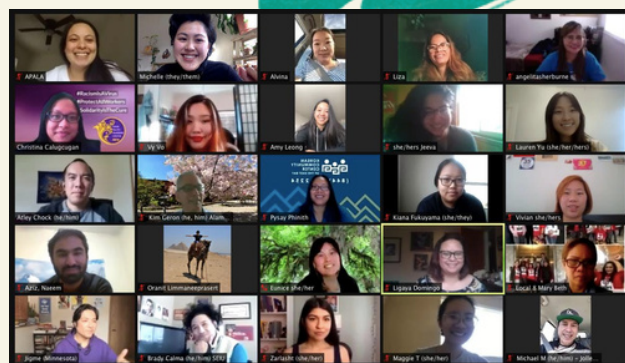
Worker stories like that of Filipino HelloFresh worker Jegy Sering's are crucial for AAPI workers to be able to see themselves in the union struggle. Expanding narratives is vital to calling on labor leaders and politicians to invest more in organizing for AAPI communities.





To empower AAPI workers in the labor movement, we provided direct support for union members to create AAPI caucuses in their unions. With the help of APALA National Executive Board Member and AFGE member Dennis Chong, AFGE passed a resolution to create APOWER (Asian Pacific Organizing Workers Empowering Representation) as a permanent AAPI constituency group within the union.

A critical role that APALA plays is equipping workers with the skills and tools they need to organize. In 2021, APALA ran three training series to grow the number of people who are ready to join unions and organize around racial and immigrant issues. We launched the Racial and Immigrant Justice Program in partnership with Grassroots Asian Rising, developing small-group relationships for 40 participants who were trained in organizing, advocacy, and political education for racial and economic justice.



We hosted APALA's flagship training, the Organizing Institute, with an updated curriculum catered to AAPI workers. The virtual training focused on the fundamentals of unions and how to win union organizing campaigns. Twenty trainees practiced one-on-ones, learned how to recruit and develop workplace leaders, and identified key opportunities for issue campaigns.

Lastly, APALA partnered with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Project Firstline, an initiative to facilitate an infection prevention and control education series for health care workers. APALA members and healthcare workers Susan Tran from UDW AFSCME Local 3930, Angelita Sherburne from SEIU 1199NW, and Amy Hoang from UDW AFSCME Local 3930 were trained to be Infection Prevention and Control Champions and they facilitated culturally appropriate health education trainings.

**APALA plays a critical role in organizing AAPI workers and strengthening the pipeline of AAPI leaders in labor and social justice movements.**

# Connecting the Dots to Challenge Global Inequity

*"I have known APALA since about 1996 when I was first exiled in the United States. We thank all of the members for contributing and donating to the solidarity fund. These are the things that keep us rolling. It is this kind of international support that provided us a space to hit the regime."*

*President Maung Maung of the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar shared these remarks in August 2021 at APALA's 16th Biennial Convention after describing the dire situation in Myanmar.*



From the military coup in Myanmar to the super typhoon that devastated communities in the Philippines, to the workers who continue to be exploited throughout international supply chains —APALA is connected to these global issues through our members and our relationships with labor leaders across the world.

Dim Mang, a Burmese APALA fellow and Michigan Chapter member, introduced President Maung Maung at APALA's 16th Biennial Convention and led several efforts to oppose the military coup in Myanmar. APALA passed a resolution pledging our unrelenting support for the workers, organized chapters to take action, and mobilized Convention attendees to contact their representatives to support the Civil Disobedience Movement. APALA raised over \$50,000 for organizers in Burma, with a specific focus on the striking nurses and transportation workers.





# APALA empowers workers to see their role as co-conspirators against U.S. imperialism and capitalism by coming together on global worker campaigns.



The Justice for Jeyasre Campaign speaking tour kicked off at APALA's Convention. Union leader Thivya Rakini, President of the Tamil Nadu Textile and Common Labour Union discussed building a stronger global labor movement with women's leadership at all levels and demanding corporate accountability on global fashion supply chains. Thivya shared the legacy of Jeyasre Kathiravel, a young Dalit woman union member who was organizing her workplace when she was murdered by her supervisor. APALA chapters hosted local events to promote the Justice for Jeyasre Campaign.

From Diwali to New Year's Eve, APALA raised over \$11,000 to support the 100+ Dalit and Adivasi (low-caste) workers who were brought to the U.S. as religious volunteers and then forced to work dangerously long shifts and paid little more than \$1 per hour to construct a temple in New Jersey. The AFL-CIO and Bricklayers (BAC) raised the plight of these workers and the class-action lawsuit they are pursuing against management earlier in the year. This is one action in APALA's efforts to raise awareness about caste-based discrimination in the workplace.

