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# HAPPEN Business Resource Group

## 2024 Annual Report

JULY 1, 2023 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2024

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## Message from the Co-Chairs

As HAPPEN enters its third year as a statewide BRG, we can only look back on year two with great pride. As you view this report, you will see a list of accomplishments that showed that ANHPI community is a force for positive change. You will also see opportunities that our communities must capture to advance in state government as future leaders.

*Photo credit: Rachel Friederich (OFM)*

This is evident in our outreach efforts expanding our general membership and the launch of our website, amplified our ANHPI story on larger DEI platforms, sharing our untold stories through special screenings, strengthened our partnerships with the Office of Equity and Office of Financial Management, co-created a meaningful solidarity gathering with other BRGs and agencies in support of our communities during times of uncertainty to the launch of our first mentorship cohort and the success of our 1<sup>st</sup> hybrid ANHPI Heritage Month Celebration.

Soon we will elect new members to the Executive Leadership Team, new voices to lead us into the next year and beyond. To those who are rotating off the Executive Leadership Team, thank you for helping to lay the foundation for HAPPEN and for laying the road that lies ahead. For those of us who will continue and for those of us who will join, we know our responsibilities and we won't let you down.

Although the bandwidth for many of our volunteer ELT members has shortened over the past year as we take on more agency responsibilities, our willingness and passion for the mission remains strong with a commitment to lean on each other's strengths to accomplish our strategic goals. The future remains brighter than ever.

-Kyle Manglona, Jim Mendoza, and Thanh Tran



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# HAPPEN Background

## Executive Leadership Committee

The executive leadership committee (ELT) has 10 members, a sponsor, and an ex-officio member. ELT members during the 2024 reporting period were:

**Sponsor:** Nicholas Vann (EQUITY)

**Co-Chairs:** Kyle Manglona (DOH), Jim Mendoza (DRS), and Thanh Tran (DSHS)

**Administrative Liaison:** Christina Pourarien (ESD)

**Communications:** Charice Pidcock (DSHS)

**External Affairs:** Trixi Yotsuda (DCYF)

**Leadership Development:** Lynora Hirata (DCYF)

**Membership:** Nadia Damchii (DSHS)

**Mentorship:** Kennly Asato (COM)

**Policy:** Brian Lock (DOH)

**Ex-Officio:** Denise Ross (PSP)



**Pictured from left to right:** (front row) Nadia Damchii, Charice Pidcock, Thanh Tran, Kennly Asato, Jim Mendoza, (back row) Nicholas Vann, Sarah Pamies, Kyle Manglona, Denise Ross, Lynora Hirata, Brian Lock; (not pictured) Trixi Yotsuda

## Representation Matters

Representation matters! Our community has a rich heritage and history. The HAPPEN BRG collective consists of over 100 countries and islands. This can make it difficult to know what is HAPPENing in every community across the state that we proudly represent. We encourage members to share information to spread the word and educate ourselves about our collective culture.

HAPPEN represents: Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei, Cambodia, China, Cyprus, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, Taiwan, Tajikistan, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates (UAE), Uzbekistan, Vietnam,

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Yemen, Western Melanesia (the Bismarck Archipelago and other islands directly east of New Guinea, Bougainville and Buka Island, and the Solomon Islands), Eastern Melanesia (the Santa Cruz Islands, Vanuatu, New Caledonia, and Fiji), the Subtropical islands in the Australia/New Zealand region (Lord Howe Island and Norfolk Island), Micronesia (the Bonin Islands and Volcano Islands, Marcus Island, the Northern Marianas, the Southern Marianas, the Caroline Islands, Nauru and Banaba, Wake Island, the Marshall Islands, and the Gilbert Islands (Kiribati)), Central Polynesia (Johnston Atoll, the Phoenix Islands, the Line Islands, Howland Island, Baker Island, Jarvis Island, Malden Island and Starbuck Island, Tuvalu, Tokelau and the Northern Cook Islands (Pukapuka, Nassau, Rakahanga, Manihiki, Penrhyn, Suwarrow and Palmerston)), Western Polynesia (Tonga, Samoa, Wallis and Futuna, Niue), Eastern Polynesia (the rest of the Cook Islands, the Austral Islands, the Society Islands, the Tuamotu Archipelago and the Pitcairn Islands, Easter Island and Salas y Gómez, the Marquesas Islands), Northern Polynesia (the Hawaiian Islands), Oceanic islands of the Eastern Pacific (The Revillagigedo Islands, Cocos Island and Malpelo Island, Clipperton Island, the Galápagos Islands, the Desventuradas Islands, the Juan Fernández Islands), Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, French Polynesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Solomon Islands, and Tuvalu.

