

2023 ANNUAL



COVER ART BY
@NATALIEPBUI

REPORT



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A WORD FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



2023 was a personal year of evolution as my husband and I welcomed our second little one, An, to our growing family. And this evolution continued professionally at SEARAC with the launch of our [new strategic plan](#), “Our Civil Rights Vision: Expanding power to welcome the Southeast Asian American 50th year anniversary.” This guiding document serves as one of the longest legacies of SEARAC’s past and present, and it will carry us through the 50th anniversary of the Southeast Asian American refugee resettlement experience in 2025.

Today, we are proud to present this annual report as a testament to our organization’s and community’s power to evolve, adapt, and grow to realize our greatest potential.

This report is also shared in celebration with the community members, organizational partners, legislative champions, Leadership and Advocacy Training alumni, and everyone who comprises SEARAC’s network across the country and the world. Together, we made these victories a reality in alignment with our new five priorities in the years ahead:

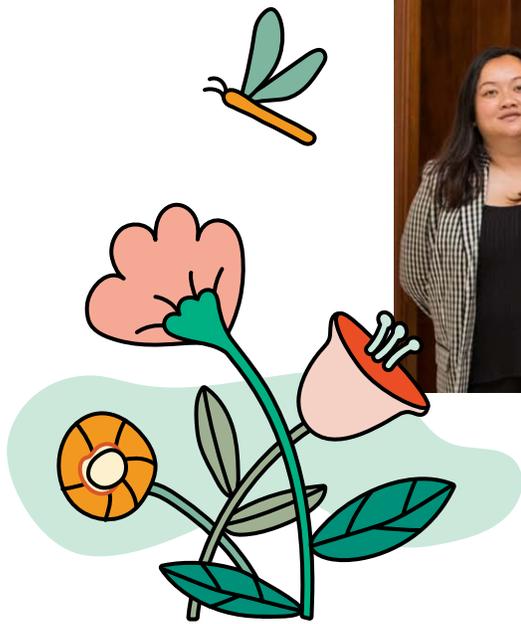
1. Build mighty communities
2. Shape national policies from the ground up
3. Bolster California for national change
4. Cultivate leaders and shift narratives, and
5. Build a path forward as survivors who thrive

As my husband and I build the third generation of multiracial, Southeast Asian Americans at home, 2023 marked SEARAC’s transition year to build for this next generation and beyond.

