

## MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

### PROCLAMATION NO. 11

Proclaiming May 2025 as Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Multnomah County, Oregon.

#### **Multnomah County Finds:**

1. The month of May is nationally recognized as a time to celebrate the contributions of Asians, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. The significance of this month is to celebrate cultural diversity, support local cultural events, and emphasize the importance of indigenous and ethnic communities in Multnomah County.
2. For over 200 years, Asian and Pacific Islander communities have lived and worked in Oregon, contributing to the State's rich history, economy, and culture. As part of the earliest outsiders to Oregon, Native Hawaiians crossed the Pacific Ocean to establish fur trading posts along the Oregon Trail. In the late 1800s and early 1900s, South Asians migrated to towns up and down the West Coast, working in lumber and agriculture. In 1851, Portland incorporated the first Chinatown founded by Cantonese immigrants, the second largest in the country at that time. By 1900, more than half of Japanese residents in Oregon lived in Japantown. Additionally, there are numerous Asian and Pacific Islander communities that migrated to Oregon and contributed to the vibrancy of our communities. Today, Asian and Pacific Islander communities continue to grow and are the largest growing populations in Oregon.
3. The history of Asian and Pacific Islanders in Oregon is one of survival and resilience in the face of violence, discrimination, and civil rights violations. Despite their contributions to Oregon, Native Hawaiians in Oregon were prohibited from voting, acquiring land, or testifying against white people in Oregon courts. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, fueling race-based violence by banning immigrant labor. In 1910, White laborers led an anti-Asian attack on South Asian laborers in the St. Johns neighborhood. With the backing of the Multnomah County District Attorney's Office, the South Asian laborers fought back and demanded the prosecution of these attacks. During World War II, Oregonians of Japanese descent were forcibly relocated to internment camps and disposed of their businesses and land. Upon their return, they discovered their land and businesses were gone, taken by white people. Systemic injustices like these continue to impact Asian and Pacific Islanders today through ongoing criminalization of immigrants, erasure in data sets used for decision making, and discriminatory policies.
4. Immigration has always been a life-affecting issue for Asian and Pacific Islander communities. Multnomah County recognizes the importance of Asian and Pacific

Islander immigrants in Oregon who are impacted by the current political climate and the systemic violence waged on these communities. Immigrants, habitual residents, and qualified non-citizens under the Compact of Free Association are welcomed as valued members of our society. Multnomah County is committed to actively use County systems of care to provide our residents the health and safety they deserve.

5. Multnomah County agrees that the acronyms “AANHPI” and “AAPI” are outdated, and that people from this racial group should be identified individually or as distinct groups. While the term conceptually connects people together of a similar geography, it effaces significant differences in culture, histories, and political relations with the United States. The disaggregation of these racial groups highlights how our society’s understanding of race continues to grow and change. Multnomah County is committed to improve our understanding of not just race, but also colonization, indigeneity, sovereignty, immigration, and ethnicity, and how these forces impact our Asian and Pacific Islander constituents.
6. The innovation and contributions of our Asian and Pacific Islander employees is essential to successful program outcomes and improving the health and well being of our communities. Our agency is stronger because of the knowledge, skills, and abilities of our Asian and Pacific Islander employees, who bring their expertise and cultural wisdom into the work they do to serve their communities and all of Multnomah County. Supporting Asian and Pacific Islander employees and recognizing their excellence at work is essential to fulfilling Multnomah County’s commitments to diversity and equity.
7. Multnomah County is committed to learning from and working with Asian and Pacific Islander partners and community organizations to eliminate disparities. Through these partnerships over the last decade, we’ve been able to remove barriers to success, increase social inclusion, grow economic opportunity, advance educational equity, and protect civil rights, ensure language and healthcare access, preserve indigenous heritage, disaggregate data, and support meaningful civic engagement.

**Multnomah County Proclaims:**

The month of May 2025 is Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in Multnomah County, Oregon. Multnomah County encourages all residents to observe this month, to learn more about Asian and Pacific Islander communities, and to continue working towards racial equity and social justice.

**SIGNED this 7th day of May, 2025.**

REVIEWED:  
JENNY M. MADKOUR, COUNTY ATTORNEY  
FOR MULTNOMAH COUNTY, OREGON

By: 

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Jenny M. Madkour, County Attorney

**SUBMITTED BY:** District 4 Commissioner Vince Jones-Dixon and District 3  
Commissioner Julia Brim-Edwards