1. **About the Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OCAPIA)**

**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 policy makers and leaders. The OCAPIA is a catalyst that empowers partnerships between 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. Stable families and housing
6. Environmental Justice/Equity
7. Civic engagement

Who we are:
The OCAPIA is composed of nine distinguished community members who are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate, along with two legislators, appointed by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House respectively. See OCAPIA member bios: https://www.oregon.gov/OCAPIA/Pages/members.aspx

OCAPIA Commission members 2015-17

Appointed by the Governor
Mari Watanabe – Chair, Portland
David Yuen Tam – Vice Chair, Eugene
Hussein Al-Baiaty, Hillsboro
Susan Soonkeum Cox, Eugene
Kathleen Jonathan, Salem
Ping Khaw, Lake Oswego
Bennie Moses-Mesubed, La Grande
Joseph Santos-Lyons, Portland
Chanpone Sinlapasai-Okamura, Portland
Michelle Vlach-Ing, Salem
Steven Ying, Past Chair, Portland

Appointed by the President of the Senate
Senator Michael Dembrow, Portland
Appointed by the Speaker of the House
Representative Gene Whisnant, Sunriver
Representative Carla Piluso, Gresham

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 in OCAPIA’s 7 priority areas, testifying in support of bills that level the playing field for success and tracking these bills through the legislative process.

2 OCAPIA STATUTORY ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2015 - 2017

ADVOCACY

The OCAPIA monitored 50 bills in 7 strategic areas for the 2015 and 2016 legislative sessions and submitted testimony on 19 bills before legislative committees. OCAPIA’s testimonies emphasize the importance to the Asian and Pacific Islander community state wide of legislation concerning core areas including: Justice, Safety and Policing; Education; Healthcare; Housing and Stable Families; Jobs; Environment and Civic Engagement.
OCAPIA leads the OAC’s in passage of historic bills for API’s and underrepresented communities in 2015/2016 Sessions:

- HB 4009, Minoru Yasui Day. PASSED
- HB 3525 (2015) and HB 4128 (2016), Reporting immigrant consultant fraud. PASSED
- HB 4071, COFA premium assistance. PASSED
- HB 2934A, OHA Basic Health Plan. PASSED
- SB 1564, English Language Learner granular data. PASSED

OCAPIA COLLABORATION PASSES IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT FRAUD BILL

In 2015, OCAPIA worked with OCHA leadership to craft and pass HB 3525, sponsored by Rep. Joe Gallegos and Rep. Jessica Vega Pederson, which established a legislative taskforce to study and frame legislation imposing penalties on immigration consultant (Notario) fraud. The resulting legislation, introduced in 2016, was sponsored by Sen. Gelser and Rep. Vega Pederson and developed collaboratively between all the parties represented on the taskforce, giving law enforcement a tool to investigate, charge, and prosecute egregious violations of Oregon’s *unlawful practice of law* statute and supports victims of those crimes to engage with law enforcement.

OCHA and OCAPIA led Oregon Advocacy Commissions’ testimony in supporting the legislation before the House Judiciary Committee which passed HB 4128 on Immigration Consultant (Notario) Fraud in 2016. In all, the legislation was a collaborative effort beginning in 2015 and passing in 2016, with OCHA and OCAPIA leading the OAC’s over the entire process.

OCAPIA LEADS WITH COMMUNITY TO ESTABLISH MINORU YASUI PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM AND OREGON’S MINORU YASUI DAY

In 2015 the Chair of Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs joined an outpouring of Oregon community support and reached out to President Obama to support his consideration of awarding Oregonian Minoru Yasui the highest civilian honor of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which he awarded in 2016. Yasui’s medal is now on display in the Smithsonian after a viewing tour to the Oregon History Museum. The OCAPIA Chair was joined in his letter to the President by the Chairs of the Oregon Commissions on Black Affairs, Hispanic Affairs and Commission for Women noting the
groundbreaking accomplishments in Civil Rights throughout Mr. Yasui’s career. Their letter to the President noted:

“Although Minoru Yasui’s commitment was perhaps most dramatically demonstrated when he intentionally violated the military curfew imposed upon American citizens of Japanese descent during World War II, Yasui’s life is replete with courageous acts. He was never silenced by fear or bitterness, and he never stopped fighting for equality.

