

Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: August 16, 2024

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx and International Institute of Minnesota (Hybrid)

Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Shawn Sorrell, Foua-Choua Khang, Paul Slack, Philip Gaye-Bai, Farhia Said, Tonia Lofton, Lolita Davis-Carter, Cratè Darden, Alex Abraha, Abdirahman Ali-Mumin, Micaela Schuneman, Nelly Torori, Manuel Zuniga, Pa Chua Vang, Chris Green, Lizzette Banini, Joanna Rosa, Josefina Geronimo
- **DHS & DCYF Staff:** Commissioner Jodi Harpstead, Helen Ghebre, Cate Dymit, Steven Wilson, Dr. Karen McKinney, Kelly Barnebey, Deqa Sayid, Heidi Hamilton, Miriam Hirman, Jazlyn Bradley, Chue Zha Thao, Reena Shetty
- **Public Attendees:** Angela Fields, Meaghan Hunt, Jared Sawyer, Simran Chugani, Dr. Richard Oni

Agenda

12:00	Lunch and Community Networking / WebEx Opens
1:00	Open Public Meeting and Land Acknowledgement
1:05	Introductions and Welcome
1:20	Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
1:25	Community Celebrations and Shoutouts
1:35	Workgroup Updates & Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislative Workgroup• Topics & Issues Workgroup• Equitable Outcomes Workgroup
2:00	CECLC Co-Chair Nominations & Vote
2:30	Break
2:40	Commissioner Jodi Harpstead: Welcome & Agency Update
3:00	Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Evaluation of the Assessment for Racial and Ethnic Disparities (HEARD) Project: Presentation & Discussion
3:50	Administrative Updates
4:00	Closing

Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, and Introductions

Shawn Sorrell called the meeting to order and led the council through a land acknowledgement and introductions.

Decisions Made

Review and approve July minutes and meeting agenda:

- Motion to approve meeting agenda and July minutes: Paul Slack
- Second: Manuel Zuniga
- The motion passed

Community Celebrations and Shoutouts

Everyone was encouraged to share upcoming events and give shoutouts.

- Shawn Sorrell recognized the August observances on today's agenda: Child Support Awareness Month, Black August, and Lao American Artist Heritage Month. He gave shoutouts to Micaela Schuneman and the International Institute for providing today's amazing meeting space, and to the DHS Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) for the invite to its presentation at Metro State University. Shawn also shared the [Small Businesses Resource Fair](#) on Friday, September 13 from 9:30am-1:00pm at the International Institute of MN.
- Cate Dymit encouraged everyone on behalf of Hli Vang to participate in the 2024 DHS Equity Week on September 23-27. More details will be shared in the post-meeting email update.
- Dr. Karen McKinney shared the Nexus Foundation's [ROOT Sabbatical Fellowship](#) opportunity. The fellowship offers three-month-long sabbaticals to ten BIPOC movement leaders in Minnesota. Applications open Monday, August 5 and close Monday, August 26. More details on their website.
- Manuel Zuniga shared Ignite the Vote: Empowering Asian Pacific Islander Voices, a civic engagement session on Thursday, September 12, 2:00-3:30 pm at Xia Gallery and Café in St. Paul. Please come for an insightful event focusing on the key issues facing API communities in Minnesota and the vital role of civic engagement. Discover how your vote can make a difference and learn from the leaders shaping our community.

Workgroup Updates

Legislative and Policy Workgroup

The workgroup has enlisted Community Relations' help to craft a survey to the CECLC for the purpose of gathering input, prioritizing its working list of priorities, and identifying topic areas to further explore.

Topics and Issues Workgroup

The workgroup continues to discuss strategies to increase community engagement and is planning CECLC Community Engagement Sessions. Foua-Choua Khang invited council members to join those sessions if interested.

Equitable Outcomes Workgroup

Foua-Choua Khang shared the workgroup is currently refining its Charter to solidify its objectives. Members discussed these three topics: what we need to be successful; what we want to see happen; and what we can do.

She encouraged council members to take DHS's Orientation to Anti-Racism, which is scheduled on an ongoing basis. Gaosheng Thao from DHS's Employee Culture Human Resources division has been sharing their equity dashboard so that the workgroup remains informed and can advise the agency. One item from the last discussion was the need to attract and retain Latinx job applicants.

The workgroup is also looking at the Aging & Disability Services programs and their equity measures including reviewing the Home and Community-Based Service (HCBS) provider capacity building grants implementation.

CECLC Co-Chair Nominations & Vote

Community Relations received three nominations for council co-chair, one of which was withdrawn prior to today's meeting, leaving two nominations for consideration. Their nominations were distributed to the council in advance of today's meeting.

- Chris Green
- Philip Gaye-Bai

Shawn Sorrell opened the floor to any council members who wish to self nominate. There were none.

Chris and Philip shared their respective backgrounds and remarks with the council prior to an open vote. After deliberation and tabulation, council leadership congratulated Chris Green for the most number of votes. Community Relations will notify the Commissioner of the council's nominee for co-chair, with the intention to have the new co-chair seated for the October council meeting.

Commissioner Jodi Harpstead: Welcome & Agency Update

Helen Ghebre introduced DHS Commissioner Jodi Harpstead who presented council members Cratè Darden and Foua-Choua Khang with certificates of recognition for their work.

She shared DHS's [new mission and vision](#), a current agency transition timeline, and other updates.

DHS's New Mission:

In collaboration with community and partners, DHS supports people to thrive in community and live their healthiest and fullest lives.

DHS's New Vision:

All people in Minnesota have what they need to thrive in community with no disparities.

Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Evaluation of the Assessment for Racial and Ethnic Disparities (HEARD) Project: Presentation & Discussion

Due to the time, this agenda item will be moved to the Equity Outcomes Workgroup or to a future council meeting.

Administrative Updates

Helen Ghebre encouraged council members to fully engage in DHS Equity Week offerings.

She indicated the 2024 CECLC appointment process is underway. The review committee spent time between August 12-19 reviewing applicant materials, scoring applicants based on criteria/scorecard provided by Community Relations, and convening to determine recommendations for the Commissioner.

Meeting adjourned at 3:32 PM