**The relationships APALA members build with labor leaders globally and the readiness they bring to mobilize chapters and members makes APALA an effective partner for taking action.**



# Growing AAPI Political Power

*"Partnering with APALA is critical in helping ground our civic engagement work in the labor struggle: and critical in providing a political background to the economic justice work we do. We have seen our fellowship with APALA as critical to building out the practice and discipline of organizing while also exposing our staff to different methods of organizing."*

*Executive Director Laura Misumi of Rising Voices shared her experience hosting an APALA Civic Engagement & Organizing Fellow in Michigan*



Furthering the #AAPI2020 civic engagement campaign that APALA led alongside partner organizations, we continued building long-term grassroots networks to build power in AAPI communities. APALA started 2021 strong by flipping the U.S. Senate: we dedicated time, money, and volunteers to the effort in Georgia that garnered major media attention and cemented the importance of AAPI voters to progressive victories. We built on lessons learned and started preparing for the 2022 and 2024 elections.

**APALA trains AAPI workers to run strong electoral campaigns and empower their communities.**

In 2021, we hired and trained four Organizing and Civic Engagement Fellows: Munni Rahman in Michigan, Syeda Bano in Georgia, JingJing Zeng in Philadelphia, and Kristi Mai in Los Angeles. APALA's Fellowship program is designed to equip local AAPI organizers with the skills, networks, and support they need to drive critical campaigns in their communities. Fellows are paid, deeply embedded in community organizations and their APALA chapter (or work on creating new chapters), and receive leadership development and political education training. The fellows' accomplishments have supported chapters, communities, and AAPI organization to organize and mobilize more cohesively.

To secure accurate representation for the AAPI electorate, APALA members spoke out in their local redistricting processes.

Members in California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Michigan, Texas, and other states attended public hearings and pushed for congressional districts that build AAPI power, not undermine it.

APALA is also working to improve a major tool for voter outreach: that is disaggregated and good data on AAPI households. We are overseeing an AAPI voter data project to pilot groundbreaking ethnicity targeting that will vastly improve our outreach to AAPI workers across the country. Reaching our communities directly is crucial as disinformation has been rampant.

This year, we laid the groundwork for a national Asian American Disinformation Table to combat the growing onslaught of rightwing messaging. Alongside these efforts, APALA is supporting the formation of the first national AAPI C4 table that would increase the political power of AAPIs.

APALA coordinated voter mobilization in the California recall election to prevent Governor Newsom from being replaced with an anti-worker candidate. Four APALA chapters in California contacted 300 APALA members through peer outreach and messaged over 15,000 Asian American voters, successfully stopping the recall. APALA chapters continue to strengthen their organizing muscles by taking collective action.



Syeda Bano is the Georgia Fellow working with the Asian American Advocacy Fund



Kristi Mai is the Los Angeles Fellow working with the Pilipino Workers Center and LA Chapter



Munni Rahman is the Michigan Fellow working with Rising Voices and MI Chapter



JingJing Zeng was the Philadelphia Fellow working with Asian Americans United and Philly Chapter

**Through our work training organizers and innovating better tools for our communities, APALA solidifies the foundation for strong civic engagement and electoral campaigns.**

# Advancing Progressive Legislation

*"While only 4% of U.S. nurses are Filipino, about 30% of the almost 200 registered nurses who have died from COVID-19 are Filipino Americans. All workers deserve dignity and safety in the workplace. Legislation like the American Jobs Plan, American Families Plan, and the PRO Act are crucial to close the gap between white workers and workers of color."*

*APALA Executive Director Alvina Yeh shared with President Biden during a White House meeting with AAPI civil rights and social justice leaders in August 2021. There are several factors that contribute to the disproportionate numbers, one of which is that Filipino nurses are more likely than white nurses to work in wings like intensive care units, which increases their exposure to patients with severe Covid-19 symptoms.*

With a new more worker-friendly administration and the urgency of an ongoing pandemic, unprecedented and visionary legislation continued to be introduced in Congress, such as the Build Back Better Act and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. We worked hard to advocate for key legislation that would provide immense relief to AAPIs, such as provisions to Raise the Wage and institute paid leave. Alvina Yeh was invited to be part of the signing of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.



We are part of several policy coalitions where we ensure AAPI worker priorities are included in legislation. Our role is to uplift labor issues in AAPI community spaces and AAPI issues in labor spaces. APALA members stayed informed on the legislative process and advocacy actions through regular email communication and virtual gatherings. We lifted up the voices of APALA members from various industries who were featured in our advocacy emails.



