

HAPPEN

Annual Report

JULY 1, 2022 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2023

BUSINESS RESOURCE GROUP



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Message from the Co-Chairs

Getting something new off the ground is never easy, but the leadership team has been guided by our histories and the experiences that have shaped us in creating a brave space where our communities can share their stories and learn from each other. A place where we celebrate each other's prosperity and promote each other's welfare.

Beyond that, HAPPEN will continue its mission to be the avenue to bring a voice and energy in increasing awareness within state agencies that the next Nicholas Vann, the next Michaela Doelman, the next Umair Shah is in their midst; that agency leaders need to look beyond the "how well someone interviews" metrics, thereby allowing its members to break through the "bamboo ceiling".

Our goal is not only to increase Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (ANHPI) representation in state government including leadership roles but also to transform agency culture to realize and honor our unique strengths, lived experiences, and value beyond common stereotypes and bias', and acts of performative allyship. We seek authentic representation and empowering a workplace culture that fosters psychological safety that allows everyone to show up as their true authentic selves leading to spaces of belonging.

Like getting HAPPEN off the ground, it won't be easy – some of us on this current leadership may even retire from state service before our mission is met - but it will be worth it.

Kyle Manglona, Jim Mendoza, and Thanh Tran

HAPPEN Background

Executive Leadership Committee

The HAPPEN executive committee members were elected at the December 2022 meeting for a two-year term. The Communications Lead seat remained vacant after the election and a special election was held in January 2023.



Pictured from left to right: (front row) Jim Mendoza, Brian Lock, Kennly Asato, Nicholas Vann, Lynora Hirata; (back row) Atina Silivelio, Kyle Manglona, Nadia Damchii, Thanh Tran, Sarah Pamies, Rocky Dimico (DEI Consultant with DRS), Ken Sauby (Employee Engagement Program Manager with DSHS); (monitor) Trixi Yotsuda, Charice Pidcock; (not pictured) Denise Ross

The executive committee currently consists of the 10 members, a sponsor, and an ex-officio member:

Sponsor: Nicholas Vann (DAHP)

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

Administrative Liaison*: Atina Silivelio (ECY)

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)

*vacant as of mid-June 2023

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, 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, Suvarrow 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 (January 1, 2023, through June 30, 2023)

Key Accomplishments

Inaugural Election

Immediately after our charter and by-laws were approved in September 2022, we began planning for our inaugural election with assistance from OFM. The inaugural election cycle did not align with the election cycle identified in our by-laws, so we had to implement a procedure for this election to promote transparency and clearly define the process. We also drafted position descriptions to be published with the inaugural election procedure. The procedure and position descriptions were completed in October, and we proceeded immediately to soliciting nominations from our members. In November with the assistance of Kristen Jenkins (UTC), we published an elections brochure and offered time to all nominees to introduce themselves to the members at our November 2022 member meeting. Election ballots were received by OFM and we completed our inaugural election in December 2022.

The inaugural Executive Leadership Team consisted of **Executive Sponsor:** Nicholas Vann (DAHP), **Co-Chairs:** Kyle Manglona (DOH), Jim Mendoza (DRS), and Thanh Tran (DSHS), **Administrative Liaison:** Atina Silivelio (ECY), **Communications:** Vacant, **External Affairs:** Trixi Yotsuda (DCYF), **Leadership Development:** Joanne Lee (DES), **Membership:** Nadia Damchii (DSHS), **Mentorship:** Kennly Asato (COM), and **Policy:** Brian Lock (DOH). The Executive Leadership Team appointed Denise Ross (PSP) as an **Ex-Officio** member shortly after the election.

Co-Chair Structure

HAPPEN is the only BRG with a three-co-chair structure. The co-chairs rotate the work and collaborate to ensure coverage needs are met. For example, general meetings are on a rotation schedule, allowing each co-chair to plan guest speakers, create the agenda, and facilitate once per quarter. This leadership structure was designed with intention to disperse responsibilities more evenly amongst elected leaders to minimize the risk of burnout.

