



# Carolyn Chou

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Asian American Organizing: Lessons in Solidarity &  
Movement Building



## Mission

The Asian American Resource Workshop (AARW) is a political home for pan-Asian communities in Greater Boston. We are a member-led organization committed to building grassroots power through political education, creative expression, and issue-based and neighborhood organizing.

# AARW's Core Values

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01

**Nourishment**

02

**Imagination**

03

**Commitment**

04

**Adaptation**

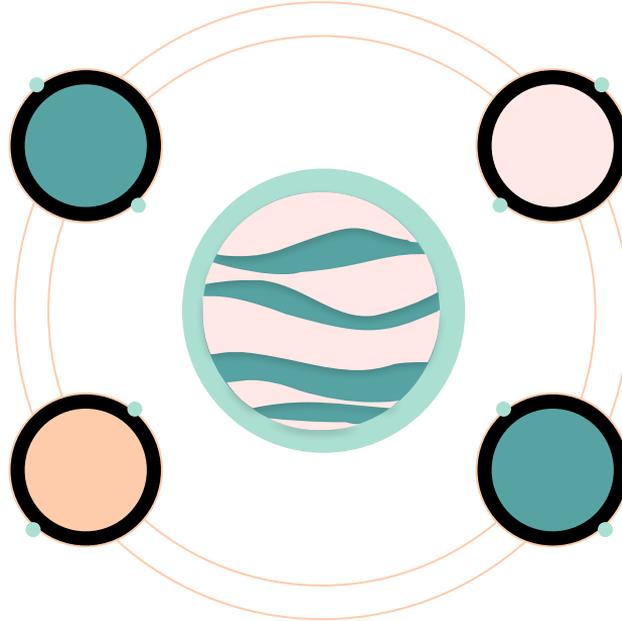
# ANTI-DISPLACEMENT FRAMEWORK

## HOUSING

Tenant organizing,  
development without  
displacement, housing  
justice policies

## IMMIGRATION

Southeast Asian  
deportation, immigrant  
storytelling,  
undocumented Asian  
American communities

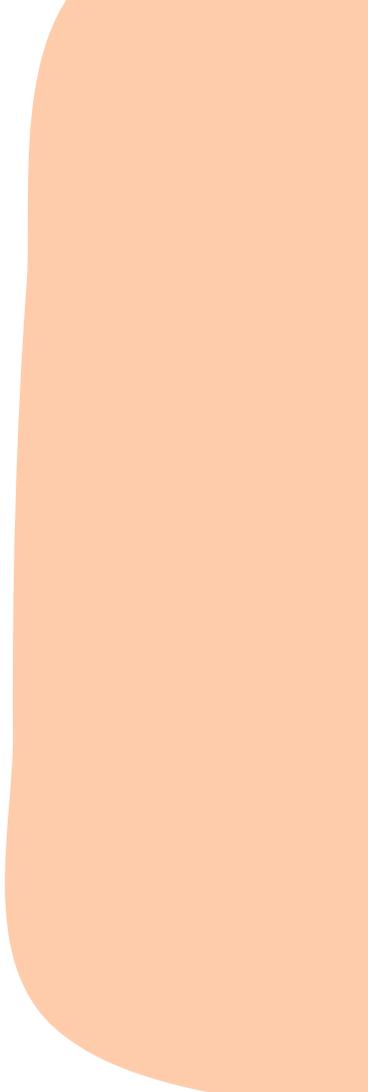


## CRIMINALIZATION

Reducing and  
defunding police &  
prisons, community  
safety, surveillance  
(particularly in Muslim  
communities)

## ENVIRONMENT

Massachusetts Green  
New Deal policies,  
environmental justice



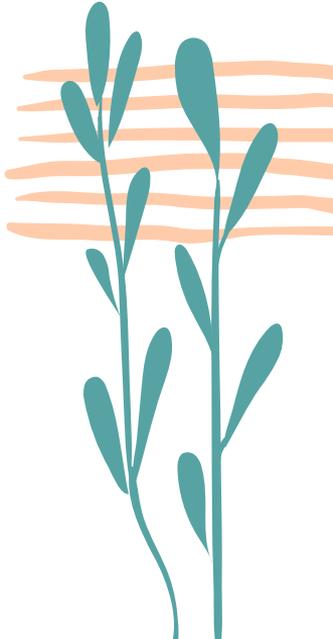
# What is Asian America?