## Year in Review (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024)

### Key Accomplishments

ELT members worked diligently to bring relevant speakers and unique content to the membership, utilizing several platforms to accomplish this.

#### Communication Platforms

This year, we successfully launched the HAPPEN website and social media sites ([Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#)). An example of the success is from January 2023 to June 2024, the subscriptions for the newsletters (via GovDelivery) more than doubled.

GovDelivery	Facebook	LinkedIn	Website
1975	37	67	

## Viewing of The Six



One of the unique offerings provided to HAPPEN members was the private screening of the award-winning documentary, [The Six](#). The Six is the extraordinary untold story of survival and dignity in the face of racism and anti-immigration policy that still reverberates today. It details six of the Chinese passengers who escaped the sinking of the Titanic. The inspiration for the infamous floating door scene is based on their story. Space was limited to the first 200 registered and 194 members registered for this successful event.

We had the privilege of having author and director, Steven Schwankert, join the session to answer questions and provide additional insights. Some of the comments HAPPEN received from participants include:

*“What an honor to participate in this viewing. Thank you HAPPEN for making this possible and thank you Steven and team for your work and dedication to telling the truth and honoring history.”*

*“Thank you HAPPEN for setting this up! Thank you @steven Schwankert for your time and for giving us the encouragement to continue the work of ensuring inclusive and diverse historical narratives that reflect the experiences of all people regardless of their race, ethnicity or nationality are accessible for everyone.”*

*“How special to have Steven to share about the film today. THANK YOU! Grateful to be part of this BRG and to learn more about the history of all our people, and very grateful to get to know you all!”*

**Solidarity Efforts**

One lesson we have learned is it is important to unite and stand together. One way we do this is to hold solidarity events for our members to come together during tragedies to grieve, share their experiences, and find a space of belonging in what can often feel like times of isolation.

Members have expressed feeling unseen during such tragedies and shared that not one person asked them how they were doing when these tragic events occurred. Members of our collective community are more likely to leave public service than other demographics. These events are a small way we can contribute to building a sense of belonging amongst Washington State employees and let them know they are not alone.



**SOLIDARITY Gathering**

Join us in this space to create a culture of belonging for state employees who have been impacted by islamophobia, antisemitism, and xenophobia.

This event is to center the experiences of state employees who are impacted and come together as a community to support one another.

**Feb 7**  
Noon - 1:30 pm

Register via the ZOOM link below

EAP staff will be available following the meeting for anyone who would like support

Sponsored by:




**Maui fires**

Many of our members still have family members on the islands. These events help members find hope again. We were able to share stories of new growth of the historic banyan tree devastated by the fires in Lahaina.

**Book Club**

The Interagency Committee for State Employed Women (ICSEW) reached out to the BRGs with a request for assistance with marketing materials to establishing a book club. HAPPEN Communications assisted in creating marketing materials and a slide deck template to be used when facilitating book club conversations.

Below are specific solidarity opportunities HAPPEN participated in, and some of the other offerings shared during this reporting period:

Date	Event	Co-Sponsors
July 2023	Book Club collaboration	ICSEW
August 2023	Maui fires	Washington Immigrant Network (WIN)

Date	Event	Co-Sponsors
February 2024	Solidarity Gathering: Conflict in Gaza with WIN	Office of Equity (OoE) WIN BRG, and Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

## Activities Report

### Events

As we launched our website and social media accounts, we identified the need to have a collection of non-stock images. Several options were explored from contacting local photojournalists and media sources to request permission to share their work to hosting a photo contest.

