

Celebrate Diversity

#MOCelebratesDiversity



Each month, the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) celebrates the diversity of our state's workforce. We look forward to providing content that embraces the differences that make us better together. Check us out [here!](#)



Celebrate Diversity!

By Jasmine Prothero and Austin Kerns

May is Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. This is a time to embrace and pay tribute to the many generations of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans who have helped shape our country and state. Countless Pacific Islander and Asian American communities are woven into the fabric of our nation. May reminds us of their contributions and sacrifices in the past, but also how we can all move towards a better future.

"Amidst these struggles, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have contributed in great and significant ways to all aspects of society. They have created works of literature and art, thrived as American athletes, and prospered in the world of academia. Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders have played a vital role in our Nation's economic and technological growth by establishing successful enterprises and pushing the limits of science. They are serving in positions of leadership within the government more now than ever before. And along with all of our great service men and women, they have defended the United States from threats at home and abroad, serving our Nation with valor."

-President Obama, 2009 Proclamation

In 2020, Vice President Kamala Harris became the highest ranking Asian American in U.S. History. Although we are seeing a growth in cultural representation, there is still more to be done to ensure Asian and Pacific Islander communities are heard, respected and represented in all areas. Despite the odds, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans have rose above underrepresentation and thrived.

An integral part of moving forward is active allyship or advocating for inclusion from those who are not a part of Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Here's how you can become more aware! Look for educational materials, conversations and exhibits planned in May. Some will come directly from our Asian and Pacific Islander leaders and colleagues across state government. If you were not able to attend the 2021 Asian

How to be an ally during Asian Pacific American Heritage month

Pacific American Heritage Month's virtual event, you can view it [here](#). We highly recommend the [Discover Missouri virtual journey](#) of Asian Pacific American History across Missouri!

Contact us if you have ideas on diverse groups to celebrate at CelebrateDiversity@oa.mo.gov.

Want to learn more? Check out the OEO's Diversity Celebrations [here](#).

History of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

1977 – U.S. Congress proposes the first 10 days of May to celebrate Pacific/Asian American Heritage and its communities' accomplishments

1979 – President Jimmy Carter issued Proclamation 4650. This was the first Presidential Proclamation for Asian/Pacific Heritage Week, emphasizing the contributions made by Asian and Pacific Islander American communities

1990 – President George H.W. Bush issued Presidential Proclamation 6130, designating May as the first "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month"

1992 – U.S. Congress passed Pub.L.102-450, permanently designating May of each year to follow as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month"