



April 2022
Project Synopsis

Empowering Asian-owned Businesses in the Greater Boston Area

I. About the Problem

The AAPI community has grown tremendously over the past decades in Greater Boston. Starting at the end of the 1960s, changes in immigration laws aligned with an increase of refugees coming to the US after fleeing war in Southeast Asia, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts saw a 46.9% increase in the AAPI population from 2000-to 2010. Despite this growth and subsequent growth of AAPI owned businesses, in every ethnic background more AAPI citizens in MA live below the poverty line than the city average. In addition to this, the Boston AAPI business community is at a particularly weak point at this moment in time due to the COVID-19 pandemic bringing on and increasing issues that were already there. Dramatic spikes in hate crimes and discrimination have created a socio-political climate that lacks the equity and opportunity that was the stated goal of this nation's founding. As the AAPI community is Boston's fastest-growing demographic, it is possible that some sectors of the white majority might fear the threat of diminished power. This notion is mirrored on a global scale, as many Americans fear the rising potential of China and India as competing superpowers. The nature of the negative public attitudes during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Boston area relating to AAPI small business owners differs depending on the individual's life experience. While the pandemic has created hardship for most business owners, it would logically be harder for someone who does not have access to intergenerational wealth or who has family ties that have been excluded from the greater Boston area community.

II. Scope of the Project

This project aims to provide policy recommendations across the economic and cultural dimensions of the AAPI business ecosystem in the Greater Boston Area to empower Asian-owned businesses. The aim is to provide a pathway to a sustainable mechanism for the inclusion of AAPI businesses in the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem by enabling coalition-building and the creation of social capital and increasing awareness about the role and importance of AAPI businesses and communities in the Greater Boston Area.

The project has the following specific objectives:

- Increase participation of AAPI businesses in partnerships between the public and private sectors; Improve access of AAPI businesses to government aid (TEA).
- Improve relationships with local banks (Are Asian business owners biased against debt and, if yes, is it racial, generational, or another form?).
- Identify gaps in the existing minority small business support ecosystem and formulate policies to address them.
- Increase access to funding support for AAPI organizations down to local communities.
- Create and invest in multiracial coalitions between Asian-owned businesses, between different Asian ethnic groups, and between Asians and other historically marginalized groups.
- Build inclusion of AAPI businesses within the overall entrepreneurial landscape; Enable access to various business clusters that could provide additional funding.
- Build pathways for enabling public education to increase the public's knowledge of AAPI communities and businesses.

III. Working Methodology

To fulfill this goal, The Asian American Civic Association's Asian Business Training & Mentoring Program, led by Andrew Goldberg, has partnered with the School of Public Policy and Urban Affairs at Northeastern University, Boston. Through an experiential learning approach, the graduate-level students enrolled in Techniques of Policy Analysis (Spring 2022), under the instruction of assistant teaching professor, Cristina Stanica, are working to address the policy problem and to provide a framework for inclusion. The client-based curriculum serves as a bridge between the classroom and the professional world. The expected outcome represents six policy analysis papers that tackle one of the specific objectives presented above. Each policy analysis framework relies on evidence to make reasoned choices across various policy options. Students are informed by theory to systematically organize knowledge and use the rational policy analysis model to acknowledge the decision-making model's assumptions, including the overall political and administrative landscape and the target populations. The project will end with a client briefing

where each student team presents their work and recommendations and welcomes feedback from interested stakeholders.

IV. Timeline

Module/Class Meeting	Topic	Assignments/ Deadlines
1/ Jan 19	Introduction to Policy Analysis	Review policy analysis project scope; Schedule project kick-off call
2/ Jan 26	Problem Definition and Identification	Live project kick-off call
3/ Feb 2	Generating Alternatives, Objectives & Criteria	Project plans draft due via email by Sunday, Feb 6 at midnight
4/ Feb 9	Assembling Evidence and Making Recommendations	Empirical research question for Project Deliverable #1 due via e-mail by Sunday, Feb 13 at midnight
5/ Feb 16	Being Sensitive to Context	Project plan due via email by Sunday, Feb 20 at midnight
6/ Feb 23	Understanding Target Populations	<u>Project Deliverable #1</u> due via Canvas by Sunday, Feb 27 at midnight
7/ Mar 2	Being Aware of Decision Biases	Project revisions and continuation
8/ Mar 9	Best Practices, Policy Learning, and Lesson Drawing	<u>Project Deliverable #2</u> due via Canvas by Sunday, Mar 13 at midnight
Mar 14-20	Spring Break	No class activities
9/ Mar 23	Alternatives to the Rational Model	Online module (ASPA Conference) Project revisions and continuation
10/ Mar 30	Implementing Policy	<u>Project Deliverable #3</u> due via Canvas by Sunday, Apr 3 at midnight
11/ Apr 4	Reflections on Ethics and Policy Analysis in Practice	

12/ Apr 11	Project Work	Project revisions and continuation
13/ Apr 18	Project Work	Project revisions and continuation
14/ Apr 25	Project Work	Project revisions and continuation
15/ May 2	Submission of final policy analysis and video presentation	Final Project due on <u>Wed. May 4</u> by midnight via Canvas Live/ Virtual Client Presentation on <u>Thu. May 5, 5:15-7:30 pm EDT via Zoom</u>