In partnership and gratitude,

Quyên Đình

SEARAC Executive Director



ABOUT SEARAC

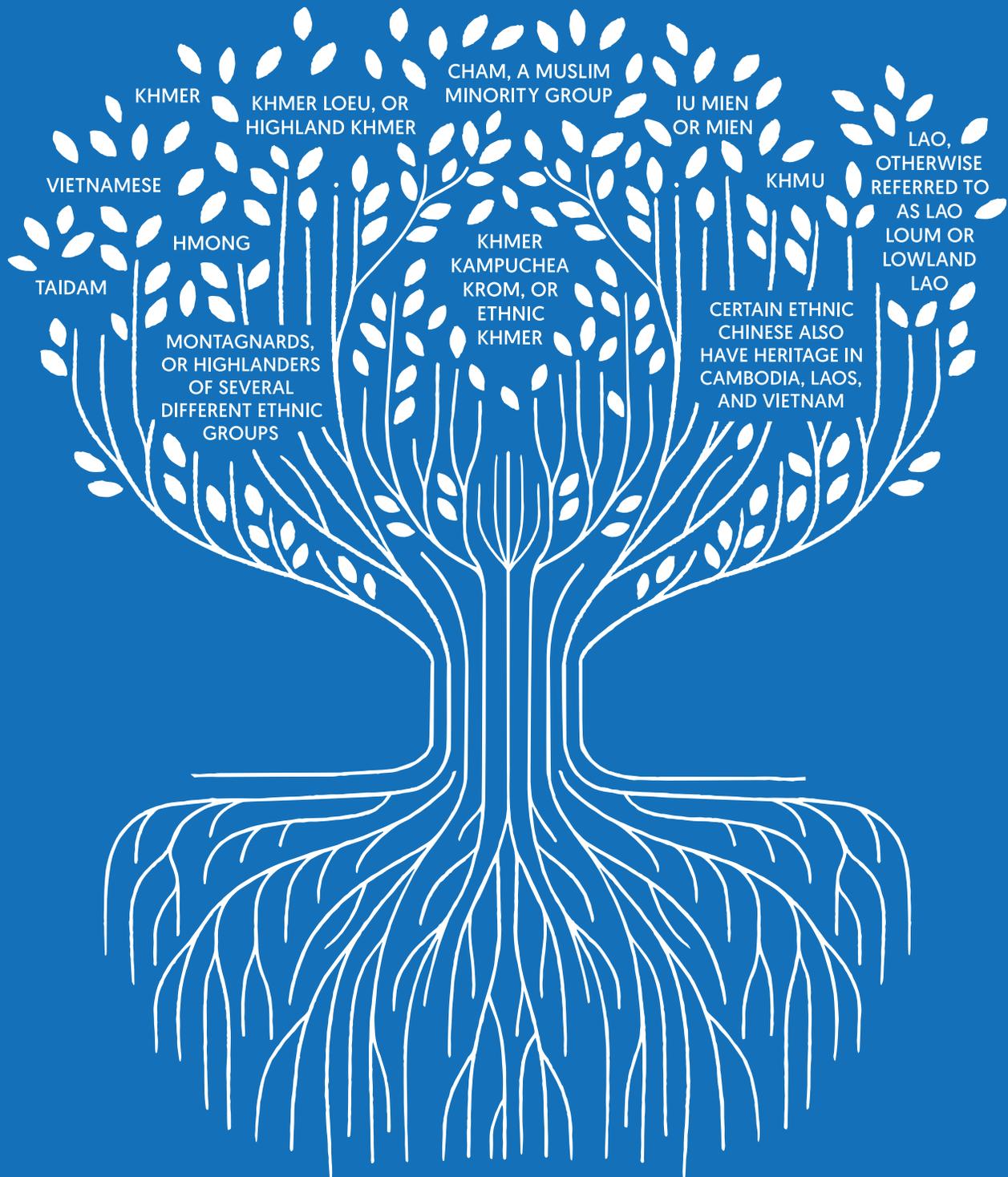
SEARAC was founded in 1979 as the “Indochina Refugee Action Center” due to concern about the genocide in Cambodia and large number of refugees fleeing Southeast Asia. After the war and bombings of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia claimed millions of lives between 1955 and 1975, our founders advocated for 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.



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 the communities listed in the tree.



THIS YEAR, WE WORKED ON:

Aging with Dignity

COVID-19 Relief and Recovery

Cultural and Linguistic Competence

Data Equity

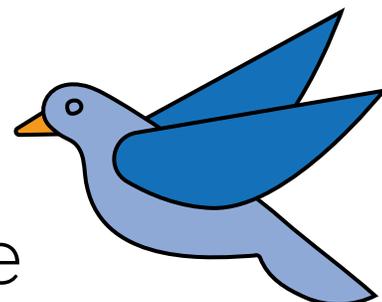
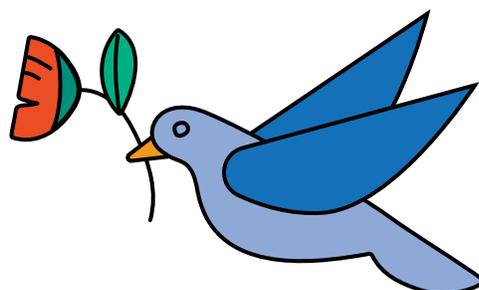
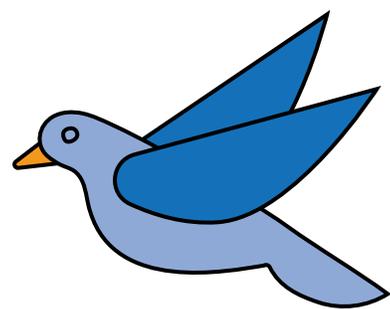
Education Access

