KATALYST

CKA IMPACT CHRONICLES

LEADERSHIP AT EVERY LEVEL

15 YEAR ANNIVERSARY
COUNCIL OF KOREAN AMERICANS

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ABOUT CKA

The Council of Korean Americans (CKA) is the leading nonpartisan national organization for Korean American leaders in every sector of American life, from technology and culture to business, medicine, government, and law. **CKA develops, connects, and mobilizes our leaders to raise the voice and influence of the Korean American community.**

Our work rests on four pillars: amplifying Korean American perspectives, building community nationwide, celebrating our shared identity, and developing leaders at every stage, from students to seasoned executives. Through gatherings large and small, CKA brings every generation of leaders together to engage and inspire one another, and remind us good change in systems and society is feasible when we work together.

The relationships built and insights we gain through CKA extend well beyond any individual program or gathering. By investing in Korean American leadership at every stage and connecting generations, CKA is building a national community of leaders who learn from and support one another, broaden their impact, and open doors for others. Together, they bring greater visibility and influence to Korean American perspectives in boardrooms, newsrooms, government, and civic life, creating pathways for generations that follow.

Founded in 2011, CKA is headquartered in Washington, D.C.

www.councilka.org

Letter from the President

Dear CKA Members, Supporters and Friends,

Katalyst is our way of sharing what your support made possible this year. In our fifteenth year, we have been busy updating, augmenting and expanding our signature programs!

Each initiative in these pages serves leaders at a different stage. Together they rest on one belief: Korean Americans lead best when we lead as ourselves and when we support one another. That is the why behind CKA, and it is what your support makes possible. I am so honored to serve as CKA's President in this pivotal year.

And yet, **the most valuable thing CKA offers is more than a program or a curriculum. It is the experience of being in a room full of people who understand you,** who believe in what you can become, and who will still be in your life ten years from now. Two Korean Americans meet for the first time, a founder from Silicon Valley and a congressional staffer from Washington, and within minutes they are finishing each other's sentences. That moment is what CKA was founded to make possible, at scale, across the country.

The work continues to grow! At our Annual Envision Weekend, we are welcoming students and young professionals to our first NextGen Summit, and in November we bring Impact Academy's media and leadership training to Houston for the first time.

None of this would be possible without your support. Thank you for investing in leaders who will go on to strengthen their organizations, their communities, and the Korean American community for years to come.

With gratitude,





Angela Sungmee Killoren
President
Council of Korean Americans (CKA)

2026 AT A GLANCE

3,500+

Leaders convening at CKA programs throughout the year

24

Senior leaders media trained at Impact Academy in Washington, D.C.

11

Collegiate and early-career leaders completed the first Emerging Leaders Fellowship

14

NetKAL XIV Fellows graduated, joining 225+ alumni across 14 cohorts

14

Korean American nonprofit leaders gathered at the fourth Empower Retreat in Nashville, TN

40+

Members on the CKA Korea Leadership Trip

10

Cities hosting programs this year, with Houston to come in November





Photographer: Elle Yeon

Impact Academy

Being Heard

In February, 24 senior leaders gathered in Washington, D.C. for a full day of media and leadership training. They came from the U.S. Senate, the House of Representatives, USAID, the World Bank Group and Comcast. They were already shaping policy and leading institutions. How do we make sure they are actually heard?

Impact Academy exists to answer that question. Participants work on executive communication, media readiness and leadership presence, and leave with tools they can use the next day. Korean Americans hold senior roles across government and industry, yet are too rarely the ones quoted, booked or called to testify. Each leader who can make the case clearly, on camera or in a hearing, shifts who the public sees as an authority.

First piloted in 2024, Impact Academy has trained leaders in Atlanta, Seattle and Washington, D.C. On November 14 we expand our reach to Houston, TX at the Asia Society Texas Center. Enrollment opens this month, and we expect another 24 leaders to take part.

> ***"I participated in the Impact Academy Training session in Washington, DC. It was truly meaningful and helped sharpen my leadership and communication skills, even for someone like me who has gone through similar training programs in the past. Leadership is a lifelong journey and one must constantly learn and grow in this area throughout a career. That's what the Impact Academy Training program is all about. I also loved the fact that so many Capitol Hill staffers went through the program. Getting them into the CKA ecosystem is a great way to build a strong talent pipeline for our community."***
>
> ***Davey Kim***
> *Senior Vice President and Chief Public & Regulatory Affairs Officer*
> *AAA Auto Club Enterprises*



The Emerging Leaders Fellowship

A First Summer

A summer internship can teach a student how an institution works. It rarely shows them who they could become within it. This year CKA turned its Emerging Leaders Scholarship into a full Fellowship to close that gap.
Eleven collegiate and graduate student Fellows spent ten weeks, from June 5 to August 11, in demanding internships at places such as the U.S. Department of Energy (ARPA-E), the Queens County District Attorney's Office, Deloitte Government & Public Services and the MinKwon Center for Community Action.

