

Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: July 19, 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, Kimetha Johnson, Micaela Schuneman, Nelly Torori, Manuel Zuniga, Pa Chua Vang, Shannon Geshick, Josefina Geronimo, Lizette Banini
- **DHS & DCYF Staff:** Helen Ghebre, Cate Dymit, Steven Wilson, Kelly Barnebey, Nikki Farago, Malissa Adams, Alexander Walker, Elyse Bailey, Nicole Juan, Matt Burdick, Kristy Graume, Leigh Grauman, Jennifer Sommerfeld, Liz Scherber, Peter Butler, Daisy Mairura, Sarah Florman, Gaosheng Thao, Dr. Karen McKinney, Patrick Holman, Paige Anderson, Jerad Green, Deondra Avery, De Anna Conover, Micah Tran, Jessica Williams, Justin Wu
- **Public Attendees:** 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	Re-introduce disability and elderly waiver programs access as key priority for CECLC
2:25	Break
2:30	Conversation with DHS Legislative Team: 2024 Session Review & Priorities for 2025
3:50	Administrative Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-Chair Nominations Open• Appointment Review Panel Opportunity
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. Micaela Schuneman gave a warm welcome to the International Institute of Minnesota and a brief summary of its history and programming.

Decisions Made

Review and approve June minutes and meeting agenda:

- Motion to approve meeting agenda and June minutes: Kimetha Johnson
- Second: Lolita Davis-Carter
- The motion passed

Community Celebrations and Shoutouts

Shawn Sorrell opened the floor for members to share.

- Manuel Zuniga invited everyone to the Cultural Society of Filipino-Americans (CSFA)'s 36th Annual [Philippine Day](#) on Saturday, July 10 from 3:00-8:00 pm at Ojibway Park in Woodbury.
- [60th Anniversary of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 Special Event](#), Wednesday, July 24, from 1:00-2:30 pm (Eastern Time)
- US Census Bureau [Understanding the Differences Between Statistics Webinar](#), Thursday, July 25 at 2:00 pm (Eastern Time).
- [AA and NHPI Mental Health Convening](#) on Wednesday, July 24.
- Fahan Organization [Back to School Drive/IEP Educational Event](#) on Saturday, August 17
 - Accepting donations for a school supplies drive.
- Dr. Richard Oni shared about the success of the 10th African Mental Health Summit that took place on Friday, July 12.
- Shawn Sorrell recognized the July monthly observances shared on the meeting agenda including National Disability Independence Day, National Grilling Month, and BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month.

Workgroup Updates

Legislative and Policy Workgroup

At its last meeting, the workgroup discussed aligning its goals with the priorities of the full council. The workgroup is narrowing in on its legislative priorities for the upcoming session and identifying actionable items to follow up on. The workgroup is interested in increasing community engagement with the council and the legislative process.

Shawn Sorrell provided an update on the council's process of engaging with Tribal communities and clarified the council is to work through the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) and the DHS Office of Indian Policy (OIP) regarding Tribal priorities and Tribal engagement.

Topics and Issues Workgroup

At its last meeting, the workgroup continued planning for CECLC Community Engagement Sessions. The workgroup discussed presentation materials providing an overview of DHS programs and services, and these questions: What is the intent of the community engagement sessions? What can community members attending expect? What are the intended outcomes of these sessions? What do you hope to see as the impact or outcome from outreaching to these communities?

Equitable Outcomes Workgroup

Shawn Sorrell announced Nelly Torori will be stepping into the co-lead role for the Equitable Outcomes workgroup.

At its last meeting, Barb Ness from the DHS Strategic Planning team provided an update on key themes that have emerged from the 'Reimagining the New DHS Roadshow.' Barb noted the timeline for 'New DHS' was planned around the Commissioner's Forum on August 8 and DHS Day in the Park on August 14 to solidify who DHS is (e.g. mission & vision) and its priorities.

There are a number of upcoming opportunities for engagement: DHS Managers Conference, DHS staff survey, and two virtual coffee chats: July 19 and July 24 (open to everyone).