Gender Justice

Immigrant Justice

Leadership Development

Physical and Mental Healthcare



THROUGH THE FOLLOWING STRATEGIES:

1. Build mighty communities
2. Shape national policies from the ground up
3. Bolster California for national change
4. Cultivate leaders and shift narratives
5. Build a path forward as survivors who thrive

2023 BY THE NUMBERS



35+ community members trained as a part of our Leadership and Advocacy Training (LAT) program



120+ organizations signing on in support of the Southeast Asian Deportation Relief Act



3 bills introduced specifically to protect and advance Southeast Asian American populations



1,700+ petition signatories in support of reclassifying Hmong as Southeast Asian in the 2020 Census



40+ Congressional and CA legislative meetings

160+ participants sharing their experiences accessing mental health services in our listening sessions and workshops in California



30+ articles in national and local media uplifting Southeast Asian American narratives

25,000 individuals visiting our website to learn more about Southeast Asian American issues



249 community members vaccinated against COVID-19 and influenza in California



CELEBRATING OUR RIGHT TO HEAL

In September 2023, SEARAC joined our California-based advocacy and health services partners to host the third annual ["The Right to Heal: Centering Mental Health Multi-Racial Equity in California."](#) Individuals, community organizations, and clinical providers from across the state gathered at Sacramento State University to learn more about the mental health needs of diverse communities in California. Together, we built connections across regions and communities to identify assets and needs, developed strategies to sustain regional mobilization efforts led by local partners, discussed the latest findings from this year's listening sessions, created learning opportunities, and empowered people to advocate for themselves, their families and communities to improve mental health and wellness.





ADVOCACY HIGHLIGHTS

KEY NATIONAL LEGISLATION THAT SEARAC SUPPORTED IN 2023:

- **All Students Count Act:** Disaggregates educational data to ensure that diverse Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander student groups are accounted for and supported by K-12 education systems to succeed.
- **Debt-Free College Act:** Covers the unmet financial needs of students through multiple funding pathways and allows certain undocumented students access to federal financial aid.
- **Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act:** Overhauls the immigration detention system by ending mandatory detention, phasing out private detention facilities, and increasing federal oversight of remaining detention facilities.
- **HEAL for Immigration Families Act:** Reduces barriers for states to allow undocumented immigrants access to Medicaid and CHIP and removes the five-year waiting period for Medicare for immigrants.
- **New Way Forward Act:** Restores due process protections back to the immigration system by ending mandatory detention, limiting crimes that make someone removable, creating a statute of limitation, and restoring judicial discretion back to immigration judges.

- **Older Americans Bill of Rights:** Expresses support for the rights of older Americans to live with dignity and independence, including access to affordable care and financial and retirement security.
- **Reuniting Families Act:** Promotes family reunification by streamlining the family immigration system and fixing the family-based visa backlogs.
- **Southeast Asian Deportation Relief Act:** Limits Southeast Asian deportations and provides further protections for the more than 15,000 Southeast Asian refugees who face deportation and are subject to ongoing trauma.
- **Transgender Bill of Rights:** Calls on the federal government to provide protections for transgender and nonbinary people, including equal access to services and enforcement of civil rights laws and protections.

KEY CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATION THAT SEARAC SUPPORTED IN 2023:

AB = Assembly Bill, SB = Senate Bill

- **AB 1110 (Adverse Childhood Experiences):** Sponsored by SEARAC, directs state officials to produce guidance on conducting culturally and linguistically competent ACEs screenings and disaggregating ACEs data by race and ethnicity.
- **SB 435 (Data Equity):** Requires the CA Dept. of Public Health and CalFresh program to collect data for each major Latino group, Mesoamerican Indigenous group, and language group.
- **AB 943 (Data Equity):** Requires the CA Dept. of Corrections and Rehabilitation to publish monthly data on people admitted, in custody, and released and paroled, disaggregated by race and ethnicity.
- **AB 617 (Legal Services for Immigrants):** Provides immigrant communities access to the One California program regardless of past contact with the criminal legal system.
- **AB 4 (Health Coverage for Immigrants):** Begins the process for CA to remove immigration status as a barrier to eligibility for the Covered California health insurance marketplace.
- **AB 1306 (Immigrant Rights):** Known as the HOME Act, ensures that immigrant Californians who earn release from state prison under existing criminal justice laws can come home instead of being transferred to Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