**Model  
Minority**

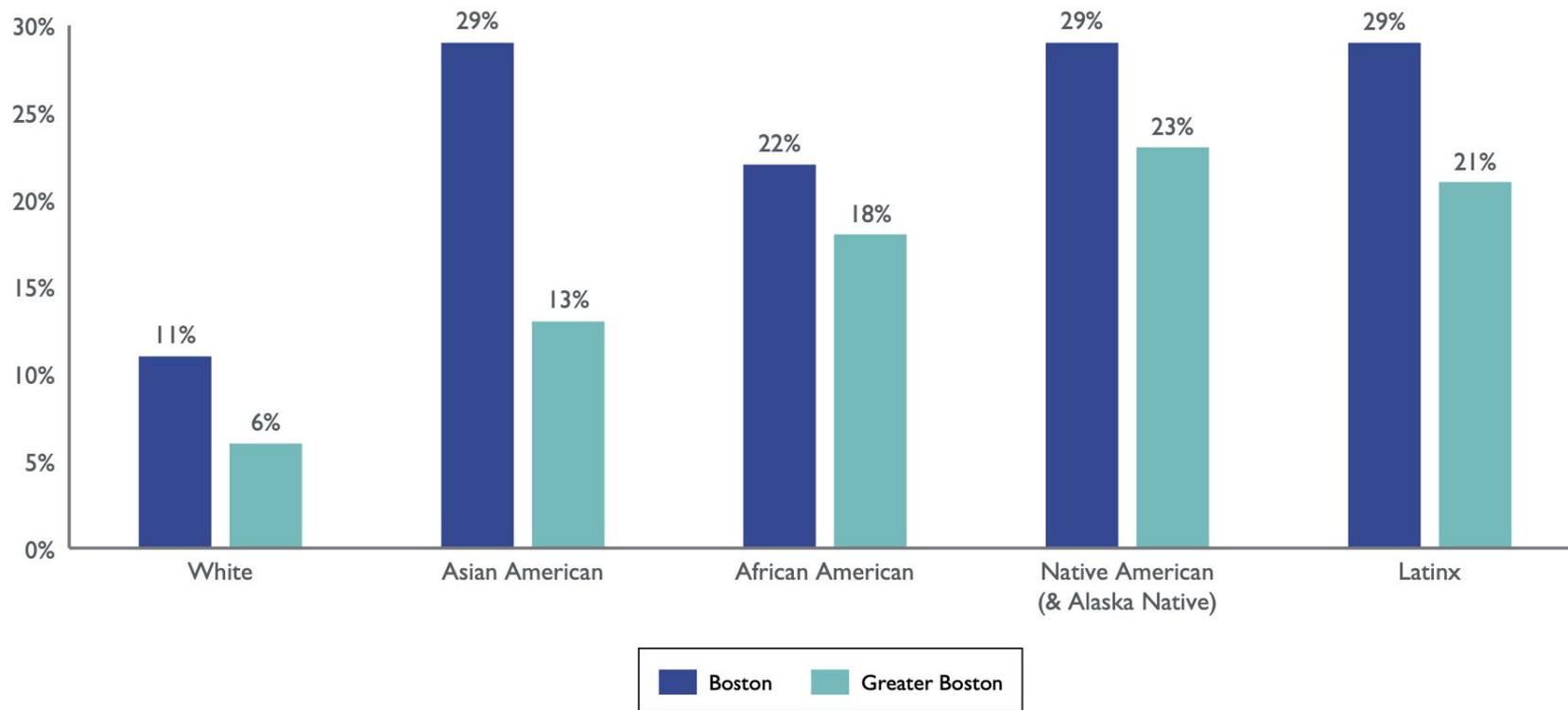
**Perpetual  
Foreigner**

How Asian Americans  
are seen



### **Figure 13: Asian poverty is 2x White poverty in Greater Boston and 3x White poverty in Boston.**

Poverty rates by race/ethnicity: Boston vs. Greater Boston. 2019.