The co-chairs coordinated a primary point of contact structure to the various members of the executive committee and distributes the workload. All co-chairs support the Treasurer and Administrative Liaison positions. Kyle provides support to the

Communications and Mentorship leads. The Policy and Leadership Development leads contact Jim, and the Membership and External Affairs contact Thanh. This has worked well to distribute the workload as questions and prompt response is needed as situations occur.

The co-chairs also collaborate to ensure someone is in attendance at events and timely messages are drafted and sent. This includes “Messages from Our Leadership”.

Executive Leadership Team Structure

The large ELT structure has been helpful to disburse the workload and allow for a more targeted focus in each area. For example, Communications has been able to support the heavy lift of creating a new Mentorship program by creating surveys to allow the Mentorship lead to focus on other program aspects, such as outreach, marketing, and development.

The Administrative Liaison and Communications lead both monitor and triage the HAPPEN mailbox to ensure timely responses to requests and sharing of information. For example, emails get forwarded to the chairs as appropriate. Brian has been able to provide prompt information and policy-related responses. When multiple engagement requests are received, they get consolidated into one email and ELT members volunteer as their schedule allows.

Our ELT structure has been tested on a couple occasions, with two sudden departures from Joanne Lee (Career/Leadership Lead) and Atina Silivelio (Admin) who both left state government. Another of our ELT members also had a sudden emergency health issue. In all instances, the rest of the ELT was able to pick up tasks and responsibilities during these extended absences. Our larger leadership structure seems to have been effective in shouldering the burden of operating with a lower capacity and we were able to keep things running smoothly through the support and selflessness of our leaders.

The structure requires good communication and collaboration. ELT communicates with each other on Teams and email. We share relevant news, stories, videos, and other materials as able.

ELT Accomplishments

ELT members worked diligently to bring relevant speakers and content to the membership. Below are the speakers, content, and other accomplishments made during this reporting period.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Accomplishment</i>
September 2022	HAPPEN officially became a Business Resource Group under the Office of Financial Management Hosted Kickoff Event on Capitol Campus in Olympia with over 200 attendees (Sept 13)
November 2022	Guest Facilitator: Beihua Page (PSP) who facilitated a discussion about cultural assimilation
December 2022	Held first election of inaugural ELT members
January 2023	Filled Communications vacancy via appointment Elected Denise Ross as an ex-officio member Facilitated first BRG general meeting introducing ELT members
February 2023	Transitioned communication access and duties Began process to create social media accounts and a website
March 2023	HAPPEN logo design presented by Kristen Jenkins Holding Multi-Ethnic Perspectives by guest speaker: Jennifer Thomas, Ph.D (DOH) Mapping the Unmappable (UW SE Asia Center) Participated as a vendor booth at the Equity Summit in Tacoma to increase visibility and membership
April 2023	Guest speakers: Keoni Fontaine (ESD) who spoke about growing up in Hawai'i, and Mustafa Mohamed'ali (DOT) who spoke about Ramadhan for Arab American Heritage Month
May 2023	Created virtual background to celebrate AANHPI month Pacific Islander Heritage Month by guest speakers: Angel Pele (DSHS) and Thanh Tran (DSHS)

Date	Accomplishment
	Participated as a vendor booth for the Public Service Recognition Week event to increase visibility about the HAPPEN Mentorship Program and increase membership
June 2023	Guest speaker: Amira Caluya (DOH)

In Solidarity Efforts

Further, supporting our other BRGs and the communities they support is important to this leadership team. We lift up leaders and role models in our community. Whenever possible, we amplified their voices and stand in solidarity with them. We intentionally and routinely share offerings and learning opportunities from a variety of sources, including the international, federal, state, and local level activities. We share relevant historical events so we can learn from our collective past and celebrations, as well as celebrate AANHPI literature and arts by sharing book recommendations, movies, and exhibits. Some examples include: BRG general membership meetings and training offerings, as well as the Office of Equity “Real Talk!” sessions.

