

# Regional Immigrant Entrepreneur Storytelling Project

*Elevating the Stories and Presence of Asian Immigrant Entrepreneurs across the Region*

**Adaptation**  
**Community**  
**Identity**





# Who is MAPC?

The Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) is the regional planning agency serving the people who live and work in the 101 cities and towns of Metropolitan Boston.

We work toward sound municipal management, sustainable land use, protection of natural resources, efficient and affordable transportation, a diverse housing stock, public safety, economic development, clean energy, healthy communities, an informed public, and equity and opportunity among people of all backgrounds.

As a regional planning agency MAPC is committed to equity in the planning process of the entire region and the projects that happen on the ground in our 101 towns.

Equity for us means focusing resources underserved or marginalized groups to make improvements in the overall system.

# Project Partners

Asian Community Development Corporation

Boston Chinatown Neighborhood Center

Chinatown Main Street

Quincy Asian Resources, Inc.

Daphne Xu, filmmaker

中小企業經營者



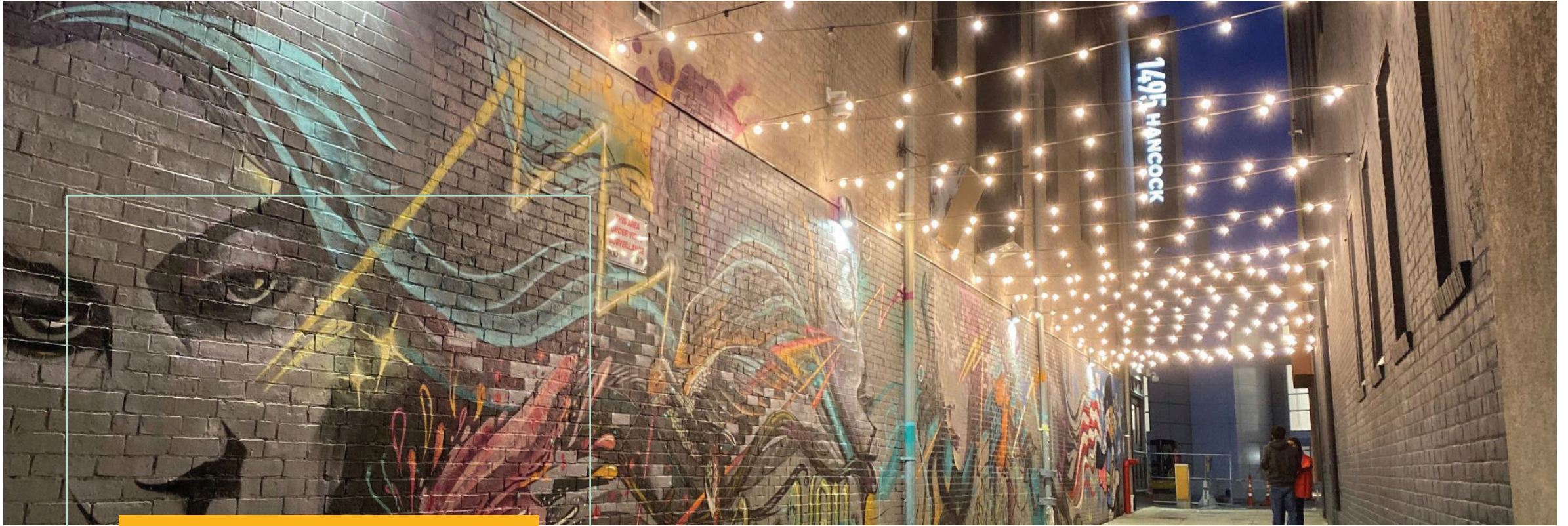


# History of Project

Quincy Small Business Plan in Early 2020 and outreach to Asian small business community in October 2019

Coordinated with Quincy Asian Resources, Inc. and other community leaders

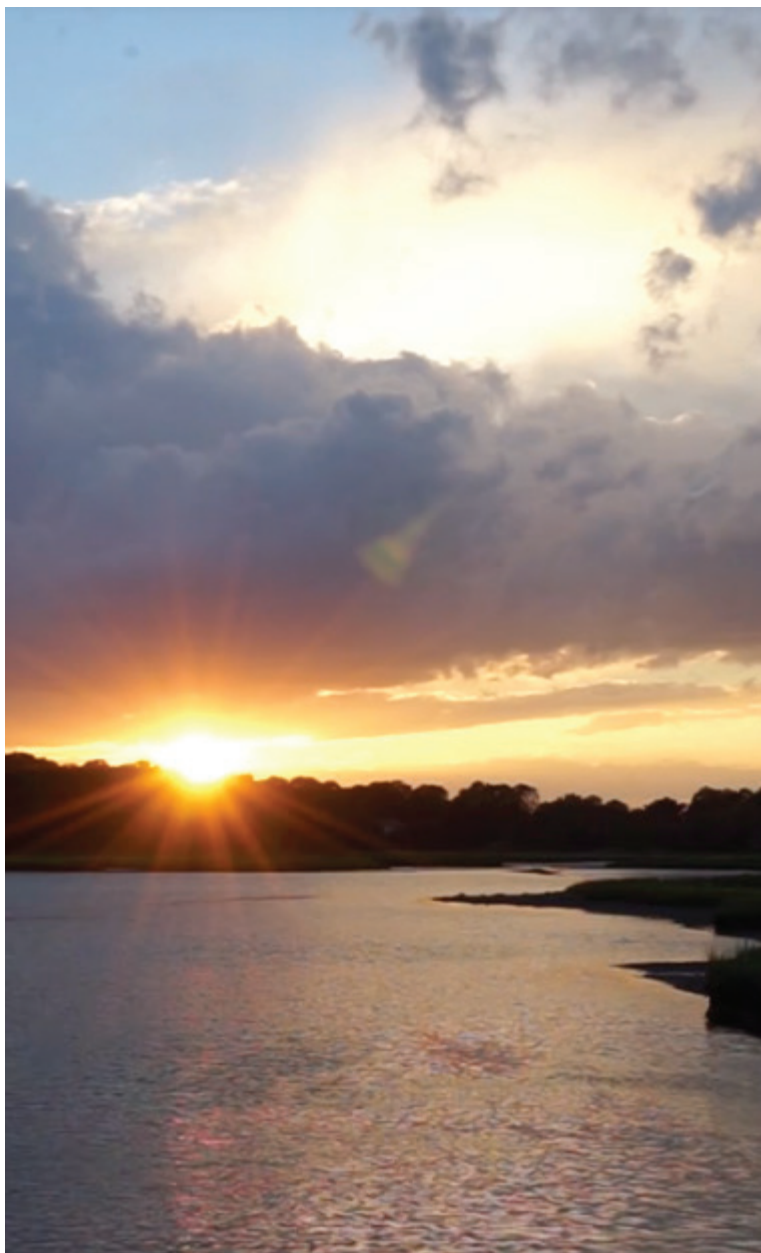




## History of Project

Municipal services not being used by Asian small business community, a situation that was exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic and racist rhetoric coming from the federal level

Economic Development partnered with Arts and Culture to embark on regional, multi-phase storytelling project. Pilot phase in Quincy!



# Project Scope

**1** Data analysis of Asian and Immigrant Entrepreneur Communities across the region

**2** Survey asking feedback on COVID-19 impact towards Asian small business community

**3** Videos documenting stories of three Asian small business owners in Quincy

**4** Policy recommendations for support to Asian Immigrant Entrepreneur Community at municipal and state level



# Data Analysis

Identified areas where the largest proportion of residents report owning their own business, being born outside the US and/or speaking a language other than English at home, and identify themselves as Asian.

The Quincy and Milton region had the highest proportion of Asian Immigrant Entrepreneurs per capita. About a quarter of Quincy's population and about one in twenty residents of Milton speak an Asian language at home. In both Quincy and Milton, the most-represented Asian ethnicity is Chinese followed by Vietnamese.



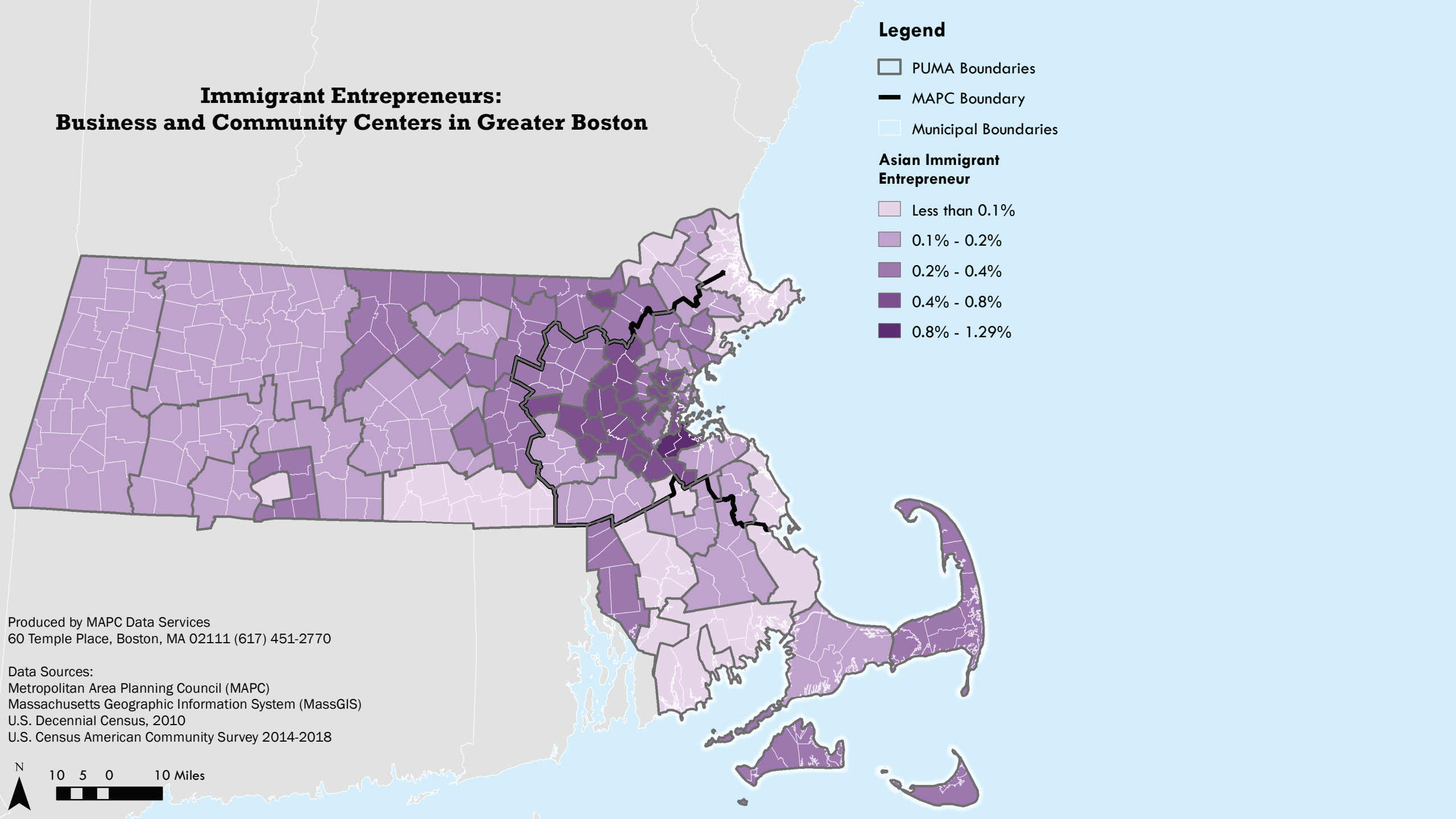
# Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Business and Community Centers in Greater Boston