# APALA organizes for AAPI priorities in legislation and advocates for AAPI political leadership.



As a co-chair of the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans' (NCAPA) Housing and Economic Justice Committee, APALA plays a key role in engaging AAPI community partners in strategic worker and economic justice legislation. We also organized support for Julie Su's appointment as Deputy Director of the Department of Labor by mobilizing our partners and members to call their Senators and demand her confirmation. In our advocacy efforts, we make sure that AAPI stories and voices are centered. APALA members from different industries, such as teaching, auto, and homecare, were featured in mobilizations for the Build Back Better Act. When the U.S. House passed the Build Better Act, the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI) included APALA's statement in their press release.

Sample demands APALA has endorsed:

- Pass the Raise the Wage Act of 2021
- Pass the PRO Act
- Pass the Build Back Better Act
- Include Civil Rights Principles for COVID-19 Vaccine Development and Distribution
- Support the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act of 2021
- Repeal SNAP/TANF Drug Felony Ban
- No Department of Defense Funding in Infrastructure Bill



**These last two years have presented an opportunity for progressives to make big asks for our communities and APALA has taken every opportunity to ensure the most pro-worker priorities are brought to the table.**

# Shaping the Narrative

APALA has risen to the forefront as a national leader on anti-Asian hate as media coverage on the issue skyrocketed. National, local, and ethnic media repeatedly looked to APALA for guidance on the impact of anti-Asian hate on workers and how workers are organizing for safer communities. APALA continues to advance a pro-immigrant and pro-worker narrative that is explicitly anti-racist.

Below please find notable media mentions throughout 2021:

## National Outlets

- *Washington Post*, "Power Up: Unions, liberal groups urge Biden to go even bigger on tax hikes for infrastructure plan," March 31, 2021
- *Philadelphia Inquirer*, "Philly SAG-AFTRA board member resigns after posting anti-Asian meme," February 17, 2021
- *USA Today*, "Invisibilized': Asian Americans lead in long-term unemployment amid COVID-19 pandemic and hate attacks," April 7, 2021
- *Harper's Bazaar*, "Organizations to Support in the Fight Against Asian Hate," March 22, 2021
- *Labor Notes*, "Pandemic Discrimination Against Asian Americans Has Long Roots," April 12, 2021
- *Bustle*, "4 Ways To Support Asian-American Communities Right Now," February 10, 2021
- *The Progressive*, "Workers Unite for May Day March," May 3, 2021



*While the AAPI community heals, we can build our legislative power as we advocate for the civil and human rights of AAPIs, immigrants, and all people of color. APALA's role in connecting the labor movement and the AAPI community in the US has been vital, and I hope you'll consider donating to them as we continue celebrating the lunar new year.*

Writer, actor, and comedian Bowen Yang shared to his followers on social media in February 2021.



## Local Outlets

- *Richmond Times Dispatch*, "Here's where Asian communities in Virginia can access support, and how others can help," March 18, 2021
- News 12 Long Island, "10 organizations to donate to in support of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities," March 19, 2021
- Pittsburgh Action News 4, "Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance in Pittsburgh addresses hate crimes against Asian American community," March 20, 2021
- *Thrillist*, "How to Support the Asian-American Community in DC," March 22, 2021
- *Desert Sun*, "Indio City Council plans resolution in solidarity with Asian community," March 24, 2021
- *West Virginia News*, "Philanthropists call for more grants to aid Asian Americans," March 26, 2021
- News 3 Las Vegas, "Cortez Masto meets with local AAPI community; talks hate bill," May 5, 2021
- *OC Breeze*, "Senator Umberg honors API leaders for Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month," June 2, 2021
- *Delaware News Journal*, "National AFL-CIO president calls for Brady's resignation from union role after use of anti-Asian slur," August 27, 2021

## Ethnic Media Outlets

- *Manila Bulletin*, "Fil-Am appointed as White House Liaison," January 26, 2021
- *New India Times*, "Several Indian-American leaders meet President and Vice President," August 8, 2021
- *Asian Fortune*, "More Asian Americans Running in Elections Amid More Voter Power," June 1, 2021
- *Rafu Shimpo*, "Asian Organizations Across Bay Area Join Forces to Demand Action Against Violence," February 20, 2021



# Building Coalitions in the Broader Racial and Social Justice Movements

APALA lifts up the voices of AAPI union members and workers in national coalitions to ensure that economic justice and the AAPI community are at the forefront.