Below are the speakers, content, solidarity opportunities, and some of the other offerings shared during this reporting period:

Date	Event
January 27, 2023	Monterrey Park & Half Moon Bay Community Solidarity Gathering with EAP
February 2023	Black & Asian Solidarity in American History
March 2023	Make Us Visible Washington Passing of Judy Heumann (DIN) Federal AANHPI Summit in Seattle People’s Gathering CAPAA Commission application processes Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of South Puget Sound (APICSPS) call for vendors and performers
April 2023	New Director, Michael Fong (COM) Career Development Workshop (WIN, VERG, HAPPEN)

Date	Event
	<p>National Stress Awareness month</p> <p>Administrative Professionals Day</p> <p>Hōkūle‘a arrival in Tacoma</p> <p>Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Racial Justice and Belonging,: A Community Conversation with Local Leaders on what jurisdictions are doing to create a more equitable Thurston County.</p>
May & June 2023	<p>Changed general meeting dates to allow members to attend other statewide events</p> <p>Visible Together</p> <p>Dr. “Auntie” Dorothy Laigo Cordova presented with Outstanding Lifetime Achievement Award</p> <p>Washington State DEI Summit</p> <p>Office of Equity Community Advisory Board application process</p> <p>WIN Lunch & Learn – The Teachers in Our Lives</p>
June 2023	<p>State Broadband Office opportunity for feedback on the Digital Equity Plan</p> <p>Office of Equity and BUILD BRG EAP meeting</p> <p>ICSEW Professional Development Conference</p> <p>CAPAA Small Business Listening Session</p>

Activities Report

Events

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

Date	Event
September 2022	HAPPEN Kickoff event held in Olympia
January 2023	<p>HAPPEN Inaugural election</p> <p>Jan 27 – Community Solidarity Gathering (response to Monterey Park and Half Moon Bay shootings)</p>

<i>Date</i>	<i>Event</i>
February 2023	Language Bias Initiative (Joint BRG)
April 2023	HAPPEN Leadership retreat
May 2023	Public Service Recognition Week RAIN BRG panel discussion DOR panel discussion WIN BRG speaking engagement Commerce Real Talk
June 28, 2023	Washington State DEI Summit

Presentations

HAPPEN received requests and presented at the following:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Presentation</i>	<i>Group</i>
October 5, 2022	About HAPPEN	HR Managers (OFM)
December 6, 2022	About HAPPEN	DSHS/DDA
March 28, 2023	About HAPPEN	OIC

Requests for Resources

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

<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Group</i>
May 15, 2023	AANHPI Heritage month	OIC
May 20, 2023	AANHPI Heritage month	Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of S Puget Sound/City of Olympia – Olympia Center

Policy Participation

Many pieces of legislation were discussed with the HAPPEN Network. Policy Lead, Brian Lock, presented at the April Board meeting on some legislation supported by AANHPI organizations and state agencies such as the Commission on Asian Pacific

American Affairs (CAPAA); Asian Pacific Islander Coalition of WA; and Asian Pacific American in Civic Engagement (APACE).

Executive Action was taken on [Senate Bill 5000](#), a bill recognizing contributions of Americans of Chinese descent. If passed, the bill would officially designate January each year as Americans of Chinese Descent History Month, dedicated as a time to commemorate the contributions by Americans of Chinese descent to the history and heritage of Washington and the US. Public schools are encouraged to designate time for appropriate activities in commemoration of Americans of Chinese Descent History Month.

Important Legislative Links:

- [CAPAA Leg Tracker](#)
- [APIC Leg Tracker](#)
- [Legislative Session Cutoff Calendar](#)

Professional Development

As a transformative action to improve Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (ANHPI) representation in leadership and general state employment, HAPPEN has been designing a framework specific to HAPPENs membership in mind. The Leadership Development Team (LDT) is in the process of developing a survey that sources the achievements as well as barriers that are the lived realities of ANHPI State employees. The results of the survey will reflect the ANHPI narrative as State employees in quantitative and qualitative data formats. These lived experiences will foundationally design the next level curricula based on expressed interest, elemental self-reflective, and mapping pathways of next steps.

As collegial BRG intersectional interface, HAPPEN's Leadership Development Lead has participated in the following:

- SSB 5304 Language Access Work Group

The purpose of the 6-month work group is to study and make recommendations to the Legislature regarding interpretive service certification policies and programs for limited and non-English-speaking Washingtonians. The work group will recommend options for the most effective ways the state can ensure that highly qualified interpreters are trained and certified to work effectively, particularly in medical settings.

