



Asian American Employment Plan Advisory Council
 FY2025 Quarterly Meeting (#4)
 Wednesday, April 23, 2025 | 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Minutes

I. Call to Order – Chair Jani

The meeting was called to order at 2:08 by Chair Jani.

II. Roll Call – Chair Jani

Council Members

Asian American Employment Plan Advisory Council				
Attendance Roster: Council Members				
Members	Present			Absent
	In person Chicago	In person Springfield	via WebEx	
Nimish Jani, Chair			X	
Shree Gurusamy			X	
Nasir Jahangir				X
Kalpesh Joshi			X	
Abin Kuriakose				X
Phimmasorn Lisa Luangsomkham			X	
Grace Chan McKibben			X	
Dennis Mondero				X
Hae D Paul Park				X

Total: 5 members present, 4 members absent. Quorum was achieved. The meeting was held via WebEx video conference.



Agency Representatives

Asian American Employment Plan Advisory Council Meeting				
Attendance Roster: Agency Representatives				
Agency	Representative	Present		
		In person Chicago	In person Springfield	via WebEx
Central Management Services	Steven Booth			X
	Kevin Jeong			X
	John Chepulis			X
	Francisco			X
	Alvarado			X
	Jill Kilroy			X
	Bobby Tucker			X
Illinois Department of Children and Family Services	Ada Tong			X
Illinois Department of Natural Resources	Eric Shirley			X
Illinois Department of Employment Security	Anna D'Ascenzo			X
Illinois Department of Agriculture	Heather Humphrey			X
Illinois Department on Aging	Cheryl Barrett			X
Office of the Illinois Attorney	Jennifer Won-Young Lee			X
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	Pam Smith			X
	James Wilcockson			X
Illinois Department of Corrections	Jeremiah Brown			X
Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation	George L. Cotton			X
Illinois State Police	Mary Dowdy			X
	Tracy Lillard			X
Illinois Department of Human Services	Dwayne Taylor			X
Illinois Gaming Board	Dovie Shelby			X
Illinois Department of Revenue	Shelby Kaiser			X
DCEO	Teri Morris			X
Illinois Department of Public Health	Lance Morgan			X
	Ericka Williams			X
Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology	Jason Barth			X
	Jason Thoron			X
	Vickie Simpson			X

Total: 20 CMS and other Agency Employees attended this meeting.



Members of the Public

Asian American Employment Plan Advisory Council Meeting				
Attendance Roster: Members of the Public				
Name	Entity Represented	Present		
		In person Chicago	In person Springfield	via WebEx
Marxson Robles	Member of the Public			X

Total: 1 member of the public attended this meeting.

III. Old Business

- a. Approval of February 5, 2025 (FY25 Q3) Meeting Minutes
 - i. Council Member Grace Chan McKibben motioned to approve the meeting minutes.
 - ii. Council Member Shree Gurusamy seconded the motion.
 - iii. All were in favor. The motion carried and meeting minutes were approved.

IV. CMS Updates

- a. CMS D&I Team New Positions and Staffing – Deputy Chief of Staff, Steven Booth
 - i. Chief Booth reported on ongoing organizational growth to support Asian American employment. CMS is reallocating staff and resources to increase Asian American representation in state employment.
 - ii. Additional questions can be directed to Kevin Jeong and Nomi Salcedo.
- b. CMS Outreach and Recruitment – Statewide Manager for Asian American Diversity & Inclusion, Naomi “Nomi” Salcedo
 - i. Naomi Salcedo shared outreach highlights from Q3:
 1. On February 22, CMS will be participated in the Asian American Coalition of Chicago (AACC) 42nd Lunar New Year celebration. Senior leadership and elected officials were in attendance.
 2. On March 19, CMS supported one of our Chinatown partners at Pui Tak’s 2nd Annual Job Fair. Pui Tak is an existing partner in Chinatown. More than 100 students and community members participated at the event.



3. On March 29, CMS D&I partnered with the McLean County Tamil Sangam (MCTS) to host a Statewide Career & Resource Fair for the Asian American community in Bloomington-Normal, a new collaboration introduced by Council Member Shree Gurusamy. The event drew about 150 attendees from across Illinois.
 4. On April 19, CMS D&I was invited by the Lao American Association of Illinois to attend their Lao Pi Mai (New Year) celebration in Elgin. This is a new partnership developed through our relationship building efforts within the Southeast Asian American community; the connect was actually made at the earlier mentioned AACC LNY event in February. The event was also in partnership with Chinese Mutual Aid Association, a community organization we have worked with several times in the past.
 5. On April 21, CMS D&I was invited by Joliet Junior College to host an information session and panel discussion for Asian American students. Joining the conversation were Ada Tong, Chief of Asian American Services, DCFS; and from CMS D&I Kevin Jeong, our Asian American Employment Plan Coordinator and myself as the Statewide Manager for Asian American Diversity and Inclusion.
- ii. CMS D&I Asian American EPAC: Upcoming Events
1. On May 1, CMS D&I will be attending Asian American Coalition of Chicago's (AACC) AANHPI Heritage Month kick-off.
 2. May 3, CMS D&I will be participating in the Annual Asian Heritage Fest hosted by the Alliance of Indian Americans of Naperville Area.
 3. May 9, CMS D&I will join Oakton College for their Aian Night Market, another opportunity for us to engage with students and rising young professionals.
 4. May 24, CMS D&I will close out AANHPI Heritage Month tabling alongside several other agencies at Pacifica Square in Aurora. This event is hosted by a nonprofit called Global Friendship Exchange Foundation.
 5. One of our last events of the fiscal year will be Piyesta Pinoy in Bolingbrook. We attended this event alongside several other agencies last year and we saw a lot of engagement between agencies and the community.
- c. Outreach and Community Event Recommendations – Statewide Manager for Asian American Diversity & Inclusion, Naomi “Nomi” Salcedo
- i. Naomi invited council members to recommend additional community events or initiatives.
 - ii. Open call for recommendations to be submitted by email as the fiscal year closes.