## Racial and Immigrant Justice

- AAPIs Beyond Bars
- AFL-CIO Task Force on Racial Justice
- The Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights
- The National Council for Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)\* APALA plays key leadership roles in NCAPA including Co-Chair of the Executive Committee, and several Policy Committee Co-Chairs.
- One Nation AAPI
- Protecting Immigrant Families
- People's Collective for Justice and Liberation
- United Against Hate
- Value our Families\* APALA's Civic Engagement Manager, Vivian Chang, serves as the Grassroots Field Director for the coalition.
- We Are Home campaign
- 

## Worker and Economic Justice

- AFL-CIO COVID-19 Task Force
- Green New Deal Network
- Essential Workers Bill of Rights Coalition
- J-1 Network
- Progressive Workers Coalition
- Congressional Progressive Caucus Center\* Executive Director Alvina Yeh is on their advisory committee.
- NCAPA COVID-19 Task Force

## Civic and Political Engagement

- AAPI Civic Engagement Network \*APALA was a founder of this coalition
- Asian American Power Network
- Census Taskforce
- EMILY's List Partners
- Somos Más

# Governance

APALA's National Executive Board (NEB) is the governing body of our organization. The NEB is made up of union appointees, chapter appointees, community members, and other rank-and-file workers.

## 2021 Report


Following a constitutional amendment passed in 2017 to expand the ranks of APALA to include young workers, community allies, and other workers who are not currently union members but who embrace the fight for social and economic justice, APALA members continue to redefine and grow potential leaders in 2021.

**In a historic effort to share power with under-represented members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community, APALA delegates passed a constitutional amendment that created four new seats on the National Executive Board.**

The amendment created two additional At-Large Vice-President positions specifically for unrepresented and/or under-represented members of the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.


The two candidates who filled these seats are: Dim Mang, young leader in the Michigan Chapter and one of the main co-conspirators on APALA's Burma solidarity work; and Pam Ng, secretary and young leader of the Los Angeles Chapter and organizer at OPEIU, who has been instrumental in building up the chapter. The amendment also established a dedicated position on the National Executive Board for a Young Worker Vice President. The Young Leaders Council elected Alex Mabanta, a member of Alameda Chapter and UAW Local 2865, where he is a delegate to the Alameda Labor Council.

Lastly, the constitutional amendment includes changes to designate all permanent national staff as non-voting Ex-Officio members, while adding a new Staff Vice President seat to the National Executive Board. This is the latest effort to create opportunities for power sharing between board members and staff. APALA acknowledges that staff drive the day to day work and therefore deserve a voice in decision making.



Following a constitutional amendment that was passed in 2017 to expand our membership base, APALA elected the first unorganized community leaders to the board: Virginia Rodino, staff at the Coalition for Labor Union Women; Tiffany Hsieh, campaign lead at Climate Power; Wei Chen, civic engagement coordinator at Asian Americans United; and Dim Mang. The national board now includes the highest number of young workers and rank-and-file members ever.

2021 was a year of transformation for APALA as the organization entered a process to reshape our internal culture and align our strategies to be more liberatory. New ad-hoc committees and workgroups formed to include leadership from rank-and-file workers, community members, and staff to share power and build a collective agenda. For example, the Revolution Evolution Committee was a temporary committee of staff and select board members that was initiated to address practices of white supremacy and silencing within the organization and create new consensus-based decision-making tools.



**We are transforming how we do the work because we know that we need to prioritize our relationships with one another if we are going to build a sustainable movement.**

**We reimagedined our structures and moved towards innovating something that is co-created and co-led. These changes set us up for a collaborative strategic planning process in 2022.**





# Chapter Updates

*“One of the most powerful things we do is organize really amazing contracts for wages and benefits,” said How. “But we should think wider than that and say ‘What else do people need to feel safe at work?’” She pointed to [UNITE HERE] Local 8’s organizing to ensure panic buttons and other safety measures for hotel housekeepers.*

*She added that the labor movement can support leaders of color, train them how to be shop stewards and staff members, pass resolutions condemning anti-Asian hate, and win contract language that allows people to speak their own languages at work and allows them time to work out immigration issues.*

*“When I became a union [member], I got the idea why there’s racial justice, why there’s racism,” Sherburne said.*



APALA Seattle Chapter President Eunice How and member Angelita Sherburne were interviewed by Labor Notes in April 2021.

**The crux of APALA’s organizing happens at the grassroots level through chapters nationwide.** Our chapters are deeply embedded in local labor and community organizing networks, keeping them responsive to changing needs of AAPI workers. Read the following to learn more about each chapter’s work in 2021.



**Alameda Chapter** was heavily involved in influencing local elections and legislation, as well as increasing spaces for people to connect and heal after traumatic racist events. The chapter joined other California APALA chapters to reach out to over 15,000 Asian voters and 300 APALA members and effectively stopped the recall of Governor Gavin Newsom. The chapter also joined the Asians for Ossoff & Warnock campaign in Georgia and covered 35 phone bank shifts. The chapter supported Malia Vella during the special elections for the 18th District Assembly Member by hosting candidate interviews, and organizing 70 volunteer shifts for canvassing and phone banking. When the city of Oakland put forward its budget proposal, the chapter supported City Council Member Nikki Bas's reframing of public safety which resulted in shifting funding from hiring more police to hiring more mental health workers. Alameda Chapter was also the first organization to endorse the "Justice for Angelo Quinto" Campaign which resulted in the passing of state legislation to ban police from using the chokehold that killed Angelo Quinto. In the face of Anti-Asian Hate, the chapter hosted a Unity Rally where 250 people attended; participated in the "Chinatown Healing" initiative led by the Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN); and hosted an AAPI Cultural Heritage Celebration in May.