We hosted a photo contest and did not get any submissions. While this was not fruitful this time, we are hopeful to have increased interest with repetition and opportunities for members to see how their photos could be used. Some photos shared by HAPPEN ELT have been used throughout this report to showcase future contributions from members.

HAPPEN held or attended the following events during this reporting period:

Date	Event
December 2023	Photo contest
January 2024	Screening of “The Six”
January 2024	Mentorship Inaugural Cohort Graduation
May 2024	ANHPI Heritage Celebration

### Presentations

HAPPEN leaders presented at several gatherings during this reporting period. The following comment was received after the 2024 DEI conference “Myth of the Model Minority” presentation:

“As no surprise to me, your groups facilitation at the DEI conference: The myth of the model minority, was one of the most engaging events I participated in this year. Your vulnerability, passion and openness to support others really stood out.”



Additionally, HAPPEN participated in the following presentations during this reporting period:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Presentation</b>	<b>Group</b>
<b>October 2023</b>	Annual Convening Joint BRG panel	Office of Equity
<b>October 2023</b>	HAPPEN Purpose and Update	Office of Financial Management
<b>February 2024</b>	Presentation to	Results WA
<b>March 2024</b>	Presentation to	Department of Revenue
<b>June 2024</b>	Myth of the Model Minority	DEI Empowerment Conference

**Requests for Resources**

HAPPEN received and responded to the following requests to provide resources.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Group</b>
<b>October 2023</b>	Professional Development Conference	ICSEW
<b>September 27, 2023</b>	LCB Enforcement & Education In-Service DEIB Panel & Booth request	LCB
<b>August 29, 30</b> <b>September 18, 19, 25</b> <b>October 2, 9</b>	DEI Community Listening Session	WSP

**Subcommittee Activities**

**Communications**

Many hands make for light work. We are excited to expand the HAPPEN Communications team members expanded to include Nina Dubinsky (OFM), Toria Loi-On (SIB), Evelyn Tuianna (DES), and Melissa Warner (OFM).

Date	Accomplishment
<b>August 2023</b>	Establish Facebook and LinkedIn accounts HAPPEN/WIN Community Solidarity Gathering with EAP (Maui wildfires) Participation in DSHS Language Access Work Group: Substitute Senate Bill (SSB) 5304
<b>December 2023</b>	Establish a website
<b>May 2024</b>	Expanded to 5 communication team members with Melissa Warner (OFM), Evelyn Tuiaana (DES), Nina Dubinsky (OFM), Toria Loi-On (SIB):
<b>June 2024</b>	More than doubled newsletter subscriptions



Photo credit: Rachel Friederich (OFM)

### **Leadership Development**

The Leadership Development sub-committee had significant attrition. Current HAPPEN Executive Leadership members, Thanh V. Tran and Kennly Asato, volunteered to support preliminary planning in advisory as well as step in for facilitator or presenter roles. The lead was able to recruit new members as of May 2024 and began drafting a new survey to be released to HAPPEN’s General Membership in either August or September 2024.

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The lead and sub-committee member, Bongsoo Park, have designed a survey to be presented to HAPPEN’s General Membership after the Second HAPPEN Mentorship Cohort begins. The survey went through several iterations. The Leadership and Career Development Team will partner with the Mentorship program as an intersectional approach to support participants.

The program will be called Asian Leadership Lighthouse (ALL) and use a lighthouse beacon light to shine on pathway options.

Lead has started the Leadership and Career Development Committee Guidebook as a resource to future committee members.

