

2026 RES-014

RECOGNIZING MAY 2026 AS ASIAN, PACIFIC ISLANDER, AND DESI AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

WHEREAS, May is designated as Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American (APIDA) Heritage Month to recognize and celebrate the achievements and contributions, as well as acknowledge the sacrifices and lived experiences, of generations of Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American people in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the month of May was selected for Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American Heritage Month because APIDA people are inextricably tied to the history of the United States, with the first Japanese immigrants arriving in the U.S. on May 7, 1843, and the first transcontinental railroad completed on May 10, 1869, with substantial contributions from Chinese immigrants; and

WHEREAS, the history of Asian Americans in the United States includes exclusionary and discriminatory laws and policies, including the Chinese Exclusion Act, the first federal law to prohibit immigration based on race and nationality, which institutionalized anti-Asian discrimination and created lasting barriers to citizenship, family reunification, economic opportunity, and civic belonging for generations of Asian Americans; and

WHEREAS, the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II Japanese American incarceration, when more than 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry—most of them U.S. citizens—were forcibly removed from their homes and confined in internment camps, causing lasting intergenerational harm and demonstrating how racism and xenophobia have denied Asian Americans full belonging, civil rights, and equal protection under the law; and

WHEREAS, Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American communities continue to experience the impacts of racism, xenophobia, violence, underrepresentation, and inequitable immigration policies, including the racial profiling, detention and deportation of Southeast Asian refugees and immigrants—particularly members of Hmong, Cambodian, Lao, and Vietnamese communities—many of whom arrived in the United States as refugees and whose families have contributed significantly to the social, cultural, economic, and civic life of communities across Wisconsin and Dane County; and

WHEREAS, Dane County recognizes that the detention and deportation of longtime community members and refugees undermines the values of inclusion, belonging, family unity, and pluralism that strengthen our communities, and stands in support of policies and practices that uphold dignity, equity, and opportunity for all residents regardless of national origin or immigration status; and

WHEREAS the APIDA community is an inherently diverse population, comprising more than 45 distinct ethnicities and more than 100 language dialects; and

WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islander are terms that encompass all of the Asian continent and the Pacific islands of Melanesia (New Guinea, New Caledonia, Vanuatu, Fiji, and the Solomon Islands), Micronesia (Marianas, Guam, Wake Island, Palau, Marshall Islands, Kiribati, Nauru, and the Federated States of Micronesia) and Polynesia (New Zealand, Hawaiian Islands, Rotuma, Midway Islands, Samoa, American Samoa, Tonga, Tuvalu, Cook Islands, French Polynesia, and Easter Island); and

WHEREAS, Desi, a term that refers to those of South Asian descent—a pan-ethnic group of diverse people and communities rather than a nationally-bounded category—is one of the fastest growing immigrant groups in the U.S.; and

WHEREAS, the 2026 theme, “Power in Unity: Strengthening Communities Together,” emphasizes the importance of leveraging collective power, storytelling, and building bridges among the APIDA community to unite in common causes using innovation, resilience, hard work, connection, and belonging; and

WHEREAS, APIDA individuals have made significant contributions across all sectors of society, including public service, education, healthcare, business, science, technology, arts, and civic leadership, while continuing to confront challenges such as discrimination, exclusion, xenophobia, anti-Asian violence, inequitable immigration systems, and underrepresentation; and

WHEREAS, Dane County values the diversity, knowledge, and experience its 181 Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American employees bring to the service they provide to the residents of Dane County, and also recognizes the APIDA milestones on the County Board; and

WHEREAS, Supervisor Brenda Yang is the first person of Hmong heritage to serve on the County Board; and

WHEREAS, former Supervisor Ashok Kumar and current Supervisor Yogesh Chawla are the first and second Desi Americans, respectively, to be elected to the County Board; and

WHEREAS, Supervisor Patrick Miles is Nisei, a second-generation Japanese American, and is the first person of color and first Asian American to serve as Dane County Board Chair; and

WHEREAS, Jeff Okazaki is the first person of Asian heritage appointed as the Dane County Clerk of Courts.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors recognizes May 2026 as Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American Heritage Month and honors the many valuable contributions and sacrifices these individuals and communities have made from the local to the national level.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Dane County Board of Supervisors reaffirms its commitment to promoting diversity, ensuring equity, protecting immigrant and refugee communities, and fostering inclusion for all Asian, Pacific Islander, and Desi American communities, recognizing that Dane County is strengthened by its pluralistic and multicultural communities and by the dignity, safety, and belonging of all people.

Patrick Miles, Chair
Dane County Board of Supervisors

Signed and sealed before me this
_____ day of _____, 2026.

Scott McDonell,
Dane County Clerk