CISC Annual Report

Chinese Information and Service Center



FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



2020 demonstrated in profound ways the vital services CISC and other community-based organizations provide. Each month brought challenges that required adaptation and innovation to respond to community needs and protect the health of our staff and the people we serve. Our team transitioned to working remotely and continued to serve families, youth, and older adults who count on us as part of their support network for health, education, financial security, and other social services. We also scheduled in person

appointments for urgent needs, particularly for seniors who were unable to navigate digital tools and online systems.

In this annual report, we highlight many of the ways we strived to maintain the well-being of thousands of community members in our region. We conducted wellness checks among older adults and families and educated them on ways to stay safe. We created interactive bilingual early learning and caregiver/parent education videos and sent materials to support student learning at home. Each week, we responded to hundreds of requests for assistance regarding unemployment benefits, healthcare insurance, and other essential needs.

The pandemic magnified the impact of inequities, poverty, and systemic racism and showed the importance of centering our collective response on protecting the most vulnerable through equitable and anti-racist policies. CISC advocated for and joined efforts to advance racial equity and social justice in regards to the pandemics of racism and COVID-19.

CISC is thankful for the decades of support for our mission, which enabled us to build a team who are working hard to support everyone in our care during the pandemic. We are appreciative of your generosity and grants from numerous foundations. I am immensely grateful to our team, who demonstrated dedication and resilience, for all their efforts to make a positive impact during these challenging times.

On behalf of our team and board of directors, thank you for your continued support of CISC. Take good care and stay healthy.

MICHAEL ITTI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

OUR IMPACT

12,200

wellness phone calls made to keep seniors safe and healthy during COVID-19 **262**

messages distributed to inform the community about public health guidance and COVID-19 response resources

10,032

unemployment applications,
claims, and questions
addressed by our Community
Living Connections &
Family Resource
Ctr teams

74

hate & bias incidents were reported to CISC in 2020 since we joined the Coalition Against Hate & Bias 211

virtual classes to promote the health and social wellbeing of seniors by the Sunshine Garden Senior Center 1,564

children improved their skills and readiness for kindergarten through our early learning programs

6,240

questions answered to help seniors and persons with disabilities access affordable healthcare 41

immigrants applied to reach their dreams of becoming naturalized U.S. citizens with our assistance 471

videos produced by our early learning programs to support the development and growth of young children

HIGHLIGHTS



RAPID RESPONSE TEAM

At the beginning of the pandemic, announcements about public health directives and emergency assistance programs were made daily and often only in English—meaning our immigrant communities would experience inequitable access to vital information and resources. Recognizing the need, we formed a Rapid Response Team in mid-March to ensure translated information was communicated to the community. The amount of information being shared by government and community-based organizations continued throughout the year, particularly in response to essential needs, educational resources, rental assistance, and more. The team has shared 262 announcements via our programs and social media platforms to ensure equitable access to information and resources.

SUPPORTING SENIORS & CAREGIVERS

The pandemic created challenges for older adults and their caregivers to access essential needs and maintain quality of life. Our team members, who support thousands of seniors in King County, began regularly checking in on the wellbeing of our seniors and providing information about how to protect themselves from coronavirus exposure. We also assessed their need for food, medicine, and other essentials and connected them to direct services from CISC and other resources. We utilized funding from King County's Veterans, Seniors and Human Services Levy to set up 400 home grocery deliveries of fresh fruits, vegetables, and proteins and purchased exercise equipment to help seniors and their caregivers who were socially distancing at home.



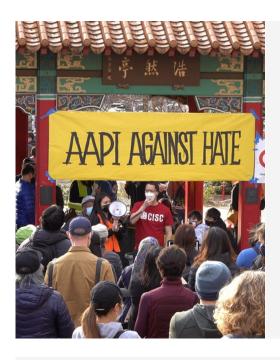


WORKING TOGETHER IN CHINATOWN ID

In the early months of the pandemic, we convened regular weekly meetings with our partners who serve the Chinatown International District to coordinate our social services, medical, and outreach resources to maintain the health and safety of the community. When we learned that a staff person employed in a building housing 100 seniors tested positive for COVID-19, we pushed the building management to sanitize the common areas and consulted with King County Public Health to provide vital information to residents. New services were set up to ensure access to health care, COVID-19 testing, food and other essential needs, small business support, and virtual social services. The International Examiner recognized Chinatown ID organizations with their Community Voice Award for our collective response.

Mission Statement: We support immigrants and their families by creating opportunities for them to succeed, while honoring their heritage.

HIGHLIGHTS



FIGHTING HATE AND BIAS

When anti-Asian racism, hate, and xenophobia increased in early 2020, we joined in efforts to denounce those actions and support the community. We also recognized that the rise in hate and bias incidents was not new or unique to the Asian community and affected all communities of color and other marginalized communities. By mid-2020, we joined the newly formed Coalition Against Hate & Bias, which is supported by the King County Office of Equity and Social Justice. The Coalition is a community-led initiative to address hate and bias incidents by strengthening and networking communities that experience racist and bigoted treatment and all forms of oppression. We assembled a team of bilingual staff who speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian, Vietnamese, and Spanish to enable community members to report incidents of hate and bias and receive information, referral, and support. The data we have collected is used to raise awareness with public officials and develop strategies to address areas of concern. Through June 2021, we have received more than 200 reports from community members.

