

AG Maura Healey's Advisory Council on New Americans Members



Eva Millona, Executive Director, MIRA Coalition - Eva A. Millona is Executive Director of the Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition (MIRA), the state's largest organization representing the foreign born, and co-chair of the National Partnership for New Americans, the lead national organization focusing on immigrant integration. She joined MIRA in 1999 and served as Director of Policy and Advocacy and as Deputy Director before becoming Executive Director in 2008, and she is now one of New England's most highly quoted immigration experts. Prior to MIRA, Ms. Millona directed the refugee resettlement program in Central Massachusetts. In her native Albania, she practiced civil and criminal law, serving on Tirana's District Court from 1989 – 1992, when she was the nation's youngest district judge ever appointed. Ms. Millona is also the co-chair of the Governor's Advisory Council for Refugees and Immigrants and serves on the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. She is the recipient of over a dozen major awards, including the prestigious 2009 USCIS Outstanding American by Choice Award, the 2010 Wainwright Bank Social Justice Award, and the 2011 and 2012 Powermeter Award, presented to the most influential people for Latinos in Massachusetts.



Patricia Sobalvarro, Executive Director, Agencia ALPHA - As director of the agency Alcanzando Logros Para Los Hispanos Ahora (Achieving Successes For Hispanics Today), ALPHA, Patricia Sobalvarro is responsible for carrying out the social service mission of her organization, which was founded in 2001 by two Christian immigrant women. ALPHA offers educational programs, referrals, translation, etc., as well as advocacy and political impact programs in defense of immigrant rights.



Gladys Vega, Executive Director, Chelsea Collaborative - Gladys Vega, Executive Director of the Chelsea Collaborative, joined the organization in 1990, two years after its inception as the Chelsea Human Services Collaborative. She took on increasing responsibility with each passing year, moving from receptionist to community organizer to Assistant Executive Director to becoming the Executive Director in 2006. Ms. Vega has worked as an organizer and an advocate to ensure that the Latino community has a role in determining the ways its needs and concerns are addressed. Ms. Vega believes that empowerment of the individual leads to empowerment of the community and that social action is the vehicle an empowered community can use to achieve its goals. She has played leadership roles in organizing for immigrants' rights, welfare rights, tenants' rights, open space and the environment, multicultural and anti-racism programs and in numerous grassroots campaigns. She is not only a successful community organizer, but also one of Chelsea's most prominent and important community leaders, receiving citywide, statewide and national accolades for her leadership. Gladys Vega was born in Puerto Rico and came to Chelsea with her family at the age of nine. Since that time, Gladys has made a lifelong commitment to the community in which she was raised. Being a mother of two has deepened her commitment to building a better future.

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Natasha Soolkin, Executive Director, Russian Community Association of Massachusetts and New American Center - Natasha Soolkin came to the U.S. from Moscow, Russia in 1990. She has 15 years of experience working with the refugee population, organizing educational seminars for diverse refugee populations, interpreting and translating for refugee clients and mainstream organizations, and designing and implementing various activities for children and families. Since 2002, she has been a Regional Director of the RCAM North Shore Office and the manager of the New American Center. Her responsibilities include coordination of the Massachusetts Preventative Health Program, Refugee School Impact Program, Employment Support Service Program, Refugee Youth Adjustment Services, provision of family support services (Post-Resettlement Community Services, Program to Enhance Elder Refugee Services and Community Support Program), and translation and interpreting services.



Paulo Pinto, Executive Director, Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS) - Paulo R. Pinto is the Executive Director of the Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers (MAPS). He has served the Portuguese-speaking community throughout his career of more than 25 years in the health and social service field. He began working at MAPS in January 1994, serving as Program Administrator for the agency's Disease Prevention and Education Program until late 1995, when he was promoted to the position of Deputy Executive Director. He served as the agency's second-in-command until April 3, 2000, when he became Acting Executive Director. He was appointed Executive Director by the MAPS Board of Directors on August 23, 2000. He is a member of the Governor's Council to Address Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault, the Jane Doe Inc. Board of Directors, the Community Public Health Board and the Community Health Advisory Council of Cambridge Health Alliance, and the Harvard Catalyst Community Advisory Board. He also is a Notary Public for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.