**V. New Business**

- a. Presentation of Agency Efforts Toward Recruitment Goals by the Following Agencies:
- b. Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS)**
 - i. Presenter: Ada Tong, Chief of Asian American Services
 - ii. Advisory council of DCFS leadership on culturally relevant service delivery and recruitment for Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander populations. Advisory Council Includes 20 staff members across DCFS roles, ranging from 5 to 20+ years of service.
 - iii. Participated in 20+ outreach events including AACC Lunar New Year, UCA Job Fest, Chinatown Dragon Boat Race.
 - iv. Partnered with Castle and Project Vision for language-accessible workshops.
 - v. Employee Demographics: FY20: 2,058 Asian American staff, FY24: 2,474
 - 1. Notable: Over 50% of Asian staff are in their first 5 years at DCFS.
 - vi. Region 5 shows the highest need for Asian American staff.
 - vii. Other regions are currently at parity.
 - viii. FY26 Goals:
 - 1. Increase bilingual job postings (e.g., Chinese, Vietnamese, Korean, Urdu).
 - 2. Conduct more in-language community education on DCFS and child welfare.
 - 3. Continue developing internal Asian American leadership and advisory council impact.
- c. Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC)**
 - i. Presenter: Kelly Firebaugh, Regional Recruitment Coordinator (Region 1 – Northern IL)
 - ii. Hiring Snapshot (Recent Quarters):
 - 1. Q4: 4 Asian American hires out of 324
 - 2. Q1: 4 of 326
 - 3. Q2: 4 of 160
 - 4. Positions placed at Joliet Treatment Centers (JTC, JITC), Logan, Springfield, and Dixon
 - iii. Screening-Based Hiring Process:
 - 1. Unique system outside of CMS pipeline
 - 2. Includes physical testing, education verification, and in-person interviews



3. Walk-in model now allowed; no longer requires pre-appointment or documentation before arrival
4. Flexibility introduced post-COVID: same-day re-testing if failed prior test (e.g., push-ups)
- iv. Recruitment Efforts:
 1. Hosting 4–6 screening events monthly across Illinois
 2. Challenges: securing large no-cost venues, staffing events (needs ~50 personnel), and rural placement limitations
 3. Facilities concentrated downstate (e.g., Pontiac, Danville, Rock Falls), limiting urban applicant pools
- v. Demographic Tracking and DEI Gaps:
 1. Underutilization areas: 25 professional roles, 1 technician, 1 administrator in Region 1
 2. Difficulty tracking applicant diversity due to voluntary self-identification
 3. Noted concern: losing more staff than hiring—e.g., Q2 had 160 hires vs. 241 separations
- vi. DEI Updates:
 1. Minority leadership roles grew from 30% to 46.8% (Q4 FY24 to Q2 FY25)
 2. New Asian American representative appointed to IDOC DEI Committee: Warden Brown (Lawrence Correctional Center)
- vii. Community Engagement:
 1. Collaborating with CMS at events (e.g., Bloomington, Schaumburg AAPI fair)
 2. Active outreach via university job fairs (e.g., UIC, Loyola)
 3. Partnerships with Urban League and other ethnic-based civic organizations
- viii. Noted Barriers to Recruitment:
 1. Pay gaps vs. private sector
 2. Reluctance to relocate to rural areas
 3. Limited appeal of non-union senior management roles
- d. Illinois Department on Aging (IDoA)**
 - i. Presenter: Cheryl Barrett (Human Resources)
 - ii. Agency Overview:
 - iii. Mission: To serve and advocate for older adults and their caregivers across Illinois.
 - iv. Core functions include administering culturally appropriate programs and managing community partnerships to support independent living and dignity for seniors.