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- A Cultural Service Landscape Analysis research project was initiated in the fall of 2022. DCYF contracted with Kauffman and Associates (KAI) on April 17th, 2023, for this project. This analysis will be completed by April 30, 2024.

The purpose of the landscape analysis is to understand the strengths, resources, and needs of specified populations of children, youth, and families served by DCYF Child Welfare Services in Washington state, including:

- American Indian/American Native (AI/AN);
- Asian American and Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (AANHPI);
- Black and African American;
- Hispanic and Latino;
- Immigrants and refugees; and
- Non-English primary language (American Sign Language (ASL), Sign language, limited English proficiency (LEP), and families using interpretive services. KAI acknowledges and recognizes LGBTQIA+ culture may be associated across the spectrum of specified populations.)

The analysis will include rural considerations and/or impact within a subsection of each category for all populations in the analysis. Additionally, the analysis will focus on gaining understanding of the current reality of services provided and how these meet legislative requirements for cultural alignment.

We are seeking your engagement as a community partner in this Cultural Service Landscape Analysis and is hoping to identify agency representative(s) to participate in this process. DCYF values your experience, expertise, and knowledge as being imperative to inform on process, the system and with service gaps as relevant to culture, equity, and rural considerations.

- BRG collaborate book club as part of the journey towards anti-racism, looking for ways to educate and activate.
- The first book will be 'So you want to talk about race' by Ijeoma Oluo.

Subcommittee Activities

Many hands make for light work as the saying goes. Subcommittees were formed and able to get some activities launched during the first six months of 2023. This required significant effort to recruit volunteers and collaborate to launch the kick-off of a

mentorship program. The HAPPEN community thanks the volunteers who brought great ideas and made this HAPPEN.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>
April 2023	Mentorship Committee Kick-off
April through July 2023	Mentorship Program Participation Recruitment (both mentors and mentees)

Membership Engagement

Members were engaged in several ways: weekly and ad hoc special bulletins, monthly membership meetings, community solidarity gatherings, surveys, and participation in the mentorship program as a mentor, mentee, or both.

We met members and recruited new members at events, such as the Public Servant Recognition event.

Meeting attendees respond to a survey to capture their participation and are asked if they are attending for the first time and/or if they would like someone to follow up about membership or leadership opportunities. This information is passed onto the Membership lead, who follows up with them.

Annual Survey

Technically, HAPPEN did not conduct an annual survey in 2023; however, there were many opportunities for members to provide feedback throughout the year. Members were and are asked about their interests, both in meetings and attendance surveys. We also launched several surveys this year as we started new programs and did not want to give members survey burnout. We are developing an annual survey for use in future years when some of the other surveys will no longer be needed.

Financial Report

As of June 2023, HAPPEN holds a fund balance of \$10,790.18 to close fiscal year 2023. These funds are the remaining balance from the Kickoff Event sponsorship in September 2022.

For this reporting period, HAPPEN did not have a budget to manage. However, many agencies recognize the importance and impact of the BRGs and have allocated funds to sustain this work for future periods. These funds will be distributed across the BRGs beginning in fiscal year 2024.

Learning Opportunities

Operating Virtually

HAPPEN was conceived from a small gathering of state employees during the thick of the COVID-19 pandemic in the summer of 2021. This group, which ultimately increased in participant numbers and evolved into an official business resource group a year later, began operating virtually for its meetings and has continued to this day. Prior to HAPPEN becoming a business resource group, Nicholas Vann (DAHP), Denise Ross (PSP), and Roslyn Leon Guerrero (HCA) began a campaign to spread awareness about HAPPEN with other enterprise groups. The virtual meeting environment practiced across the enterprise during 2021 and 2022 removed the barrier of travel and maximized our ability to present and speak to a great number of enterprise groups about HAPPEN.

Similar to other state government groups, membership meets virtually presented its own challenges in building psychological safety, building relationships, and creating belonging.

