

Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL) Secures State Funding to Expand CAAL Ignite and Other Community Investments

CAAL Ignite Grant Fund opened grant applications Friday, September 12, 2025.

MINNEAPOLIS, MN, UNITED STATES, September 15, 2025 / EINPresswire.com/ -- The [Coalition of Asian American Leaders](#) (CAAL) today announced the second cohort of its Ignite Fund, investing in Asian American small businesses, nonprofits, and emerging entrepreneurs across Minnesota.



Coalition of Asian American Leaders Grant Fund CAAL Ignite

Asian Americans are among the fastest-growing racial groups in Minnesota and one of the fastest-growing groups of entrepreneurs nationally, yet systemic barriers consistently overshadow this growth story. In recent years, anti-Asian hate crimes have risen by more than 300 percent, while philanthropy has invested just 20 cents of every \$100 in Asian American nonprofits—only 40 cents in Minnesota. Despite fueling the state's future, Asian American communities remain among the least resourced and continue to face some of the widest wage gaps.

[CAAL Ignite](#) is one step toward closing these gaps and building a future where Asian American communities are fully resourced and empowered.

This year's Ignite Fund builds on the success of its 2025 launch, when CAAL received more than 230 applications and funded 20 community leaders. The overwhelming demand underscored both the urgent needs and the immense potential within Minnesota's Asian American community.

In 2024, CAAL was honored with a grant from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott, national recognition that underscored the importance of investing in Asian American leadership. Building on that momentum, CAAL has continued to fight for the resources our communities deserve—securing state-level funding through persistent advocacy and coalition-building at the

Capitol. These investments reflect both the urgency of the moment and CAAL's commitment to ensuring Asian Minnesotans are not only supported through grants but represented at the highest levels of decision-making.

"CAAL is not only advocating for systemic change but also fueling it," said ThaoMee Xiong, Executive and Network Director. "By legislative advocacy for state resources and reinvesting directly into our communities, we are proving that Asian American leadership is central to Minnesota's future."

The 2026 Ignite Fund cohort includes:

- 10 small businesses receiving \$15,000 each
- 4 nonprofits receiving \$15,000 each
- 7 emerging entrepreneurs receiving \$5,000 each

The grants are open to Asian American leaders ages 18 and older, ensuring opportunities for both established and emerging voices in the community.

Since its launch, the Ignite Fund has provided catalytic support to Asian American leaders working to build economic wealth, combat systemic inequities, and advance community resilience. By pairing direct investment with CAAL's policy advocacy, the program demonstrates how community power can reshape Minnesota's future.

"The demand for intentional investment has never been clearer," said Xiong. "We are proud of what CAAL Ignite has made possible, but we know the work is far from finished. Continuing this fund is our way of ensuring that Asian American leadership, creativity, and economic opportunity are not just recognized, but fully resourced. This is how we build lasting change for our communities and for Minnesota as a whole."

For more information about the Coalition of Asian American Leaders (CAAL) Ignite Fund and to apply for the grant fund, visit www.caalmn.org.

Media Contact:

Aisha Branch
Vyne Collective
+1 763-202-1548

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