



Biography of City Councilmember, Dr. Nina Ahmad

Nina Ahmad, Ph.D., believes in the power of people to make positive change and advocates for equity for all. Dr. Ahmad was honored to win one of the seven At-Large seats on City Council on November 7, 2023, after securing the Democratic nomination in a 27-candidate race on May 16, 2023. She is the first ever South Asian American, the first Muslim woman and first immigrant in recent history to serve on Council.

As a child of war, having lived through the War of Liberation for Bangladesh, she never forgets she stands in that sacrifice of the 3 million who were killed and the 250,000 women and girls who were sexually brutalized. She also stands in solidarity with, and underscores the sacrifices of the Black community, which has been fighting for over 400 years for equity in all spaces. She is keenly aware that their collective fight for civil rights spurred changes in the immigration laws; ending the race-based immigration quota system which opened the door for her many years later.

Dr. Ahmad received her Ph.D. in Chemistry from the University of Pennsylvania, followed by a Molecular Genetics Postdoctoral Fellowship at Thomas Jefferson University. She is a patent holder of “Methods of detecting a Genetic Predisposition for Osteoarthritis”, held a joint Assistant Professorship at Wills Eye Hospital and the Ophthalmology Department of Jefferson Medical College and subsequent Directorship of Molecular Biology of the Research Department at Wills Eye Hospital.

She served as a Deputy Mayor in Mayor Jim Kenney’s first term, where she was the first Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Cabinet member ever in a Philadelphia mayoral administration, and established the Department of Public Engagement; a first such department for the City.

Having had the honor to be appointed by **President Obama** to his **AAPI Commission**, Dr. Ahmad learned the importance of representation as government shapes public policy. She worked on issues such as Nail Salon Worker Safety, antibullying efforts in schools, and disproportionate deportation in certain Asian communities. As the **President of the PA chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW)** and former Philadelphia Chapter President, she has worked to end sexual harassment and level the playing field for marginalized communities; advocating for living wages, working conditions, and a fair and just work environment for those in low-wage jobs. As Trustee of the largest regional community foundation, the Philadelphia Foundation for nine years, she served in two key financial roles: chair of the grant-making committee – reviewing and approving over \$40 million in grants each year – and member of the investment committee which reviewed and approved all investment decisions of a half-billion-dollar endowment. She is the co-owner of a family community development finance business for over 30 years, making responsible decisions on community investments with union-generated and union labor-built partnerships. She is an elected member of the PA State Democratic Committee and established the first ever Asian American & Pacific Islander (AAPI) Caucus. She also serves as a longtime committee person of the 9th Democratic Ward.

Dr. Ahmad received the Distinguished Advocate Award from the Greater Philadelphia Health Action (July 27, 2025) for her ongoing support of equitable healthcare access. Bethanna (providing child welfare services and behavioral health care in Philadelphia), awarded their 2025 Kids Champion Award to Dr. Ahmad in recognition of her outstanding leadership and unwavering advocacy for children and families in Philadelphia. In the Spring of 2026, The Food Trust



awarded the inaugural Visionary Leader Award to Dr. Ahmad for her leadership in nutrition security across the city. She was the recipient of the Global Community Impact Award in June 2026, from the Brotherly Love Pro-Am Foundation and League in recognition of Dr. Ahmad's leadership and unwavering commitment to serving communities both locally and globally. Dr. Ahmad was one of City & State PA's 2023 AAPI Power 100, listed as one of the most influential members of Pennsylvania's AAPI community. In 2022, she was honored as one of the City & State PA Above and Beyond – one of 40 women in Pennsylvania recognized for their accomplishments in government, business, nonprofit organizations, medicine, and more. She was also a 2022 honoree of the Philadelphia Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). Dr. Ahmad was recognized as a Trailblazer for Women's History Month and continues to make a positive impact on Pennsylvania. Once again, she was recently recognized by City & State PA as one of PA's 100 most influential women leaders, as well as the 2023 The Phenomenal Woman Honoree of the Grands As Parents.

As an At-Large City Councilmember, Dr. Ahmad uses her experience as a scientist and activist to find responsible, evidence-based solutions to address Philadelphia's critical priorities.

She is the proud mother of two amazing young women and resides in East Mt. Airy with her husband.