

ANNUAL



SEARAC



EST 1979 • 40TH ANNIVERSARY

FOUR DECADES OF

AMPLIFYING SEAA VOICES

2019

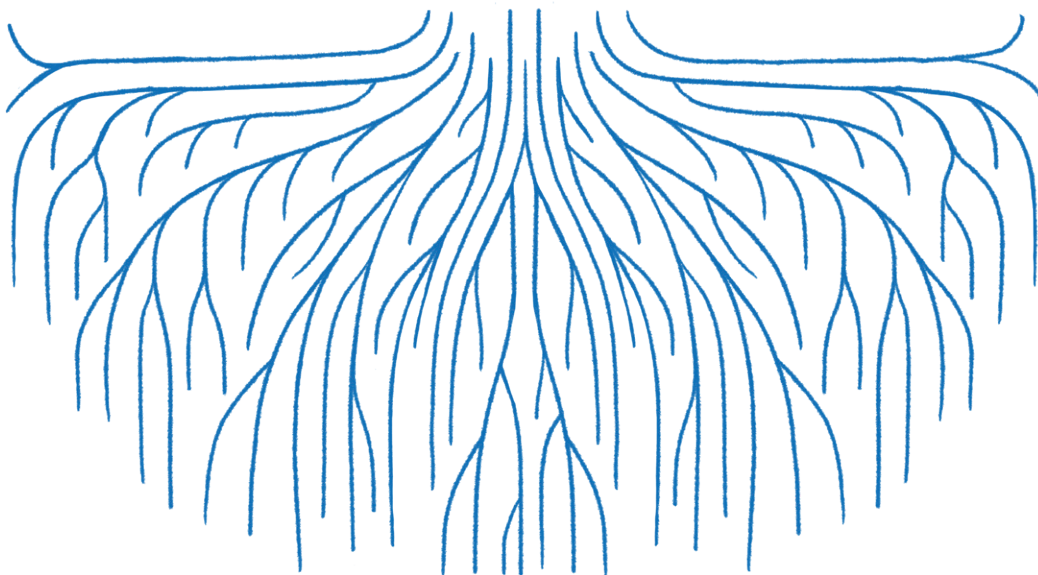
REPORT



FOUR DECADES OF
AMPLIFYING SEAA VOICES



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A WORD FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2019 was momentous for SEARAC. We saw both the 40th anniversary of our founding, as well as the 20th year of our flagship Leadership and Advocacy Training program, which began in 1999 with 19 trainees and has evolved into a prestigious leadership pipeline that has graduated more than 1,000 Southeast Asian American (SEAA) advocates and allies from over 40 states. We honored four decades of fierce love for our communities by amplifying SEAA voices on Capitol Hill, in state legislatures, in national media, and in partnership with other communities of color. We began preparations for a pivotal 2020, a crucial census and election year that requires full SEAA civic participation. And then we capped off the year with our second-ever biennial Moving Mountains Equity Summit, which provided much-needed space for the Southeast Asian American community to come together to heal, build, learn, and mobilize — to demand that policies are inclusive of our families' needs and to celebrate the progress we've made in this fight.

It was only fitting that our historic year culminated with historic legislation in the form of a comprehensive immigration reform package that dares to demand that all human beings deserve due process, including refugees and immigrants. By the end of the year, we would be able to bring several community members

to DC to speak to the pressing need to repair our country's broken immigration system.

To paraphrase the words of fierce community leader Ny Nourn of Asian Americans Advancing Justice-Asian Law Caucus, spoken during one of these congressional hearings, it's not just "the right time" for legislation to provide equity for our community. This legislation is long overdue.

Our fight is not over.

And we couldn't be where we are without the support of communities and allies from across the country who continue to entrust SEARAC to be the national voice of Southeast Asian Americans. We present this 2019 report as a testament to our community's power in SEARAC's 40th year anniversary, and the pivot point for a historic 2020 ahead when we commemorate our community's 45th year anniversary.





ABOUT SEARAC

MISSION

SEARAC is a national civil rights organization that empowers Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese American communities to create a socially just and equitable society. As representatives of the largest refugee community ever resettled in the United States, SEARAC stands together with other refugee communities, communities of color, and social justice movements in pursuit of social equity.