The chapter ended the year by gathering 30 members for a book party to promote the book *Asian American Workers Rising: APALA's Struggle to Transform the Labor Movement*, and by organizing a tribute to the late Supervisor Wilma Chan for her contributions to working people and AAPIs.

**Inland Empire Chapter** increased the dialogue on anti-Asian violence in the region and organized local politicians to take action. They organized several rallies including one in response to the murders of Asian spa workers in Georgia which garnered over 250 attendees and Congressman Mark Takano's attendance. The chapter also organized a rally after a racist letter was sent to nail salon workers in the region. Lastly, the chapter partnered with the city of Coachella to commission a public mural of Larry Itliong, Filipino farmworker critical to the labor movement.

**Los Angeles Chapter** members organized impactful racial and economic justice programming, turned out to support workers at the picket, and increased relationship-building by hosting regular socials. The chapter's monthly socials are where members can hang out with one another and strengthen our bonds and our movement. Throughout the year, members turned out to support picket lines, including

one with hotel workers at the Terranea Resort and another with airport workers at Phoenix International Airport. Chapter leaders facilitated political education and outreach by tabling at local community events, hosting workshops on worker power and the Quality of Care Campaign in partnership with the Pilipino Workers Center, speaking on pressing issues such as member Jill Marucut on a panel hosted by the AFL-CIO about how the PRO Act will address systemic racism, and creating visibility projects such as member Mary Entoma producing videos of Pilipinx APALA leaders sharing how they got involved with their chapter for Pilipinx/o/a Visibility Week. The chapter took strong actions for racial justice: member Mary Entoma spoke at a memorial service in honor of AAPI women after the murders of the Asian spa workers in Georgia, and President Lisa Lei spoke out against police violence and marched for justice of the murder of Andres Guardado, the son of a fellow union member. Member Emmelle Israel was awarded APALA's John Delloro Trailblazer Award for her outstanding commitment to worker, immigrant, and civil rights. Lastly, the LA chapter joined other California APALA chapters to stop the recall of Governor Gavin Newsom (read more in Alameda Chapter's update).

**Maryland Chapter** facilitated dialogue on

anti-Asian racism and worker issues locally and also in partnership with partners across the nation. They partnered with United Against Hate to host national public meetings on the role of AAPI communities and the labor movement in standing up to the far right. They partnered with Michigan Chapter and DC Chapter to host a virtual community event on the documentary "Who Killed Vincent Chin?" President Virginia Rodino spoke on the radio show Your Rights At Work to discuss how the labor movement united in condemning the murders of the Asian women workers in Atlanta. The chapter is also active in planning national events for the UN International Day to End Racial Discrimination and #WorldAgainstRacism Day, and lobbied Maryland Congress members for a just immigration system.

**Massachusetts Chapter** members pressured local elected officials and bosses over and over again to win for workers. The chapter kicked off 2021 by celebrating Lunar New Year with different Asian ethnic groups where folks shared their New Year traditions. The chapter increased the number of engaged and informed AAPI voters by turning out AAPI workers to mayoral forums ahead of Boston's elections. They partnered with UNITE HERE Local 26 and successfully turned out members to support over 750 hospitality workers in



downtown Boston. Chapter members were also crucial in the efforts to get adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) for SEIU 1199 home care workers, as well as equitable distribution of state premium pay for home care workers, and a fair share of funding from the American Rescue Plan Act. The chapter also contributed to the worker fight by organizing members to submit testimonies for a statewide bill to protect against wage theft, joining the Coalition to Protect Workers' Rights to oppose a campaign by Uber and Lyft to classify workers as independent contractors, and joining Greater Boston Labor Council's Labor Day Parade to march with UNITE HERE Local 26 workers. Massachusetts members organized with vaccine access coalitions to co-host in-language vaccine information sessions focused on immigrant communities. Lastly, members are deeply engaged in growing their leadership and political education by committing to a Cantonese speaking study group led by Chinese Progressive Association founding member Suzanne Lee. Members learn about American history, policies and issues that impact AAPI communities, and how to build stronger immigrant working-class leadership.

