

2024



Annual Report



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Letter from the Executive Director

Dear community,

2024 feels like a long time ago.

We are now living through a period of history in which Southeast Asian American immigrant and refugee communities—alongside many others here in the United States—are facing violence, fear, and uncertainty.

This is not the first time our communities have experienced darkness.

In fact, we spent much of 2024 preparing ourselves for this moment: to build power with Southeast Asian American communities regardless of who would become president, and celebrating 2025 as our power year to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Southeast Asian refugee resettlement in the US.

Our ancestors have taught us that there is light through the darkest of times.

That is why we can affirm that our communities will be seen, heard, and valued, regardless of who is in power.

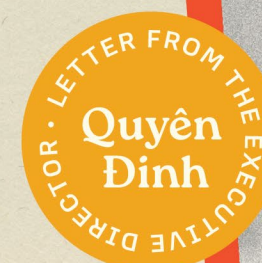
We hope this annual report is a reminder of all of the strengths, assets, and hopes that are held dear across Southeast Asian American immigrant and refugee communities. Now more than ever, it's important to reflect on our victories, when it can sometimes feel like all is lost.

But all is not lost.

Every year, we create history together, grounded in community and love.

Thank you for being a part of a national Southeast Asian American movement.

Quyen Dinh



who we are



About SEARAC

SEARAC was founded in 1979 as the “Indochina Refugee Action Center” due to concern about the genocide in Cambodia and large number of refugees fleeing Southeast Asia. After the war and bombings of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia claimed millions of lives between 1955 and 1975, our founders advocated for the passage of the 1980 Refugee Resettlement Act, which created our nation’s first comprehensive and unified system of refugee resettlement and support.

Today, SEARAC is a national civil rights organization that builds power with diverse communities from Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam 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.



Cham

a Muslim
Minority group

Hmong

Iu Mien

or Mien



Khmer

Khmer
Kampuchea
Krom

or ethnic Khmer

Khmer
Loeu

or Highland
Khmer

Khmu

Lao Loum

otherwise known
as Lao Loum or
Lowland Lao

Montagnards

Highlanders of
several different
ethnic groups

Tai Dam

Vietnamese

Certain
Ethnic
Chinese

also have heritage
in Cambodia, Laos,
and Vietnam

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 US occupation of Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam. Southeast Asian Americans now number nearly three million, and most arrived in the United States 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
- Hmong
- Iu Mien, or Mien
- Khmer
- Khmer Kampuchea Krom, or ethnic Khmer
- Khmer Loeu, or Highland Khmer Khmu
- Lao, otherwise referred to as Lao Loum or lowland Lao or Mien
- Montagnards, or Highlanders of several different ethnic groups
- Tai Dam
- Vietnamese
- Certain ethnic Chinese also have heritage in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam





strategic plan

SEARAC's work in 2024 was guided by [our 2022-2026 strategic plan](#), which was informed by more than 40 partner organizations and community leaders, and which outlines our organizational direction and strategy through 2026.

2024 by the Numbers

7

members of our inaugural [California policy seeding cohort](#)

15

members of our growing [SEAA Collaborative](#) in California

33

rising leaders trained at our 25th Annual [Leadership and Advocacy Training](#)

45

meetings with Federal policymakers

8

meetings co-hosted with the [California Department of Health data workgroup](#)

34

[news stories](#) uplifting SEAA communities in outlets including The Hill, Washington Post, NBC News, AsAm News, and more

1,800+

signatories representing 44 states on our [petition](#) to reclassify Hmong Americans as Southeast Asian in 2020 Census data

57,000

individuals reached across our social media channels

40

unique illustrations created by our first-ever artist-in-residence, [Natalie Bui](#)

national



NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS • NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS • NATIONAL HIGHLIGHTS
Of Note

highlights

National Highlights

ADVANCING HMONG IDENTITY IN THE 2030 CENSUS

Throughout 2024, SEARAC and our Hmong American community partners led an effort to engage the US Census Bureau to ensure that Hmong Americans are accurately represented in US Census data. We led a [petition](#)—signed by more than 1,800 individuals—demanding that the Census Bureau reclassify Hmong Americans as Southeast Asian, not East Asian as they are currently represented.

