The unprecedented COVID-19 public health crisis has devastated Massachusetts’ Asian Pacific Islander American (APIA) and immigrant communities, the fastest growing population in Massachusetts. We are a community of small businesses and service industry jobs, with an economic foundation in restaurants and nail salons across the state, as well as home health aides and hotel workers. The COVID-19 public health crisis and incitement of xenophobia has doubly impacted our community.

APIsCAN!, a network of organizations in Massachusetts that advances equity and opposes discrimination through year-round civic action in APIA communities, urges stakeholders, policy makers and leaders to take immediate comprehensive action.

Our organizations are on the front lines advocating for language access, data equity, and the preservation and expansion of affordable housing, economic opportunities, immigrant rights, and education justice. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, we have pivoted our work to meet the needs of our most vulnerable community members.

Massachusetts’ APIA community is 68% foreign born, of which 15% is undocumented, and 80% of whom speak a language other than English at home. Approximately 32% are US-born and 34% are naturalized US citizens. The 2010-2014 per capita for Asian Americans was $35,351 and disaggregated at $18,632 for Cambodians, $35,467 for Chinese, $23,170 for Vietnamese and $50,837 for Indians.

Loss of income, language barriers, immigration fears, uncertainty about the future of businesses and employment—all augmented by the national rise in anti-Asian hate incidents—has meant that APIAs are among those most deeply impacted during this pandemic.

During this challenging time, APIsCAN and our allies urge the following:

- Publicly oppose xenophobia, like usage of the term “Chinese virus,” and hate incidents against APIAs.
- Pass a moratorium on evictions, rent, and mortgage payments for all residents and small businesses.
- Create federal emergency funding to stabilize subsidized affordable housing and public housing.
- Halt Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids, detentions, and deportations.
- Prioritize low-wage workers, undocumented people, and small businesses for any bailout, emergency funds, and resources.
- Expand support for small businesses, including tax subsidies, grants, and no interest loans.
- Ensure all residents, regardless of immigration status, have access to full and high-quality preventative and curative healthcare, including testing and treatment for COVID-19.
- Expand earned sick leave law to increase eligibility, types of workers covered and reason (social distancing, caring for a loved one, and quarantine).
• Pass a moratorium on termination of public benefits such as SNAP, Mass Health and disability benefits.
• Expand language access to expedite applications for public benefits and unemployment insurance.
• Identify safe and dignified quarantine sites for those who are experiencing domestic violence, homelessness, living in safe houses or other congregate living situations.
• Increase language-accessible communication and resources from schools to parents and more equitable online resources for students.

Undersigned (in alphabetical order):

Adressing Disparities in Asian Populations Through Translational Research (ADAPT)
APISCAN!
Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW)
Asian Community Development Corporation (ACDC)
Asian Task Force Against Domestic Violence (ATASK)
Asian Women for Health (AWFH)
Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center (BCNC)
Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (CMAA)
Chinatown Community Land Trust, Boston
Chinese Culture Connection, Inc.
Chinese Progressive Association Boston
Greater Boston Legal Services Asian Outreach Unit
Greater Malden Asian American Community Coalition (GMAACC)
Korean-American Citizens League of NE
Lynn United for Change
Massachusetts Asian American Commission
Massachusetts Asian American Educators Association (MAAEA)
Massachusetts Voter Table
Quincy Asian Resources (QARI)
Revere Youth in Action
South Asian Workers’ Center
South Cove Community Health Center
Saheli - Friendship and Support for South Asian Women and Families
The Southeast Asian Coalition (SEACMA)
Vietnamese American Initiative for Development, Inc. (VietAID)

Sources:
- https://www.standagainsthatred.org/