KEY CALIFORNIA STATE LEGISLATION THAT SEARAC OPPOSED IN 2023:

AB = Assembly Bill, SB = Senate Bill

- **SB 43:** Expands the definition of “grave disability” to make it easier to commit people involuntarily to locked facilities for behavioral health reasons, which disproportionately impacts communities of color and diverts resources away from evidence- and community-based services.
- **SB 326:** Diverts Mental Health Services Act funds away from outreach, early prevention and intervention, voluntary treatment, outpatient services, and other critical mental health care to focus on housing and substance use disorders; also significantly reduces independent oversight of spending.

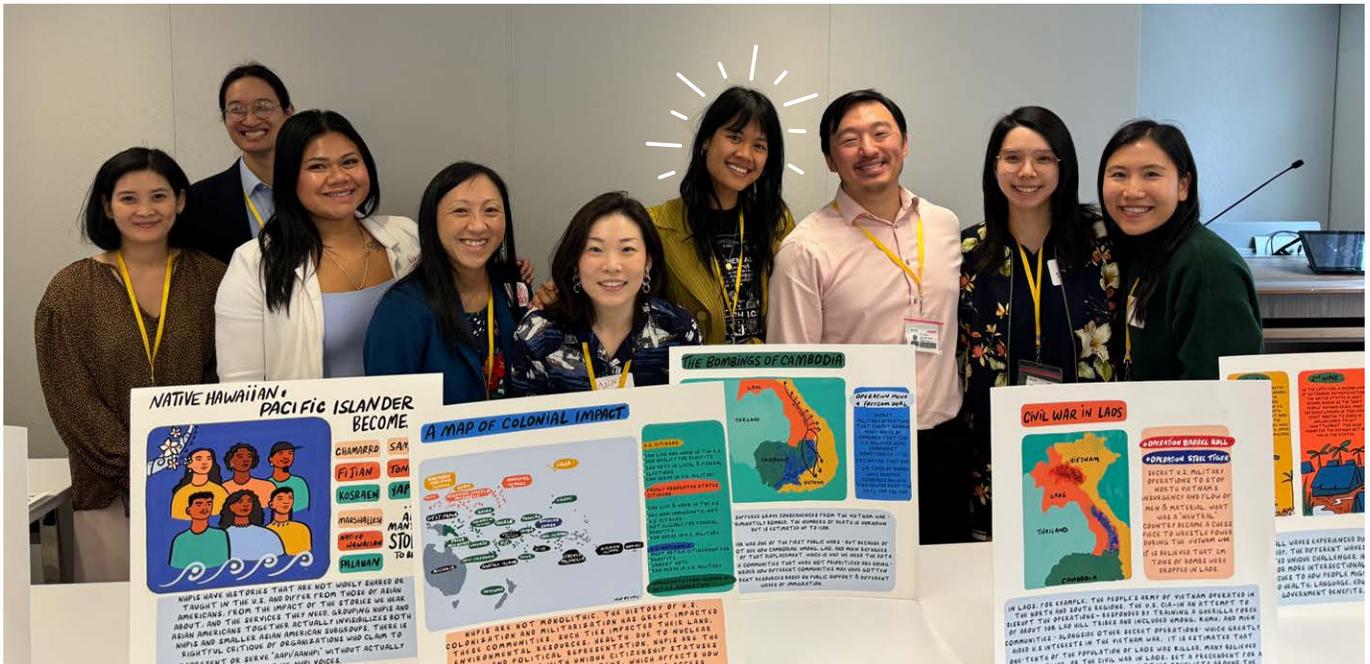


NEW IN 2023



Launching our SEAA Collaborative Website

The SEAA Collaborative is made up of 15 Southeast Asian American-serving organizations across CA. Our coalition collaborates and coordinates to ensure a collective SEAA voice on local and statewide advocacy toward education, health, and immigrant and refugee rights for all SEAA communities. This year, we were thrilled to launch a brand new website for the Collaborative, which uplifts member and coalition events, houses our groundbreaking research, and spotlights the work we are doing across the state of CA for Southeast Asian American communities. Check out the new website [here](#).



Introducing our First Artist-in-Residence

This year, we were honored to welcome Natalie Bui, a Vietnamese American digital illustrator and movement artist dedicated to centering the narratives and histories of marginalized communities, as SEARAC's first ever artist-in-residence. Through her collaboration with us and engagement with our network of partners, Natalie played a vital role in bringing more visibility to the issues impacting Southeast Asian American communities.

SEARAC'S 2023 IMPACT



Health

Increasing visibility through disaggregated race & ethnicity health data

SEARAC and 14 community-based partners met with seven county health departments, as well as with data advocates and technical experts, to learn about the progress and challenges of implementing [AB 1726](#), legislation SEARAC co-sponsored that requires the CA Department of Public Health (CDPH) to release health data disaggregated for additional Asian and Pacific Islander groups, including Hmong, Fijian, and Tongan. SEARAC also joined the newly formed CA AA and NHPI Data Disaggregation Taskforce. Together, we continually engaged CDPH, resulting in the creation of an official state workgroup focused on improving race and ethnicity data on health.



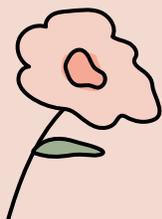
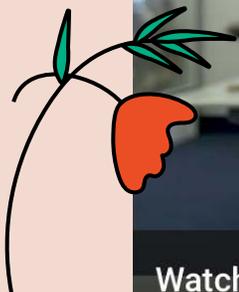
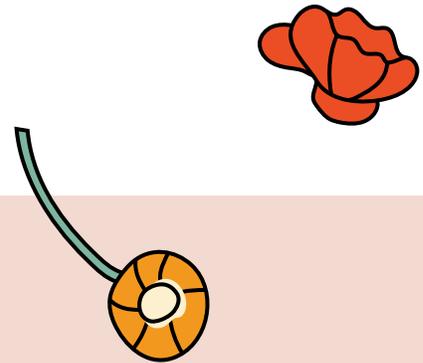
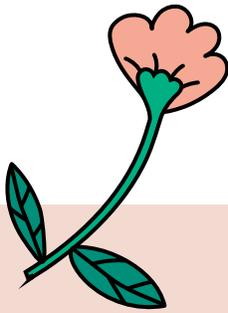
Uncovering mental health impacts and education challenges from COVID-19

SEARAC released our new report, "[Voices Unheard: Uncovering the Mental Health Impact of COVID-19 on Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander and Southeast Asian American Youth](#)" to uplift the needs of SEAA and NHPI youth who have been impacted by the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and rising anti-Asian hate. Written in collaboration with researchers from Illinois and Maryland whose work focuses on racially marginalized groups – such as Native Hawaiian (NH) and Pacific Islander (PI) communities and Southeast Asian refugee populations – and the Asian American and Pacific Islander Coalition Helping Achieve Racial and Gender Equity (AAPI CHARGE), *Voices Unheard* highlights the experiences of more than 200 respondents and the impact that COVID-19 has had on their health, mental health, and education.



Translating health information and keeping our communities safe

SEARAC joined our partners across the country including Lu Mien Community Services, Hmong Cultural Center of Butte County, United Cambodian Community of Long Beach, Vietnamese American Roundtable, and The Progressive Vietnamese American Organization (PIVOT) to translate vital COVID-19 health information into Southeast Asian American languages and combat disinformation. An informative [in-language video series](#) on how to take an at-home COVID test was produced and disseminated to thousands of SEAs. We continue to partner with SEAA-led organizations to promote health equity and health access, such as the series of COVID-19 and flu vaccine clinics that we launched in California in winter 2023. Learn more on the new [SEAA Collaborative website](#).



SEARAC'S 2023 IMPACT

Immigration



Reintroducing Southeast Asian deportation relief into the 118th Congress

Building on our momentum from the historic 2022 introduction of the Southeast Asian Deportation Relief Act (SEADRA) into Congress this year, we reintroduced the bill with additional cosponsors and new provisions to better protect our communities. This historic federal bill would limit Southeast Asian deportations and provide further protections for the more than 15,000 Southeast Asian refugees who face deportation and are subject to ongoing trauma.