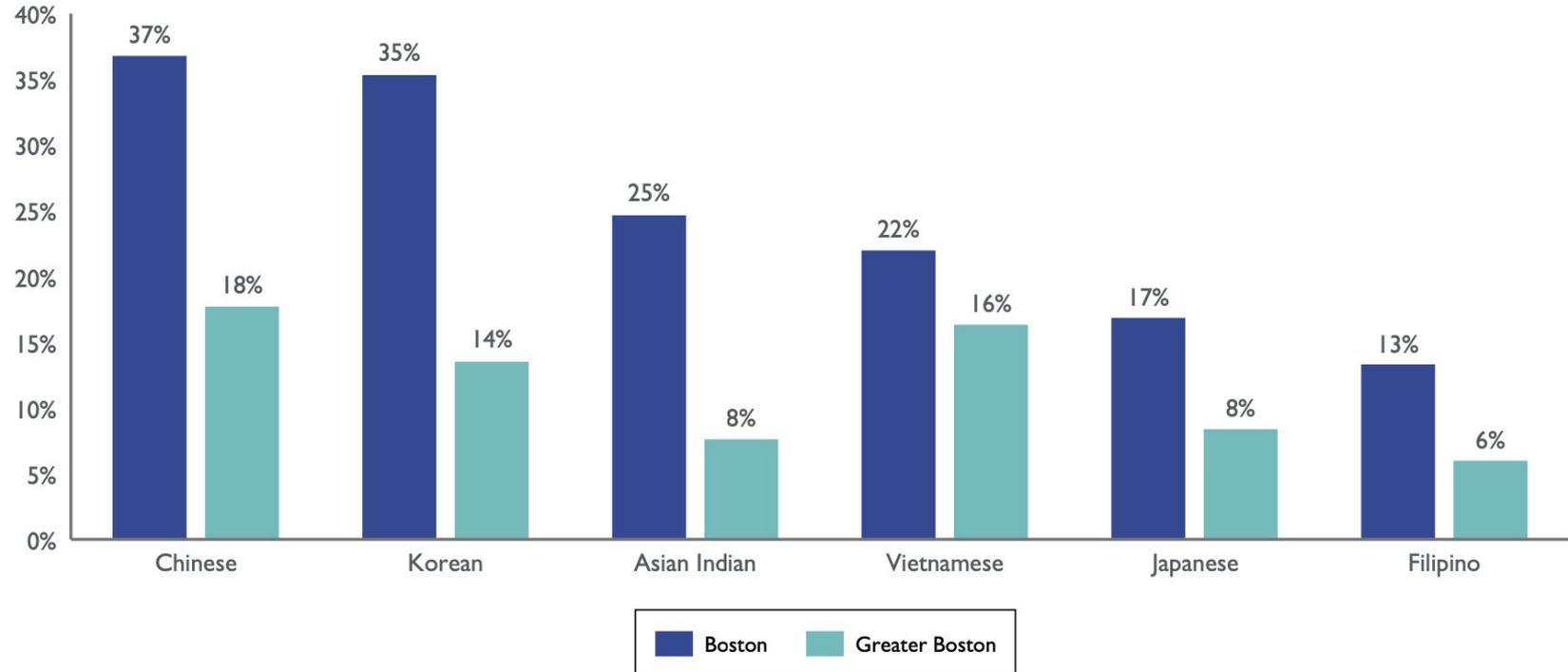


Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

Note: All racial groups do not include individuals who identify as Latinx or multiracial. Latinx can be of any race.

**Figure 14: Asian poverty varies greatly by nationality.**

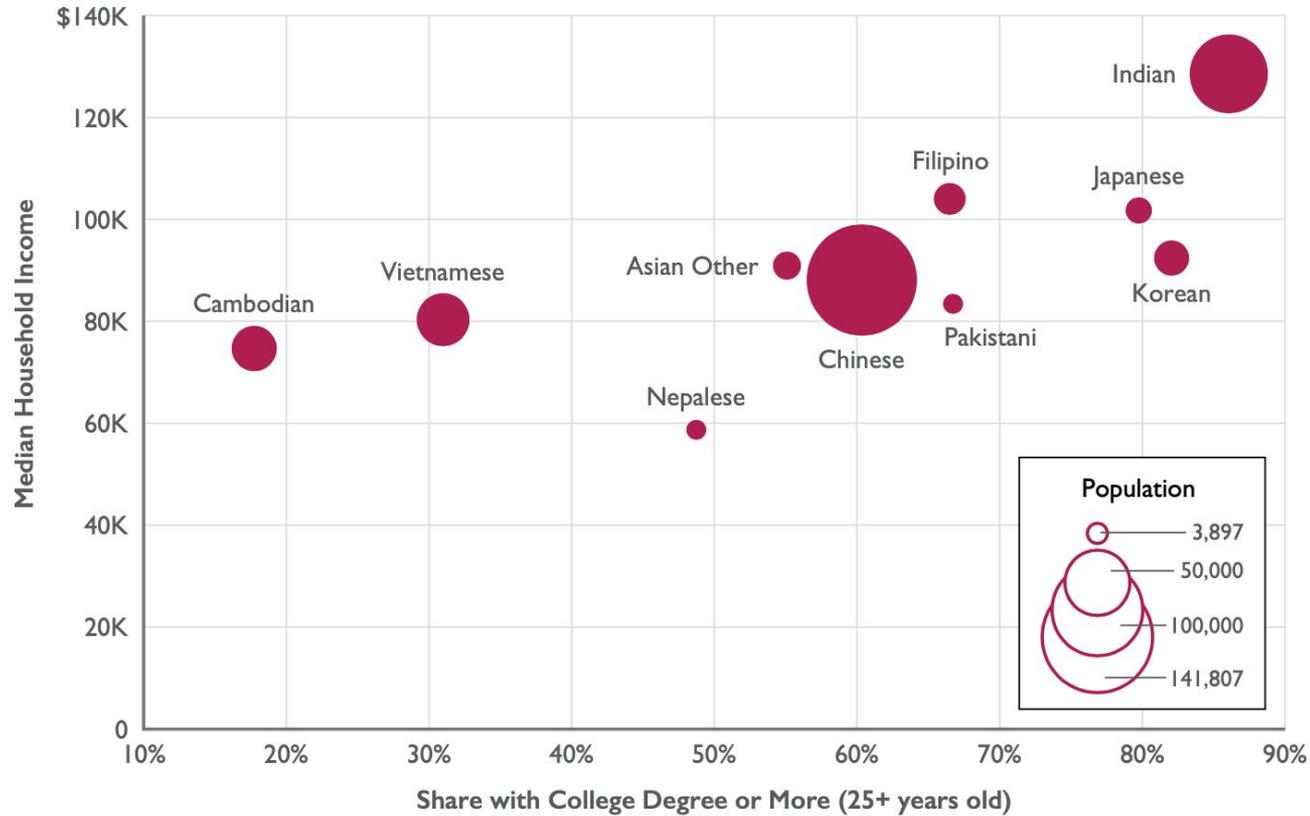
Poverty rates by nationality: Boston vs. Greater Boston. 2019.



Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey 5-year Estimates.

**Figure 12: Income and educational attainment vary greatly across AAPI communities.**

Top 10 countries of ancestry for Asian Americans in Greater Boston. 2018.

