



## Report Back to the Governor's Safe Start Social Support Advisory Group

### Asian Community Statewide Listening Forum

Monday, July 27, 2020 | 12:00 - 1:30 PM

#### Organizing Committee:

Michael Byun, Governor's Safe Start Social Support Advisory Group member  
Shomya Tripathy, Asian Counseling & Referral Service  
Commissioner Helen Christensen, Clark County  
Commissioner Ekkarath Sisavatdy, South King County  
Commissioner Carrie Huie-Pascua, Yakima County



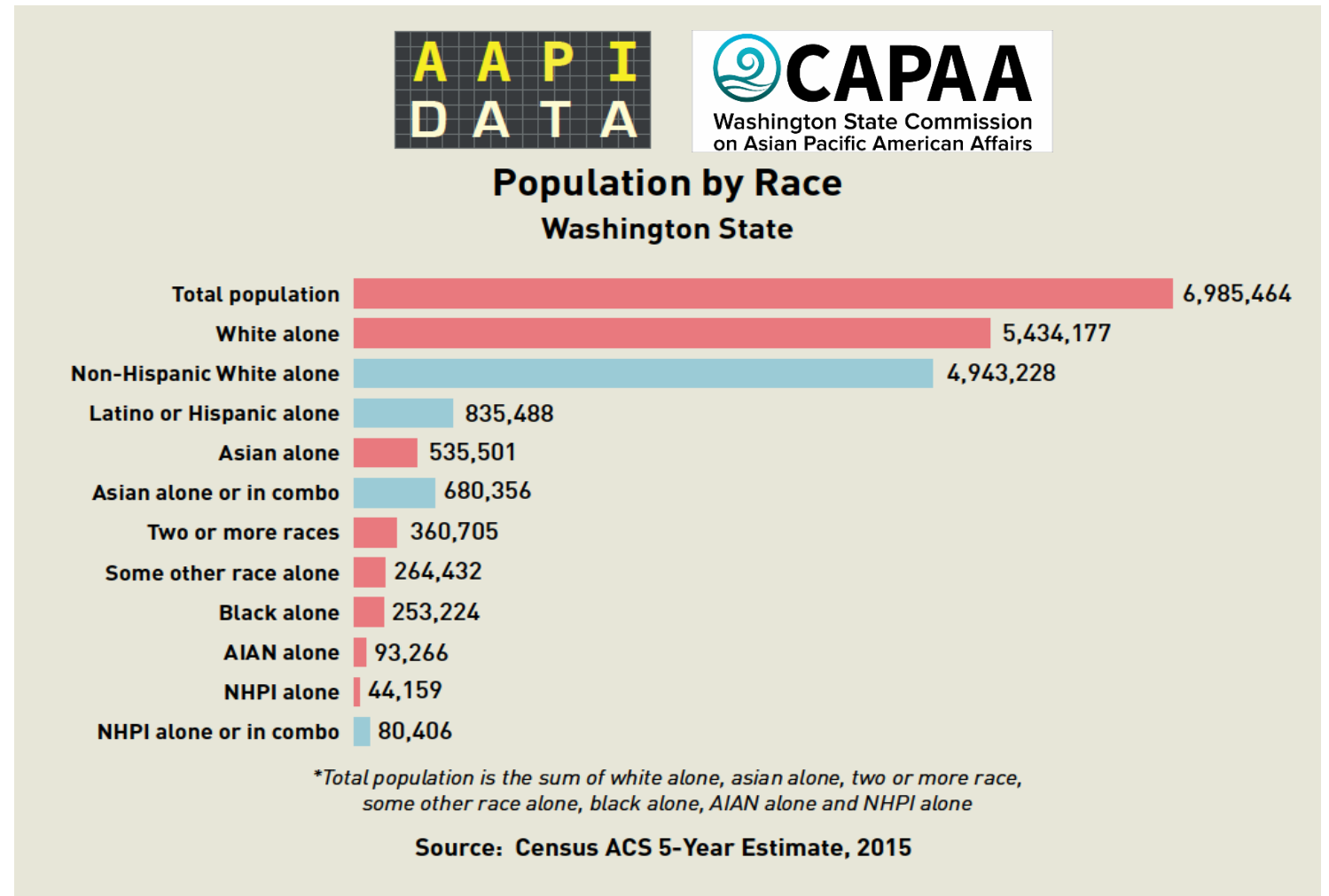
**Washington State Commission  
on Asian Pacific American Affairs**



**Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of Washington State**  
Celebrating Unity and Civic Participation

# Washington State's Asian Population

- 9.8% of the State's total population (Asian Alone or in Combination with another race)
- Fastest-growing population in Washington State
- Present in all 39 counties
- Represent 51 Asian Countries and Territories
- Idiomatically diverse: <https://capaa.wa.gov/languages/>
- Washington State Language Access Plan



Source: <https://capaa.wa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/pop-by-race.pdf>

# Outreach

- APIC and CAPAA shared information about the opportunity to provide public input through each of their e-mail list servs.
- Promoted the opportunity on Facebook
- Posted to webpage
- Included in our June Public Board Meeting
- All testimonials were accepted through COB on the day of the Forum
- Abided by all OPMA regulations

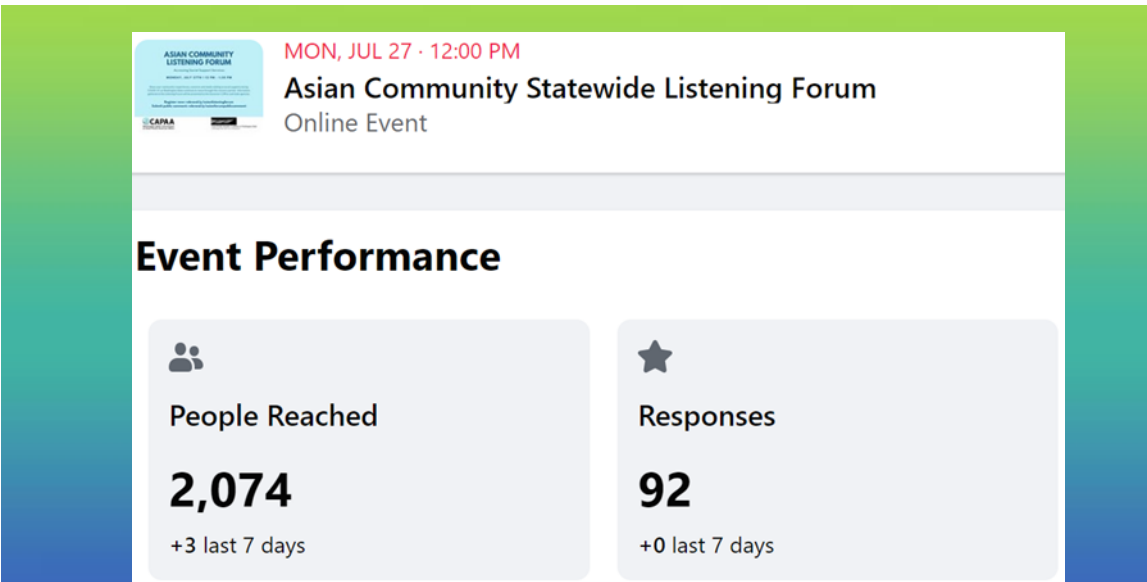
*NOTE: Due to the critical COVID-19 impact on the Pacific Islander community, a separate Listening Session is scheduled by the Washington State Pacific Islander COVID-19 Taskforce.*



**ASIAN COMMUNITY LISTENING FORUM**  
Accessing Social Support Services  
MONDAY, JULY 27TH | 12 PM - 1:30 PM



Share your community's experiences, concerns and needs relating to social supports during COVID-19, as Washington State continues to move through this recovery period. Information gathered at the Listening Forum will be presented to the Governor's Office and state agencies.

Register now: [rebrand.ly/asianlisteningforum](https://rebrand.ly/asianlisteningforum)  
Submit public comment: [rebrand.ly/asianforumpubliccomment](https://rebrand.ly/asianforumpubliccomment)



MON, JUL 27 · 12:00 PM  
Asian Community Statewide Listening Forum  
Online Event