**Michigan Chapter** members Sandra Engle and Dim Mang were elected to the National

Executive Board at the 2021 Convention. Michigan APALA fellow Munni Rahman created a redistricting training for Bangladeshi community members. Chapter members partnered with Rising Voices and volunteered on election outreach and served as poll workers for elections in southeast Michigan. The chapter is excited to do even more work on global solidarity, Know Your Rights for local workers, and chapter development in 2022.

**Minnesota Chapter** members deepened relationships within labor and within Minnesota's communities of color. The chapter worked with local AAPI organizations to call on U.S. Senators Klobuchar and Smith, Governor Walz, and other elected leaders to act on anti-Asian hate and violence. They connected with local union leaders to educate and understand AAPI history in the context of the labor movement. The chapter's representatives are at immigration and climate tables. Since the Black Lives Matter uprising in 2020, they have continued to organize with the wider AAPI Minnesotan community to support the Movement for Black Lives.

**New Jersey Chapter** recruited a new young leader, Isabel Hamada, who has been strategic in connecting the chapter to APALA's Young Leaders Council

and new local audiences.

**New York Chapter** effectively turned out members for local mayoral and comptroller elections by organizing extensive outreach among its members and turning people out to outreach events. They also mobilized members to support local rallies to Stop Asian Hate.

**Philly Chapter** was a strong and influential voice on Anti-Asian racism in labor that resulted in accountability. Earlier in the year, chapter members spoke out against a Philly SAG-AFTRA board member for posting an anti-Asian meme. They were also vocal about asking former Delaware Representative and Delaware AFL-CIO Executive Director Gerald Brady to step down after making insensitive anti-Asian comments. Both leaders have since left their positions in labor. Philly chapter members have a strong relationship with UNITE HERE local 274 and joined their vaccine phone banking to connect members to local vaccine providers. They also joined Council member Helen Gyms public town hall listening sessions on public schools to share know your rights outreach information on the Fair Workweek predictable scheduling law that protects service retail and hospitality workers.

**Pittsburgh Chapter** raised significant funds

to support immigrants struggling through the pandemic and continued to increase vaccination rates among AAPI communities through their outreach work. For Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, the chapter partnered with the Filipino American Association of Pittsburgh (FAAP) to host virtual cook-alongs that fundraised \$12,000 for 30 families that were excluded from the federal stimulus program. They also provided information about immigrants' rights and wage laws to these families. Chapter members conducted multilingual outreach and scheduled COVID-19 vaccine appointments for more than 1,000 community members who would not have been able to navigate the system because of language or technology barriers. Pittsburgh Chapter won the CLASS (a local community service organization) 28th Annual Community Heroes Award for working tirelessly throughout the pandemic to help neighbors access essential support toward a community where each person belongs.

**Sacramento Chapter** came together after the passing of Dean Murakami, the beloved chapter president, and re-committed to increasing the voice of AAPI workers, the advocacy for immigrants and social justice, and the chapter's collaboration with local and national unions. The executive board voted to sign on to the South Asian

Americans Leading Together's letter to Vice President Kamala Harris to call on her to ensure the inclusion of a pathway to citizenship for South Asian Americans in the Build Back Better package. The board also voted to join the We Are Home campaign by lobbying their Congressional Representatives for urgent immigration reform. In September, the chapter worked with local unions and other chapters of APALA to successfully stop the recall of Governor Gavin Newsom (read more in the Alameda Chapter update). In December, the chapter president and a member passionately participated in numerous activities organized by the California Nurses Association and the National Nurses United to advocate for H.R. 1976 (Medicare for All). In fact, the APALA-Sacramento president was the only Asian American who attended the meeting with Congressman Garamendi on December 9th to urge him to co-sponsor the bill.

**San Diego Chapter** members provided crucial aid to immigrants and asylum seekers at the border and organized gatherings in light of anti-Asian violence. The chapter was awarded the 2021 Worker Justice Partner of the Year Award from the San Diego Immigrant Rights Consortium (SDIRC) for their work on SDIRC's street vending committee, coordinating humanitarian aid in the encampment in Tijuana, helping bring

back a deported veteran, serving on the SDIRC advisory board, participating in Immigrant Day, and advocating for the VISION Act which aims to end the prison to detention pipeline. Led by member Ian Seruelo, the chapter is part of the Chaparral Humanitarian Alliance that has helped provide legal screenings and clothing to asylum seekers who are stuck in an encampment waiting to approach the U.S. border. Lastly, like many of the chapters in California, San Diego Chapter was part of the efforts to stop the recall of Governor Gavin Newsom.