When HAPPEN held its September 2022 kickoff event, the state of emergency was still in place for COVID-19, but some restrictions were ending. The planning committee was faced with the challenging decision of whether to hold the event virtually or in-person knowing the virus could change social distancing requirements quickly. The committee felt the most valued purpose of the kickoff, was to experience the symbolic meaning of ANHPI food as a community, the expression of cultural clothing, and the connection of spending time together. Many of the themes heard in the initial membership meetings prior to HAPPEN becoming an official business resource group was the lack of opportunity to gather or meet others who identify with Asian, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian culture in state government. It was important to the planning committee that the kickoff be an opportunity to learn more about other cultures and of their own as we celebrate a very historical moment for Washington state government and its employees.

Precautions were taken for safety, such as volunteers wearing face masks when handling the food and holding the entire event outdoors to lessen the possibility of people breathing in virus droplets in the air.

HAPPEN leadership looks forward to the day when its membership can meet more often in person at its meetings or events in the upcoming year.

Active Member List

HAPPEN BRG had a total of 452 meeting attendees from January through June 2023. There was an average of 76 attendees per meeting with 8 new members per meeting. We had gained 48 new members within this time period.

Elections

We have learned a lot about elections through our first year. We have had to host single seat elections to fill vacancies on two occasions (Leadership and Communications leads). In early FY24, we will also facilitate an election to fill our vacated Admin Liaison seat. Elections take time with soliciting nominations, being clear about the process, following our by-laws and ensuring transparency with our members. We have taught ourselves to take our time and to do things the right way, and not to rush through the process even though we operate at a lower capacity when there is a vacancy.

Looking Forward (July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024)

“Do we have a lot of work to do? Oh, absolutely we do! The barrage of bad news about violence and hatred toward members of our community. It’s disappointing and disheartening, but we can’t let that get us down – quite the opposite.

We need to get up, continue to amplify our voices and our stories, and make sure those people, stories, accomplishments – all of it – is infinitely louder than the hate...I am filled with boundless hope that we can do this, together.”

*--Lea Salonga, August 2023 [Gold Legend Honor Recipient](#)
for a lifetime of indelible contributions to the success
and representation of the Asian Pacific community*

Strategy and Goals

In our first year, we have been able to stay grounded in our vision and mission. In part, our Vision states: *“We strive for a culture that allows all to fully participate and be their authentic self at work.”* Furthermore, our Mission states: *“We work to build a culture of inclusion and belonging that gives voice to the Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander experience.”* In all our member meetings, solidarity gatherings, executive leadership meetings, and events in which our leadership participates as representatives of HAPPEN, we endeavor to stay true to these statements. We have received feedback from our members that we have created space for Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander state employees to express themselves, to be seen and heard, and to feel a sense of belonging. These anecdotes motivate us to continue persevering and to stay committed to each other and HAPPEN’s mission and goals.

Upon reflecting on the stated goals in our charter, we have made significant qualitative progress on many of our goals and strategies despite limited time spent strategizing and organizing as a leadership team. Our first team retreat occurred in April 2023, eight months after our charter and by-laws were approved and four months after our inaugural election took place. In a very short amount of time, we have achieved success in several areas.

Activities Plan

HAPPEN Leadership is considering the following activities for the next reporting period:

<i>Date</i>	<i>Activity</i>
July 2023	Mentorship Cohort kickoff
August 2023	Establish Facebook and LinkedIn accounts
October 2023	Office of Equity Annual Convening Joint BRG panel
November 2023	Create Professional Development Cohort Survey
December 2023	Establish a website
January 2024	Screening of “The Six” Mentorship Graduation and wrap up
May 2024	<u>May Day and Lei Day</u>

Summary

HAPPEN has experienced monumental growth and achievement in its first year during a time in our nation when the need for solidarity and support for the ANHPI community was greater than ever before. The significant increase in hate crimes and acts of violence against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, in addition to the incorrect blame of Asian Americans for the COVID-19 virus, led to many of our HAPPEN community members feeling a loss of belonging, safety, and mental health wellness. HAPPEN has been dedicated to listening to the needs of its membership so we can in turn be a more meaningful voice in our upcoming policy and training work. The objectives for the next year are:

- Establish more outreach and communication tools that reach a wider audience
- Develop offerings of value to the career growth and support of HAPPEN members