Minoru Yasui fought for the rights of Latinos, African Americans, Native Americans, Asian Pacific Americans, youth, people with disabilities, seniors, international human rights agencies and many others. A visionary well ahead of his time, Yasui recognized the common struggle of all marginalized people and dedicated his life to advocate and achieve results on their behalf.”

In 2016, OCAPIA Chair Mari Watanabe led the Advocacy Commissions’ testimony before the Oregon legislature as they considered House Bill 4009 establishing March 28th honoring the struggle and the legacy of Minoru Yasui in Oregon each year. The bill was signed by the Governor surrounded by the Yasui family.

2015-16 OCAPIA PRIORITY BILLS

**Education**
1. SB 1564, English language learner granular data, [Testimony](#), (OCAPIA), PASSED – 2016
2. SB 187A, Student data protection, [Letter of Support](#), (OCAPIA and OAC’s), PASSED – 2015
3. SB 215, OEIB sunset, [Testimony](#), (OCAPIA and OAC’s), PASSED – 2015
4. HB 3308A, HECC group on disparities, [Testimony](#), (OCAPIA and OAC’s), PASSED – 2015

**Jobs/Economy**
5. SB 454A, Employer sick time benefits, [Testimony](#), (OCAPIA and OAC’s) PASSED – 2015
6. HB 2005, Employer sick time benefits, [Testimony](#), (OCAPIA and OAC’s) PASSED – 2015

**Healthcare**
7. HB 4017, OHA Basic Health Plan, [Testimony](#), (OCAPIA, OCHA, OCBA) PASSED – 2016
8. HB 4071, COFA premium assistance, Supported, (OCAPIA and OAC’s) PASSED – 2016
9. HB 2522, Health care for API COFA residents, [Testimony](#), (OCAPIA) PASSED – 2015
10. HB 2934A, OHA Basic Health Plan, [Testimony](#), (OCAPIA, OCFW) PASSED – 2015

**Justice, Safety and Policing**
11. HB 4128, Immigration consultant fraud, [Testimony](#) and [Floor Letter](#), (OCAPIA and OAC’s) PASSED – 2016
12. HB 2002, CJC for profiling complaints, [Testimony](#), (OCAPIA and OAC’s), PASSED – 2015
13. HB 2205, Fund to end commercial exploitation of children for sex, Testimony, (OCAPIA, OCHA, OCFW), PASSED – 2015
15. SB 822, Recording of grand jury proceedings, Joint Coalition Letter, (OCAPIA and OAC’s) – 2015

Stable Families and Housing
16. SB 1533A, Inclusionary zoning, Testimony, (OCAPIA and OAC’s), PASSED – 2016
17. SB 939, Programs for children of incarcerated parents, Testimony, (OCAPIA and OAC’s), PASSED – 2015

Environmental Equity/Justice
18. HB 4036, Clean energy and community solar, Letter of Support, (OCAPIA and OAC’s) PASSED – 2016

Civic Engagement

2016 JOINT LEGISLATIVE DAY WITH APANO

The OCAPIA joined its community partner APANO for a joint Legislative Day at the Capitol in 2015 and 2016. OCAPIA Commissioners joined the other attendees including API community and faith leaders, college students, parents and their children from around the state. The large group of participants gathered in the Capitol to be welcomed with presentations from legislators and other leaders. OCAPIA Commissioners and others visited in small groups for scheduled meetings with individual legislators and caucus staff on primary issues including immigration consultant fraud and health coverage for COFA residents and children.

PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH

The OCAPIA provides Masters, PhD, and Law students with for-credit public policy internships addressing our strategic priorities. The research is conducted jointly with state partners, and
the Governor’s Office to study data, best practices, effective policies, literature review, analyze gaps, suggest remedies and produce reports used by the Advocacy Commissions and their partners to inform new policies, develop strategic approaches and craft bills that improve the success of Asian Pacific Islanders statewide.