The lead participates in the following sister BRG committees and alternative Affinity Groups:

*ICSEW Book Club, Inter-Agency Cross-BRG Dress Code Workshop, DCYF RESJ Book Club, Asian American Career Ceilings – Committee of 100, White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (WHIAANHPI), Seattle & Spokane Chapters of the Japanese American Citizens League, Tsuru for Solidarity Education and Policy Advocacy Committee and the East Asia Resource Center, Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington*

### **Membership Engagement**

HAPPEN BRG had a total of 568 meeting attendees during this reporting period. There was an average of 64 attendees per meeting with 12 new members per meeting. We have gained 108 new members within this reporting period.

### **Mentorship**

We had a successful mentorship cohort that ran from July 2023 through January 2024. Our “graduation” in January 2024 featured keynote speakers Nick Vann, Executive Sponsor for HAPPEN, and Michaela Doelman, State HR Director. Each month, mentors and mentees gathered for cohort meetings to discuss a variety of topics including networking (virtual and in person), how to prepare for interviews, workplace challenges, and personal resilience. Special thank you to the Mentorship subcommittee for creating an incredible mentorship program: Kennly Asato (COM), Katie Scott (DOH), My-Linh Tran (DSHS), Cheryl Chan Hardee (COM), Christina Pourarien (ESD), and Joanne Lee (DES).

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### ***Policy Participation***

Special thanks to the Policy subcommittee for their comments and contributions. They include Jeremy Walker (COM); Edmon Lee (Retired-LCB); Briana Samuela (DSHS-FFA); Ric Farinas (ESD) Jim Mendoza (DRS); and Nick Vann (DAHP and EQUITY).

<b>Date</b>	<b>Activity</b>
<b>July 2023</b>	Mentorship Cohort #1 Kickoff
<b>November 2023</b>	Create Professional Development Cohort Survey
<b>January 2024</b>	Mentorship Cohort #1 Graduation & Wrap Up
<b>February 2024</b>	HAPPEN participation in ANHPI Legislative Day at the State Capitol Building; and meetings with Legislators.
<b>May 2024</b>	HAPPEN staffed information table and participated in the CAPAA 50th Anniversary Celebration at Highline CC.

### **Annual Survey**

HAPPEN Leadership understands the importance of listening to our members. HAPPEN prioritized of implementation of the website and social media accounts to build a solid foundation allowing HAPPEN to communicate with members, as well as increase membership.

The development of the annual survey has begun. The intention is to distribute in May 2025 to analyze for the 2025 annual report.

### **Financial Report**

As of June 2024, HAPPEN holds a fund balance of \$137,933.03 to close fiscal year 2024.

At the start of the fiscal year, HAPPEN had a balance carried over from the previous year of \$10,790.18. All BRGs received a share of pooled agency sponsorships in fiscal year 2023, the total amount provided to HAPPEN was \$137,640.69 to use towards events and operating expenses. \$36,666.24 of this amount was allocated for ASL/CART services. HAPPEN also received a sponsorship from WSECU as part of a contract to support all BRGs. From this contract, HAPPEN received \$1,667.00 which was used towards the May 2024 ANHPI Celebration Event.



HAPPEN’s total expenses for fiscal year 2024 was \$12,164.84, majority of which was spent on the May 2024 ANHPI Celebration Event. Other expenses included promotional swag, a Survey Monkey subscription, member events, and printing services.

<b>FY24 Beginning Balance</b>	<b>\$10,790</b>
<b>Sponsorships</b>	
Agency sponsorships	\$137,641
WSECU BRG sponsorship	<u>\$1,667</u>
<b>Total sponsorships</b>	<b>\$139,308</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
Promotional Items	(\$5,131)
SurveyMonkey	(\$329)
Member events	(\$1,500)
Printing services	(\$67)
ANHPI Celebration event	<u>(\$5,138)</u>
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b><u>(\$12,165)</u></b>
<b>FY24 Ending Balance</b>	<b><u>\$137,933</u></b>

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## Learning Opportunities



*Photo credit: Rachel Friederich (OFM)*

### **Heritage Celebration**

HAPPEN hosted its first ANHPI Heritage Celebration Event on May 29 at the Labor and Industries building in Tumwater. This event included cultural performances from Lemana Polynesian Revue and Kennly Asato. We also received important messages from Asian Inclusivity Consultant Jolene Jang; Michaela Doelman, Chief Human Resources Officer at the Office of Financial Management; Megan Matthews, Director of the Office of Equity; and Grace Yoo, Director of the Washington State Women’s Commission. Each speaker was inspiring and provided calls to action. Their messages could best be summed up by these words by actor Manny Jacinto: "We can’t wait for somebody else to do it. If we want bigger stories out there, we have to make them for ourselves."

HAPPEN was especially pleased with the presence of representatives from the several other statewide Business Resource Groups who were each given an opportunity to share stories of their good works. So, while the event was advertised as a time to celebrate, it was also a time to learn, remember why HASPPEN exists, and be reminded that work remains to be done.

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The ANHPI Heritage Celebration had close to 200 people attend throughout the day, along with an online audience. Hybrid meetings come with a set of challenges:

- Technical glitches,
- Poor audio quality
- Poor camera placement
- Inadequate visual aids for remote participants
- Inadequate technical support

We faced but were able to overcome all these challenges. As hybrid meetings are a reality going forward, HAPPEN along with other BRG's will need to take these logistical opportunities into consideration when selecting a facility, setting up the room, and developing presentations as well as any associated materials.

### **Elections**

When we were chartered in September 2022, it was impossible to anticipate all the logistics of how our BRG would function. We knew there would be some elements of trial and error and ensuring that we were co-creating organizational structure that allows us to serve, connect, inform, engage, and most importantly empower our members. We faced some crucial changes to our by-laws that we felt would enable our existing leadership team to finish establishing key programs and networks to best position the business resource group for the future. We therefore asked our members for grace and understanding as we "fumbled forward" together by amending our bylaws to accommodate staggered election terms.

Some amendments to our by-laws were already presented to, voted on, and approved by the members. These include creating an ex-officio position appointed by the executive leadership team to ensure legacy knowledge is maintained for succession purposes and organizational sustainability. We added additional transparency about how to handle mid-election cycle appointments in the event there are vacancies, and succession planning so that collaborative transfers of knowledge occur from an elected incumbent to their successor.

Lastly, we presented a significant alteration to the by-laws pertaining to the elections cycle. These options as presented are copied below, and we solicited feedback from the members before agreeing to Option 3 by consensus, which was confirmed by a virtual approval by vote of by-law amendments.

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Issues with elections as previously written in by-laws:

- By-laws state one co-chair position is designated as a one-year term. No one has been designated as serving one-year versus two-year term.
- By-laws state elected individuals will serve terms lasting two years. 9 of the 11 elected positions on the current Executive Leadership Team (ELT) were elected in December 2022. 2 were appointed and confirmed by vote of membership in mid-2023. If elections continue according to by-laws, current ELT members will only be serving 19 months (or less if appointed). Waiting until 2025 for elections will result in terms in excess of two years. 2 positions on the ELT are non-elected (ex-officio and executive sponsor).
- No ELT appointment process exists in the by-laws. By-laws state a special election will take place.
- Lack of term staggering may result in significant loss of institutional knowledge and momentum for ongoing programs and projects that achieve strategic goals.

Option 1: Maintain status quo. Do not change terms or current election cycle.

*Pros: No changes necessary.*

*Cons: None of the issues identified above are addressed proactively.*

Option 2: Revise by-laws to shift election schedule to the Fall. Nominations would open August 1 instead of March 1. Elections would occur in October instead of May. This option must include revision to by-laws to indicate which co-chair position is a one-year term.

*Pros: Allows all current ELT members to serve a full two-year term. Each position moving forward is guaranteed two-year terms.*

*Cons: Does not address transfer of knowledge from one elected ELT to the successive elected ELT and perpetuates the issue long-term.*

Option 3: Revise by-laws to create staggered terms. Nominations would remain in the current cycle, with nominations for some positions opening immediately and elections taking place in May. Approximately half of the current ELT positions would be up for re-election immediately, and the other ELT positions would stay in position until June 2025 instead of June 2024.