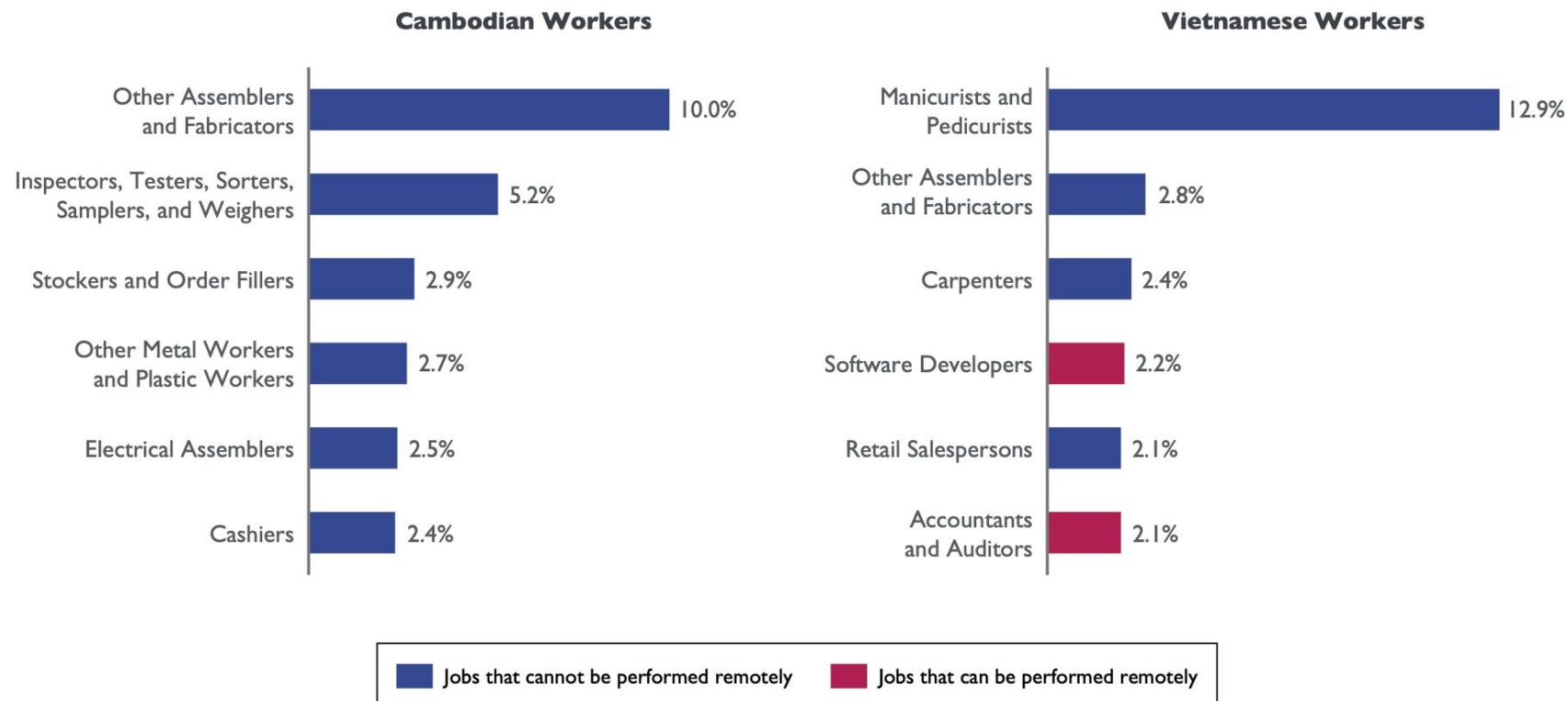


Source: 2014-2018 American Community Survey

Note: Bubble sizes represent population count.

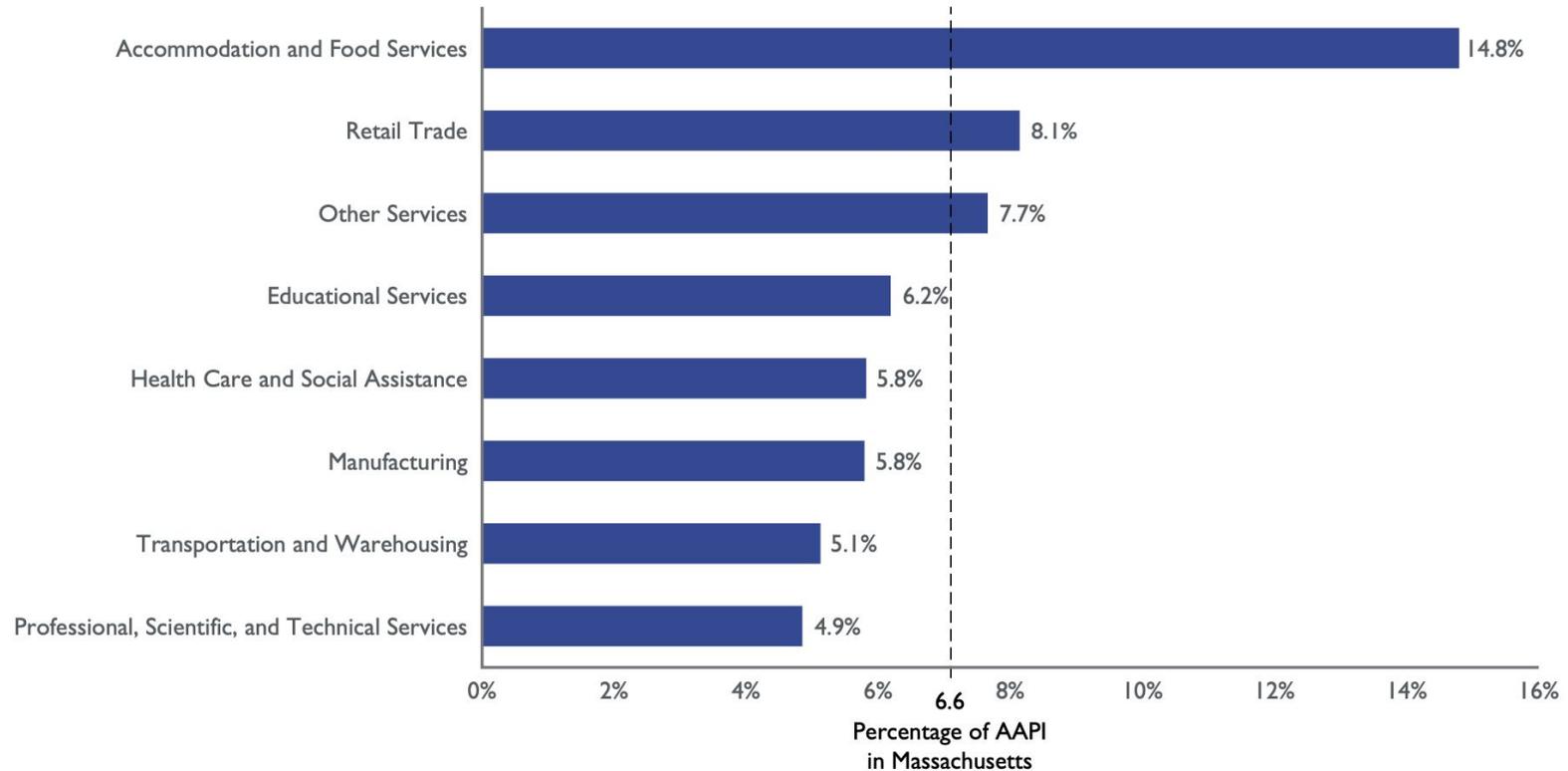
**Figure 11: AAPI work in a range of occupations, many of which cannot be performed from home.**

Occupational make-up of workers by ancestry. MA. 2019.



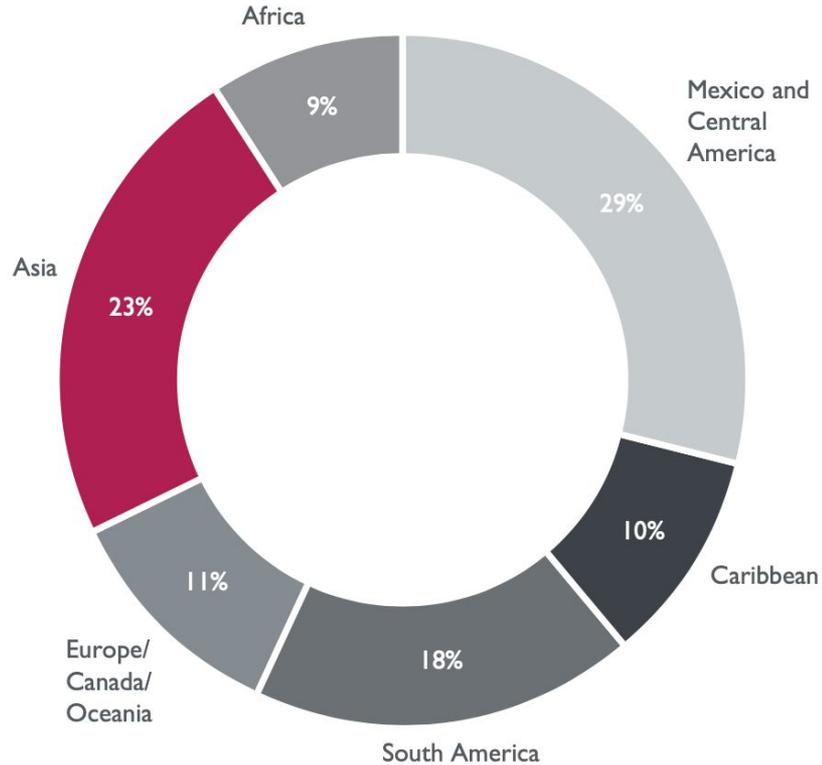
**Figure 9: Asian entrepreneurs are more likely to be in hard-hit industries that have closed at high rates.**

Share of MA entrepreneurs that are AAPI by sector, 2019.

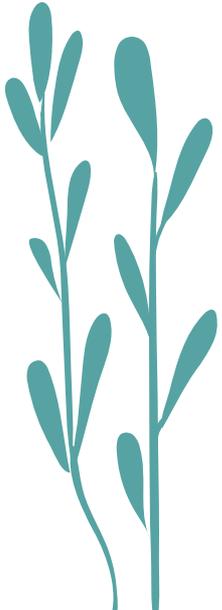


Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Sample

**Figure 6: Almost 1/4 of unauthorized immigrants in Massachusetts are Asian.**



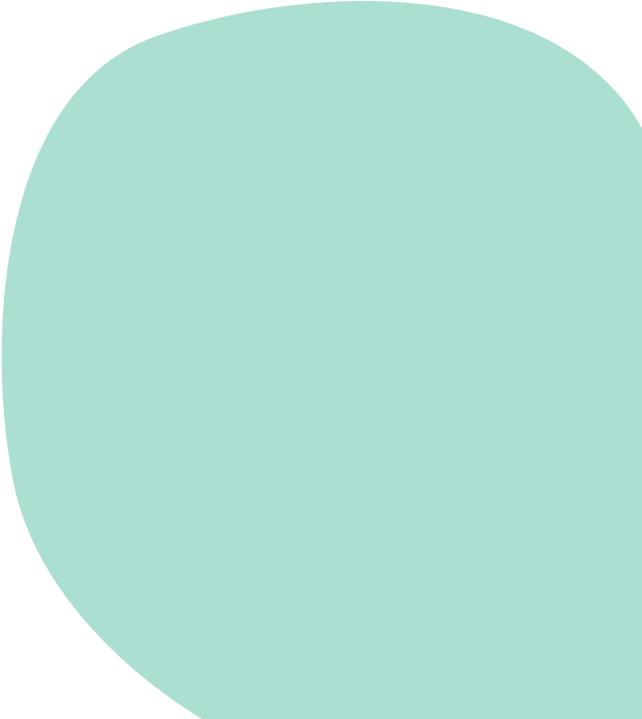
Source: Migration Policy Institute, *Profile of Unauthorized Population: Massachusetts, 2019*