Karen Chen, Executive Director, Chinese Progressive Association - Chen immigrated to the U.S. at age 10, and first joined the CPA through its youth program. Her parents' experiences as low-wage workers in restaurant and garment industries inspired her social justice involvement and after college she became the worker rights organizer at CPA. In this role, she helped educate Chinese workers on their rights in the workplace and advocate on their behalf. Chen's previous roles also include work as a paralegal for the Asian outreach unit of Greater Boston Legal Services, and as tenant service coordinator for Castle Square Apartments, a 500-unit low-income housing complex at the edge of Chinatown and South End.

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Helena DaSilva Hughes, Executive Director, Immigrants' Assistance Center, Inc. - Executive Director, Helena DaSilva Hughes, was born in Madeira, Portugal, and immigrated to the United States at the age of 10 with her family. With a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and a minor in Paralegal Studies from Newbury College, she is also a graduate of SouthCoast Leadership Academy in 2009. Ms. Hughes is committed to researching immigrant needs and developing programs to enhance the community potential. She has a working knowledge of community issues and legislative processes, serving as translator and interpreter. Ms. Hughes has been selected several times by the Massachusetts Immigrant & Refugee Advocacy Coalition, to inform and educate Congress about issues pertaining to the immigrant population. Ms. Hughes serves on the following Boards: Workforce Investment Board, the Governor's Advisory Council on Immigrants and Refugees, Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy, the New Bedford Advisory Board of the Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA), New Bedford Economic Development Council, Greater New Bedford Vocational High School Advisory Board, the Adult Learning Education Advisory, Portuguese American Citizenship Project Board of Directors, co-founder of Our Sister School, the Portuguese American Women's Association, Leadership SouthCoast, Inc., SouthCoast Hospital Community Benefits Advisory Board, the Offshore Wind Task Force and New Bedford Regeneration Committee.



Damaris Frias-Batista, Executive Director & co-founder of Center For Assistance to Families (CAF), Centro de Apoyo Familiar (CAF) - Damaris Frias-Batista co-founded CAF. She is Executive director of CAF's Lawrence, MA office and oversees The Connectors, a national capacity building program for clergy serving Latino churches that prepares them to serve as bridge between their congregations and their communities. Mrs. Frias-Batista brings over 15 years of experience in the area of leadership development, management, and program development. She holds a BA in Psychology from University of Massachusetts at Boston and a MA in Mental Health with specialty in children, youths and families from Southern New Hampshire University. Mrs. Frias Batista has served at her local church as youth, children, and family minister director.



Gladys Ortiz, Domestic Violence Advocate, REACH Beyond Domestic Violence - Gladys Ortiz works with bilingual victims of domestic violence, bringing them to court appointments, providing translation, and access to service for victims.



Khalid Sadozai, President, Islamic Society of Greater Worcester - Khalid Sadozai is the President of the Islamic Society of Greater Worcester. Founded and established in 1978, the ISGW has been focal

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point of Islamic activities for the Muslim community. The Islamic Society of Greater Worcester (ISGW), an independent non-profit organization that is located in central Massachusetts in the city of Worcester. The ISGW is dedicated to satisfying spiritual, education and social needs of the Muslims including New Muslims.



Suzanne Lee, Community Activist - Suzanne Lee is a Chinatown resident former principal of the Josiah Quincy Elementary School in Chinatown. During her decade long tenure as the school's principal, the school was named one of the Best 100 Elementary Schools in Massachusetts. She founded and then served as the longtime chair of the Chinese Progressive Association and is also a founding member of the Massachusetts Asian American Educators Association. She has also served on the Massachusetts

Advisory Council on Bilingual Education and the English Language Learners Task Force for the Boston Public Schools. She worked in the Boston Public School system for over three decades. She ran twice unsuccessfully for the District 2 seat – which includes Chinatown, Bay Village, Fort Point, South Boston and parts of downtown and the South End on the Boston City Council.



Giles Li, Executive Director, Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center - Giles Li is a homegrown Bostonian and proud of it. The son of immigrants, Li's family frequented Chinatown and Li found his first job in the neighborhood. Today, he continues to work in the area by taking over for Elaine Ng as executive director of Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center this month. Ng

stepped down to take care of her son. Li first came to BCNC in 2006, right after the agency consolidated from six sites to two at 38 Ash Street and the Josiah Quincy Elementary School. He grew the new arts and enrichment program into a well-known one, and became director of programs in 2011, managing eight different programs serving childcare, after school, youth and adults.



