

Inaugural Asian American Professional Development Day



By Margaret S. Smith

On February 9, 2023, the Asian American Advisory Council held its Inaugural Professional Development Day, *Looking Ahead: Supporting the Growth of Asian American Leadership*, virtually via Webex. This year's event focused on providing resources for career advancement to Asian American, Pacific Islander and other DCFS and Community-Based Partner (CBP) agency employees.

The event kicked off with a State Employment Leadership Career Panel featuring DCFS Deputy General Counsel Marjorie Moore, CMS Division Manager of Personnel Katrina McCarver and retired CMS Senior Public Service Administrator Carlos Charneco, who shared their career journeys with attendees and experiences as minority leaders in state government. DCFS Central and Southern Illinois Recruiter Stephanie Ward also led a SuccessFactors Presentation, which gave attendees an overview of the new hiring platform used by the state with the retirement of the CMS-100 form. Event panelists gave

attendees practical advice and takeaways based on their years in government; and in the SuccessFactors presentation, Ms. Ward reviewed resume tips using exercises.

Welcoming remarks were provided by DCFS Director Marc Smith, DCFS Deputy Director of the Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Daniel Fitzgerald, DCFS Asian American Advisory Council Chairperson Sebastian Emmanuel and DCFS Asian American Advisory Council Professional Development Day Chairperson Margaret Smith. In his remarks, Director Smith highlighted the need for fill vacancies and support employees in their career growth during this critical time.

The event was planned with assistance from Chief of Asian American Services Ada Tong and DCFS training office staff Brooke Taylor and Alix Young. For more information, please view the Professional Development Day program booklet online under the Asian American Advisory Council page.



Welcome to our third newsletter. It is an honor to be a part of the collaborative efforts of the DCFS Asian American Advisory Council. This newsletter keeps readers informed of updated Asian American events, child welfare information and past events held by the DCFS Asian American Advisory Council. If you have any questions or article ideas for upcoming newsletters, I can be reached at nancy.rodriquez@Illinois.gov.

The DCFS Asian American Advisory Council is recruiting DCFS and private agency staff to serve as council members. If you are interested or have questions, please send me an email and I will connect you with the nominations committee.

Best Regards,

Nancy Rodriguez

Star Newsletter Committee Chairperson



Archive: Dim Sum 5K Race (photos courtesy of DimSum5K.com)

2023 Asian American Illinois Events			
Date	Time	Event	Location/Hyperlinks
May 1	10 AM – 1 PM	Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Chicago Community Kick-off	3241 S Federal St Chicago, IL 60616
May 5-7		APIDA Arts Festival	www.apidaarts.org
May 6	1 – 3 PM	A Day in Asia: Celebrating Asian American and Pacific Islander Month	270 N. Grove Ave. Elgin, IL 60120
May 12	5 – 9 PM	Asian Night Market	1600 Golf Rd Des Plaines, IL 60016
May 13	11 AM – 2 PM	Umbrella Arts Festival 2023	1601 Sherman Ave Evanston, IL 60201
May 19-25		Foundation for Asian American Independent Media Showcase	164 N State St Chicago, IL 60601
June 10	11 AM – 7 PM	Piyesta Pinoy	375 W Briarcliff Rd Bolingbrook, IL 60440
June 10	10 AM – 9 PM	Thai Festival Chicago	850 W. Irving Park Rd. Chicago, IL 60613
June 11	11 AM – 7 PM	Thai Festival Chicago	850 W. Irving Park Rd. Chicago, IL 60613
June 24	8:30 AM – 4 PM	Chinatown Dragon Boat Race for Literacy	300 W 19th St Chicago, IL 60616
July 29	12 – 10 PM	Chinatown Summer Fair	W Cermak Rd & S Wentworth Ave Chicago, IL
July 30	10 AM – 7 PM	Chinatown Summer Fair	W Cermak Rd & S Wentworth Ave Chicago, IL
August 5	8 AM	Dim Sum & Then Some 5K/10K/Kids Dash	1016 W Argyle St Chicago, IL 60640

If you have an event you would like to add to the event calendar, please email Ada Tong, Chief of Asian American Services at ada.tong@illinois.gov.

Someone you should know: Shobhana Verma



Shobhana Verma is the executive director of the South Asian American Policy and Research Institute (SAAPRI). Most recently she has built and led one of the first and most effective South Asian voter engagement programs at the Chicago Board of Election Commissioners that has helped unprecedented numbers of South Asian Americans in the city exercise their right to vote by participating in the electoral process.

Prior to joining the Chicago Election Board, Shobhana held numerous roles as a researcher, educator and journalist advocating for environmental causes and gender and immigrant interests, including challenging roles supporting victims of sexual exploitation, human trafficking and domestic violence. She has written for and been published in digital and print media in the United States and India.

Shobhana holds two master's degrees in women's, gender and sexuality studies from the University of Cincinnati and Lucknow University. She is a certified sexual violence prevention educator and is trained in medical and legal advocacy. She is a past student board member of the Cincinnati Chapter

of Planned Parenthood. Shobhana is also a past member of the Chicago Commission on Human Relations Advisory Council on Equity that advises the mayor and City Council of Chicago on policy matters regarding civil rights issues. Shobhana was recently appointed to the Asian American Family Commission by the Illinois Senate president. The commission advises the governor, General Assembly and state agencies how to best improve and expand services and opportunities for Asian American families in Illinois. Shobhana is also a member of the Chicago Mayor's Office AAPI Community Engagement Council; the Language Access Advisory Committee and the Chicago Committee on Asian and Pacific Islander Hate Crimes.

Shobhana has been an active and trusted leader within the South Asian American community in the greater Chicago area; and as SAAPRI's executive director, she is continuing her work as a researcher, organizer and strategist on a wide range of human rights and social justice issues with diverse and collaborative coalitions in Chicago and beyond.

Asian American Advisory Council Upcoming Meeting Dates

2023

May 24, 2023 at 2 pm

June 28, 2023 at 2 pm

July 26, 2023 at 2 pm

Learn more online ([click here](#)).

Youth Advisory Affinity Groups



Youth Advisory Affinity Groups (YAAG) overview:

Purpose: To organize and provide space, support, education, coaching and advocacy for Illinois youth in care that identify as or allies with the following communities: African American, Asian American, Latino or LGBTQIA+.

The Statewide Youth Advisory Board invites youth in care ages 14–21 to join one of the established YAAG groups to provide feedback on service delivery, programs and policies for the department’s multifaceted communities.

Youth are encouraged to contribute to the change they want to see by sharing their voice, perspective and experience within one or many of the YAAG’s. All general members are eligible for membership incentives.



Youth Advisory Affinity Groups (YAAG):

Engagement Includes:

- We host monthly YAAG meetings for each group.
- We focus on EDI issues and concerns for marginalized communities.
- We bring together communities that share similar interests and backgrounds that support the equity, diversity and inclusion.
- We identify the greatest issues and challenges for youth. In care related to racial and gender bias, disparity and equity.
- We propose recommendations and produce a collaborative project that will help with system improvements that promote equity, diversity and inclusion.
- We collaborate with equity, diversity, and inclusion experts and DCFS staff to improve services, programs, policies and the experiences of youth in care.
- We participate in specialized training sessions to gain knowledge and skills on leading equity, diversity and inclusion practices.
- We leverage resources and support through DCFS Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

Interested In becoming an Ambassador?

Requirements:

- Currently in care.
- Age 16 or older.
- Identifies as an ally or member of one of the affinity groups.
- Makes a commitment to participate in monthly meetings.
- Has a passion for improving the experience for all youth in care.

What Do You Get?

- Opportunities to collaborate with equity, diversity, and inclusion professionals and DCFS staff to improve services, programs, policies and the experiences of youth in care.
- A great addition to any resume or college application.
- Gaining experience serving on a workgroup and networking with peers.
- Each YAAG member selected will receive a monthly stipend.

Asian American YAAG meeting schedule:

The fourth Monday of the month (5–6 pm).

Learn more, contact:

Alyssa Del Angel
Alyssa@bestrongfamilies.net
800-805-2505 ext. 1



January 22, 2023: DCFS celebrates the Lunar New Year via social media

Asian American Advisory Council Membership FY2023

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Asian American Star Newsletter Credits

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