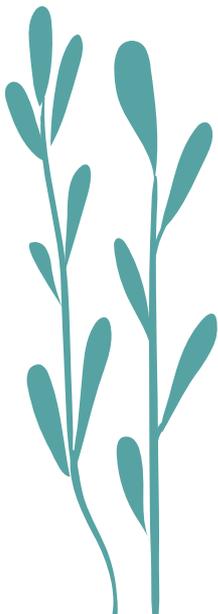
# Pan-Asian

How do we build multiethnic political power given this reality?





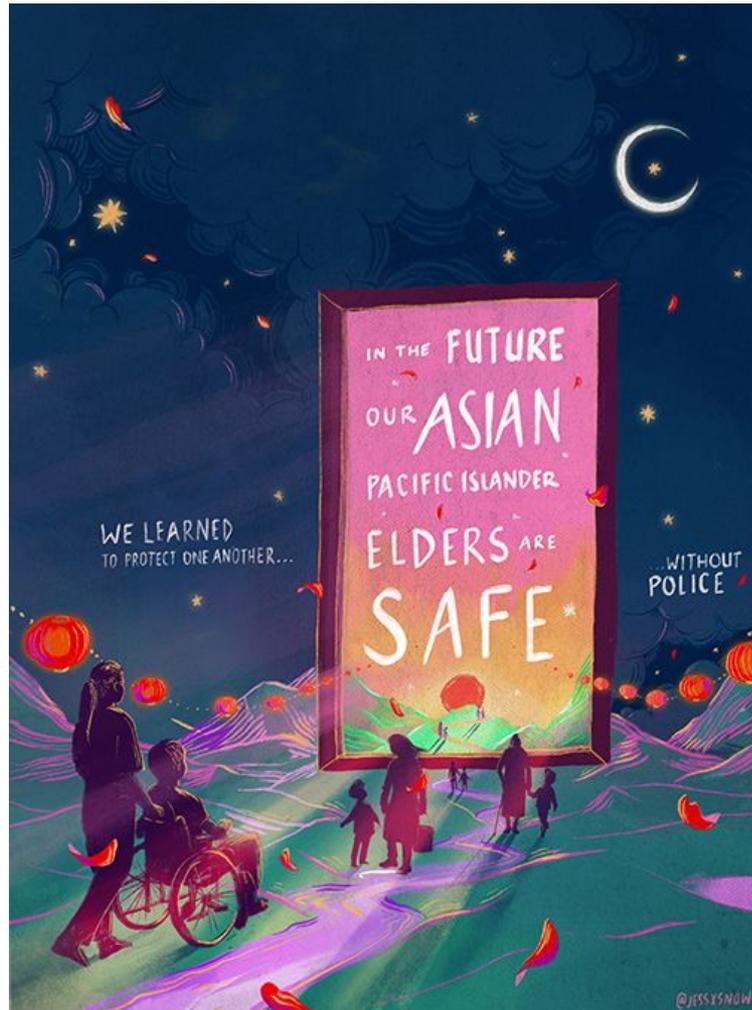
# Deportation Defense Work





**Development  
without  
displacement**





**How we've  
understood  
this moment**

Jess X. Snow



# Key Lessons

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**01**

## **Relationships**

Take time but are critical to the work



**02**

## **Building Power**

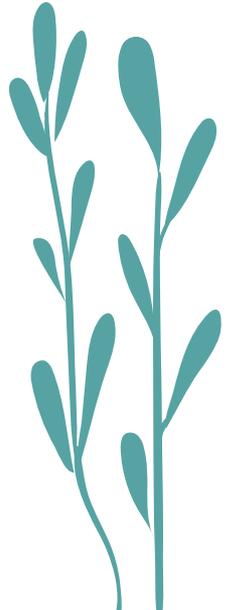
We need to invest in building grassroots people power

**03**

## **Margins -> Center**

Working with those marginalized within a community creates clarity





**Thank you**

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