



## Business Resource Group Application Documents

### Charter and Bylaws

**Executive Sponsor:**

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*September 7, 2022*

Contents

CHARTER..... 2

ARTICLES AND BYLAWS ..... 13

# Charter

## **Title**

This Business Resource Group (BRG) is named **HAPPEN**, which stands for Hawaiians, Asians, and Pacific Islanders Promoting an Empowerment Network.

## **Background**

Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (ANHPI) individuals have been living in and contributing to the US society for many generations. The US oversimplifies and categorizes this group of individuals as "Asian." The popular contemporary opinion is that this group is the "model minority," meaning we have achieved economic and social success. The US rewards hard work for those who are willing to pull themselves up by their "bootstraps." Unfortunately, this information and presumption could not be further from the truth.

The model minority stereotype and generalization is a harmful myth. This stereotype erases awareness of the most marginalized members of this very diverse group by highlighting the economic prosperity of a select few. The lack of awareness leads to a lack of services for members of this group. Public opinion then becomes distorted and manipulated. It minimizes the enduring challenges and biases that members of this group continue to face daily. It also creates winners and losers (a zero-sum game) amongst all fabricated racial groups. Further marginalizing and promoting a caste system based on anti-blackness. Accepting what's given is fighting back and you're potentially placed into a lower caste level.

In the 2019-2020 legislative session, the Washington State Legislature passed HB 1783 to establish the Office of Equity and stated, "as the demographics of our state change, historically and currently marginalized communities still do not have the same opportunities to meet parity as their nonmarginalized counterparts including education, poverty, employment, health and more." Washington State marginalizes and silences Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander individuals at all levels of government employment despite the model minority myth. Cultures within the broadly defined ANHPI, such as Pacific Islanders, are not recognized. Studies conducted by Harvard Business Review and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission show that ANHPI individuals are the least likely group in the US to get promoted to management.

The 2019 Asian, Native Hawaiian & Pacific Islander Community Demography Report based on the 2019 American Community Survey Data provides an analysis of pay gaps that exist for the communities represented by Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asian individuals compared to whites and subgroups of these communities (Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, 2019). Specifically, the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs' (CAPAA)

2019 survey analysis reported that Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, Filipinx, Vietnamese, and Koreans earn less than whites per capita income. Similarly, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander women earn less than males from the same community. Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islanders have the lowest pay averages compared to Asians and whites.

The limited narrative explained above does not fully represent the breadth of our collective experiences or issues facing Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander state employees and respective communities. It is not an exhaustive snapshot and represents a sampling of issues. For as long as Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asian individuals have lived in Washington, they have made positive contributions to society and their history is American and Washington history. The individuals represented by these communities make significant contributions to public service as Washington State employees, though obstacles and barriers have at times made such contributions underappreciated or underrecognized.

## **Vision**

A Business Resource Group for Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, and Asian employees and their allies that transforms the state's narrative of oppression, inequity and exclusion, and gives an identity and voice to current employees. We strive for a culture that allows all to fully participate and be their authentic self at work.

## **Mission**

HAPPEN's mission is to improve lives by increasing ANHPI representation in leadership and general state employment and advocating for policies that promote anti-racism, equity, inclusion, diversity, and belonging in the workplace. We work to build a culture of inclusion and belonging that gives voice to the Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander experience.

## **Values**

Our values are:

- Antiracism
- Equity
- Diversity
- Inclusion
- Belongingness

We are firmly committed to these values. The organizational culture they create will dismantle bias and discrimination. We commit to each other, our communities, our allies, and to

transforming our workplaces. We will continue to amplify and center the voices of the communities we represent. Through this representation we work towards a state government that eliminates discrimination and increases equity and justice for all.

## **Purpose**

HAPPEN's purpose is to support pro-equity and antiracism work of the enterprise, and to represent, support, and amplify Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, and Asian employee voices by promoting an inclusive workplace culture that values the authenticity and intersectionality of all employees.

By acknowledging and embracing every individual's lived experience and expertise, HAPPEN will create and promote brave spaces, a strong sense of belonging, develop a meaningful alliance with other BRG leaders, and will advocate and contribute to anti-racist, social justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging initiatives and outcomes.

## **Description**

Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander individuals represent more than 50 ethnic groups and speak more than 100 distinct languages. Over the years the US. dominant culture has categorized and grouped these communities to marginalize them so that they are perpetually deemed the "foreigner." Although HAPPEN intends to highlight and bring honor to each unique Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian and Asian culture, the below definitions help bring context to the language that has been used to describe them. It is important to note that these definitions may be fluid and can be modified to ensure maximum inclusion.

- **AAPI**: Asian American and Pacific Islander. This term generally includes all individuals of Asian or Pacific Islander descent.
- **Asian American**: Person with ancestry from a country in Asia or islands in the Pacific Rim who live in the United States.
- **Asian**: Includes a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Persia, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, or the Indian subcontinent including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Vietnam. This term can also reflect persons with ancestry from a country in Asia or islands in the Pacific Rim who live in the United States.
- **COFA Islanders**: Compact of Free Association. COFA Islands have a special relationship with the USA and COFA Islanders experience unique challenges because of this

relationship, including barriers to service and accessing opportunities. COFA represents individuals from the Republic of Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, and the Republic of the Marshall Islands.

- **Pacific Islander**: Includes those whose origins belong to island nations in the Pacific, such as the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (Kosrae, Pohnpei, Yap, and Chuuk), Guam, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Republic of Palau; Polynesia: Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu; Melanesia: Fiji, New Zealand.
- **Native Hawaiian**: Any descendant of indigenous individuals inhabiting the Hawaiian Islands. Native Hawaiians, ([Hawaiian](#): kānaka ʻōiwi, kānaka maoli, and Hawaiʻi maoli), are the [Indigenous](#) individuals of the [Hawaiian Islands](#). The traditional name of the Hawaiian individuals is Kānaka Maoli. Native Hawaiians have also been referred to as “South Pacific Islanders” by some.

**ANHPI**: Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander. Based on the above, HAPPEN chooses to identify with this acronym to highlight the Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Asians who have often been erased, overlooked or excluded from important policies and government services. It is a way for Asian, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander employees to acknowledge and challenge past assumptions and stereotypes, to highlight the richness of the cultures and traditions in our respective communities that we still carry with us today, while also recognizing individual intersectionality and the multitude of cross-cultural heritage.

## **Goals**

Our goal is to be intentional in our effort to identify disparities in data subsets of Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander and Asian state employees. It is critical and necessary to fully understand gaps, challenges, and opportunities. We will examine each of these goals on an annual basis to determine the proper quantitative or qualitative metrics to evaluate. Strategic goals are ongoing, and they may not be appropriate to evaluate by either quantitative or qualitative data.

### **Goal 1: Advance pro-equity and anti-racism by cultivating a culture of belonging throughout all levels of state government.**

- a. Provide and encourage safe spaces while working towards brave spaces for Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, and Asian voices by hosting meetings and events accessible to all state employees.
- b. Increase awareness of the experienced trauma and marginalization of Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asian communities.

- c. Amplify the voices of Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander state employees through empowerment to be active voices in policy development and meeting the state's business needs.
- d. Provide information, strategies and recommendations to state executives, management, employees, and the Governor's Office regarding the perspective of the Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asian communities.
- e. Recognize, honor and elevate Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, and Asian history through activities that promote cultural awareness and understanding while addressing assumptions and myths about Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders (combat implicit bias, dispel the model minority myth, identify microaggressions, stereotypes, etc).

**Goal 2: Recruit, retain, and nurture a diverse and equitable workforce.**

- a. Increase annual retention rate of Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asian state employees respectively by fostering a sense of belonging across the enterprise.
- b. Increase representation of Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, and Asian state employees respectively so that it is reflective of Washington state's citizenry.
- c. Educate employees, managers, and executive leaders to acknowledge, understand, and address awareness and effects of violence and microaggressions in the workplace.
- d. Plan and advertise outreach and networking events for future state employees.
- e. Advise state human resource leaders on recruitment and hiring practices, such as reducing biases in job posting, application review, interview, salary offer, and onboarding.

**Goal 3: Enhance equity by providing and identifying professional development, advancement, and leadership opportunities.**

- a. Cultivate Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander leaders by leveraging members' lived experiences, strengths, and skills.
- b. Recruit and mentor Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian, and Asian state employee leaders through proactive involvement the BRG's committees and elected positions.
- c. Increase visibility, respect, and recognition of the significant contributions made through public service by Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and Asians.

**Goal 4: Identify, explore, and address disparate barriers to advancement through analysis of disaggregated data, particularly for disparities facing Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asian state employees.**

- a. Advocate for the disaggregation of data to accurately portray the disparities facing our Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander state employees.
- b. Identify barriers to state employment and promotions. Work collaboratively with human



resource leaders to reduce identified barriers.

- c. Support and encourage state agencies to work towards equitable representation of ANHPI in all levels of management.
- d. Address disparities related to colorism for Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander, and Asians that are untraceable using traditional data tracking and analysis.