Ronnie Millar, Executive Director, Irish International Immigrant Center - Millar is the Executive Director of the Irish International Immigrant Center (IIC), Boston. IIC assists immigrants from Ireland and from around the world as they integrate into American society. Along with partner organizations they aim to promote reconciliation in Ireland. IIC provides legal, wellness and education

services, advocate for systemic change, and facilitate cross-cultural community building. An immigrant from County Antrim, Northern Ireland, Ronnie has also served as Center Director at the Corrymeela Center for Peace-Building and Reconciliation in Northern Ireland. He came to community work after a 16-year career in the technology sector.



Anh Vu Sawyer, Executive Director, Southeast Asian Coalition - Anh Vu has developed new initiatives to assist immigrants and refugees such as the wellness and sewing program, and expanded the existing ESOL and Referral services. Besides focusing on program development, she has encouraged the development of arts and culture within the community.

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Soben Pin, Co-founder-Manager of KhmerPost USA - Soben Pin was born in Vietnam's TraVinh Province during the years of turmoil that followed the fall of South Vietnam. With her own family disrupted by the consequences of the war, Soben along with her father, one sister, one brother came to the United States in 2000. After several years in California, the family moved to Philadelphia where

Soben excelled in high school receiving a scholarship to and then graduating from Penn State. While in college, she embraced Khmer culture and became deeply involved in cultural and charitable causes in Philadelphia's large Cambodian community. It was there that she met and married Roger Pin. Together, they launched the KhmerPost USA of which Soben is the owner and business manager.



Carol J. Kenner, President, Friends of Kayany, Inc. - Carol J. Kenner is the president and a co-founder of Friends of Kayany, Inc., a US public charity that supports education for Syrian refugee children living in refugee camps in Lebanon. She believes education is the key to preventing more than 500,000 Syrian refugee children from becoming a "lost generation". She served as a judge for the U.S.

Bankruptcy Court for the District of Massachusetts for 18 years; for four of those years, she served as the Court's chief judge. She also served as a judge and chief judge of the First Circuit's Bankruptcy Appellate Panel. Judge Kenner was an adjunct professor at Suffolk University Law School for 5 years. After retiring from the bench, she served as a special assistant attorney general, as counsel to National Consumer Law Center and as a board member and executive committee member of Cape Abilities, a nonprofit serving developmentally disabled adults. She was a founding member of the Women's Bar Association and received its Lelia J. Robinson Award in 2015.



Veronica Serrato, Esq., Executive Director, Project Citizenship

Veronica is the executive director at Project Citizenship, a non-profit organization working to naturalize legal permanent residents in the Boston area. Prior to joining Project Citizenship, Veronica was the Senior Staff Attorney at the Volunteers Lawyers Project and was responsible for training and mentoring pro-bono attorneys in civil litigation, family law and guardianship law, from 2005 to 2014. She also served for over 5 years at the Wilmer Hale Legal Services Center of Harvard Law School as a Specialist Consultant on domestic violence cases. She also handled domestic violence issues at the Casa Myrna Vazquez and served as the Assistant District Attorney for the Middlesex and Framingham Districts. Her other work and volunteer activities are extensive. Veronica is the recipient of the Massachusetts Lawyers Weekly Top Women in Law Award, the Boston University School of Law Public Interest Attorney Award and the Boston University School of Law Victor G. Garo Public Service Award.

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Rakashi Khetarpal Chand, Vice President, United India Association of New England

Rakashi Khetarpal Chand is the grand-daughter of Hurbans Khetarpal, one of the first Indian Community Organizers and Activists in Boston. Rakashi is the current Vice President of the United India Association of New England, an organization founded by her grandfather and seven other like-minded Community Organizers in 1986, to promote Indian culture and assist Indian families and new immigrants residing in New England. Rakashi has served on the board of the United India Association of New England for 6 years, although she has been actively promoting Indian Culture and organizing Community Events through most of her life. Aside from organizing Community Events, Rakashi works at the Massachusetts Historical Society.



Mojdeh Rohani, Executive Director, Community Legal Services and Counseling Center

Mojdeh Rohani is the Executive Director at Community Legal Services and Counseling Center (CLSACC) in Cambridge, MA. Previously, she served as CLSACC's Associate Clinical Director for eight years. Mojdeh has worked extensively with survivors of torture, war trauma, gender-based violence, human trafficking, and other types of human rights violations since 2000.

She received her MSW from Boston University and earned a B.A. in Psychology through the Baha'i Institute for Higher Education in Iran. She co-authored a book in 2004 on social work theory and practice with refugee and immigrant youth in the United States. Mojdeh has been Adjunct Faculty at Boston University School of Social Work and most recently served as the Co-Director of the BRIDGE (Building Refugee and Immigrant Degrees for Graduate Education) Program for 8 years.