Around that work we built:

- One-to-one mentorship with CKA members from The Asia Foundation, Comcast, Asian Health Services and MediaCo Holding.
- Six virtual learning sessions, opening with a keynote from L. Song Richardson of UC Irvine School of Law.
- A New York City immersion with FiscalNote, Northwell Health, MediaCo and The Korea Society, and a service day with Korean Community Services of NY & NJ.
- A Washington, D.C. immersion with leaders in government, national security and policy, a visit to the Korean War Veterans Memorial, and a service day with the Korean Community Service Center of Greater Washington (KCSC).
- More than 55 leaders, many of them CKA members, gave their time as mentors, speakers and hosts across the ten weeks

Fellows told us the access changed what they thought possible. One wrote that being invested in by accomplished leaders "empowered me to dream of and envision my future without limits." Another hopes to "give back to the future fellows the way I was taken care of in this community."

> ***"The CKA Emerging Leaders Fellowship has equipped me with a toolkit that is at once personal and broadly applicable. Each program was a goldmine of opportunities to learn and practice. It felt as if the whole CKA community came out to support us."***
>
> ***Colby Ko***
> *Dual MBA/MPP candidate*
> *Yale University*







Photographers: Elle Yeon (DC). Dan Ahn (NY)

> ***The CKA Emerging Leaders Fellowship was one of the most meaningful experiences of my life. As a Korean American women and former Division I athlete transitioning into a new career chapter, I was searching for a greater sense of community, purpose, and direction beyond the identity I had built through soccer. CKA gave me the opportunity to connect with an incredible community of Korean American leaders who challenged me to think more deeply about what leadership means and how I want to use my experiences to make an impact.***
>
> ***What made the fellowship especially meaningful was the opportunity to learn from people who have navigated their own paths while remaining connected to their roots and community. Through the conversations, mentorship, and relationships I built, I grew stronger and more confident in my identity, not just as a Korean American, but in all the different parts of who I am and the leader I hope to become.***
>
> ***The fellowship also reminded me that leadership is not just about personal achievement, but about creating opportunities for others, investing in your community, and helping the next generation see what is possible for them. As I transition from collegiate athletics into a career in business, I feel more intentional about the impact I want to make, particularly in creating greater opportunities and representation for women and the next generation of Asian American leaders.***
>
> ***I am deeply grateful to everyone who made this fellowship feel like family, from the mentors and speakers who generously shared their experiences to the fellow participants who inspired me through their own journeys. The relationships, perspectives, and sense of belonging I gained through CKA are things I will carry with me well beyond the fellowship. CKA helped me see my identity not as something I am still trying to figure out, but as a source of strength that I can confidently bring into every room I enter. For that, I will always be grateful.***
>
> ***Ella Hwang***
> *BS in Business Administration*
> *University of San Francisco*





NetKAL at Twenty

NetKAL turned twenty this year, and its fourteenth class exemplified why the program endures. Fourteen Fellows from business, the arts, retail, food and beverage, investment, the military and education spent five months together, meeting monthly online and over five weekends in Harpers Ferry, Los Angeles, New York, Chicago and San Jose.

This year each weekend was paired with a guest speaker series and joined by CKA local members. Fellows heard from Dr. Suzan Song and Abraham Kim in Harpers Ferry, from Jane Cha Cutler, Phillip Hyun and Jeffrey Yoo in Los Angeles, from Sandor Hau in New York, and from Suzanne Yoon in Chicago. In San Jose, SK hynix hosted an AI leadership session, followed by a fireside chat with CKA Board Member Yul Kwon and NetKAL alumnus David Lee attended by a full strength CKA San Francisco crowd.

Fellows addressed the 2026 Community Question: how can an evolving Korean American community build greater trust and create collective impact? The winning project, Teach Me Halmeoni, uses storytelling and art to connect Korean American families across generations. Minjoo Cha, Julia Chon, Alex Lee, Edmond Lee and Victor Oh are developing it toward publication with advisor Charles Kim of Third State Books. CKA is supporting the team with a $10,000 award, joined by a $2,000 gift and mentorship from NetKAL VII alumnus Eddie Ahn. The team is presenting during the Envision weekend.