**San Francisco Chapter** increased the visibility of AAPI workers in their city's community events and local legislation. In February, the chapter was featured in San Francisco's Virtual 2021 Chinese New Year Parade. In May, they participated in the San Francisco May Day parade, uplifting the need for labor to unite against Anti-Asian hate and be in solidarity with Black Lives Matter. They participated through chapter social media pages in the #TeachTruth Days of Action to support telling the truth about racism and oppression in U.S. history. The chapter also worked with the local labor council to pass a resolution to demand sanctions on Myanmar in support of the pro-democracy movement there. Several chapter members were part of local efforts to translate



vaccine communications and participate in safety patrols for Asian seniors.

**Seattle Chapter** took the lead in advising labor and community groups on anti-Asian violence and continued to build AAPI worker power. With the rise in focus on anti-Asian violence and in response to the murders of the spa workers in Georgia, chapter leaders developed and led presentations for labor and community groups on how to respond. As the COVID-19 pandemic raged on, the chapter documented the stories of AAPI workers and provided relief to workers in need. The chapter continues to be the voice of AAPI workers at Seattle's County and State Labor Federations, in coalition with APRI, CBTU, and LCLAA (the Black and Latinx constituency groups of the AFL-CIO). Many chapter members participated in reaching out to hard-to-reach AAPI voters for the Ossoff/Warnock runoff elections in Georgia and for the Seattle Mayoral elections. Lastly, they received a grant from the Seattle Department of Transportation to spread awareness about scooters.

**Texas Chapter** led coordinated efforts to support the pro-democracy movement in Myanmar. They coordinated a Burmese labor leader to speak with APALA's 700 Convention attendees and organized chapters across the country to pass a

resolution in support of Burmese workers.

Chapter members also lobbied state representatives for voter reform.

**Washington, DC Chapter** members raised the visibility of AAPI workers in their city. They joined their local May Day march and hosted a book event for Asian American Workers Rising: APALA's Struggle to Transform the Labor Movement where they brought on founding and new APALA members including Kent Wong, Arlene Inouye, Tracy Lai, Yves Gomez, and Matt Finucane. The chapter also elected new leadership; Tarn Goelling, Jillian Matundan, Mina Itabashi, Mary Tablante, Vivian Chang, and Marlan Maralit.



# What's Next: APALA in 2022

In 2022, APALA enters its 30th year as an organization. This is a time to reflect on our legacy, assert the progressive AAPI worker agenda we've been building, and engage our members and chapters in our path forward. We are going to practice our new co-created and co-led processes in a transformative strategic planning process that will kickoff efforts to update our branding, theory of change, and create a set of strategic objectives over the next three years that drive our collective agenda.

In 2022, we are:

- Providing critical thought leadership by organizing political education workshops that dig into the connections between Anti-Asian hate and border and policing issues;
- Growing grassroots community advocates to demand humane and inclusive immigration policies by organizing lobby meetings, digital actions, and leadership trainings;
- Increasing the capacities of AAPI workers to organize their workplaces and communities by developing culturally appropriate content for the long running Organizing Institute and APALA's flagship program, the Emerging Leaders Transformation training;
- Empowering workers to be co-conspirators against U.S. imperialism by coming together to build with casino workers in Cambodia, and garment workers in India;
- Running strong electoral campaigns during the 2022 midterms by developing local leaders, and investing in strategic outreach methods;
- Organizing for AAPI priorities in legislation by asserting the AAPI worker agenda in progressive coalitions; and
- Preparing to host the next largest convening of AAPI unionists and allies in 2023 by strengthening member leadership and recruitment

Stay connected with APALA to plug into these exciting movement building opportunities!

# Lifetime Warriors

The APALA Lifetime Warrior Program was launched to recognize the commitment of APALA Warriors—those that have dedicated their lives to advance Asian Pacific American worker, immigrant and civil rights.