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*Pros: Allows some current ELT members are just getting programs started and building their committees and bodies of work from scratch. This option allows the momentum gained to continue forward. This option facilitates the long-term sustainability of continued operations and transfer of knowledge from one elected ELT to the next. Each position moving forward is guaranteed two-year terms.*

*Cons: Does not offer maximum availability for new leadership positions and delays such opportunities for an additional year.*

\*In all options, any existing ELT member is eligible to run for another term or to run for a different ELT position.

Once we had passed approved amendments to the by-laws, we were able to move forward with our first full election cycle, opening up a nomination period for 6 open positions around the end of FY24.

## **Looking Forward** (July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025)

*“Our history is built upon the precarious foundation of what is remembered, acknowledged, and disclosed.”*

*--Ron Chew*

*Founder of the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, former editor-in-chief of the International Examiner, and community advocate*

### **Strategy and Goals**

In our second year (first full year), we have been able to stay grounded in our vision and mission. We continue making progress towards all the strategic goals identified in our charter, and we know there is still more work to be done.

Goal 1 states: “Advance pro-equity and anti-racism by cultivating a culture of belonging throughout all levels of state government.” Our members embody these values, and we will strive to continue providing brave spaces for Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander state employees. We will ensure we are more committed to making these spaces fully accessible and will continue to understand all the intersectionalities we have within our organization and with our partners.

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For Goal 2: “Recruit, retain, and nurture a diverse and equitable workforce,” we will continue working with our human resource partners to increase the annual retention rate of ANHPI state employees. Our professional development and mentorship cohorts will aid in empowering our employees for longer tenures and increasing leadership opportunities.

In Goal 3: “Enhance equity by providing and identifying professional development, advancement, and leadership opportunities,” we will bring in a new leadership team class that will expand such opportunities. We will expand our committee membership to increase visibility as well, and to leverage the full strength of our membership.

Goal 4 states: “Identify, explore, and address disparate barriers to advancement through analysis of disaggregated data, particularly for disparities facing Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asian state employees.” Data disaggregation is an incredible powerful tool that assists in identifying hidden disparities within our community. By working in partnership with CAPPA, the Office of Equity, State HR, and many other enterprise facing organizations, we can gain a fuller understanding of the hidden barriers faced by Pacific Islander and Native Hawaiian communities and state employees. We will be relentless in this pursuit of data gathering and will continue working on instilling data disaggregation goals in all corners of the enterprise.

Lastly, Goal 5 states: “Support enterprise-wide efforts to support equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging and PEAR (Pro-Equity and Anti-Racism) initiatives, strategies, planning, and implementation.” Being a voice for our own history and culture and amplifying the messages by our partner organizations is imperative to cultivating a state of belonging and advancing PEAR. We will increase the strength in our individual and organizational relationships with everyone who embraces this work and will continue embedding shared power principles through all ways in which we operate.

## Summary

HAPPEN has experienced continued and sustained growth and achievement in its second year during a time of continued struggle and achievement for our larger ANHPI community. Our community continues to fight against hateful rhetoric happening in our state and nationwide, and we continue experiencing violence targeted towards us as a result. We have also worked through cultivating solidarity with our partner

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Business Resource Groups, the Office of Equity, and other statewide entities to explore our intersectionalities and support systems. We have hosted countless conversations with intention around destigmatizing mental health concerns, promoting belonging in the workplace and in our communities, and centering the experience of our fellow state employees when faced with challenges of all varieties. Together, we believe we have built a strong network that continues to grow, inspire, and influence. Our reach has doubled since this time last year. Our visibility has grown significantly, highlighted by the 1,100+ state employees who tuned into our session during OFM’s DEI Empowerment Conference in June about dismantling the model minority myth. We hope to continue growing in solidarity, and further busting myths, stereotypes, and wedges fabricating within and amongst our communities.

*“Success is a collection of problems solved.”*

I.M. Pei, infamous Chinese-American architect



Photo credit: Rachel Friederich (OFM)