Additionally, SEARAC [coordinated a meeting](#) with US Census Bureau Director Robert L. Santos to share community concerns about this misclassification of our identities. In the meeting, advocates raised the points that the misclassification erases Hmong identity and history, potentially affects future research and funding on the Hmong, prevents accurate race and ethnic data, and creates distrust of the US Census within the community.

Our advocacy efforts to ensure that Hmong Americans are correctly classified in the upcoming 2030 Census are ongoing, including the groundbreaking nomination of SEARAC Executive Director [Nguyễn Đình](#) to the [2030 Census Advisory Committee](#).

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE DATA EQUITY ILLUSTRATIONS

From 2023-24, SEARAC hosted our first-ever artist-in-residence. Natalie Bui worked with us for 18 months to create gorgeous illustrations for our policy advocacy and leadership development campaigns, culminating in the release of [SEAA My Story in Data](#), an innovative series of digital illustrations exploring today's fight for data equity and its historical context. We are so grateful to Natalie and our community partners for their collaboration on this incredible project.

ADVANCING DATA EQUITY NATIONALLY THROUGH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Aggregated data—or data that lumps all Asian American (AA) and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) groups together—continues to conceal inequities and disparities across AA and NHPI communities in education, housing, health, and other areas of everyday life. In 2024, the Biden administration [announced changes](#) to Statistical Policy Directive No. 15 (SPD 15), which sets the federal minimum standards for how federal agencies maintain, collect, and report race and ethnicity data. Most important for Southeast Asian American communities, it requires federal agencies to collect minimum race and detailed ethnic data of the following Asian communities:

- Chinese
- Asian Indian
- Filipino
- Vietnamese
- Korean
- Japanese, and
- Another group [for example, Pakistani, Hmong, Afghan, etc.]

SEARAC and our partners at the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) continue to work directly with policymakers and advocates at the national, state, and local levels to ensure the timely and successful implementation of SPD 15 informed by community voices. You can learn more about our ongoing efforts [here](#).

To learn more about SEARAC's [education](#), [data equity](#), [health](#), and [immigration](#) work, click the links to visit our website.

california



California Highlights

INTRODUCING OUR CA POLICY SEEDING AND LEADERSHIP COHORT

Launched in July 2024, the [CA Policy Seeding and Leadership Cohort](#) is a 9-month applied learning experience for staff at SEAA Collaborative member organizations interested in growing as advocates for their communities at the state level. As we look toward commemorating the SEAA community's 50th anniversary of resettlement in the United States, the Cohort was guided by the question: How do we plant the seeds for new policy solutions or campaigns for Southeast Asian American (SEAA) communities to thrive in CA?

ROLLING OUT COMMUNITY-INFORMED SEAA ETHNIC STUDIES CURRICULA

SEARAC has been a leading advocacy voice in the ethnic studies graduation requirement for K-12 students in California, and this year, we were thrilled to roll out [new SEAA curriculum modules](#) that were developed by educators, community leaders, and students. These curricula uplift the history, culture, and critical leaders from the Cambodian, Hmong, and Vietnamese communities in California. These resources are free to the public and are designed to support K-12 classrooms across California.

We were able to attend several [conferences](#) across the state in 2024 to introduce the new curriculum modules to educators and school administrators. Southeast Asian American students joined panel discussions with SEARAC staff to discuss the importance of ethnic studies curriculum and the impact of seeing ourselves in our history books.

LAUNCHING A DATA DISAGGREGATION WORKGROUP WITH CDPH

Our continued work to ensure that state-level data reflects the actual experiences and needs of Southeast Asian Americans in California culminated this year in the launch of a new data working group with the CA Department of Public Health. SEARAC is a co-chair of this working group, which meets monthly to strategize and develop best practices for data collection that captures the diversity of health-related needs and experiences of Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders living in CA.