- v. ~~Services are primarily delivered through a network of community-based providers, such as:~~
 - 1. 13 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs)
 - 2. Senior centers, home-delivered meal sites, and congregate dining facilities
- vi. IDOA employees primarily work in oversight and monitoring, not direct service provision.
- vii. Organizational Structure:
 - 1. Despite managing a \$1.6 billion budget, IDOA has a small internal staff:
 - a. Total staff: 163 employees
 - b. Offices in only two regions: Springfield and Chicago (Regions 7 and 1)
 - c. Only about 20 employees in Region 1
- viii. Diversity Metrics and Underutilization:
 - 1. Minority employees: 36.2%
 - 2. Asian employees: 1.84% (significantly below parity)
 - 3. Region 1 has an underutilization of one Asian professional
 - 4. Asian representation dropped after 2022 when IT personnel transitioned to the Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT); formerly 4.5–5% of IDOA staff were Asian
- ix. Workforce Challenges:
 - 1. High percentage of bargaining unit positions, limiting flexibility in hiring and diversity initiatives
 - 2. Small workforce size hinders ability to execute large-scale recruitment strategies
- x. Action Steps & Goals:
 - 1. Focus on increasing outreach and visibility in Asian American communities
 - 2. Interest in partnerships with community colleges and local organizations for targeted recruitment
 - 3. Continued emphasis on culturally competent monitoring of community providers
- e. Illinois Department of Public Health**
 - i. Presenter: Lance Morgan
 - ii. IDPH shared their approach to outreach, focusing on boosting visibility of job openings beyond the standard state job portal.
 - iii. Weekly targeted communication of open roles is shared via email and social media with community partners and diversity groups.



- iv. ~~Emphasis placed on summarizing roles, locations, and deadlines to encourage broader engagement.~~
- v. Council members were encouraged to assist in circulating opportunities to their networks.
- vi. Asian American Workforce
 - 1. FY 2024 FY 2025
 - 2. 98/8.63% employees
 - 3. 101/8.56% employees
- vii. Underutilization of Asian Employees:
 - 1. 4 in FY 2024 4 in FY 2025
 - 2. Region 5 = 2 Region 5 = 2
 - 3. Region 6 = 2 Region 6 = 2
- viii. Outreach efforts to Asian Americans over the past year:
 - 1. 7/20/2024- Asian American Employment Counsel & Alderman
 - 2. Shweta Baid event in Aurora IL.
 - 3. 3/19/2025- PUI Tak Center 2nd Annual Career Fair, Chicago IL.
 - 4. 4/19- Muslim Community Event
- ix. Planned efforts and strategies for FY26:
 - 1. September 2025- planning to attend an additional PUI Tak event once we receive information on the event.
 - 2. We will continue to source for Asian American related hiring events and school career fairs where there is larger Asian representation.

f. Illinois State Police

- i. Presenter: Tracy Lillard
- ii. ISP is using targeted communication strategies to promote open positions and engage with Asian American and other underrepresented communities.
- iii. The department actively highlights weekly openings to avoid passive reliance on the statewide Work for Illinois platform.
- iv. The communication strategy has led to increased public engagement and job application traffic.
- v. ISP invited support from council members and partners to further amplify postings and outreach efforts.
- vi. Outreach efforts to Asian Americans over the past years
 - 1. 6/11/22 - Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Networking Reception
 - 2. 6/21/23 - Chinatown Library recruitment Table
 - 3. 6/24/23 - Chinatown Dragon Boat Race Work Fair Recruitment Table



4. 12/4/23 - social media post that we had on our ISP recruitment page and in our newsletter.
5. 2024-we had 8 male and 6 female Asian applicants. (2023: Male Asian- 2 graduated and 2024: Male Asian 1 graduated, No female Asian)
- vii. Planned efforts and strategies for FY26
 1. 2025 - continue partnering with Asian American Law Enforcement Association (AALEA),
 2. 6/21/2025 - Dragon Boat Race - Chinatown Chicago Recruitment Table
 3. 7/21 - 7/25/2025 -NAPOA (National Asian Peace Officers' Association) Career Conference
 4. 2025 - meet again with the Chinatown community board and request community events to attend.
 5. 2025 - use social media platforms to showcase our diversity which includes the Asian American community.
- viii. Identified Asian language access needs among clients and stakeholders
- ix. Challenges in recruiting or retaining Asian American employees.
 1. Asian Americans are underrepresented in law enforcement overall.
 2. Networking opportunities can be difficult as leadership and organization information is difficult to obtain.
 3. Cultural barriers - women becoming police officers
 4. Nationally there has been a decline of applicants for law enforcement positions overall
- x. Potential ways the council can support the agency
 1. Send targeted work or community flyers/emails of events that are scheduled statewide
 2. Provide leadership contact information from different Asian America organizations
 3. Promote the ISP and its recruitment efforts with the community and work force
 4. Assist in promoting/distributing our civilian job postings that go out to outreach and diversity groups via email and social media.
- g. FY26 Q1 Asian American Employment Plan Advisory Council Meeting on Wednesday, July 30, 2025, 2:00pm – 4:00pm (In-Person/Hybrid)

VI. Public Comment

- a. No public comments or questions were recorded during the meeting.

VII. Adjournment

- a. COUNCIL MEETING ADJOURNED at 3:00pm.