STRATEGIES

- Building Powerful Community Leaders and Advocates
- Community Engagement and Mobilization
- National and State Policy Advocacy Internal Infrastructure Building

MAJOR AREAS OF FOCUS

- Education Equity
- Immigrant Justice
- Health Access
- Boys and Men of Color
- Aging with Dignity
- 2020 Census

OUR COMMUNITIES

For SEARAC, Southeast Asian American is a political identity that comes from the shared experience of people who came to this country as refugees from the U.S. occupation of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Southeast Asian Americans now number nearly three million, and most of them arrived in the U.S. as refugees, are the children of refugees, were sponsored by refugee families, or arrived as immigrants.

Southeast Asian Americans include people from dozens of diverse ethnic and language groups, including but not limited to:

- Cham, a Muslim minority group
- Khmer
- Khmer Loeu, or Highland Khmer
- Hmong
- Lu Mien or Mien
- Khmu
- Lao, otherwise referred to as Lao Loum or Lowland Lao
- Taidam
- Khmer Kampuchea Krom, or ethnic Khmer
- Montagnards, or Highlanders of several different ethnic groups
- Vietnamese
- Certain ethnic Chinese also have heritage in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

2019 BY THE NUMBERS



60+

advocates recruited
in our SEARAC Census
Ambassador Network



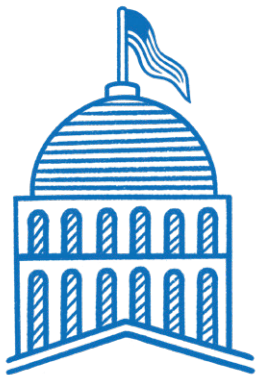
579

community members
registered during
9 community calls



13

sub-grants disseminated
to build the advocacy
capacity of our
education partners



48

leaders representing
16 states trained
during Leadership and
Advocacy Training,
meeting with 45
Congressional offices



5

SEAA-specific
factsheets on the 2020
Census translated into
5 SEAA languages



6

sub-grants to support
our partners working to
educate their community
on the 2020 Census



Photo by Samantha May

RALLYING AGAINST DEPORTATION

For the last two years, Cuong Nguyen's loved ones have been living in fear of his deportation. "After serving a 24-month prison sentence for my mistake, a decade later I was suddenly separated from my family, missing my son's first birthday and forcing my wife to be a single parent and manage our business alone without knowing when I would return," said Cuong, a nail technician and nail salon owner with a 3-year-old son who was detained for over two years in ICE detention and faces deportation for a 13-year-old criminal conviction.

SEARAC spent 2019 making strides in gaining growing congressional awareness and support of Cuong and other Southeast Asian American community members,

whose families have been devastated by this country's cruel immigration policies.

2019 opened in January with a National Week of Action, spanning 15 cities across the country, organized in response to one of the largest Southeast Asian deportation flights in US history in December 2018. More than 6,000 people participated in countrywide events. SEARAC led a Twitterstorm, during which local and federal elected officials also joined in solidarity. Rep. Alan Lowenthal (CA-47) led a Congressional sign-on letter expressing concern over attempts by the Trump Administration to renegotiate a repatriation agreement between Vietnam and the United States.

The next month, SEARAC joined our partners Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Southeast Asian Freedom Network, and the Vietnamese Anti-Deportation Network in collaboration with the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus in holding a press conference denouncing President Trump's increased deportation of refugees and long-term lawful permanent residents who resettled in the United States after fleeing conflict in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam.

The year ended with the successful introduction of a landmark immigration reform bill called the *New Way Forward Act*, introduced by US House Reps. Jesus “Chuy” Garcia, Pramila Jayapal, Karen Bass, and Ayanna Pressley, to advance the national conversation on immigrants with a criminal record by restoring due process protections for all immigrants, including immigrants in deportation proceedings.