MAINTAINING QUALITY OF LIFE

Each year, our team of information and assistance specialists ensures low-income seniors and community members are able to access public benefits that support health care, home energy, cash and food assistance, and more. Due to social distancing guidelines, we provided services using technology and set up our large classroom space for in-person appointments for urgent needs. With the rapid loss of jobs, particularly in the hard-hit restaurant and service sector, we received a tremendous number of requests for help to submit new unemployment applications and weekly claim filings. With unemployment offices closed and the phone lines jammed, our community members who are limited English proficient and unfamiliar with the online application process turned to CISC. We added evening and weekend hours to address the increasing urgency. In 2020, we responded to more than 10,000 new and returning requests for assistance regarding unemployment benefits.





PARTICIPATION IN THE CENSUS

Historically, immigrant and limited English speaking populations have been undercounted in the once a decade census. Undercounting communities has a tremendous impact on determining public funding and political representation. Amidst a challenging year and reliance on online completion, CISC launched efforts to support a complete count of our clients and their family members. In partnership with the State of Washington and Seattle Foundation, we launched a series of videos in Cantonese, Mandarin, and Russian languages; went on Russian and Chinese language radio shows; created in language phone helplines; and ran ads in ethnic media to raise awareness and encourage participation in the 2020 Census.

HIGHLIGHTS







PREPARATION FOR KINDERGARTEN

Our partnership with and support from Best Starts for Kids, United Way, DCYF, and Seattle Preschool Program enabled our team of Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese staff to continue our efforts to develop the cognitive, social, emotional, and leadership skills of young children. Our early learning specialists worked virtually with families to assess progress and needs and our Bilingual Preschool at Yesler Community Center provided instruction in the classroom and online. Our teachers sent curriculum and hands-on materials to students to support learning at home.

Our Kaleidoscope Play & Learn (KPL) program produced 300 circle time and caregiving learning videos in more than seven languages as well as held monthly KPL Live Zoom sessions in Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese. We also created the CISC Early Learning Education Group to share early learning resources to our families. KPL provides parents and caregivers resources to engage their children in fun activities as well as stay connected to community resources. To facilitate social interaction, our weekly KPL Live programming featured songs, nursery rhymes, kindergarten readiness skills, and more. KPL is made possible through our collaboration with King County Library System and Seattle Public Library.

HEALTHCARE ACCESS DURING COVID

Access to quality and affordable healthcare is essential to health and wellbeing. CISC's Healthcare Access Team has been a longtime partner in the Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors program. To help community members understand the complexities of programs like Medicare and Medicaid, we conducted 10 virtual sessions between December and February. We invited a Univ. of Washington clinical instructor to provide information about COVID-19 and the various vaccines. We also referred eligible clients to our Vaccination Task Force members to help them schedule an appointment.





VACCINE ACCESS AND EQUITY

CISC joined efforts with community leaders and public officials to ensure equitable access to vaccines by bridging unique language and cultural needs and the digital divide. We worked closely with Seattle Housing Authority, King County Housing Authority, and Aging and Disability Services to ensure seniors who live in affordable housing and homebound seniors were able to access the vaccine. In addition, we joined a collective of community leaders led by Trang Tu to improve access to the City of Seattle's mass vaccination sites, particularly the Lumen Field site. The advocacy efforts and coordination with City leaders resulted in operational changes to improve language access, wayfinding, customer service, transportation connections, and diversity of volunteers and staff.

In January 2021, we formed a Vaccination Task Force to inform communities about the vaccine, schedule appointments, and assist with vaccinations of seniors onsite. Our efforts resulted in more than 650 appointments scheduled by our team. We also provide logistics and interpretation assistance onsite 26 times resulting in 2,350 vaccine doses completed by fire department and emergency medical staff through the spring of 2021.

In May 2021, the City of Seattle's Office of Immigrant and Refugee Affairs partnered with CISC to launch in-language COVID-19 Vaccine Community Helplines to support King County residents, who speak Cantonese, Mandarin, and Vietnamese, who need help securing a vaccine appointment.

COMMITMENTS

Anti-Racism

In mid-2020, CISC embarked on a journey to become an anti-racist organization following the murder of George Floyd. On this path, we believe centering our work around dismantling racism that impacts Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) is critical so each person can achieve their full potential and goals. Our efforts involved an internal committee of staff representing the diversity of our agency and regular meetings each month with the guidance of Bulle Consulting and DSK Culturally Responsive Educational Services. This committee co-created trainings geared toward our staff of immigrants to bring understanding of how systemic racism continues to harm BIPOC communities.

HealthierHere

CISC continued its partnership in 2020 with HealthierHere, which is working in new ways to improve the health and well-being of King County residents. Resources from HealthierHere supported our efforts to respond to COVID-19, address social determinants of health, and implement system transformation, including:

- Convening of community-based organizations serving the Chinatown International District to respond to the pandemic.
- Participation in trainings with the Nonprofit Finance Fund to strengthen our financial systems and develop better information sharing and collaboration through the Community Information Exchange.
- Efforts to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion and journey toward becoming an anti-racist organization.
- Survey of clients and community members to engage them in a Consumer Voice
 Listening Project to learn how Chinese Americans access health care and ways to
 improve the system.
- Raising awareness of mental health and providing mental health first aid trainings for CISC staff through International Community Health Services.

FINANCE REPORT

Revenue

Government grants and contracts	7,538,636
Contributions & special events	204,633
Foundation and business grants	439,906
In-kind contributions	7,664
Other income	97,434
Total Revenue	\$8.288.273

Expenses

Program services:

Elderly	4,306,679
Family and youth	2,641,755
Supporting services:	
Management and general	819,213

Management and general 819,213
Fundraising 64,926

Total Expenses \$7,832,573

117

Staff who speak Cantonese, Mandarin, Russian, Vietnamese, Spanish, English and other languages 16

Programs serving families, youth, and older adults throughout King County 483

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