**Goal 5: Support enterprise-wide efforts to support equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging and PEAR (Pro-Equity and Anti-Racism) initiatives, strategies, planning, and implementation.**

- a. Support alliances and initiatives that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging across Washington State agencies.
- b. Collaborate with other Business Resource Groups, the Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA), the Office of Equity, the Office of Financial Management, and other partners.
- c. Foster an environment where all Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) employees feel valued and can be their authentic selves in the workplace.
- d. Integrate our diverse cultural experiences, history, purpose, and values into the backbone of the Washington State government.

## **Membership**

We design our membership and roles without hierarchy as a commitment to our community's values of antiracism, inclusion, and a belief that we are always better together. We also understand that having roles with designated responsibilities within a community helps to ensure that we can carry out our vision, mission, and purpose. Below are the elected roles to carry out specific responsibilities for the Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander group but do not carry unilateral power. Members can opt to create additional elected positions on an ad hoc basis to respond to evolving needs.

## **Elected Positions**

The active membership shall elect each position listed below for (1) two-year term unless otherwise noted. Additional terms may be consecutive if a member is re-elected. There are no term limits. Only current state employees may be elected, though anyone meeting the definition of "active member" may vote in elections.

- A. **(3) Co-Chairs (3 positions):** the active membership elects each Co-Chair. The (3) co-chairs will have staggered terms in order to provide continuity between incoming co-chairs and incumbents.
- B. Administrative Liaison
- C. Treasurer

- D. Membership Coordinator
- E. Communications Coordinator
- F. Committee Leads:
  - External Affairs Lead
  - Policy Lead
  - Mentorship Lead
  - Career/Leadership Development Lead

*Note: Each committee lead may solicit additional committee members without an election.*

### **Non-elected Position**

- G. **Executive Sponsor:** A non-elected position. The person must be employed as an executive leader within state government with shared or demonstrated interest in the mission of HAPPEN.

### **General Members**

- H. **Active Members:** any current or former Washington State employee who has attended at least one general membership meeting or event in the past six months. Only active members have voting rights.
- I. **Community-at-Large:** Any individual who is affiliated with the shared interest in the mission of the business resource group but may not be a state employee and may not have attended a general membership meeting in the past six months. Community-at-Large individuals do not have voting rights.

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee will include all elected positions mentioned above and the Executive Sponsor. This committee shall meet at least once per month to discuss the business needs of HAPPEN. The following roles and responsibilities include, but not limited to:

- J. Preparation of agendas and presentations for future membership meetings and/or special events.
- K. Deliverables or actions required of the Business Resource Group by the Office of Financial Management or the Office of Equity.
- L. Discuss general operating procedures, issues or conflicts within HAPPEN or any of the committees.
- M. Annually review and recommend changes to the charter and bylaws, which shall be voted upon by the active membership.
- N. Make interim or acting appointments to vacant leadership or committee lead positions until an election by the membership can be conducted.

## Meeting Decorum

Each member, guest, speaker, etc. who attends a meeting hosted by HAPPEN is valued and brings a unique perspective. Therefore, our values of inclusion and belonging shall be centered with each discussion and methods of engagement. Examples of ideals that exemplify these foundational values include but are not limited to:

- A. Practice active listening.
- B. Listen to understand, rather than listening to respond.
- C. Recognize that sometimes disagreements are really misunderstandings.
- D. Be genuinely curious.
- E. Lead with radical empathy and love.
- F. Be flexible and adaptable.
- G. Acknowledge that disagreements are okay:
  - Help us gain a deeper understanding.
  - Conflict is an opportunity.
  - Expect and accept non closure.
- H. Progress not perfection.
- I. Speak your truth.
- J. Understand your impact.
- K. Practice compassion, vulnerability, and humility.
- L. Stay engaged.
- M. Experience discomfort.
- N. Exercise self-care during difficult moments and understand your own possible triggers.
- O. Address policies not people.
- P. Racism cannot be separated from reality.
- Q. Remember we are all socialized into a common white supremacy culture narrative - challenge your own assumptions.

## Decision Making

Each decision made by members of HAPPEN or by individual members has the potential to impact others. We are cognizant of the disparate impacts some decisions have on our members and communities. However, many decisions have limited impact and must be made without consent of the whole membership body, particularly regarding administrative issues. Collaboration and proactive communication are strongly encouraged. If a member is faced with rendering a decision that has the potential to affect HAPPEN in any manner, the questions

below should be considered before moving forward with a decision.

- A. Is it an important topic?
- B. Can it be solved by collaborating without a meeting?
- C. Does it require everyone to participate?
- D. Does the group or individual have authority to act?
- E. Are the individuals with tasks or responsibilities related to this decision present?
- F. Is there enough time to get to the desired outcome?
- G. Is there a clear and easy answer?