The Class of XIV joins more than 225 alumni across 14 cohorts. NetKAL XV opens April 16 to 18, 2027 in Portland, OR. If you know an amazing Korean American leader, encourage them to apply!

> ***The program strengthened my connection to the Korean American community, broadened my network of leaders across industries, and reinforced the importance of leveraging our collective experiences to create meaningful impact. Participating in NetKAL inspired me to think more intentionally about how I can bridge U.S.–Korea relations, harnessing both countries' comparative advantage to foster mutually beneficial growth across industry and policy. The greatest gift was connecting with the greater CKA community, which transcends the regional silos of the diaspora, and engaging in truly candid and meaningful discussions on how we define this next chapter of Korean-American leadership.Thank you again for everything, Monica, and for helping make this experience possible!"***

Rachel Kim
Acquisition Officer,
United States Department of War
CKA Member





Photographers: Elle Yeon, Sunwook Kim, Dan Ahn, Tonic Park







Empower Retreat

Care for Those Who Lead

In June, CKA hosted its fourth annual Empower Retreat in Nashville, TN. Fourteen Korean American nonprofit leaders spent four days, June 15 to 18, in rest, reflection and community. They lead organizations such as Asian Health Services, the Asian Women's Shelter, Brightline Defense, KACF San Francisco and Little Lights Urban Ministries. People who spend their days serving others rarely get time to think alongside peers who understand the work. The retreat gives them opportunities for reflection and connection.

The four days moved through four themes: Welcome, Recharge, Reset and Ready.

Participants spent a fully offline day walking Radnor Lake, creating their own letterpress posters at Hatch Show Print and touring Historic RCA Studio B. The next morning they volunteered at the Edgehill Community Memorial Garden, before an afternoon sharing the challenges and lessons of leading nonprofits. The retreat closed with reflections on how this new circle of peers can keep supporting one another long after Nashville. Past participants have gone on to collaborate across organizations, building relationships that strengthen a growing national network of Korean community based organizations.

“As a first-time participant in the CKA Empower Retreat, I wasn’t quite sure what to expect. Much of my career has been spent in philanthropy, while many of the other participants were leading organizations that work directly with communities every day. What I found was an extraordinary group of Korean America leaders who were generous with their experiences, honest about their challenges, and deeply committed to serving others. The retreat created something that is rare in our sector – space to slow down, reflect, and build meaningful relationships. I left Nashville with new friendships, a greater appreciation of the work happening across our community, and a renewed sense of purpose. Most importantly, I gained a broader perspective on how change happens and a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges nonprofit leaders face on the ground every day. The experience reminded me that lasting impact requires both strong institutions and strong relationships, and it reinforced the importance of listening to and learning from those closest to the work. I know the insights, relationships, and sense of community I gained through the retreat will continue to influence how I approach leadership, partnership, and philanthropy in the years ahead.”

John Kim
Chief Administrative Officer
Annie E. Casey Foundation





Photographer: Tiffany Bessire









Korea Leadership Trip

Seeing Korea Now

CKA takes its members to Korea to see the motherland as it is today. Over five days, members came away with a deeper understanding of Korean culture and innovation, stronger ties across the U.S.-Korea relationship, and new connections with Korean and Korean American leaders shaping both countries. From August 30 to September 4, more than 40 CKA members traveled to Seoul for CKA's second Korea Leadership Trip. General Xavier Brunson, Commander of U.S. Forces Korea, briefed the delegation on the U.S.-Korea alliance. Members met U.S. Ambassador Michelle Steel and five Korean American senior staff at the Embassy, heard from OpenAI Korea General Manager Harrison Kim and a former Samsung Electronics CEO, joined roundtable discussions with 40 Harvard alumni in Korea, and held a joint reception with GLOKOL at the Seoul Club, celebrating the graduation of NetKAL Korea 3 and so much more.

Members also spent an afternoon at Frieze Seoul, an international cultural destination, and visited Amorepacific, the Park Seobo Foundation, the Songeun Foundation, Arumjigi, the DMZ Peace Park and Ewha Womans University, all while enjoying incredible dining at some of Korea's world-class restaurants such as Bium, Solbam, 7th Door and Gucci Osteria. After a final morning reflecting on their deep dive into Korea today, CKA members spent three hours serving hot lunches to more than 500 elderly Koreans in need.