INTEGRATING IMMIGRANTS’ PROFESSIONAL CREDENTIALS INTO THE OREGON WORKFORCE: RESEARCH ON IMMIGRANT RE-CREDENTIALING

OCAPIA partnered with Partners in Diversity (a business-led group based in Portland), the Oregon Commission on Black Affairs (OCBA), the Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB), and the Governor’s Office in 2016 to begin research on ways to integrate the professional degrees and credentials that immigrants bring to Oregon into the workforce. Many immigrants from Asian, African, Middle Eastern and other regions bring their professional credentials to their new home in Oregon with the expectation that they will be able to work in their fields. These credentials include physicians, skilled nurses, psychiatrists, machine operators and electricians among others. However, immigrants with these specialized skills can often land only minimum wage, low skill jobs because their internationally earned degrees and credentials have no efficient path to equivalent credentials in Oregon. Oregon and its communities need these important and sought after expertise and competencies in every part of the state. This research will inform policy discussions already begun in leadership circles within state and county government, higher education, immigrant communities, and other key partners.

The research, being conducted from fall of 2016 though spring 2017, includes a review of best practices; statutory or administrative barriers and analysis of lessons learned and a needs assessment; comparisons of the credentialing process within several health related fields in Oregon; input forums with
immigrant groups leading professional credentialing; forums with professional licensing boards and interviews with immigrant professionals seeking to become licensed in Oregon. The research is being conducted by an OSU graduate student in public policy who is also a Fulbright Scholar from Morocco, Ennada Lagouit. The research includes overviews of national and Canadian best practices, and will also identify the roles of training, education and credentialing bodies in workforce skillset integration strategies for internationally trained immigrants. Senator Dembrow, Chair of the Senate Workforce Committee, serves as advisor for the researcher to consider the policy implications of the findings. Senator Dembrow, OCAPIA, Oregon Workforce Investment Board, and Governor’s Office are working with the student to consider legislative or administrative responses.

The research and data will be presented to the OCAPIA, Oregon Workforce Investment Board, and the Senate committee on workforce at the end of the project. The final report will be included in the OCAPIA Biennial Report to the Governor and the Legislature with recommendations for policy development, training and possible legislative action.

The first set of outcomes will be available at [https://www.oregon.gov/OCAPIA/Pages/index.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/OCAPIA/Pages/index.aspx) in June, 2017.

“What is so impressive about the Advocacy Commissions’ research work is the way that they combine solid academic research, community outreach, and practical policy proposals for community-building change. They synthesize cutting-edge national research with facts on the ground here in Oregon—addressing real-world problems faced by real Oregonians—and they do so in an extremely cost-effective manner. This really helps legislators and other policy-makers, faced with tough decisions, make the right decisions.” Senator Michael Dembrow

**OCAPIA COMMISSIONER APPOINTED TO 2015 LEGISLATIVE TASKFORCE ON IMMIGRATION CONSULTANT FRAUD AND SUPPORTS PASSAGE OF HB 4128**

Over the summer of 2015, the Governor appointed OCAPIA Commissioner Chanpone Sinlapasai-Okamura to represent immigration lawyers on a legislative taskforce on Immigration Fraud, Co-chaired by Senator Gelser and Representative Vega Pederson. The work of the taskforce, which produced a successful 2016 bill on the subject, focused on penalties for Immigration Consultant Fraud which is an illegal practice of falsely representing oneself as an immigration expert in order to defraud vulnerable immigrants. During its meetings, the Task Force analyzed the existing provisions of ORS 9.280, ORS 9.990, ORS 162.235, ORS 162.365, and ORS chapter 194. Consistent with its charge, the Task Force explored amending criminal and civil regulatory statutes. The Task Force discussed providing law enforcement with improved
tools to fight notario fraud, and expanding the Secretary of State’s regulatory authority over notaries who engage in the unlawful practice of law. The Task Force also discussed amending ORS 164.075, Oregon’s Theft by Extortion statute, ORS 162.235, Oregon’s Obstruction of Justice statute and ORS 162.365, Oregon’s Criminal Impersonation statute. See the final report of the taskforce here.