## Legend

- PUMA Boundaries
- MAPC Boundary
- Municipal Boundaries

## Asian Immigrant Entrepreneur

- Less than 0.1%
- 0.1% - 0.2%
- 0.2% - 0.4%
- 0.4% - 0.8%
- 0.8% - 1.29%



Produced by MAPC Data Services  
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Data Sources:  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)  
Massachusetts Geographic Information System (MassGIS)  
U.S. Decennial Census, 2010  
U.S. Census American Community Survey 2014-2018

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# Regional Survey

Outreach to business owners across the region was supported by network of advising CBOs and their introductions

We reached out to elected official and state agencies



# Who did we hear from?



## Total respondents

Total of 75 unique Asian Immigrant Small Businesses responded to the survey

## Geography

A majority of responses came from the Cities of Boston (24) and Quincy (19)

Additional locations of small business owners who answered the survey included Cambridge, Malden, Abington, Braintree, Burlington, Lynn, Sharon, Saugus, Revere, Randolph, Tewksbury, and Taunton.

## Ethnicity and race

55 respondents identified as Asian and Pacific Islander (93%)

Within respondents who identified as Asian, 66% identifies as solely East Asian, 21% identified as Southeast Asian, 2% of respondents identified as South Asian

We also heard from small business owners who are multi-ethnic and mixed-race which included 2% identifying as East Asian and Southeast Asian, 2% identifying as East Asian, Southeast Asian and South Asian and 2% of identifying as South Asian and White.



# Who did we hear from?



## Industry

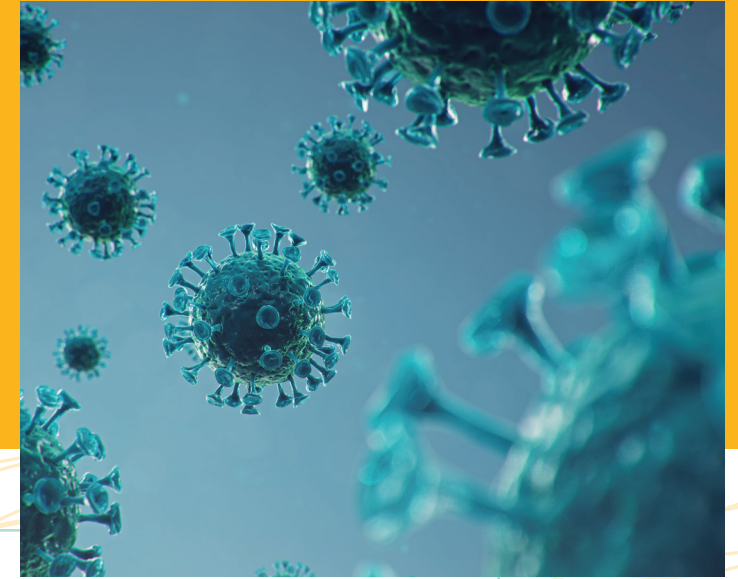
Restaurant (30%) and Retail (20%) industries were the most represented in the responses which supports the evidence that they have been the most impacted to disruption of pandemic. Other industries represented are Nail and Hair Salon, Construction, Non-profit, Education, and Manufacturing (Based on 65 responses)

## Business composition

53% having a business of 1-5 employees. 22% of respondents had 6-20 employees and 20% were self-employed (Based on 58 responses)

A majority of respondents (86%) owned their small business and (83%) leased their place of business, which was later consistent with the need for rental assistance. Only 7% of respondents own their place of business (Based on 58 responses)

# How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted Asian immigrant small businesses?



## Impact from COVID-19:

Most survey respondents indicated that temporary shutdowns (49%) or production of sales (49%) were the two biggest impacts to their businesses connected to COVID-19.