It is also imperative to understand the differences and impacts of administrative versus strategic decisions. Administrative decisions are necessary to continually meet the business needs of HAPPEN and can be rendered by individuals who have roles and responsibilities related to certain issues. Strategic decisions should generally be made by the elected leadership and the Executive Sponsor and in many instances by consensus of the active membership.

## Sources

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# Bylaws

## HAPPEN (A State of Washington Business Resource Group)

### ARTICLES AND BYLAWS

1. **Article I:** Name: HAPPEN (Hawaiians, Asians, and Pacific Islanders Promoting an Empowerment Network).
2. **Article II:** Vision, Mission, Purpose, and Goals (see Charter).
3. **Article III:** General Membership.

General membership is open to individuals who are committed to supporting and advancing the goals of HAPPEN and meet one of the definitions listed in Article IV, Section H.

4. **Article IV:** Structure

The Executive Committee shall be comprised of the Executive Sponsor, (3) Co-Chairs, Administrative Liaison, Membership and Communication Coordinators, Treasurer, and the Standing Committee Leads.

- A. **Executive Sponsor** – Washington State agency administrator/executive management leader who guides and advocates for the goals of HAPPEN. It is a non-elected position. The person must be employed as an executive leader within state government with a shared or demonstrated interest in the mission of HAPPEN.
- B. **Co-Chairs** (3 Positions) - All three Co-chair positions (1, 2, and 3) must work collectively and collaboratively to meet the needs of HAPPEN by attending state BRG Leads meetings, act as co-facilitators for all HAPPEN meetings and develop and submit the HAPPEN annual report. Co-chairs are the representatives of HAPPEN in different spaces, direct contact for the BRG coordinator, DEI Innovations Manager, Office of Equity, and others.
- C. **Administrative Liaison**
  - Maintains all meeting minutes.
  - Schedules meeting space.
  - Monitors general email inbox and filters communications as required.
- D. **Membership Coordinator**
  - Maintains membership and attendance rosters.
  - Recruits new members and facilitates nominations for elected officers.
  - Facilitates elections.
  - Records minutes for general member meetings.

**E. Communication Coordinator**

- Maintains documentation and disseminates information related to HAPPEN.
- Develops external and internal communications such as website and social media.
- Works collaboratively with Public Outreach committee.

**F. Treasurer**

- Maintains budget and finances for HAPPEN.
- Provides fiscal updates to HAPPEN Executive Committee and members.
- Coordinates with OFM BRG Coordinator on funding and expenditures.

**G. Standing Committees** - These will be established in accordance with the charter, with the addition of special committees as determined by HAPPEN and its general membership. Each committee will be led by a “Committee Lead” who will be elected. Each Lead may solicit additional committee members without election of those members. Standing committees include:

- Career/Leadership Development** - Identifies or facilitates training opportunities in leadership and career development for HAPPEN members.
- Mentorship** – Maintains a list of potential or current mentee and mentors. Creates mentorship application and matches members.
- External Affairs** – Develops and engages with state government stakeholders and partners such as the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA), and external relationships with ANHPI communities and organizations on outreach events and activities which includes and embraces all cultures within the ANHPI communities. Plans and organizes events, trainings, and informs members of various external events and opportunities pertaining to understanding history and celebrating culture.
- Policy** – Reviews and monitors legislation (proposed or amended) that impact all cultures within ANHPI communities, work closely with the Executive Sponsor and Co-chairs in creating policy recommendations to the Governor’s Office (through the Office of Financial Management (OFM)), the Office of Equity, the Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs (CAPAA), and state government agencies as needed.

**H. General Membership**

- Active Members:** Any current or former Washington State employee who has attended at least one general membership meeting or event in the past six months. Only active members have voting rights.
- Community-at-Large:** Any individual who is affiliated with the shared interest in the mission of the business resource group but may not be a state employee and may not



have attended a general membership meeting in the past six months. Community-at-large individuals do not have voting rights.

- iii. **BRG Coordinator:** The OFM BRG Coordinator facilitates and bridges communication between the BRG and the Office of Financial Management.

## **5. Article V: Elections**

### **A. Elected leadership positions:**

- Co-Chair (Position 1)
- Co-Chair (Position 2)
- Co-Chair (Position 3)
- Administrative Liaison
- Membership Coordinator
- Communication Coordinator
- Treasurer
- Committee Leads:
  - o Career/Leadership Development
  - o Mentorship
  - o Public Outreach
  - o Policy

**B. Frequency of Elections:** Elections are held annually in May with terms beginning on July 1. Special elections may occur when a position is vacant. There are no term limits.