The Oregon Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, in coalition with the Commission on Hispanic Affairs and the other Advocacy Commissions, testified in support of the resulting 2016 bill, HB 4128, which addressed a serious issue in Latino and other immigrant communities – that of unlicensed non-lawyer “immigration consultants” (often referred to as “notarios”) which prey on certain members of the public. Unlicensed immigration consultants were already prohibited under ORS 9.280, but prior to passage of HB 4128, when someone applied for a notary public license, the Secretary of State had no discretion to deny it. Likewise, there were few tools for prosecutors to use to indict and bring to trial individuals who had violated the public’s trust by pretending to be a fully licensed notario or the equivalent of an immigration consultant.

The passage of HB 4128 in 2016 gave law enforcement a tool to investigate, charge, and prosecute egregious violations of Oregon’s unlawful practice of law statute. It also encourages victims of those crimes to feel comfortable meeting with law enforcement.

This legislation was the product of the taskforce involving the Oregon Commissions on Hispanic Affairs (OCHA) and API Affairs (OCAPIA), representatives of the Oregon Department of Justice, District Attorneys, the Oregon Chapter of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, the Oregon State Bar, the Secretary of State’s office, and the Human Trafficking Unit of Multnomah County Sheriff’s Office.

OCAPIA’S WORK IN SUPPORT OF OREGON’S INCLUSIVE SOCIAL STUDIES

In 2013, Senator Jackie Winters sponsored a bill that made OCAPIA and the Advocacy Commissions partners with the Oregon Department of Education (ODE) in building a set of resources to help make Social Studies curricula in grade schools inclusive of the contributions of Oregon’s diverse citizenry over its history. That accomplished, OCAPIA Commissioner Stephen Ying was invited to participate in ODE’s Inclusive Social Studies Summit where educators and experts statewide came together in July, 2016, to review and comment on ODE’s new standards.

“For me, the Oregon Advocacy Commissions (OACs) serve a crucial role by connecting the legislature with issues important to our diverse communities. Through the network and connections of OAC’s Commissioners, issues like immigration consultant fraud, paid sick time, and the ban on racial profiling by law enforcement officers have been made priorities for the legislature. The OAC’s support and advocacy are critical to the progress that we have made in the legislature on creating policies representative of all Oregonians.”

Representative Jessica Vega Pederson
for inclusive social studies pedagogy. OCAPIA’s contributions on that day and the OACs’ interest going forward will help set and then monitor Oregon’s success in making its social studies representative of the notable contributions of communities of color to our great state.

**AT OREGON ADVOCACY COMMISSIONS OFFICE’S 10TH ANNIVERSARY, OCAPIA AND THE OACs ADD STAFF SUPPORT FOR PUBLIC POLICY AND RESEARCH**

In 2015, OCAPIA Chair Stephen Ying joined the Chairs of the Oregon Commissions on Black Affairs (OCBA,) Hispanic Affairs (OCHA), and Commission for Women (OCFW) to present the Advocacy Commissions’ budget request to the Joint Ways and Means General Government Committee. The 2015 session marked the 10th anniversary of the establishment of the OACO administrative agency for the Advocacy Commissions, supporting the development and work of the OACs with two staff since 2005. Supported by testimony from Advocacy Commission Chairs, Senator Jackie Winters, Representative Lew Frederick (on behalf of the eight OAC legislative members), the Governor’s Office, AAUW, Urban League, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO), the Center for Intercultural Organizing and others, the General Government committee cast an historic vote to increase the OAC’s staff support at the work session for the OACO budget bill.

The budget passed the House and the Senate in May 2015. It includes a reclassification for OACO’s Executive Assistant and new permanent Policy Analyst position, .5 FTE. Though the Commissioners and legislators of Joint Ways and Means had hoped to approve further support for the statutory work of the OACs, all agreed that in a challenging budget year the investment in additional staff for the Commissions marks the Governor’s and legislature’s appreciation for the important public policy work of the OACs.

