



**The Future of Business**  
**A Virtual Event Series for AAPI Entrepreneurs and Business Leaders**  
**Thursday, October 1, 2020 – 2:00pm EDT to 3:00pm EDT**

***Government Procurement Tools, Resources and Opportunities for AAPI-owned Businesses***

*This White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (WHIAAPI) virtual event is a collaboration between the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), and the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to inform AAPI-owned small businesses about the tools, resources and opportunities available at these three cabinet-level agencies. It features special opening remarks from the U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Elaine L. Chao, who is Co-Chair of WHIAAPI, alongside U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross, who we will hear from later in the series. We will also hear from Dr. Paul Hsu, Chair of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (PAC-AAPIs).*

**AGENDA**

**Brief Welcome by WHIAAPI**

WHIAAPI Executive Director, Tina Wei Smith

**Special Remarks**

U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Elaine L. Chao  
PAC-AAPI Chair, Dr. Paul Hsu

**Introduction of Panel Experts**

WHIAAPI Executive Director, Tina Wei Smith

**Presentations by DoC OSDBU, DoT OSDBU & SBA**

*Business Tools, Resources, & Opportunities for AAPI-owned Businesses*

- *Willis Morris, Acting Assistant Secretary for Administration and DOT OSDBU Director*
- *LaJuene Desmukes, DOC OSDBU Director*
- *Ben Raju, SBA Los Angeles District Office Director*

**Question & Answer with Expert Panelists**

WHIAAPI Executive Director, Tina Wei Smith - Moderator

## SELECTED SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES



### **Elaine L. Chao**

U.S. Secretary of Transportation

Secretary Elaine Chao is currently the U.S. Secretary of Transportation. This is her second cabinet position. She served as U.S. Secretary of Labor from 2001 to January 2009 and is the first Asian American woman to be appointed to the President's cabinet in American history.

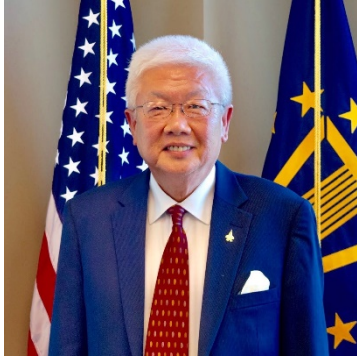
Secretary Chao comes to the U.S. Department of Transportation with extensive experience in the transportation sector. Early in her career, she specialized in transportation financing in the private sector. She began her executive career in public service working on transportation issues at the White House. She then served as Deputy Maritime Administrator, U. S. Department of Transportation; Chairman of the Federal Maritime Commission; and, Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation. As U.S. Secretary of Transportation, she is a strong advocate for safety, and the importance of infrastructure and innovation in our nation's economic competitiveness and growth.

Secretary Chao has a distinguished career in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors. An immigrant who arrived in America at the age of eight speaking no English, she received her citizenship at the age of 19. Her experience transitioning to a new country has motivated her to devote most of her professional life to ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to build better lives for themselves and their families. As U.S. Secretary of Labor, she focused on increasing the competitiveness of America's workforce in a global economy, promoted job training, and set new records in workplace safety and health.

Prior to the Department of Labor, Secretary Chao was President and Chief Executive Officer of United Way of America, where she restored public trust and confidence in one of America's premier institutions of private charitable giving, after it had been tarnished by financial mismanagement and abuse. Secretary Chao also served as Director of the Peace Corps, where she established the first programs in the Baltic nations and the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.

Secretary Chao earned her MBA from the Harvard Business School and an economics degree from Mount Holyoke College. Honored for her extensive record of accomplishments and public service, she is the recipient of 37 honorary doctorate degrees.

Secretary Chao is a resident of Jefferson County, Kentucky. Prior to her appointment as Secretary of Transportation, she was a Distinguished Fellow at Hudson Institute. She is the eldest of six daughters born to Dr. James S.C. Chao and the late Mrs. Ruth Mulan Chu Chao.



## **Dr. Paul Hsu**

Founder  
Hsu Educational Foundation

Paul S. Hsu, Ph.D. serves as Chairman of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders. An Engineer, Entrepreneur, Business Leader, Author and Public Servant, Paul is a first-generation immigrant who came to America in 1976, receiving citizenship in 1980, later successfully achieving his American Dream.

Paul founded Manufacturing Technology, Inc. (MTI) in 1984, serving the DoD in avionics and battlefield electronics. Following MTI, Paul built three successful businesses - Total Parts Plus, Inc., an internet-based data content company providing electronic component obsolescence management and engineering services; ActiGraph, LLC, an electronic medical device manufacturer of a product that collects biometric data; and Crestview Technology Air Park, an airport development providing infrastructure for aerospace and technology driven solutions in Northwest Florida.

Previous Presidential Appointments and roles in public service include President's Export Council (PEC), SBA's National Advisory Board, SBA's Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Board, USAF Chief of Staff Civic Leaders Advisory Group, Associate Administrator of the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Office of Government Contracting and Business Development.

Paul serves as National Chairman for the International Leadership Foundation, an organization bringing young Asian American leaders to Washington, D.C. for summer internships. As Founder and Chairman of Hsu Educational Foundation Inc., Paul's vision has inspired establishment of Hsu Innovation Institutes of learning, hosting business to student initiatives that inspire and prepare tomorrow's workforce with high demand skills.

Receiving an M.S. degree in 1978 from the University of Central Missouri in Industrial Management and System Engineering, Paul received his Ph.D. in 1992 in Engineering Management from LaSalle University and in 1995, completed a three-year Executive Educational Program at Harvard Business School. Since 2014, Paul holds a Sr. Research Fellow position in the Harvard University Asia Center. In 2014, Paul authored and published *Guardians of the Dream, The Enduring Legacy of America's Immigrants*.



**Willis Morris**

Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization  
U.S. Department of Transportation

Willis Morris is currently serving as the Director, Office of Small & Disadvantaged Business Utilization at the Department of Transportation and performs the duties of the Assistant Secretary for Administration.

Throughout his career, Mr. Morris has held many leadership positions within the private sector, Federal and State governments, including serving at the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary), Commonwealth of Virginia (Deputy Secretary, Health & Human Resources), and State of California (Deputy Director, DC Office).

Mr. Morris earned a bachelor's degree from Saginaw Valley State University (College).



**LaJuene Desmukes**

Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization  
U.S. Department of Commerce

LaJuene Desmukes is the Director for the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization for the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC). Ms. Desmukes reports to the Deputy Secretary for DOC and is responsible for providing leadership, oversight, and policy for the Department's Small Business Program. Her wealth of knowledge and experience has helped to push DOC to the forefront among cabinet level agencies in small business goal achievement.

Ms. Desmukes has over twenty years of Federal contracting experience, including over 13 years as a fully warranted contracting officer. Ms. Desmukes is a member of the Federal Acquisition Council Small Business Team responsible for implementing changes in the Federal Acquisition Regulation related to the Small Business Program.

Ms. Desmukes is the Department's liaison to the AbilityOne Program. Through her advocacy and leadership, the Department has created significant opportunities for people with disabilities through the acquisition process. She is a Senior Fellow with the Council for Excellence in Government.



## **Ben Raju**

Deputy District Director

Los Angeles District Office, U.S. Small Business Administration

Ben Raju is the Deputy District Director for the U.S. Small Business Administration's (SBA) Los Angeles District Office. Mr. Raju is responsible for providing the leadership, management and oversight required to optimize the deployment of all SBA programs and services within the nation's largest lending market.

During his Federal career, Mr. Raju has represented the SBA in various capacities throughout the United States, including Assistant District Director of Lender Relations, Collateral Cashier, Customer Service Representative, and as a Public Information Officer with SBA's Office of Disaster Assistance where he was responsible for communicating the agency's Disaster Loan Program for the Western United States and the U.S. Pacific Territories. While he is passionate about utilizing his experience and assisting the diverse small business communities, Mr. Raju engages the District's many resources, ideas, industries, and cultures to create a strong eco-system where commerce can continue to thrive locally and have a dynamic influence globally.