The new version of the bill includes a provision to ensure that Southeast Asian refugees who have already been deported can return home to the US and be reunited with their families. For Southeast Asian refugees who are still in the US and face deportation, the changes allow them to fight their deportation order to remain in the country. We are grateful to our partners at the Southeast Asian Freedom Network (SEAFN) for their leadership on this bill. Learn more and watch the livestream of our introduction [here](#).

Reintroducing the New Way Forward Act to Repeal Harmful Immigration Laws

SEARAC helped reintroduce the [New Way Forward Act](#) through our collaboration with the [New Way Forward Coalition](#). The bill would repeal many of the harmful laws created in 1996 that criminalizes and makes over 15,000 Southeast Asian refugees deportable.

SEARAC'S 2023 IMPACT

Leadership Development

SEARAC's Leadership and Advocacy Training once again takes over DC

Southeast Asian advocates from across the country joined SEARAC's 2023 Leadership and Advocacy Training (LAT) program, marking the first in-person LAT since 2019. Twenty-seven advocates hailed from 12 different states and Washington, DC, with ages ranging from 18 to 52. This is the 24th year that SEARAC has hosted a Leadership and Advocacy Training, which has graduated more than 1,200 participants. Over the course of the three-day program, advocates celebrated their Southeast Asian American legacy, gained knowledge on the impact of civic engagement on their communities, and were trained on how to tell their lived truths to their elected officials.

During meetings with elected officials and administration staff on Capitol Hill, our participants shared powerful testimonies and demands for equity for Southeast Asian American communities. One participant reflected on the experience:

"I talked about my father and his experience with the healthcare system. He takes a number of different medications for his kidney disease, hypertension, and high cholesterol. I was 11 years old when a doctor told him, 'You are younger than me. You are too young to have these problems.' In that moment, I realized that there are so many deep structural inequities for our communities, the struggles my family encountered as refugees. I held on to that as the day progressed, how our data need to be represented and not hidden."



SEARAC'S 2023 IMPACT

Education

Affirming SEAA students' right to be seen

After its initial introduction nearly a decade ago, in 2023, SEARAC reintroduced the All Students Count Act into the 118th Congress, with support in both the Senate and the House. The All Students Count Act would require more comprehensive disaggregation of race and ethnicity data for Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, and Native Hawaiians by the US Department of Education. This is a powerful opportunity to ensure that Southeast Asian American students – as well as other Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Native Hawaiian students – are fully seen by our country's education systems.

"As someone who came to this country alone, at 16, with nothing in my pockets – I deeply understand the unique challenges in the US education system that immigrant communities face and persist for generations after. Our students deserve visibility at all levels."

- Rep. Pramila Jayapal, All Students Count Act co-sponsor



Spotlighting Southeast Asian American history

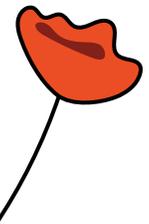
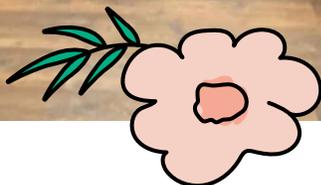
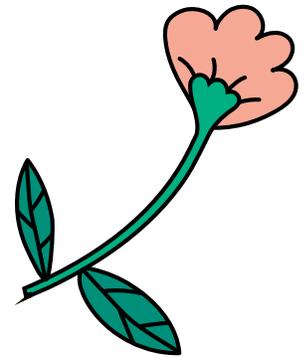
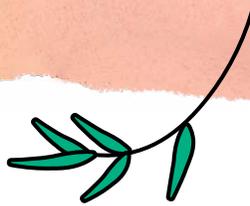
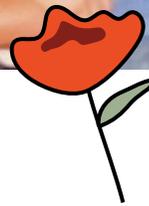
In California, SEARAC partnered with the Orange County Department of Education to support the development of ethnic studies model curricula that uplift the histories, identities, and contributions of Cambodian, Hmong, and Vietnamese communities in California. Throughout 2023, we hosted community listening sessions and led a series of visioning workshops that helped develop ideal curriculum content for K-12 students. Community members shared their hopes for the curriculum, thoughtful considerations, and recommendations on topics, stories, resources, and cultural practices to include. We continue to collaborate with the Department of Education to develop curriculum materials and ensure that Southeast Asian American students see themselves in the history they learn in schools.



COMMUNITY STORIES



Throughout 2023, SEARAC maintained a robust archive of stories from staff, program participants, partners, and community members on our website. From [Lundy Khoy's powerful op-ed](#) about her 20-year fight against deportation, to [Ai Inthavong Lopez's heartfelt reflection](#) on the death of a parent, to [an inspiring interview with our 2023 Artist-in-Residence, Natalie Bui](#), we strive to spotlight the diverse experiences of Southeast Asian Americans and showcase the incredible work that our community members are doing as artists, advocates, parents, caregivers, small business owners, and more. Check out the [Our Voices archive](#) to browse these impactful stories.



2023 FINANCES

REVENUE	2023	2022	2021
Grants-Foundation/Nonprofits	\$1,900,576.69	\$5,161,688.50	\$2,058,024.92
Individual Contributions	\$42,618.05	\$44,985.79	\$80,211.37
Corporate Contributions	\$5,624.66	\$1,646.58	\$97,500.00
Government Contracts	\$151,340.00	\$0	\$0
Program Sales	\$1,000.00	\$13,750.00	\$59,228.23
Other Income	\$2,339.21	\$174,259.65	\$301,161.24
Other Income Investment Income	\$159,234.89	-\$3,018.39	\$7,154.54
Total Revenue	\$2,262,733.50	\$5,393,312.13	\$2,603,280.30
EXPENDITURES	2023	2022	2021
Program Expenses	\$1,720,105.70	\$1,747,718.69	\$1,277,378.00
Administrative Expenses	\$641,067.92	\$562,503.75	\$254,520.00
Fundraising Expenses	\$175,606.41	\$54,488.55	\$44,058.00
Total Expenses	\$2,536,780.03	\$2,364,710.99	\$1,575,956.00
NET ASSETS	2023	2022	2021
Net Assets Beginning of Year	\$5,537,683.44	\$2,509,082.30	\$1,481,758.00
Net Change in Assets	-\$274,046.53	\$3,028,601.14	\$1,027,324.30
Net Assets End of Year	\$5,263,636.91	\$5,537,683.44	\$2,509,082.30

Note: These numbers are based on SEARAC's fiscal year calendar, which runs from October 1 - September 30. 2021 and 2022 data are based on our final audited financial statements. Our FY23 audit is currently in progress.





WORDS FROM OUR DONORS

"I'm always encouraged by the way that SEARAC pairs community building with intentionality and social justice."

"The stories SEARAC shares are so inspiring! Keep up the good work."

"My hope is to see more SEAs influencing policy, advocating for their communities, and being more visible. Whether it's on the Hill or in state government, whether it's at national or grassroots organizations – seeing that number rise is really inspiring."

"I have so much love for SEARAC!"

"SEARAC has helped me to understand the policies that impact Southeast Asian Americans and empowered me to fight for my communities."

2023 DONORS



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- Alicia Manzione
- Alvina Yeh
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- Anna (Hoa) Duong
- Annie Kuo
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- William Ly
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- Zoe Fuad

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- The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- The California Endowment
- California Pan-Ethnic Health Network
- California Wellness Foundation
- CareFirst BCBS
- Diverse Elders Coalition
- Immigrant Legal Resource Center
- The John A. Hartford Foundation
- The Leadership Conference Education Fund
- Kresge Foundation
- MacKenzie Scott
- National Education Association
- National Asian Pacific American Women's Foundation (NAPAWF)
- Neo Philanthropy - Four Freedoms Fund
- Orange County Department of Education [CA]
- Silicon Valley Community Foundation
- State Farm
- Surdna Foundation
- Teach for America
- USAging
- W.K. Kellogg Foundation



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