**GROWING LEADERSHIP FOR ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER OREGONIANS**

The OCAPIA works to grow the number and influence of Asian and Pacific Islander Oregonians within all branches of state government, its key initiatives, departmental leadership and policy
work. To do this, the OCAPIA reaches out to API communities statewide to inspire the desire to lead, access training and mentoring opportunities, and to create pathways to lifelong leadership, including in elected roles.

**OCAPIA COMMISSIONER CHANPONE SINLAPASAI-OKAMURA SELECTED AS A 2016 OCFW WOMAN OF ACHIEVEMENT**

The Oregon Commission for Women (OCFW) hosts its annual Women of Achievement Awards with Governor Kate Brown each year. Friends and family members of those honored join Oregon Advocacy Commissioners, legislators, community leaders, and students from area community colleges and universities to honor some of Oregon’s most inspiring women.

In 2017, OCAPIA announced that its nominee, Chanpone Sinlapasai-Okamura, is being honored as a Woman of Achievement at a March 8th ceremony in the Governor’s Ceremonial Room in the Capitol. Ms. Sinlapasai-Okamura, who began life with her family in a Laotian refugee camp and has risen to prominence as an Oregon civil rights and immigration attorney, will share her story of challenge and leadership with the attendees. The Women of Achievement are individuals who have led in civic rights and social justice in Oregon, serving Oregon as leadership models for the next generation of women and girls from diverse communities and walks of life across Oregon.

**OCAPIA’S 2016 FUNDRAISER AND ESTABLISHING THE OCAPIA PEGGY NAGAE & JAIME LIM LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIPS**

Celebrating the Journey, Telling Our Stories, on August 23, 2016, saw OCAPIA gather with community leadership, honorees Peggy Nagae and Jaime Lim, the Honorable Lynn Nakamoto, elected and business leaders, families and friends for a night of celebration and fundraising. Actor Reggie Lee, who plays Sergeant Drew Wu in Grimm, served as keynote speaker to the sold out event, sharing his own journey as a kid from the Philippines with a dream to act, and onward to success in Hollywood.
The celebration, hosted by Platinum Sponsor NW Natural and esteemed business and community sponsors, raised funds for OCAPIA’s newly established leadership scholarships, named for Peggy Nagae and Jaime Lim. The OCAPIA annually provides Asian and Pacific Islander youth and emerging leaders with scholarships to attend leadership conferences and other training hosted by APANO, the Asian American Youth Leadership Conference and others.

**INTERNSHIPS FOR OCAPIA’S PUBLIC POLICY RESEARCH**

The OCAPIA provides undergraduate honors, Masters, PhD, and Law students interested in public policy with high-level for-credit internships researching strategic public policy issues of importance to the Commission and the Asian and Pacific Islander community statewide. Individual Commissioners and OAC legislators serve as champions for the research and as mentors for the students on the public policy implications of their work. In fall 2016, Ennada Lagouit, a Fulbright scholar from Morocco studying at the OSU graduate school for public policy, was selected by OCAPIA and its research partners as the primary researcher to help the Commission, Partners in Diversity, and Oregon Workforce Investment Board study ways to increase success for immigrants who have advanced degrees from international schools to become credentialed and work in their field in Oregon. The resulting research report, due in June 2017, will become a policy guide for legislators, policymakers, licensing boards and business working to integrate immigrant skills into Oregon’s workforce. The research internships of the OCAPIA and other Advocacy Commissions provide diverse students who wish to work in policy fields of importance to API, Black, and Hispanic communities statewide with high-level, relevant policy work usually unavailable to graduate students, providing leadership training and entre into their professions early in their careers.

**OCAPIA’S API COMMUNITY FORUMS**

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE**

**WHITEHOUSE INITIATIVE ON ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS (WHIAAPI) IN PORTLAND AND EUGENE**

OCAPIA partners with the national WHIAAPI to bring the Oregon API community together with leaders of Federal Agencies serving Oregon to learn about the programs and services helpful to Asian and Pacific Islanders. OCAPIA organized the WHIAAPI community gatherings in Portland and Eugene over the summer of 2015, attracting over 170 attendees for discussion and breakout sessions.