She served as a board member for the Tahirih Peace Institute (an immigrant women's social and economic development project), and The African House (a mutual aid organization whose primary mission is to help acculturate all French-speaking people from Africa, with special attention to the newcomers' social, economic, and cultural life in the United States). Mojdeh has presented locally, nationally, and internationally on topics related to refugee mental health, treatment of torture, U.S. asylum policies, and human rights. Prior to coming to the United States in 1995, she worked as a music therapist and a music teacher.

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Antonio Amaya, Executive Director, La Comunidad, INC



Antonio Amaya is the Executive Director at La Comunidad, Inc, a non-profit immigrant rights organization in Everett. La Comunidad's works for the full integration of Latino immigrants into the mainstream society of Everett (and surrounding cities of Chelsea, Revere, East Boston, Somerville, Lynn and Malden) offering citizenship training, adult education, basic social services, and active civic engagement.

Brooke Mead, Executive Director, Berkshire Immigrant Center



Brooke Mead is the Executive Director at the Berkshire Immigrant Center (BIC) in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, winner of Massachusetts Non-Profit Network’s “Excellence by a Small Non-Profit” Award in 2018. BIC offers comprehensive services for around 700 individuals annually from more than 70 countries to promote civic engagement, facilitate cultural integration, and assist clients with immigration law. Additionally, BIC engages and educates 300-500 community members through outreach workshops and presentations. Brooke began her career at the Center in September of 2002 working for many years as its Program Manager. In addition to directorial work, Brooke manages a caseload of clients and provides workshops on immigration law. A Williamstown, MA native, she credits various time spent living abroad with her passion to help those who have come to reside in the U.S. temporarily or permanently. Before joining BIC Brooke taught Spanish. She holds her master’s degree in Spanish from Middlebury College and has lived in Venezuela and Mexico.



Jean Marc Jean-Baptiste

Executive Director, Haitian American Public Health Initiatives

Jean Marc Jean-Baptiste is executive director of the Haitian American Public Health Initiatives (HAPHI), a multi-service organization that serves the Haitian community in Boston in a holistic way. Under his leadership, programs at HAPHI have been expanded to include more services for youth to build their academic skills and foster their ability to combat peer pressure. The agency's service base has expanded to include ESL classes, case management services for refugees, Gardening through Refugee Organizations (GRO), and mental health.

In addition, HAPHI serves as the fiscal agent for various projects of the Mutual Assistance Association Coalition, a coalition of 11 agencies meeting to address the needs of the refugee and immigrant community.

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Grace Corporan, Site Director, Families and Youth Initiative/ PATCH

Grace Corporan is the site director of the Families and Youth Initiative/ PATCH, a non-profit family centered service agency in Lawrence. PATCH/ FYI mission is to combine and integrate community; agencies and family resources; to promote policy change to support creative nurturing services for strengthening families and communities in Lawrence and other cities in the Merrimack Valley.

Under her leadership as a site director, she has coordinated various seminars to encourage parents to enroll students in after school programs; for undocumented residents in Lawrence to understand their rights and other topics related to landlord and tenant rights.

She has served as a board member for Casa Dominicana. Ms. Corporan is also a native from the Dominican Republic and has lived in Puerto Rico. As an immigrant herself, she brings her cultural experience, expertise as a community organizer and as a service provider to understand the needs of the immigrant community in Lawrence.



Lisette Le (Lê Hồ Hồng Tước), Executive Director, VietAID

Lisette has over 10 years’ experience in community organizing, civic engagement and advocacy on working on local, city and state levels. Born in Phan Rang, Vietnam, Lisette immigrated to the United States in 1990 through the H.O program. Growing up in Ohio as a first-generation Vietnamese American, she experienced firsthand the struggles that immigrants and low-income communities faced. She is committed to building a vibrant, civically engaged Vietnamese community and training young people to become leaders in the community.



Valeria do Vale, Lead Coordinator, Student Immigrant Movement (SIM)

The Student Immigrant Movement is a MA-based statewide immigrant youth-led organization. SIM organizes youth, ages 13-30, and provide political education, leadership training, protection, guidance, mentorship, and safe healing spaces. Ms. Do Vale is responsible for guiding the work

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of the staff, supporting strategic and structural development, and developing partnerships with other groups and organizations.