### Event Performance

 People Reached <b>2,074</b> +3 last 7 days	 Responses <b>92</b> +0 last 7 days
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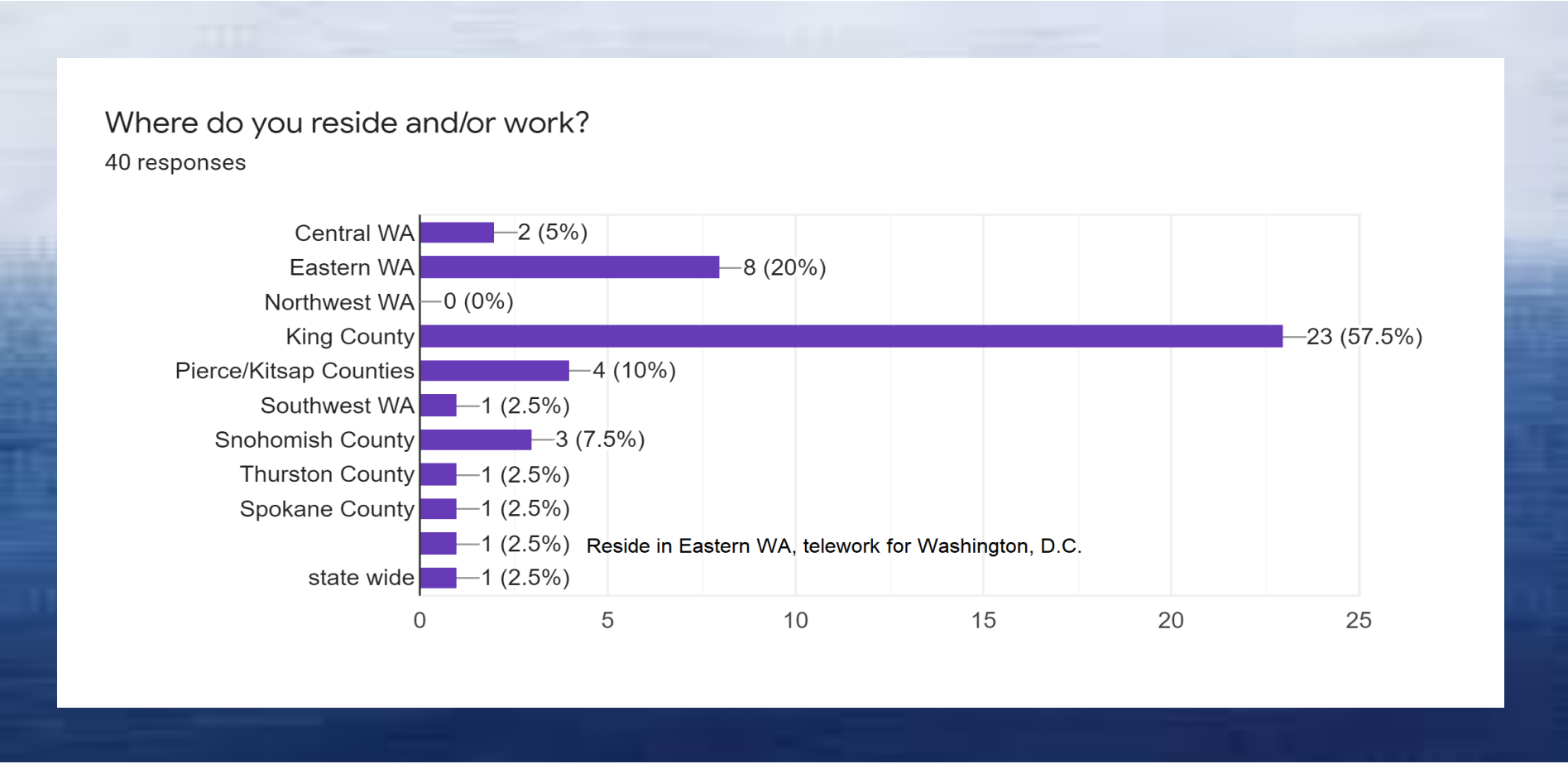
# Participation

- In all, there were 41 unique respondents who submitted input online
- 33 people on the Zoom call, including special guest First Lady Trudi Inslee & event organizers
- 16 people provided oral testimony

1. CAPAA Commissioner Lori Wada, Pierce County
2. Liza Cruz, Unite HERE Local 8, King County
3. CAPAA Commissioner Lalita Uppala, Indian Assn. of Western WA, APIC East KC
4. Precy Tamaki, Yakima Valley
5. CAPAA Commissioner Ping Ping, Spokane County
6. Traci Lai, American Federation of Teachers/Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, King County
7. Sina Sam, Southeast Asia Resource Access Center, Whitman County
8. Michael Itti, Chinese Information Service Center, King County
9. Yoon Joo Han, ACRS Health Director, King County
10. Dr. Anita Paul, Indian Association of Western Washington, King County
11. Thyda Ros, Khmer Community of Seattle/KC, King County
12. Vinod Sharma, Microsoft, King County
13. Carol Lightle, Swedish Providence Medical Center/APALA, King County
14. Sonny Gailan, Fil Am of Yak Valley, Yakima County, WA
15. Juliana Repp, Employment Law Project, Spokane County
16. Tracie Friedman, United Communities of Laos, King County