Rosie Abriam	John Delloro	Sabrina Yowchyi Liu	Norm Ten
Mary Anne Ahtye	Ligaya Domingo	Delrico Loyd	Monica Thammarath
Mary Au	Henry Y. Eng	Ken Liao	Marian Thom
Willard Beck	Virginia Eng	Amanda Lowrey	Tamlyn Tomita
Linda Bennett	Sandra Engle	Francine Ly	Stephanie Tsai
Daniel Blinkoff	Christopher Erikson	Jillian J.P. Matundan	Maf Misbah Uddin
Luisa Blue	Matthew Finucane	Michael Milan	Jigme Ugen
Rob Bonta	Miguel Foster	Barbara E. Miller	Victor Uno
Tim Bressler	Calvin Gee	Alana Moy	Kent Wong
Michael Byun	Ying Gee	Jeffrey M. Moy	Lai K. Wong
Brady Calma	Kim Geron	Lonway Moy	Bowen Yang
Christina Calugcugan	Tarn Goelling	Steven Moy	Kathleen M Yasuda
Josie Camacho	Yves G. Gomes	Michael Mulgrew	Michael Yee
Kathia Canlas	James Hardy	Elsie Myers	Wendell Yee
David Carpio	Johanna Hester	Karen Nakatani	Alvina Yeh
Maria M Castaneda	Tichakorn Hill	Patty Ng	Mazie Yeh
Gregory A Cendana	Alex Hing	Van S. Nguyen	
Andrew Chang	Jenny Ho	Lisa Pau	
Roy Chavadiyil	Arlene Inouye	Satomi Rash-Zeigler	
May Y. Chen	Emmelle Israel	Patrcia Recinos	
Susan Chen	Theodore H. Jacobsen	Bobby Dalton Roy	
Carlton Chew	Jammi Juarez	Ahmed Shakir	
Donna Y. Chin	Andy Kopra	Darren Shiroma	
Helen T. Chin	Tracy A. Lai	Maria Somma	
Olivia Chow	Joyce Yee Lau	Anna Stuart	
Richard Chu	Anne Lee	Zahid Syed	
Lila Chui	Hee Won Lee	Tracy Takano	
Dolores Clemente	Gemma de Leon	Jessica Tang	
Bella Comelo	Brandon Leung	Kenneth Tang	
Troy Davis	Paul Lew	Mark Taylor	



# APALA National Executive Board

Brady Calma, SEIU  
National President

Steven Moy, IBEW Local 3  
1st Vice President

Ligaya Domingo, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW  
2nd Vice President

Sandra Engle, UAW  
Secretary

Jessica Tang, BTU Local 66, AFT  
Treasurer

Shwe Tun Aung, SIU/ ITF  
Jason Chan, IAMAW  
Parvesh Cheena, SAG-AFTRA  
Wei Chen, Asian Americans United  
Atley Chock, OPEIU Local 2  
Cindy Datangel, APWU  
Yunup Dennis Chong, AFGE  
Bobby Dutta, SEIU Local 1000  
Leon Chow, SEIU 2015  
Teresa Ellis, IFPTE  
Katherine General, IFPTE Local 21  
Kim Geron, CFA, SEIU  
Tarn Goelling, IBEW  
Mack Harrell Jr., AFL-CIO  
Eunice How, UNITE HERE Local 8  
Tiffany Hsieh, Climate Power  
Stan Kiino, AFA-CWA Local 29011  
Tracy Lai, AFT Washington  
Nam Le, UFCW

Seung Lee, UFT-AFT Local 2  
Will Lee, UNITE HERE Local 26  
Lisa Lei, UNITE HERE Local 11  
Sabrina Yowchyi Liu, USW  
Alex Mabanta, UAW Local 2865  
Jillian Matundan, AFSCME  
Kimvy Nguyen, BTU Local 66, AFT  
Lindsay Peifer, NEA  
Mikayla Robinson, UAW  
Andrew Pang, OPEIU Local 50  
Yeon Park, SEIU 1021  
Virginia Rodino, CLUW  
Anna Stuart, AFL-CIO  
Brian S. Tanaka, ILWU  
Norm Ten, CWA 9404  
Marian Thom, UFT  
Maf Misbah Uddin, AFSCME  
Jigme Ugen, SEIU Healthcare MN  
Tevita Uhatafe, TWU Local 513

# IAPALA Board of Directors

Brady Calma, SEIU  
National President

Ligaya Domingo, SEIU Healthcare 1199NW  
2nd Vice President

Steven Moy, IBEW Local 3  
1st Vice President

Sandra Engle, UAW  
Secretary

Jessica Tang, BTU Local 66, AFT  
Treasurer





# National Staff

Thank you to all the staff and interns who contributed to APALA in 2021.

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Sara Greiner, Operations and Development Manager

Maricel Laquindanum, Operations and Finance Coordinator

Michelle Loo, Program Coordinator

Kristina Romines, Programs Manager

Maggie Tsai, Data and Program Coordinator

Alvina Yeh, Executive Director

Alfred Barrion, OCA Summer Intern

Paola Choque Villarroel, Dream Summer Fellow

Rachel Jeong, Racial, Economic, and Immigrant Justice Intern

Freddy Lopez, Project Firstline Coordinator

Syeda Bano, Organizing and Civic Engagement Fellow

Kristi Mai, Organizing and Civic Engagement Fellow

Dim Mang, Organizing and Civic Engagement Fellow

Sophie Mark-Ng, Organizing and Civic Engagement Fellow

Jeeva Muhil, Organizing and Civic Engagement Fellow

Munni Rahman, Organizing and Civic Engagement Fellow

JingJing Zeng, Organizing and Civic Engagement Fellow







**The first and only national organization of Asian American  
and Pacific Islander (AAPI) union members and allies**