Close to half of respondents indicated that they needed to acquire new types of equipment or signage to deal with the public health emergency (30%) or had dealt with some type of xenophobia (26%) around the time of the public health emergency (Based on 53 total responses)

## Response to COVID-19:

Asian immigrant small business owners reported that they temporarily reduced employment (45%) . However, many survey respondents also reported laying off employees (32%) and customizing and coming up with new products (32%) as additional adaptation mechanisms (Based on 52 total responses)



# Were Asian immigrant small business owners able to access COVID-19 relief funding and services?

## **Aid (local, state, federal):**

80% of respondents indicated that they applied for COVID-19 aid and loan programs. Just over 10% of respondents indicated they did not apply for COVID-19 aid and loan programs. (Based on 54 responses).

## **What was funding and services used for?**

The most highlighted COVID-19 relief for Asian immigrant small business owners was the need for financial assistance for the implementation of new safety measures (66%) (Based on 37 response)

Open-ended responses indicated that some Asian immigrant small business owners did not want or need additional support or had already connected to a community-based organization for support.



# What support will Asian immigrant small business owners need from municipal and state governments moving forward?

## What is still needed?

The majority of respondents indicated a continued need for financial assistance (53%) and of those one quarter of respondents identified a specific need for rental assistance, which is consistent with the demographics of Asian immigrant small business owners renting over owning their places of business (Based on 30 responses)

Respondents also indicated a need for more assistance related to public health guidelines, protective equipment, and testing services (17%).



# Storytelling Videos

Engaged with Canadian-Chinese filmmaker, Daphne Xu in May 2020

Remote filming took place in Aug - September 2020

Footage includes zoom interviews archival materials, and videos recorded by interviewees at the direction of Daphne Xu

With advice from partners, three Quincy-based business owners were contacted



*Footage from pre-COVID era, August 2019*



# Storytelling Videos

Films available for viewing on project website

Screening and Artist Talk hosted by MAPC held on March 3

Quincy, From A Distance Film Screening

**Quincy, from a distance**  
*Premiere*

Stories and Presence of Asian Immigrant Entrepreneurs across the Region

中小企業經營者

MAPC

2021-03-03 19:33:29  
Exit full screen (f)

Community

Identity

Adaptation

1:32 / 1:31:50

Scroll for details

# Policy recommendations

## Goal 1

Decrease Cost of Business +  
Increase Revenue

## Goal 2

Addressing xenophobia  
and racism

## Goal 3

Providing services  
for individual needs

# Decrease Cost of Business + Increase Revenue

## Municipal - Regulatory

Establish placemaking support for vending and provision of goods outside of the establishment.

Municipalities should prioritize working with local Asian immigrant small business owners on supplier diversity efforts.

Municipalities should collaborate with Asian immigrant facing community development corporations or community-based orgs who could establish a grant or forgivable loan program for Asian immigrant small business owners.

Municipalities should explore cultural designation of Asian commercial corridors as a long-strategy for commercial stabilization.