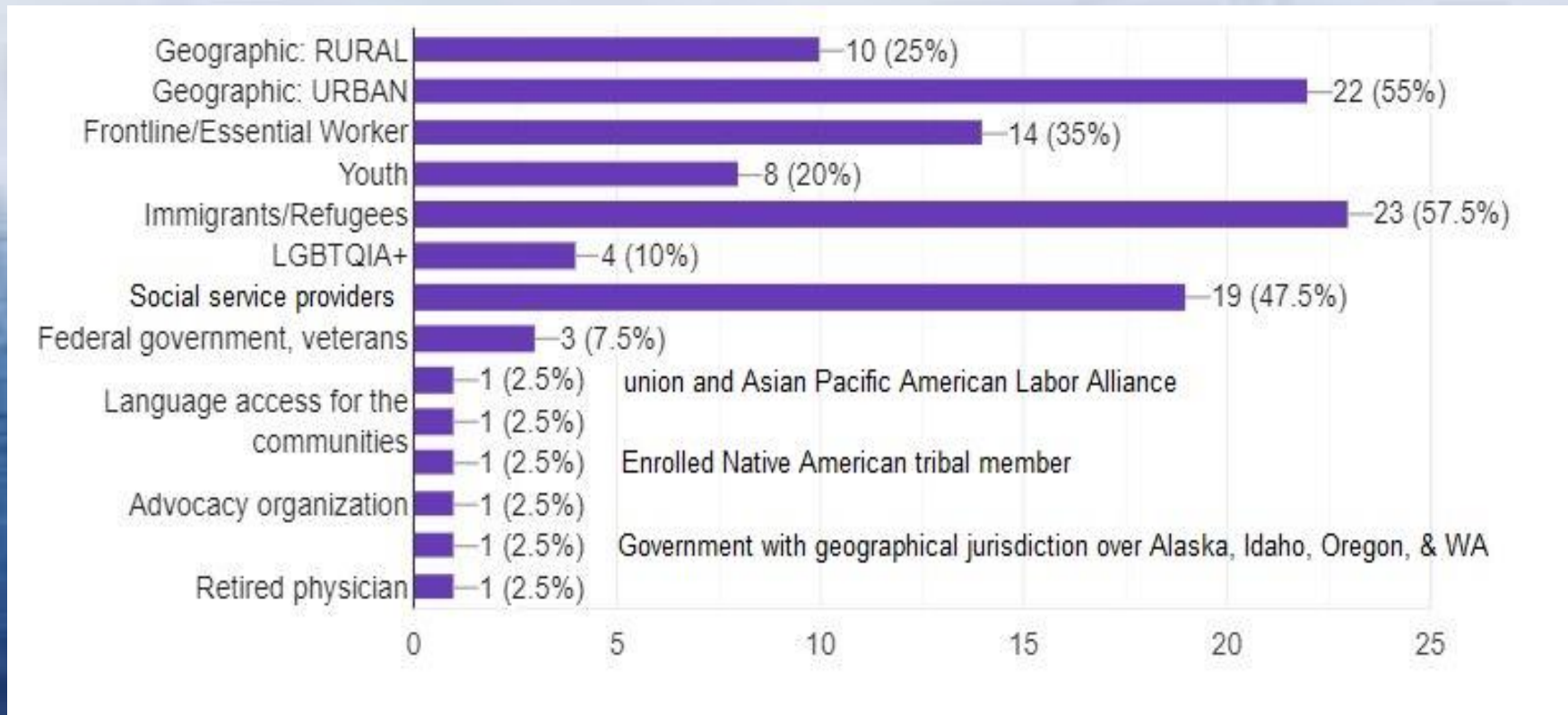
# Participation, cont.



- 75% of respondents were from the Puget Sound Area
- It's important to have the geographic diversity represented, as Asian community members make up significant percentages of total county populations



# Participation, cont.



# Common Themes

1. Racism, Xenophobia, Bias & Hate
2. Language Access
3. Unemployment
4. Economic Instability/Need for Resources
5. Mental Health Care
6. Impact of Isolation Upon Elders
7. Dangers for Frontline Workers
8. Digital Divide



# Racism, Xenophobia, Hate & Bias

- Economic impact upon businesses
  - Lack of sales, vandalization, threats
- Social impact in community (Commissioner Ping)
  - One day in march, a student rode the bus and a passenger told her “stay away from me, I don’t want to be close to the virus”.
  - While Chinese woman was in the drug store, a white woman on the phone said loudly, “a chinese girl just passed me -- I think I just caught the virus.”
- Impact in Schools
  - Micro-aggressions
  - Bullying
  - Long-term effects on future students ability to perform well in school and close the educational gap. (AFT, SEARAC)
- “Chinese virus, Kung Flu” - Washington State has a pattern of violence against chinese people that goes unpunished. Anti-Chinese sentiment is upheld through oppressive laws and political speech. (Traci Lai, EFT)
- Exacerbates mental health issues and tensions in the home

## Suggestions:

- We need a unified message from all law enforcement across jurisdictions, especially in rural WA, denouncing bias incidents and crimes
- There should be swift, certain and severe repercussions for harassment/hate crimes/hate-based altercations
- Education/outreach on ways victims can find help and support





# Language Access

- Challenges applying for unemployment, being served by ESD
- Challenges advancing through the claims appeals process
- Need for public education on Covid-19 in-language
- Specific issues with the implementation of the WA State Language Access Plan

## Suggestions:

- Provide advance notice - way more time than the night before or one day prior to the effective date of the order (ex: public health instructions, funding opportunities, or legal notices)
- Simplify all communications materials
- Translate all new materials/announcements yourselves. CBO's legally can't risk making errors, particularly with health matters and opportunities
- Greater transparency/visibility of Governors language access plan: Publicize each agency's designated point of contact for the LAP



# Unemployment

- CISC reports that between March 21 and April 19, 519 people requested help for unemployment weekly claim filing assistance. **Today, they help 250 people/wk for application assistance and weekly claim filings**
- In volunteering, Commissioner Wada received **30 calls/day for 7d/wk for almost 4 months from Korean community members** in need of support. She reports half of the calls for assistance were from small business owners, and 50% from individuals needing support to access unemployment.
- **Lack of Service**
  - Portal account dysfunction;
  - Non-responsiveness by phone & e-mail
  - ELL individuals may submit forms with missing or incorrect information. When there's been a user error, they have to contact ESD. But due to the backlog, there is a tremendous outstanding number of people not being served.
  - "The Employment Security Department was not accessible, their service providing was inadequate. There is no bridge for the middle person to connect community with resources to help them."
  - Employment Law Project reports that people call to complain that ESD hasn't answered the phone or responded to messages
    - Have been waiting weeks and weeks for benefits - 70% have appealed benefits, but are not timely transmitted to the Office of Administrative hearings, so they're awaiting their hearing and thus their benefits.

*"Many people are in financial distress for having waited so long - they use benefits for basic needs like shelter, food, and medicine."*

*–Unemployment Law Project*



# Unemployment, cont.

*“We are told by OAH that transmittal from ESD will take 7-8 weeks, and another 2 weeks to set an appeals hearing after that. Some calling [in for counsel] are now homeless because they’ve lost their benefits - they need appeals for immediate action to help these individuals.”*

## **Suggestions:**

- Fund ESD to: 1) address the backlog; and 2) Translate the portal and forms into all languages needed.
- Prioritize hiring customer service staff with language skills and provide a direct line for the public to access those staff.
- Similar to Washington Health plan finder which has navigators from various CBO’s around WA State, the ESD should look at that model and partner with CBO’s serving immigrant communities providing language assistance.
- Establish a “Trusted Partner” program with CBO’s, similar to DSHS’s Washington Connection Purpose program, to Washington residents complete applications and carry out other activities designed to help them maintain eligibility. Per this model, “Trusted Partners” are given their own login accounts, and after completing a client consent agreement, the assisting organization can log in as trusted partners and complete applications on behalf of community members.

# Economic Instability/Need for Resources

- Unemployment
- People off work due to illness
- Risk of losing health benefits
- Need for rental/utilities assistance
- Lack of childcare, inability to support homeschooling while WFH
- Access to food
  - “We set up grocery stops so no one had to experience shame asking for food.” (IAWW)
  - “One Auntie cried when we delivered them a meal because she didn’t know what she was going to eat that day.” (Fil-Am Yakima Valley)
- Ineligibility for any relief resources due to immigration status
- Small Business Support

## Suggestions:

- Establish a Statewide Network for Food Safety Providers and Food Distribution Centers
- Extend access to health insurance during the pandemic
- We have a dire need for rental assistance
- Direct emergency cash, food supports for folks ineligible for other supports
- “Small businesses need mentorship during this time” - Commissioner Lalita Uppala



# Mental Health Care

*Many Asian people live in poverty, many don't speak english, many suffer from physical health issues, and don't have access to health care.*

- Increased domestic violence
- Abusers hoarding stimulus checks
- Influx in Anxiety and Panic Attacks from increased strain
  - Increased anti-asian sentiment
  - Lack of resources (food, shelter)
  - Fear of displacement
  - Lack of support for children
  - Uncertainty of welfare of those in detention (ICE or Prison)
- Increase in substance abuse
- Many small business owners were caught off guard.