KEY COMPONENTS OF THE BILL INCLUDE THE BELOW PROVISIONS:

- Eliminating mandatory detention
- Ending deportations based on certain convictions
- Restoring judicial discretion for immigration judges
- Creating a five-year statute of limitations for deportability
- Establishing an opportunity to come home for certain deported individuals or non-citizens in deportation proceedings



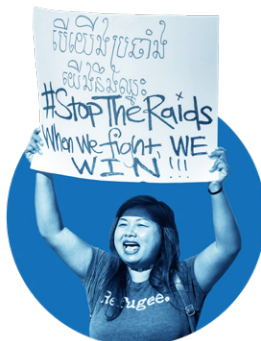
“That is why the New Way Forward Act is important to me. By restoring judicial discretion to immigration judges, they can finally look at my case, see my family and my contributions to my community, and hopefully provide me and others in my position the relief we so desperately need.”

- Cuong Nguyen, CA



“As this Administration continues to terrorize immigrant and refugee communities, it is crucial that our elected leaders not only speak out against the Administration’s sweeping anti-immigrant agenda but also do everything in their power to put in place real protections for our communities. We are encouraged to see members of Congress speak out against the cruelty of Southeast Asian detention and deportation and hope that this is only the starting point for the overhaul of an immigration system that is, by design, broken.”

- Phi Nguyen, litigation director at Asian Americans Advancing Justice | Atlanta



“Southeast Asian communities have been devastated by the relentless attacks and rampant ICE arrests within our neighborhoods... But impacted families, Southeast Asian organizers, community leaders, legal advocates, and allies from all across the country have come together to fight back. We will not stop until our families are safe, healing, and whole, again.”

- Sina Sam, community organizer with Khmer Anti-deportation Advocacy Group and the Southeast Asian Freedom Network



HITTING A KEY MILESTONE

SEARAC reached an organizational milestone in hosting our **20th Annual Leadership and Advocating Training (LAT)**, a three-day training program that teaches participants how to harness the power of their lived experiences and effectively advocate for change in their communities. The program culminates in advocacy visits with participants' members of Congress on the Hill. To date, LAT has trained more than 1,000 advocates in 41 states.

ISSUES ADVOCATED ON:

- Climate change
- College affordability
- Culturally inclusive training for health providers
- Data disaggregation
- Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act
- Expanding TRIO to serve SEAA students with disabilities
- Equitable funding for census
- Health Equity and Accountability Act
- Minority-serving institutions
- Opposing the Trump Administration's "public charge" regulation
- Pathways to paying student debt
- Protecting the Affordable Care Act (ACA)
- Reducing ICE budget
- Teacher shortages

LAT 2019



"I learned so many things at LAT, but my biggest takeaways were: Your representative works for you and the process to schedule an appointment and actually meet with them to discuss issues that affect your community is easier than expected. Seriously, why do they not teach this in high school or college?"

Data disaggregation matters and influences/shapes how policy is created. In relation to healthcare, being able to see a high rate of liver cancer in Southeast Asian ethnicities as compared to other Asians (East or South Asians) or ethnicities can help healthcare providers determine how to provide better care (e.g. better public health campaigns, earlier diagnoses, etc.) to these populations.

The census is a big deal because it determines resource allocation, political representation, and visibility."

- Lily Nhoisaykham, Health Track Participant

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

LAT 2019

"You read about different campaigns here and there on social media, in different places and in some ways they connect with you and in some ways they feel so far removed.

What was dope was that some of the immigration track members were the directly affected folks in the stories I had followed. And hearing their stories first hand was moving. And seeing that they were trying to use their freedom to free others was inspiring.

And while the immigration track was made up of people from all over the country, I realized even more so that the diaspora shared more similarities than differences and that the struggle we all went through in our own spaces far from each other gave us much more in common and that it made our story uniquely American."

- Bunthay Cheam, Immigration Track Participant

IN THEIR OWN WORDS



FIGHTING FOR EQUITY

MOVING MOUNTAINS OCTOBER 2019

We convened over 170 Southeast Asian American community members from across the nation in Sacramento, CA, for three special days of building our collective power and building home. Our second biennial Equity Summit saw powerful panels, moving spoken word performances, inspiring speeches, an intergenerational dance party, and an anti-deportation rally in conjunction with many others across the country.