# Goal 1





# Decrease Cost of Business + Increase Revenue

## Municipal - Technical Assistance

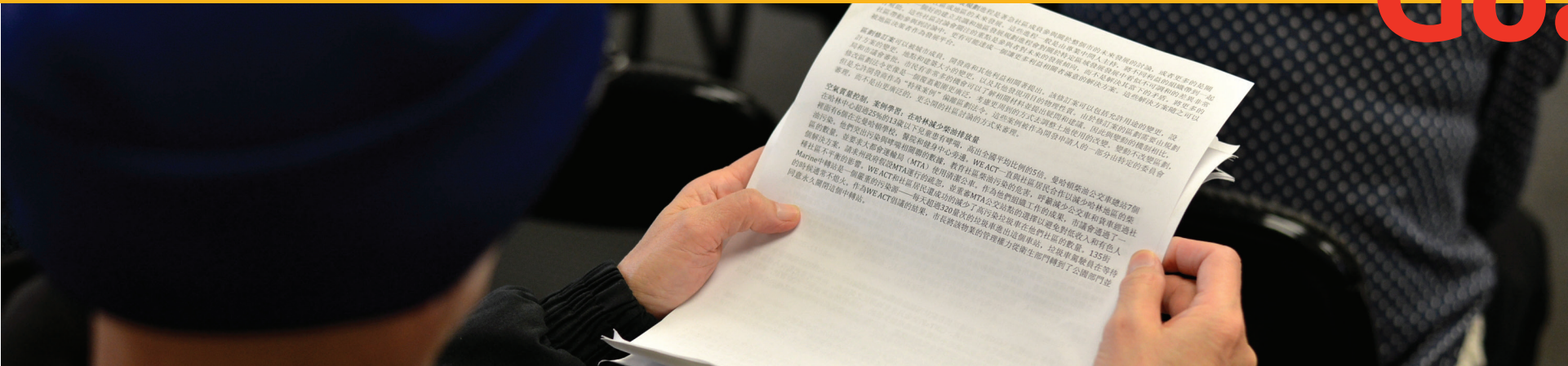
In order to understand the languages and magnitude at which assistance must be made available we recommend that municipalities plan to identify gaps in accessibility prior to undertaking any additional technical assistance.

Municipalities can collaborate with Asian immigrant small business owners to gather consumer-based feedback that could lead to longterm vitality in a changing market.

Technical assistance related to location and retention of Asian immigrant small business owners must be addressed.

Provide language accessible legal services and affordable legal assistance available regionally to Asian immigrant small business owners.

# Goal 1



# Decrease Cost of Business + Increase Revenue

## Municipal - Technical Assistance (cont.)

We recommend that municipalities explore providing the following types of technical assistance either directly or through funding community-based organizations to bring down the cost of business while increasing revenue for Asian immigrant small business owners:

- Reimburse PPE, cleaning supplies and environmental controls like partitions and barrier shields or establish an online marketplace for purchasing PPE and cleaning supplies with language accessible features
- Locate testing sites close to hubs of Asian immigrant small business owners
- Print signage for businesses to use to communicate physical distancing requirements translated to relevant languages particular to customer base. Signage should also be printed for employees to remind and communicate cleaning and disinfecting guidance, best hygiene practices, staying home when sick, etc.
- Provide digital presence training for interested small business owners with culturally relevant venues being part of the program (ie how to attract new customers and establishing your brand on WeChat or LINE apps)

# Decrease Cost of Business + Increase Revenue

## State

We recommend that the state translate all state and federal materials distributed at the state level.

The state should establish formal partnerships with CBO's that are trusted entities in Asian Immigrant communities to support this work.



# Goal 1



# Goal 2:

## Addressing xenophobia and racism

### Municipal – Educational

In order to combat the disinformation, municipalities should denounce xenophobia and racism against the Asian American community and disseminate accurate information about the pandemic.

### Municipal – Regulatory

Municipalities should establish an anonymous hotline through which to report any xenophobic and racist attacks and partner with local public health departments to establish access to mental health care for those affected.

### State

The state governing body should consider investing in the continued tracking, research and addressing of anti-Asian incidents.



Photo Credit: Amanda Phingbodhipakkiya <https://www.alonglastname.com/>

# Goal 3: Providing services for individual needs

## **Municipal – Assistance**

In order to support Asian immigrant small business owners in areas of life that intersect with their ability to contribute to the small business community, we encourage municipalities to collaborate with community-based organization that are actively working on providing affordable childcare options to the Asian Immigrant community.

Support community-based organizations that are addressing the need for culturally sensitive food security.

Support ethnic chamber organizations or establish an Asian Immigrant Business Owner Task Force.