“Participating in this year’s CKA Korea Leadership Trip was an exhilarating, fast-paced, and deeply enriching journey, made truly unforgettable by exclusive culinary and cultural experiences alongside new and old friends. It was incredibly exciting and reassuring to see many Korean American leaders so actively involved in augmenting Korea’s culture, economy, and global reach while I was able to reconnect personally with my family who lives there. Returning home to New York, I bring back proudly a renewed vision for bridging Korea/U.S. connections as well as a grounded, vibrant heritage. One of CKA’s best programs to date and looking forward to next year!

Dr. Isabella Park
Physician Executive Leader, Northwell Health
CKA Member



“I have lived in Korea for many years, yet experiencing it alongside fellow Korean Americans on the CKA Korea Leadership Trip made it feel new again. Their candid perspectives reminded me that understanding Korea, personally and professionally, is never finished.”

Jim No
Managing Director & Board Member
William Grant & Sons Korea
CKA Member



Photographer: Ryu Tae Hyeok







Looking Ahead

The NextGen Summit

At the 2026 Envision weekend, CKA inaugurates its first NextGen Summit, for students and young professionals under 30. We believe it's more than a new program; it's an investment in extending CKA's leadership community to those earlier in their journey and ensuring the network strengthens for the next 15 years. We shaped it through listening roundtables around the country with some 150 CKA members, mentors and student leaders, who told us what young Korean Americans are missing: mentors and sponsors who will invest in them, room to practice leadership, and a place to work out what being Korean American means to them. Supported by a grant from the NAEIL Foundation, the idea is simple: the community CKA has built over fifteen years should be open to the people who will lead it next.

The Summit scales CKA's model of learning, inspiring and connecting, so that more young Korean Americans find this community early. In one day, it brings students and young professionals into proximity with the leaders they hope to become. Our message to them is simple: you are not the future of this community. You are already a part of it.

> ***I'm energized to attend and participate in the NextGen Summit because community matters, especially for those of us living where there are few Korean Americans. I'm looking forward to talking about entrepreneurship and sharing knowledge that might be useful to others.***
>
> ***Senator Rocket***
> *Founder, Eat Vermont;*
> *President, Farmhouse Chocolates*





Connecting with a Stronger Voice

In July, Board Chair Catharina Min spoke at the San Francisco luncheon for Korean President Lee Jae Myung, delivering her remarks in Korean. She was the only community organization representative asked to address the room. In August, CKA signed a memorandum of understanding with the Korean American Institute and the Federation of Korean Associations USA. With our first formal three-way collaboration, we look to start developing closer cooperation between first and second generation Korean American organizations.

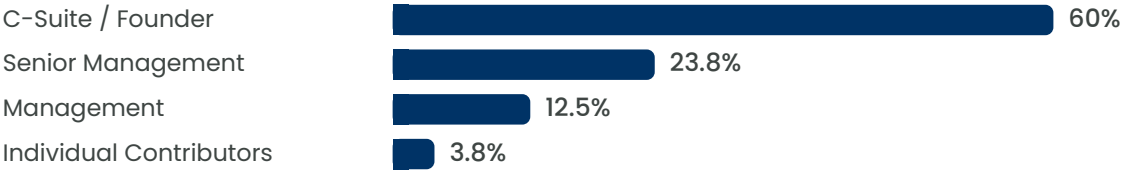
CKA began fifteen years ago as a national community of second-generation Korean American leaders. That remains our core, but our reach is growing. We are building connections across generations, from first-generation community organizations to students just finding their footing, and across the Pacific, as American leaders who choose to be a bridge between two countries we care about. Our voice is stronger when it carries more people.

A Community of Leaders

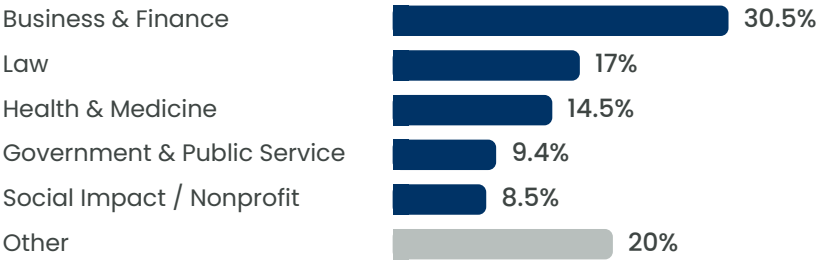
Membership Snapshot

450+ members nationwide, the only national, cross-industry leadership organization for Korean Americans. More than 3,500 Korean American leaders convene at 75+ CKA programs and gatherings each year.

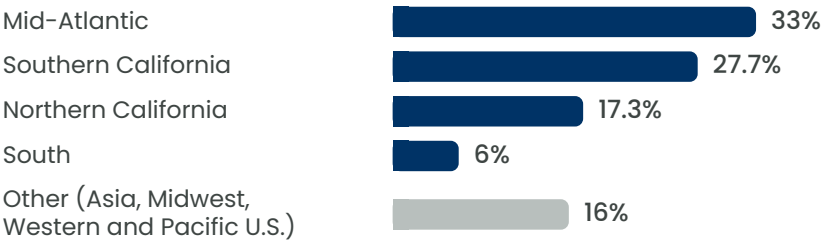
Career level



Industry



Region



BOARD MEMBERS

We thank our Board of Directors, who volunteer their time and expertise to steer CKA's strategy and champion our mission across the country.

Catharina Min, CKA Board Chair, Partner, Covington & Burling, LLP
Randy Sim, CKA Board Vice Chair, President and Founder, Satsun Corporation
Lisa Yang, CKA Board Secretary, Partner, LimNexus LLP
Leezie Kim, CKA Board Treasurer, Chief Legal Officer, Fox Restaurant Concepts LLC
Paul Chae, CKA Board Director, Managing Partner, Chae Advisory
Hosea Chang, CKA Board Director, Chief Operating Officer, Hayden Global
Eugene Choi, CKA Board Director, CEO and President, United Exchange Corp
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Sandra Schubert, CKA Board Director, Managing Director, Goldman Sachs
Esther Song, CKA Board Director, Founder & CEO, Song Group
William Um, CKA Board Director, Partner, Jassy Vick Carolan LLP

BOARD CHAIRS EMERITI

With deep gratitude, we honor the former Board Chairs whose leadership, vision, and generosity helped build the Council of Korean Americans into what it is today.

Michael Yang, Author, Entrepreneur, Investor, and Adventurer
John Lim, Co-Founder and Managing Partner, LimNexus LLP
June Lee, Elevaate Biotech, Founding Board Director, Public Company Board Director (Abivax, etc)
Paul Kim, Founder and Principal, LaSalle Asset Management
Michelle Rhyu, Retired Litigation Partner, Cooley LLP
Peter Huh, Chairman and Co-Founder, Pacific American Fish Company (PAFCO)

The Vision Fund

Investing in Our Voice. Building Our Future.

The Vision Fund is CKA's community of sustained, multi-year supporters whose commitment provides the stability and flexibility to strengthen successful programs, launch new initiatives like the NextGen Summit, and invest in the people, relationships, and infrastructure that sustain our long-term growth and impact.

With gratitude to our Vision Fund donors

CHAIRMAN'S CIRCLE
$100,000 annually
3- or 5-year commitment

Eugene & Carol Choi
Michelle Rhyu & Stephen Neal
Michael & Sunny Yang
Peter Yun Huh & Jihee Kim Huh – Embrace Unity Foundation
Sunny K. Park Family Foundation

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE
$25,000 annually
3- or 5-year commitment

Bill & Mary Kim's Charitable Fund
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Marie Oh Huber
Paul & Ellen Chae
Randy & Sue Sim
Robin-Hwajin Yoon Kim Foundation
Salle Yoo & Jeffrey Gray
Yul Kwon

Every program is made possible by people who believe in Korean American leadership.

Together, we strengthen our community's voice at the national level and invest in leaders at every stage, from students to seasoned executives.

15 YEAR ANNIVERSARY COUNCIL OF KOREAN AMERICANS

WAYS TO GIVE

Your generosity helps CKA develop and empower Korean American leaders at every stage and across every sector. Together, we strengthen our community's networks, expand opportunities for future generations, and amplify the Korean American voice nationwide.

Every gift, at every level,
moves our shared vision forward.

Support CKA

- **Online:** by credit card or PayPal at councilka.org/donate
- **Check:** payable to "Council of Korean Americans," 1100 15th Street NW, Suite 400, Washington, DC 20005
- **ACH bank transfer, stock or cryptocurrency:** contact giving@councilka.org
- **Donor-advised fund (DAF):** recommend a grant to "Council of Korean Americans," EIN 27-3496925, through your DAF sponsor, and let us know at giving@councilka.org so we can thank you
- **Matching gifts:** many employers match charitable contributions

CKA is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, EIN 27-3496925, and holds a Gold Seal of Transparency on GuideStar. Questions: giving@councilka.org.

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