"Being at Moving Mountains with so many other Southeast Asian Americans felt like home. For the first time in a while, I felt my family's stories validated through the narrative of others with similar experiences. As a Laotian American with family members who are incarcerated and an uncle living with a final order of removal, it meant so much to learn from other organizers, advocates, and attorneys on ways to disrupt the prison-to-deportation pipeline. I feel excited and empowered to bring many of these lessons back home with me."

-Tammy Phrakonkham, Arcata, CA, Equity Summit participant.

"Storytelling is an act of rebellion, because we are a universe of stories. All of our identities - LGBT, Southeast Asian, and more - by sharing our stories, we are breaking past and subverting the dominant narrative."

-Carolyn Lê, San Jose, CA, Equity Summit participant

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS:

- AAPIs for Civic Empowerment Education Fund
- Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus
- Alliance of Rhode Island Southeast Asians for Education
- Asian Health Services
- Asian Prisoner Support Committee
- Banteay Srei
- Boat People SOS - Houston
- CA Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus
- Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants
- Coalition of Asian American Leaders
- Devata Giving Circle; Diverse Elders Coalition
- Formerly Incarcerated Group Healing Together
- Freedom Inc
- Hmong Innovating Politics
- Khmer Anti-Deportation Advocacy Group

- Khmer Girls in Action
- Legacies of War
- ManForward
- National Education Association
- National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
- Providence Youth Student Movement
- Southeast Asian American Education Coalition
- Southeast Asian Freedom Network
- Teach For America
- The Cambodian Family

ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS:

- California State University, Fresno
- John F Kennedy University
- San Jose State University
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Massachusetts-Lowell