**C. Nomination Structure:** Any active HAPPEN member may submit nominations (even if it is a self-nomination) for the elected positions to the Membership Coordinator, with support from the OFM BRG Coordinator if the current Membership Coordinator is seeking election for any position.

1. Nominations will start March 1 and must be made by April 30 in an election year.
  2. Nominees must obtain supervisor approval to run for election.
  3. Non-self-nominees can reject a nomination.
  4. Membership will conduct elections when positions are vacant when a position term is ending, there is a resignation, or other circumstances that may occur.
  5. All nominees who are willing to accept the nomination will be included on the ballot.
  6. All nominees acknowledge that terms are two years, except for the one-year chair term.
- iv. Voting / ballots will be set-up using SurveyMonkey® or other subsequently approved

secure online or other process approved by a majority of HAPPEN members. Ballots will be emailed to all active members, with the support of the Communication Coordinator. This will allow all active members of HAPPEN to vote for nominated candidates.

7. The OFM BRG Coordinator may support the Membership Coordinator during the elections process.
8. If two or more candidates are nominated for a position, a simple majority is required to elect that position. If a simple majority is not achieved, the top two candidates shall be placed in a run-off election. A simple majority is required to win a run-off election. In the event of a tie during a run-off election, the (3) Co-Chairs shall select the winner by each casting their vote.
9. Should an elected incumbent choose to resign their position before their term ends, sufficient notice is highly encouraged so that an election to fill the vacancy can be done so in a timely manner or during the election cycle identified above.

## 6. **Article VI: Meetings**

**A. Calendar:** A meeting calendar will be developed by co-chairs and distributed to committee members by the Communications Lead.

**B. Frequency of Meetings:** HAPPEN will hold at least one meeting per month, except for the month of December, unless there are special circumstances as determined by elected members and agreed to by general membership by consensus.

**C. Agenda items:** Can include but are not limited to:

1. An update report from all committees, as available.
2. Guest speakers on topics such as advancing racial equity, leadership development, cultural competencies, career development, public policy/legislation impacting ANHPs, and State equity, diversity, inclusion, and belongingness competencies.
3. A list of planned activities and readings supporting the charter to aid in focusing committee work.
4. New or Other Business.

**D. Transparency:** All HAPPEN business will be conducted in an open and transparent manner that is expected of all public employees.

## 7. **Article VII: Annual Report**

**A.** Establish methods to measure the performance of HAPPEN activity.

**B.** Continuously review methods to measure the success and/or performance of each activity to include measurable goals that will be included in the annual report.

C. Provide annual report to OFM State HR or to the OFM BRG Coordinator by June 30 of each year.

**8. Article VIII: Amendment of Bylaws**

**A. Amendment Process:** Amendments to the by-laws or charter (or any other governing ANHPI BRG document) will require a simple majority vote of the membership.

**B. State Directive or Legislative Changes:** In the event a State HR Directive, Executive Order, or Legislation that would cause any contents of these by-laws to fall out of compliance, the Co-Chairs shall work with the OFM BRG Coordinator to amend the by-laws administratively in order to comply. These actions shall be reported to the membership but shall not require a formal vote.

**9. Article IX: Impeachment Procedures**

**A.** Any member can call for any elected position to be removed from their position if the calling member provides reasonable evidence that the elected person acted in bad-faith or inconsistent with the HAPPEN charter and by-laws.


**B. Criteria for Impeachment.** The Executive Committee shall determine whether to call for a vote by the general membership to consider impeachment of an elected person if it determines any of the following criteria have been met.

- i. An elected person has acted in a documented egregious manner that is detrimental to HAPPEN being able to fulfill its purpose and goals.
- ii. An elected person has violated the law pertaining to civil rights, harassment, sexual harassment, bribery, forgery, or any other action which may result in disciplinary action or dismissal.

**C.** Impeachment from the position requires a two-thirds vote of active members, which shall be facilitated by the Membership Coordinator. If the Membership Coordinator is called for impeachment, the vote may be facilitated by the Co-Chairs, Executive Sponsor, or the OFM BRG Coordinator.

**10. Article X: Dissolution**


**A.** Should HAPPEN become dissolved and no longer be a functioning entity, any resources or products will be archived and turned over to OFM State HR.

X   
Nicholas Vann (Sep 7, 2022 11:38 PDT)

Sep 7, 2022

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Nicholas Vann  
HAPPEN Executive Sponsor

X   
Michaela Doelman (Sep 8, 2022 08:56 PDT)

Sep 8, 2022

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Michaela Doelman  
Chief Human Resources Officer