

International Network of Asian Public Administrators (I-NAPA) Leader Interview



Monica Davis
Finance Management Analyst II
City of Hayward

Elaine: What attracts you to local government?

Monica: The ability to have impact in people's daily lives. I worked in a university setting for 6 years, and I wanted to get back to serving a broader community.

Elaine: What's an example of that kind of impact that you're proud of?

Monica: Over the last year I worked with a community task force to update Hayward's 25 year old anti-discrimination action plan. In light of federal politics and general community anxiety, people have been turning to local government to find ways to build community. We undertook a 3-4 month community engagement process, updated the document, and we're now in implementation. One of the results was the City Council voted unanimously to become a sanctuary city, despite the possibility of losing federal funding.

Elaine: Wow! That's a big deal. It sounds like the thorough process gave them the confidence that they were making the right decision for their community.

Elaine: Has your Asian-Pacific American heritage come up in your professional life in municipal government? How so?

Monica: I'm half Indian and half white, and I bring my whole self to work. We have a diverse community and diverse employees, but even so I don't necessarily look like everyone else. I want everyone to feel welcome, and for me to have a space to feel comfortable and do good work. One thing I've done is to work closely with the City Manager on diversity training for employees. This year I'll be bringing equity and diversity training to every department in the city.

Elaine: Inspiring stuff! What are your future plans?

Monica: I'd like to be a city manager one day, or maybe an assistant city manager. I'm not sure what my next step would be, since there's no linear path there, but I might look for a deputy or assistant role at some point.