# Mental Health Care, cont.

*“The disparities ... between mainstream Washingtonians and immigrant/refugee communities are more severe than I thought. The impact ... has significant mental health impacts that will linger over time.”*

*- Commissioner Lori Wada*

## **Suggestions:**

- Everybody deserves access to mental health care, regardless of their immigration status. Help us ensure that mental health care is available and accessible to everyone.
- We need extensive health education relating to COVID-19 in-language, in alignment with cultural norms.
- We need to ensure that we have stable funding for our vulnerable clients with a mental illness.
- Support to small businesses should include access to mental health care.



# Impact of Isolation Upon Elders

- Standstill of all programming, Online programs cannot reach all people
- Dire need for food programs for seniors
  - One elder went 3 days without food because their caregiver was afraid to enter and support -- and they don't know who to call. (Khmer Community Seattle/KC)
  - "We used to have 20 volunteers - but now we have a skeleton crew delivering meals to 75 people. (Fil-Am Yakima Valley)
- Increased depression, anxiety among seniors
  - Great fear of the virus as greatest-risk population
  - Fear of isolation of quarantine
  - Fear of dying alone, or not getting to say goodbye
  - Can't attend funerals
  - "One Uncle was crying because he didn't understand that we couldn't come in and converse with him a while... the List of those in need grows every week and it's harder to fill the needs." (Fil-Am Yakima Valley)
- Online programs can't reach all seniors (IAWW)

## Suggestion:

*"Diverse communities will care for their own elderly but they need financial assistance because private donors and volunteers can't do all the lifting."*

*- Precy Tamaki, Yakima County*



# Dangers for Frontline Workers

- PPE denied to workers by other hospital workers
- Lack of supplies to clean/sanitize work space
  - “The lack of PPE is a threat to our safety, health, and autonomy. How can we keep communities safe & healthy if the government can’t keep nurses safe at the bedside?”
  - “We are still rationing out supplies - we are running out of sanitizing wipes in facilities.”
- Lack of COVID-19 testing for frontline workers
- Lack of negative pressure rooms
- The Employment Law Projects reports that calls for counsel have increased 400% since Covid-19 for concern of being called back to work when it’s unsafe & they have risk factors that make the vulnerable to return to work.

*“Many workers are missing whole paychecks because they missed work due to being sick. If you can’t keep us healthy, we can’t take care of our communities.”*

*- Carole Lightle, frontline worker, Swedish Providence Medical Center*

## Suggestions:

- Ensure all workers get PPE. Withholding PPE from any worker should be illegal. It is rooted in someone’s perception of them being less important because they are brown , or are immigrants who clean rooms.
- Provide free PPE for staff and clients or mandate employers provide PPE to all staff
- Incentivize frontline caregivers rather than furloughing them
- Hold administrations accountable for discriminating against Frontline workers of color
- Make COVID-19 testing accessible for all frontline workers





# Digital Divide

- Digital literacy barriers, especially elders, rural
- Inadequate technology (devices and service) to support fully online telework/schooling
- Many don't have a safe or private place to access telehealth
- ACRS reports serving over 200 clients with no phone

## Suggestions:

- Address inaccessibility to stable internet and devices.
- Provide free, public broadband
- Fund smart phones, internet, and/or tablets for students and workers to access
- Establish funds to set up technology stations at our facilities so clients could communicate with their providers;
- Establish funds to support WFH and providing telehealth from home;
- Provide a waiver for written consent and telehealth restriction, and telehealth platforms



# Additional Suggestions

*“Small, culturally specific organizations are taking on the role of providing for basic needs across the spectrum, not just what is in their mission, due to lack of ability of government to provide basic access to API folks.”*

- Develop partnerships with ethnic, community-based organizations. They have knowledge of their community members. Support community leaders as trusted messengers by funding them with grants (not loans).
- At a minimum, do not cut from organizations that support the basic needs of individuals in communities





# Questions & Follow-Up



Washington State Commission  
on Asian Pacific American Affairs

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