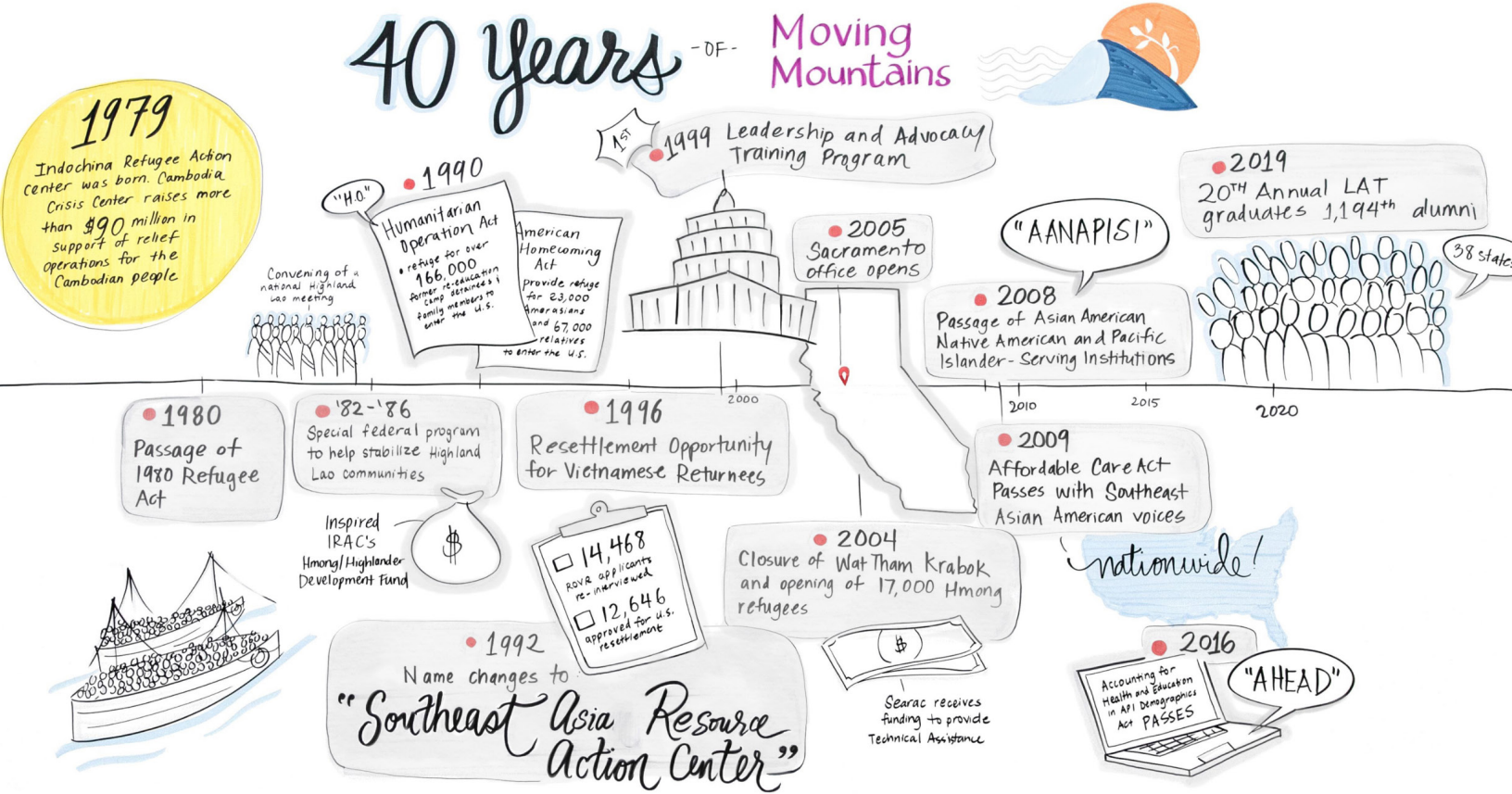




Photo by Leland Simpliciano

BEING SEEN AND HEARD — THIS YEAR, NEXT YEAR, AND BEYOND



Asian American + Pacific Islander
CHARGE

Our new CHARGE logo

VOICES FROM YOUTH

The Asian American and Pacific Islander Coalition Helping Achieve Racial and Gender Equity [AAPI CHARGE], coordinated by SEARAC, launched a new factsheet specifically focusing on barriers to education equity. *Can You See Me?* includes data and quotes that illustrate the lived experiences of Hmong, Cambodian, Iu-Mien, Laotian, and Samoan youth who participated in the coalition's California AAPI Youth Assessment survey and focus groups. The coalition collected survey data from 813 youth and young adults, ages 12-30, and led focus groups in Fresno, Long Beach, Santa Ana, San Jose, and Stockton.

SEARAC also advocated for ethnic studies model curriculum to be reflective of diverse Asian American and Pacific Islander experiences. In California, we alerted the SEAA community to send comments to the CA Department of Education, telling the department that inclusive ethnic studies courses available to students can be a tool to combat high rates of racially motivated bullying by allowing students to learn about each other's histories and increasing AAPI visibility and cultural awareness.

VOICES FROM BOYS AND MEN OF COLOR

SEARAC debuted a groundbreaking report that provides a glimpse into the field of organizations and leaders who are addressing the unique and pressing challenges that Asian American and Pacific Islander boys and men of color must navigate. “Revealing the Asian American Pacific Islander Boys and Men of Color Field: Living in the Intersections and Invisibility of Race and Gender” is a field analysis representing the culmination of interviews with 25 organizations serving diverse populations in 11 states across the country.

“In Asian American spaces, the work is a lot different than what it looks like in other communities. In our Asian American men’s group, they talk about some of these things. They feel like their masculinity has been attacked, and a lot of it feels like fear...”



Photo by Leland Simpliciano



VOICES UPLIFTING MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS

In 2019, SEARAC joined partners to co-sponsor California Assembly Bill (AB) 512 – Cultural Competence in Mental Health, which would have improved county cultural competence plans and utilized both evidence-based and community-defined practices to address the mental health conditions of California’s diversity. While CA Gov. Gavin Newsom ultimately vetoed this proposed legislation, SEARAC was able to collect community stories related to the various ways Southeast Asian Americans have accessed, or not accessed, mental health services. By identifying gaps in mental health services, we can support the development of community-defined policy solutions to share with policymakers.

