

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
Executive Office of Mayor Muriel Bowser



FY2015 Performance Oversight Hearing on
Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

Testimony of
David Do
Director, Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs

Before the

Committee on Housing & Community Development
Anita Bonds, Chairperson

Council of the District of Columbia

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Room 120
John A. Wilson Building
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20004



Good morning, Chairperson Bonds, members of the Committee on Housing & Community Development and members of the public. My name is David Do, and I am honored to be testifying before you today having recently been appointed the Acting Director of the Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs (OAPIA) by Mayor Bowser.

I am Vietnamese-American and the son of parents who came to the U.S. as Vietnam War refugees. I'm a proud Ward 1 resident and have spent my career dedicated to public service, serving most recently as a teaching assistant and as a correspondence management specialist in the Mayor's Correspondence Unit for the previous two mayoral administrations. I also recently completed my graduate degree in community planning at the University of Maryland.

I am here today in the seventh week of the Bowser Administration to provide an overview of the few weeks we have been in office during FY2015. At this hearing, I will provide an outline of our Office functions, summarize the Office's Performance Accountability Report for FY2014, and provide you with the Mayor's vision for the Office looking forward.

In the District of Columbia, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are comprised of several ethnic groups from many different countries. According to the latest Census numbers, the Asian American population grew to 29,132 or 4.6% of the entire District population in 2012. This was a 77% increase from 2000 and a 6% increase from 2011. The largest ethnic groups reported in 2012 were Asian Indian, followed by Chinese, Filipino, Korean, Vietnamese, and Japanese. Recent data from 2013 indicates that 36% of the Asian American population in the District has limited English proficiency, this compared to 5% of the entire District's population.



Furthermore, 1 in 5 Asian American households were considered linguistically isolated; meaning no in the household spoke English very well. Most of the District's Asian residents live in Ward 2 (6,942 individuals) followed by Ward 3 (5,146), Ward 6 (3,161), Ward 1 (3,156), Ward 4 (1,218), Ward 5 (1,037), Ward 8 (260), and Ward 7 (136). Asian residents made up 9% of Ward 2 and 7% of Ward 3.

For the past 28 years, the Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs has been committed to improving the lives of our Asian and Pacific Islander communities who face numerous barriers, notably language and cultural barriers, in becoming contributing, active members of the District of Columbia. OAPIA remains committed to promoting and engaging the District's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) residents and merchants so they may successfully integrate into the civic, economic, and cultural life of the District. To this end, OAPIA currently provides three core services: 1) assist District AAPIs in accessing equitable services from District agencies and advocate on behalf of District AAPIs on issues affecting their quality of life; 2) assist District agencies to build their capacity to provide culturally and linguistically competent services to District AAPIs; and 3) provide AAPI community-focused grants. As the Mayor's liaison, we connect the AAPI residents and merchants with District agencies to foster efficient and effective partnerships, improve access to services, and help break down language and cultural barriers. OAPIA works with all levels of government and facets of the AAPI community.

In FY2014, the Office exceeded all of its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and our overall Performance Assessment was marked "Fully Achieved." Some of the highlights of our KPIs



involved community outreach, as OAPIA reached 57, 641 Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community members via workshops, special events, community meetings, email listserv, website visits, Facebook and Twitter. OAPIA resolved 100% of constituent issues/cases and received a 100% satisfactory or above rating on OAPIA services (e.g. programs, technical assistance to Agencies, case assistance, events, etc.). We also were able to conduct 3,162 capacity building efforts. Under the Bowser Administration, we will work to provide even more meaningful engagement with the community.

In just the few weeks since Mayor Muriel Bowser announced me as the acting Director of the Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs we have already had major successes. First, we have met with a wide-range of stakeholders and community members to listen and discuss my vision for this office. I have also devoted Fridays as my community outreach day. So far we have visited over 15 businesses to share the duties of the office and also help business owners with various issues and concerns. We have also visited community churches and seniors centers that are dedicated to working towards increasing the quality of life for AAPI residents. We will continue this outreach effort in all eight wards. We have also planned our community office hours, we will host our first meeting at the Samuel Kelsey Apartments this week. Just last week, to continue meaningful engagement we hosted our open house and Lunar New Year celebration, over 150 community members and government officials attended the event. Finally, we are getting a jump-start in planning for our May heritage month celebrations, we will be hosting four events throughout the month to engage members of the AAPI community including LGBT and young professional groups.



The Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs strives to be a valuable asset for all the District's residents and merchants. OAPIA will continue to build on its successes and find creative ways to address the challenges stated. As we enter this new year we are looking at a Fresh Start where we will look to focus on new populations and new initiatives. Inclusion, engagement, and outreach are major themes of Mayor Bowser's vision that the Office will focus on moving forward. We will make sure to include groups that the Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs has not traditionally targeted like young professionals, LGBT, and other underrepresented groups in the AAPI community. We will develop strong connections and creative solutions that will benefit the AAPI community garnering strong interagency and community support through all of the OAPIA initiatives.

Finally, we will place emphasis on outreach, building upon existing relationships through a holistic and approachable strategy. As you know, the Mayor has made "Fresh Start February" all about engagement. She is encouraging DC residents, including the AAPI community, to join her to discuss priorities for the FY16 budget. The Mayor is hosting Budget Engagement Forums that are designed to be interactive discussions with DC residents to help shape budget priorities. The forums are scheduled for Thursday, February 19 at Wilson High School; Saturday, February 21 at Anacostia High School; and Monday, February 23 at Dunbar High School. Public input in government is an important priority of the Mayor's, which is why she is ensuring these forums happen before she puts together the FY16 budget. The Mayor also held an open house at the John A. Wilson Building earlier in the month. And she met with residents during our Office's open house. Both were opportunities for the public to see where and how the government works and to meet and greet with the new administration.



As the AAPI community continues to grow, new issues will arise and, on behalf of the Mayor, we look forward to addressing those issues head-on in partnership with DC Government agencies, this Committee, and the DC Council. We plan to continue to work in all eight wards to help ensure that all the needs of the AAPI community are being met.

Thank you for providing me with the opportunity to discuss our agency, and I look forward to working with you and your Committee in the future. I am happy to answer any questions you may have at this time.

