

March 11, 2022

Workforce and Business Development Finance and Policy Committee
Chair Mohamud Noor
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd., Room 379
St. Paul, MN 55155

Honorable Members of the Committee,

The Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans (“the Council”) writes this letter in support of House File 4100, offered by Representative Vang, to provide a grant for a capital project to SEWA-AIFW, Inc. This project would support SEWA-AIFW in providing critical services to vulnerable members of our South Asian communities, including Minnesota’s Afghan, Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Guyanese, Nepali, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan populations.

The Council is charged by the Legislature with the statutory duty of advocating on behalf of Minnesota’s Asian and Pacific Islander (API) communities, acting as the liaison between state government and Minnesota’s API communities, and serving as an advisory body to the Legislature and the Governor. It is in this capacity that we strongly support this legislation.

We recognize that the expanded services that SEWA-AIFW could provide through the financing and renovation of this facility would fill critical gaps for these fast-growing immigrant and refugee communities in the service areas of domestic violence and sexual assault prevention, human services, and economic development. Providing sustained community resources through a community kitchen, meditation center, and clinical space for volunteer doctors and health professionals will create a centralized hub for community members to meet their needs in a safe, familiar setting. These services would provide an important, culturally relevant refuge for the members of our South Asian community in a location proximate to where these community members live, work, and gather.

Long-term investments in community capacity, such as those made through this bill, will provide a strong foundation to community members to grow and thrive. Knowing the disparities that exist across our Asian Pacific Minnesotan communities, it is essential to provide a culturally relevant and welcoming space so that all members of our communities can find their footing and succeed as Minnesotans.

We urge the passage of this important legislation to provide a crucial, long-term investment in the health and well-being of our South Asian communities, and all the Minnesotans served by SEWA-AIFW.

Sincerely,



Andrew Morris
Legislative and Public Affairs Liaison
Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans