

# I-N-A-P-A

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF  
ASIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS



# Introductions

- ▶ Name
- ▶ Title
- ▶ City
- ▶ How long have you worked in local government?
- ▶ Optional: cultural Identity

# Origins

- ▶ At ICMA's 2015 Annual Conference in Seattle, keynote speaker Vernā Myers asked attendees to self-identify by various groups.
- ▶ When she called out "Asian," only a handful of people stood among a crowd of a thousand.
- ▶ After the session, non-Asian colleagues remarked that they were surprised to see so few Asians in the crowd; of course, those present were not.
- ▶ An affinity group was started, like LGHN and NFBPA

## I-NAPA Mission and Vision

- ▶ I-NAPA's Vision: Inspire Inclusion.
- ▶ I-NAPA's Mission: Advance inclusive local government by empowering leadership and supporting excellence among public administrators of Asian heritage by developing emerging leaders, providing networking opportunities, and offering other unique resources.

# I-NAPA Goals & Objectives

- ▶ I-NAPA is an organization encouraging excellence among public administrators of Asian heritage by:
  - ▶ Developing leadership of emerging leaders of Asian heritage
  - ▶ Supporting public administrators of Asian heritage as leaders
  - ▶ Providing networking opportunities
  - ▶ Providing unique resources to Asian public administrators

# Events and Resources

- ▶ Monthly Boba Breaks (National and State)
- ▶ Educational webinars and learning opportunities
- ▶ Access to ICMA jobs board
- ▶ I-NAPA Mentorship program
- ▶ A national network of like-minded leaders looking out for each other

## For More Information

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**Featured Discussion:**

**The Importance of Names in the  
Office for Asian and Pacific Islander  
Employees**



# Disclaimer

- ▶ This advice can be applied to gender pronouns in many ways as well, but today's conversation focuses on names which for API communities is more commonly a place we experience mispronunciations or misuse of our names.
- ▶ This is only just one person's experience and sharing of others' stories. Reach out to others in your circle and organizations to learn more. The first step is awareness of an issue.

# The importance of Names

- **Names are deeply personal.** They are a reflection of a person's self-perception, culture, personal history, and a core part of their identity.
- Using a person's chosen name validates their lived experience and fosters a sense of belonging. It's a constant reminder that you see them for who they truly are.

# Cultural Significance of Names

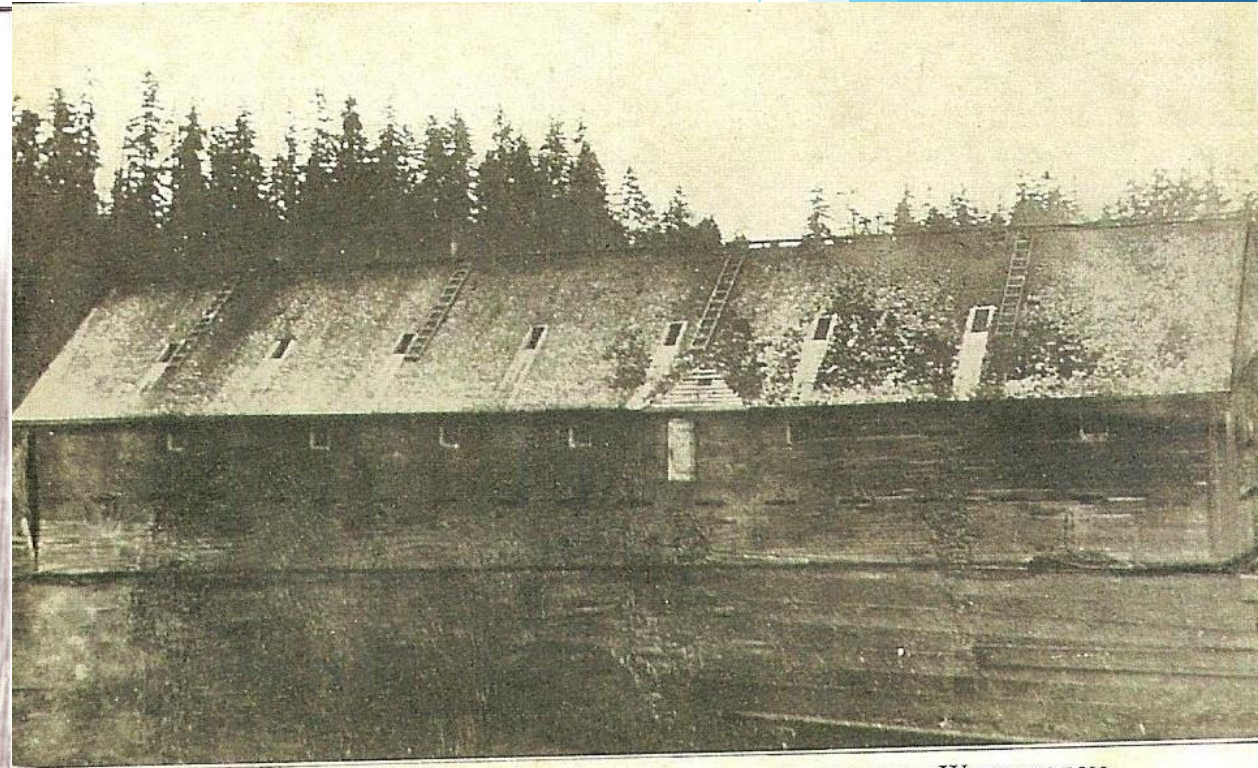
## ▶ Names as Identity:

- ▶ Names carry cultural, familial, and historical meanings in many Asian and Pacific Islander cultures.

## ▶ Examples:

- ▶ Chinese names often have characters that convey specific meanings and are chosen to reflect virtues or aspirations.
- ▶ Pacific Islander names may indicate familial ties, land, or significant events

# My Name Story: Bucoda (Buh-Ko-Duh)



BUCODA TERRITORIAL PENITENTIARY NEAR CENTRALIA, WASHINGTON

# My Name Story: Bucoda (Buh-Ko-Duh)

- ▶ It was first named "Seatco", an English translation of a Salish word meaning evil spirit or devil.
- ▶ The Northern Pacific Railroad located a station at Seatco in 1872.
- ▶ Later the town was renamed Bucoda using the first two letters of three principal investors in local industries- Buckley, Coulter, and David
- ▶ Major industries during the boom included lumber, coal mines, a box factory, shingle mill, a brickyard, a door factory, and a blacksmith shop.
- ▶ From 1874 to 1888 Bucoda was the site of Washington's first territorial prison. It was discontinued when the state opened the Washington State Penitentiary in Walla Walla, Washington.

# My Name Story: Bucoda (Buh-Ko-Duh)

- ▶ The town from the late 1880's to the early 1900's, was the largest commercial district in Thurston County.
- ▶ Bucoda was officially incorporated on June 7, 1910.
- ▶ Now it is a town of about 600, calling themselves the World's Tiniest Town with the Biggest Halloween Spirit

# My Name Story: Bucoda (Buh-Ko-Duh)

- ▶ Was raised away from my cultural roots
- ▶ Parents chose this name because it was unique.
- ▶ It is memorable and is always a fun story of why.
- ▶ Learning about the history and exploring towns like this has shaped me today.
- ▶ I was raised away from much of my own culture, but my name has allowed me to connect with my family and peers as I have stepped into my culture in my adult years.

# Challenges Faced by Asian and Pacific Islander Employees

- ▶ **Mispronunciation and Anglicization:**
  - ▶ **Cultural Erasure:** Adopting a Westernized name can contribute to the erosion of cultural identity and heritage.
  - ▶ **Assimilation Pressure:** Individuals may feel pressured to change their names to fit in or avoid discrimination, leading to a loss of personal and cultural authenticity.
  - ▶ **Convenience vs. Identity:** The convenience of a Westernized name should not outweigh the importance of preserving one's cultural identity and personal story.



# Challenges Faced by Asian and Pacific Islander Employees

- ▶ **Impact on Identity:**
  - ▶ **Personal Impact:** Frequent mispronunciation of names can lead to feelings of alienation, frustration, and invisibility, impacting self-esteem and confidence.
  - ▶ **Microaggressions:** Persistent mispronunciation may be viewed as a microaggression, suggesting that one's name—and by extension, identity—is not worth the effort to learn.
  - ▶ **Professional Consequences:** Mispronunciation in professional settings can undermine credibility and affect career opportunities, as individuals may feel less respected or acknowledged.

# Importance of Correct Name Usage

- ▶ **Respect and Inclusivity:** Making an effort to pronounce names correctly shows respect and fosters an inclusive environment where everyone feels valued.
- ▶ **Active Listening:** Take the time to listen, learn, and practice pronouncing names correctly, demonstrating genuine interest and respect.
- ▶ **Enhancing Employee Morale:** Acknowledging names can improve morale, increase job satisfaction, and strengthen employee relationships.

# What You Can Do

- ▶ **Mistakes happen, but correction is key.** If you mispronounce a name, apologize sincerely, and make a real effort moving forward, and avoid dwelling on the mistake. Everyone makes mistakes, and focusing on growth fosters a more forgiving environment.
- ▶ **Be an advocate for your colleagues.** If you witness someone intentionally or accidentally mispronouncing a coworker's name, politely correct them in private or offer to discreetly intervene. This demonstrates your support for your colleagues and reinforces the importance of using the correct pronouns.

# What your Organization Can Do

- ▶ **Promoting Name Awareness.** Encourage the use of phonetic spelling guides and name pronunciation workshops.
- ▶ **Preferred names on email addresses and communication materials.** Extend the use of preferred names beyond internal systems. Update email address, name tags, and business cards to reflect chosen names.
- ▶ **Standardize preferred name usage on company ID cards.** While legal names may be necessary for security purposes, explore the possibility of including preferred names on the ID cards and many companies are doing it already. This small change can make a significant difference in how someone feels valued and respected in the workplace.
- ▶ **Encouraging Open Dialogue.** Foster an environment where employees feel comfortable discussing the significance of their names and correcting mispronunciations.

# What is Your Name Story?

- ▶ Please feel open to share your name story if you feel comfortable doing so.
- ▶ Have you experienced mis-naming in your workplace?
- ▶ What can you, and your organization, do to be aware of the importance of names?