

Contact

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Top Skills

Public Speaking
Public Policy
Management

Kiran Ahuja

U.S. Office of Personnel Management
Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Summary

I have spent the better part of my career addressing systemic barriers affecting communities of color through litigation, policy and grassroots advocacy, working inside government to affect change, and through philanthropic support and engagement. I am passionate about creating and managing institutions that are mission-driven, customer-service and community-oriented, responsive, innovative and committed to the highest ideals of compassion and social responsibility.

I have held a number of senior executive positions in the government, nonprofit and philanthropic sectors. I'm currently the CEO at Philanthropy Northwest, a philanthropy-serving organization that supports funders in a six-state region in the Northwest. Over the past few years, we have expanded our DEI programming, and deepened our commitment to equity. I also served as Chief of Staff at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. There, as the second-highest ranking political official, I utilized my skills and experience developed over the past six years in the Obama Administration to support thousands of federal employees committed to serving the public good. As Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, I had the distinct privilege of leading an exciting Initiative and Commission that sought to expand opportunities and increase access to Federal programs and services for underserved Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. In addition, I led a national Asian American women's advocacy organization for five years, taking it from a volunteer network of progressive AAPI activists to one that was fully staffed and positioned to engage in national policy campaigns. And finally, early in my career, I litigated education-related civil rights cases for the U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, many of which included long-standing desegregation cases.

Through these experiences, I have gained a wealth of experience in running both small and large mission-driven organizations;

managing and attracting high-functioning and dedicated staff; setting vision, strategy and scope; and developing and implementing projects with clear timelines and benchmarks. More importantly, I've come to believe that running an effective institution takes humility, compassion and collaboration. And that all institutions should strive toward the greater good for all.

Experience

U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

Director

June 2021 - Present (2 years 5 months)

Washington, District of Columbia, United States

Philanthropy Northwest

CEO

June 2017 - April 2021 (3 years 11 months)

Greater Seattle Area

U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM)

Chief of Staff

November 2015 - January 2017 (1 year 3 months)

Washington, DC

Recruited to be second-ranking official in the Federal government's chief personnel agency (\$2 billion operating budget and 6,000 employees) following highly publicized data breach

- Rebuilt senior leadership team to manage agency key components
- Led and supported 20+ leadership team in core agency functions: providing background investigations, administering retirement and health benefits, setting government-wide personnel policies, and providing professional development and training programs in order to recruit, retain, and develop 2.2 million-strong Federal workforce
- Led and advised on policy development and implementation, budgets, operations, legislation, audits and inspections, personnel matters, and government-wide coordination with the White House and multiple Cabinet agencies
- Oversaw key initiatives relating to modernizing workforce, improving government-wide diversity and inclusion, White House-led hiring reforms, employee engagement practices, and improving administration of Administrative Law Judges program

- Directed and managed key internal agency-wide functions, including identifying opportunities to improve organizational effectiveness among program offices, overseeing senior leadership hiring and performance management across the agency, and spearheading efforts to streamline regulatory and agency communication processes
- Represented the agency in senior meetings on government-wide personnel policy, diversity/inclusion, budget & operations, health/retirement benefits, and regulatory, legislative, and policy issues

White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders

Executive Director

December 2009 - November 2015 (6 years)

Appointed under presidential Executive Order to relaunch community-driven policy, outreach and service initiative focused on Asian American and Pacific Islanders

- Assembled and led multi-disciplinary staff recruited from public and private sectors
- Executed public-facing role, speaking at hundreds of events reaching more than 30,000 individuals nationwide, and serving as Administration surrogate to the AAPI community
- Provided strategic direction for the Initiative, working with 23 Federal agencies and Executive Offices, and a 20-member presidentially-appointed Advisory Commission
- Coordinated annual strategic plans by 23 Federal agencies with key deliverables and benchmarks like increasing data disaggregation of racial/ethnic Federal data, improving access to Federal programs for limited English proficient individuals and outreach to AAPI communities, and agency-specific initiatives that expanded opportunity for AAPI communities
- Created an infrastructure that funneled hundreds of community-led policy recommendations to senior Federal officials across government
- Oversaw development of regional infrastructure, engagement and technical assistance across 10 Federal regions with more than 300 Federal regional employees
- Managed public/private partnership initiative with Federal agencies, foundations and corporations
- Pursued numerous policy efforts impacting AAPI communities, including health & safety of nail salon workers, Filipino WWII veterans compensation fund, bullying/harassment of South Asians/Muslim students, immigration reform, DACA, diversity and inclusion in government

National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum

Executive Director

March 2003 - January 2008 (4 years 11 months)

Recruited to be first full-time Executive Director for organization dedicated to grassroots organizing, education and advocacy in issues of concern to Asian American women

- Built organization from \$50,000 entity with all-volunteer staff to a \$500,000 enterprise employing seven-member paid staff
- Advised Board of Directors on organizational structure, resource allocation, strategic planning and advocacy priorities
- Designed and managed programmatic work: federal and state policy advocacy, education & policy campaigns, advocacy and leadership trainings, multiple conferences including 10-year anniversary, and community-based participatory research projects
- Oversaw national and state policy advocacy efforts around broad women's issues, reproductive health, human trafficking and immigration reform
- Managed all fundraising efforts including grant writing, relationship-building with foundations, donor and member cultivation, and board fundraising
- Formed effective, strategic partnerships with non-profit organizations focused on women's, AAPI, anti-violence, immigrant, environmental and reproductive health issues

American University Washington College of Law

Adjunct Professor

May 2003 - May 2007 (4 years 1 month)

- Taught Public Interest & Government Lawyering Seminar
- Developed syllabus, assigned readings, held lectures/discussions on public interest legal topics
- Provided advise and direction to students in their DC externship placements

U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division

Trial Attorney

August 1999 - July 2002 (3 years)

Competitively selected as one of five Honors Programs attorneys to join the federal government's principal civil rights enforcement agency

- Litigated cases involving school desegregation, bi-lingual education, and harassment, including initiating and successfully resolving Department's first student racial harassment case

- Following 9/11 attacks, helped launch National Origin Working Group to increase number of complaints and investigations affecting immigrant communities

Education

University of Georgia School of Law

Doctor of Law (J.D.) · (1995 - 1998)

Spelman College

Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Political Science · (1991 - 1993)