“Vietnamese language interpreters could not (or were ‘uncomfortable’) translating gender/sexuality terminology. The few times my family member/s were allowed to be in the room were not helpful for these reasons. Not having access to culturally appropriate MH services has almost permanently created distance between myself and some of my family members. Considering the importance of community and community resources for first-generation immigrants, this has impacted my survivability, connections to my own SEA identity/hx/culture, and ability to navigate my mental health experience.”

- Vietnamese, 18-24 years old, transgender, non-binary/gender queer, queer

“I wished that the services I received had a culturally appropriate aspect. I shared about the trauma and hardships my parents and grandparents faced and how that has an impact on me. They have their issues, and they react harshly and sometimes violently towards my siblings and I. However, the therapist ignored that aspect and almost made me feel like the trauma my parents have doesn’t affect me.”

- Hmong, 25-34 years old, female, straight

“I never really knew about culturally appropriate mental health services until I was incarcerated. Growing up I was just surviving and never thought about trauma, mental health issues/struggles/services, and/or culturally relevant issue(s). I just knew I was discriminated against because I was different and my cultural norms were not socially accepted or recognized in the communities I was living in. My family often reminded me to keep it to myself and be invisible - ‘Don’t stand out.’”

- Vietnamese/Chinese, 35-44 years old, male, straight



VOICES FROM HARD-TO-COUNT SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES

SEARAC opened its Census Ambassador network and launched a set of census factsheets to bolster education and civic participation among Southeast Asian Americans. These resources were translated in-language for the general SEAA community, in addition to communities that are historically harder to reach and harder to count, including:

- Immigrants
- Young adults
- Elders
- Children and youth

During the last census in 2010, more than 650,000 SEAs, or 23% of the SEAA population, were found to live in areas of the country that had low census response rates. This means that these community members may have not been counted, resulting in loss of money that could have gone to their communities for important programs, like fixing roads, more health care, more affordable housing options, and more money to schools.

2019 FINANCIALS

REVENUE	2019	2018
Grants-Foundation/Nonprofits	1,432,698	1,305,597
Grants-Corporate/Business	247,645	95,559
Individual Contribution	45,228	24,753
Fundraising Income	-	-
Other Income	9,377	75,994
Total Revenue	1,734,948	1,501,903
EXPENDITURES	2019	2018
Program Expenses	1,545,739	1,251,872
Administrative Expenses	168,489	125,309
Fundraising Expenses	47,915	41,018
Total Expenses	1,762,143	1,418,199
NET ASSETS	2019	2018
Net Assets at the Beginning of the Year	1,394,679	781,428
Release from Restriction	224,135	613,251
Total Net Assets	1,618,814	1,394,679

2019 DONORS

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- Alice Dizon
- Anna (Hoa) Duong
- Anne Frank
- Annelisa Luong
- Antonio Mariategue
- Arch Mayfield
- Billy Taing
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- Cara Priestley
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- The California Endowment
- Wallace H. Coulter Foundation
- Open Society Foundation
- Kresge Foundation
- Solidarity Giving

CORPORATIONS

- AT&T
- Comcast NBCUniversal
- The Estee Lauder Companies Global Philanthropy and Corporate Citizenship
- Gelman Rosenberg, and Freedman
- Kaiser Permanente
- NCheng LLP
- State Farm
- Sutter Health Valley Area

ORGANIZATIONS

- Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Los Angeles
- Asian Creative Network
- Diverse Elders Coalition
- National Education Association
- SAGE USA



SEARAC – California Office

1225 8th Street, Suite 590
Sacramento, CA 95814

P 916-428-7769 **F** 916-428-7293

SEARAC – Washington, DC Office

1628 16th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20009

P 202-601-2960 **F** 202-667-6449

E searac@searac.org **www.searac.org**

STAFF

- Quyen Dinh, *Executive Director*
- Anna Byon, *Education Policy Advocate*
- Gabriel Garcia, *Boys and Men of Color Coordinator*
- Kelsey Hendrixson, *Operations Manager*
- Lee Lo, *Policy Associate*
- Kham Moua, *Immigration Policy Advocate*
- Katrina Dizon Mariategue, *Director of National Policy*
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