Community leaders and policymakers need disaggregated data in order to identify disparities various populations face and create evidence-based solutions that improve health outcomes for all. Our recommendations from the passage of legislation mandating disaggregated health data collection in California and a series of meetings with county health departments are captured in this [policy brief](#), released in March 2024.

To learn more about SEARAC's work in California, visit our [website](#).



highlights



Leadership development



In 2024, SEARAC proudly celebrated the 25th anniversary of our Leadership and Advocacy Training (LAT), which first launched in 1999. We were honored to be joined by a diverse cohort of 33 participants, representing 11 different states and ages ranging from 18 to 52. Our cohort included leaders from Hmong, Khmer, Lao, Mien, Vietnamese, and other Southeast Asian and ally communities. Over the three-day program, we celebrated the SEAA

legacy, explored the impact of civic engagement on our communities, and empowered a cohort of advocates to share their stories with elected officials.

To mark this milestone year, SEARAC was also thrilled to launch our alumni report which featured the voices of 25 LAT participants from the past two decades and is a testament to SEAA collective power.

2024 Finances

REVENUE	2024	2023	2022
GRANTS - FOUNDATIONS/NONPROFITS	\$2,361,620.00	\$1,900,576.69	\$5,161,688.50
INDIVIDUAL CONTRIBUTIONS	\$38,697.84	\$42,618.05	\$44,985.79
CORPORATE CONTRIBUTIONS	\$9.00	\$5,624.66	\$1,646.58
NONPROFIT & FOUNDATION CONTRIBUTION	\$126,099.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS	\$162,462.18	\$151,340.00	\$0.00
PROGRAM SALES	\$15,950.00	\$1,000.00	\$13,750.00
OTHER INCOME	\$657.42	\$2,339.21	\$174,259.65
INVESTMENT INCOME	\$306,295.23	\$159,234.89	-\$3,018.39
TOTAL REVENUE	\$3,012,790.67	\$2,262,733.50	\$5,393,312.13

EXPENDITURES	2024	2023	2022
PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$2,019,927.42	\$1,720,105.70	\$1,747,718.69
ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES	\$585,794.11	\$641,067.92	\$562,503.75
FUNDRAISING EXPENSES	\$128,213.60	\$175,606.41	\$54,488.55
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$2,733,935.13	\$2,536,780.03	\$2,364,710.99

NET ASSETS BEGINNING OF YEAR	\$5,296,982.76	\$5,537,683.44	\$2,509,082.30
NET CHANGE IN ASSETS	\$278,855.54	-\$274,046.53	\$3,028,601.14
NET ASSETS END OF YEAR	\$5,575,838.30	\$5,263,636.91	\$5,537,683.44

Note: These numbers are based on SEARAC’s fiscal year calendar which runs from October 1 - September 30. 2022 and 2023 data are based on our final audited financial statements. Our FY24 audit is currently in progress.

Thank you to the philanthropic, corporate, and community funders who generously supported SEARAC’s work in 2024:

FUNDERS

APIA Scholars
The Asian American Foundation
Asian Pacific American Institute
for Congressional Studies
Bellwether
The California Endowment
California Wellness Foundation
CareFirst BCBS
Chefs Stopping AAPI Hate
Diverse Elders Coalition
ECMC Foundation
Gates Foundation
Immigrant Legal Resource Center
The John A. Hartford Foundation
Kresge Foundation

Leadership Conference on
Civil Rights Education Fund
MacKenzie Scott
Micron Technology Foundation
National Education Association
National Urban League
Next50 Foundation
NEO Philanthropy / Four Freedoms Fund
Orange County Department of Education
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Santa Clara County Office of Education
State Farm
Surdna Foundation
USAgings
W. K. Kellogg Foundation
Women’s Foundation of California



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