Re-introduce Disability and Elderly Waiver Programs Access as Key Priority for CECLC

Abdi Ali-Mumin and Farhia Said shared they have been leading engagements with families and mothers who are struggling with accessing disability services for their children. They have been attending spaces with community members to hear more about the barriers families face and identify where there are gaps. They are hoping for greater engagement and collaboration with DHS around solutions for improving access to Disability and Elderly Waiver Programs. There are community-based events where parents/caregivers/relatives are able to meet and plan their participation in potential DHS listening sessions or roundtables and at future CECLC workgroup meetings.

Lizette Banini in the DHS Aging and Disability Services Administration (ADSA) responded that waiver applicants are waiting 3-6 months for an assessment while in the midst of experiencing great need for services. In addition, the ADSA received feedback the pieces of the assessment are unnecessarily duplicative, i.e. applicants must repeat their story at each step of the process. The ADSA has had internal conversations with Community Relations to expand community engagement around this topic.

Conversation with DHS Legislative Team: 2024 Session Review & Priorities for 2025

Shawn Sorrell introduced Deputy Commissioner Nikki Farago who introduced Matt Burdick, DHS Legislative Relations Director, who provided some updates from the DHS Legislative team. After 10 years of service, he recently announced his last day at DHS will be August 13. Matt is confident his team is committed and more

than capable to carry on this work. Kristy Graume will serve as interim director. Shawn thanked Matt for his service and his work with the CECLC.

Matt presented a 2024 legislative session recap, a description of the DHS proposal process, the 2025 legislative picture, and DHS's budget priorities. The slide deck was emailed to the CECLC prior to today's meeting.

It was asked whether the Legislative team constructs a narrative around DHS guiding principles and whether they are reshaped for each legislative session. Elyse Bailey responded a narrative format would be a good idea to explore going forward.

There was a comment to remember that staff are community members and that community engagement can occur within agency teams, not only in external outreach efforts. Staff as community members bring their perspective and expertise to this work.

Helen Ghebre asked the CECLC to consider getting engaged in internal processes. The Equity Analysis Toolkit may be a good place to start, and council leadership will have internal discussion about this.

Administrative Updates

Helen Ghebre indicated DHS Community Relations is now officially accepting nominations for council co-chair. A nomination questionnaire was sent out with the meeting materials this month and is due by July 31, 2024. For more information about the co-chair role, please reach out to Foua-Choua Khang.

In addition, Community Relations is preparing for the upcoming 2024 CECLC appointment process and is seeking 3-4 CECLC members to serve on the review committee.

The review committee will be tasked with reviewing the applicant materials, scoring applicants based on criteria/scorecard provided by Community Relations, convening to determine recommendations for the Commissioner, and potentially participating in brief applicant interviews. The time commitment would be approximately a total of 6 hours between August 12-19. Please reach out to Cate Dymit if interested and to indicate availability.

Community Relations invited council members to participate in an upcoming DHS Engagement Month Session to increase visibility of the council and build relationships across DHS. It occurs on Thursday, August 15 from 9:30-11:30am (hybrid), 11:30am-12:30pm (in-person only networking) at the Elmer L. Andersen Human Services Building, Room C2370-2380, in St. Paul and via WebEx. Contact Cate Dymit if interested in participating.

The MMB Management Analysis and Development (MAD) team members Jenna Laine, Josh Hill, and Trevor Frey are working with DHS on an environmental scan to assist them with a legislative report related to recommendations on preserving the SSI, RSDI, Veterans, or other federal cash benefits paid to a child in foster care. It is hosting listening sessions with individuals who identify with the following populations:

- Youth with lived experience
- Parents whose children were placed in foster care
- Relatives and kinship caregivers, which may include relatives who provide foster care
- Foster parents who are unrelated to the foster youth
- Adoptive parents who are not relatives or kinship caregivers
- Foster care and permanency organizations

- Organizations working with families in voluntary placements or children with disabilities
- Advocates or advocate organizations for children and parents in the child welfare system including:
 - Child advocates
 - Parent advocates
 - Tribal advocates
 - Ombudsperson offices
 - General advocates
- Children's Justice Initiative

Meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM