

# Strengthening Minnesota's Future: CAAL Funds 20 Asian American Leaders Through CAAL Ignite Initiative

*Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL) proudly announced today the 20 grantees selected for its 2025 CAAL Ignite Fund*

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, UNITED STATES, April 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Coalition of Asian American Leaders](#) (CAAL) proudly announced today the 20 grantees selected for its 2025 CAAL Ignite Fund, an initiative created to invest directly in the leadership, creativity, and economic vitality of Minnesota's Asian American community.



Coalition of Asian American Leaders Grant Fund CAAL Ignite

The announcement comes as CAAL gathers at the Minnesota State Capitol for Asian Minnesotan Day, where leaders and community members are engaging lawmakers around the priorities and policy solutions that impact Asian Americans across the state.

From over 230 applications, 12 small businesses, 4 nonprofits, and 4 individuals were selected to receive \$10,000–\$15,000 grants. These grantees are creating solutions that reflect the diversity, innovation, and strength of Minnesota's Asian American community.

"The idea behind the CAAL Ignite Fund has been years in the making. Asian American leaders have pushed for decades to increase investment in our communities, knowing that philanthropy nationally spends less than 25 cents for every \$100 on Asian American nonprofits," says CAAL Executive Director, ThaoMee Xiong. "After the mass shooting in Atlanta that took the lives of Asian American women, there was an outpouring of support and promises—but little real action. Even with new national efforts, no one truly stepped up to meet the needs here in Minnesota. CAAL Ignite is not just a response to a moment—it's the result of years of leadership demanding intentional investment to ensure our communities can lead, thrive, and determine our own futures."

Launched with foundational support from a \$2.5 million gift from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott, and bolstered by additional funding from state and local partners, CAAL Ignite was designed to meet the urgent demand for investment in Asian American leaders and organizations across the state.

#### IMPACT TO DATE

Since launching, CAAL Ignite has demonstrated both the urgency of need and the depth of community leadership:

- 230+ completed applications from 39 Minnesota cities
- Applicants representing 23 Asian ethnic groups
- Grantees ranging in age from 16 to 65
- Over 4,000% increase in digital engagement during the campaign

"The demand for intentional investment is clear," added Xiong. "If we want to combat anti-Asian hate and build thriving communities, we must invest in leadership, creativity, and economic opportunities. CAAL Ignite is our commitment to showing that when we invest directly in our people, we don't just strengthen Asian American communities—we create progress that benefits everyone."

Despite being one of the fastest-growing populations in Minnesota, Asian American organizations continue to receive disproportionately low funding. National philanthropic dollars directed toward Asian American nonprofits remain below 25 cents per \$100, while Asian American women earn just 69 cents for every dollar earned by white men—leading to more than \$1 million in lost income over a lifetime. Asian Americans are also one of the fastest-growing entrepreneurial group nationally, yet face significant barriers to accessing funding and business resources. CAAL Ignite was created to close these gaps and fuel self-determination within the community.

"CAAL Ignite is a reflection of what's possible when we trust, resource, and invest in the leadership that already exists within our communities," said Nicole Dailo Jison, CAAL Board Chair. "This is not just about funding projects—it's about building a stronger, more just Minnesota where Asian Americans are fully seen, supported, and empowered to lead."

To learn more about CAAL Ignite and to support CAAL, visit:

□ <https://caalmn.org/caal-ignite>

#### ABOUT THE COALITION OF ASIAN AMERICAN LEADERS (CAAL):

Founded in 2013, CAAL is a cross-sector network of Asian American leaders working to advance equity, justice, and prosperity for Minnesota's Asian American community. Through advocacy, leadership development, narrative change, and direct investment, CAAL builds power with and for those most often excluded from institutional decision-making.

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