

Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: June 21, 2024

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx and Minnesota Child Welfare Training Academy (Hybrid)

Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Shawn Sorrell, Foua-Choua Khang, Josefina Geronimo, Chris Green, Paul Slack, Philip Gaye-Bai, Farhia Said, Tonia Lofton, Lolita Davis-Carter, Lizette Banini, Cratè Darden, Alex Abraha, Abdirahman Ali-Mumin, Micaela Schuneman
- **DHS Staff:** Helen Ghebre, Cate Dymit, Kelly Barnebey, Hli Vang, Malissa Adams, Daisy Mairura, Steven Wilson, Alexander Walker, De Anna Conover
- **Public Attendees:** Angela Fields, Amina Mumin

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
2:05	CECLC Leadership Update: Co-chair Appointment Process
2:30	DHS High-Level Overview Continued
2:50	Break
3:00	DHS Updates & Discussion: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reform 2020 Waiver Extension Request• Cultural and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure Development Grant Program (CEMIG) Overview & Q/A
3:30	2025 Legislative Session Engagement Prep
3:50	Closing

Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, and Introductions

Shawn Sorrell welcomed everyone and led the council through a land acknowledgement and introductions.

Decisions Made

Review and approve May minutes and meeting agenda:

- Motion to approve meeting agenda and May minutes: Micaela Schuneman
- Second: Lolita Davis-Carter
- The motion passed

Community Celebrations and Shoutouts

Shawn Sorrell opened the floor for members to share.

- Shawn Sorrell called out the various acknowledgements on today's agenda: Refugee Awareness Month, Pride Month, and Immigrant Heritage Month.
- Chris Green shared the [Fiesta de Crookston](#) on Tuesday, July 9 from 4:00-8:30pm.
- Hli Vang wished to remind everyone this weekend is the [Hmong International Freedom Festival](#) at McMurray Field at Como Park. Free admission this year.
- Paul Slack shared Lutheran Social Services is hosting a [World Refugee Day Celebration and Fundraiser](#) Friday, June 21 from 6:30-8:30pm at the Center for Changing Lives, 2400 Park Avenue South, Minneapolis.
- Helen Ghebre highlighted two events: the Black Men Healing Conference which is underway. Tikki Brown, the new Commissioner for the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF), spoke at that conference. The [Healthy Churches 2030 Roadmap Tour](#) takes place on Saturday, June 22 at the Capri Theater in North Minneapolis from 10am-2pm. DHS will have a booth there. Registration is required and admission is free.
- Lolita Davis-Carter shared the [Juneteenth Minnesota 2024](#) event at the State Capitol on Saturday, June 22 from 12:00-5:00pm. The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH) will have a booth – come say hello.
- Cate Dymit shared the DHS Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) is hosting a learning session on Capacity Building for Restorative Practice on Wednesday, June 26 from 12-2pm. More details will be shared in the post-meeting email update.

Workgroup Updates

Legislative and Policy Workgroup

At its last meeting, the workgroup heard from Theo Rose, Policy Director from Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage about the African American Family Preservation Act (AAFPA), noting its passage and the phased implementation model. Bill implementation starts July 1st and is ongoing.

The workgroup discussed concerns about the role of CECLC in the new Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). Council members emphasized the council's support for the bill and expressed concern about being left out of the transition process to the new agency. They discussed concerns with how the DCYF split will impact the role the CECLC plays in advising around the AAFPA.

Topics and Issues Workgroup

Paul Slack shared the workgroup spent more time discussing community outreach, possibly using Cratè Darden's presentation on DHS High-Level Overview. Workgroup members shared their personal goal statements for advancing priorities of the workgroup, which included bringing the council to the people we represent; engage with members' faith institutions; hear more from DHS about its services; develop collateral to share with communities about the CECLC and its work.

Helen Ghebre added there may opportunities to create printed material and video around these topics, as part of future outreach. Council members may be asked to participate and offer input.

Equitable Outcomes Workgroup

Foua-Choua Khang's co-chair appointment will be ending in August at which time she will participate on CECLC as a community member. She is more than willing to provide mentorship to anyone interested in this leadership opportunity.

In addition, the workgroup is looking for two new co-leads.

CECLC Leadership Update: Co-chair Appointment Process

DHS Community Relations and council leadership have begun seeking nominations for co-chair. Helen Ghebre gave a presentation on the CECLC co-chair appointment process, including co-chair duties and responsibilities; meetings with DHS leadership; and timeline from June through October 2024. July 31 is the deadline to submit co-chair nominations.

Helen indicated four positions on the CECLC currently open for appointment: American Indian Community Representative (1), Community Member Representing Cultural and Ethnic Communities (2), and DHS Employee (1). The Secretary of State postings will open in early July with review by committee in mid-August. An onboarding and new member orientation is planned for early October. We aim to have newly appointed members attend their first council meeting on October 18, 2024.

DHS Updates & Discussion

Liz Banini provided updates on the Reform 2020 Waiver Extension Request and the Olmstead Oversight Group's survey specifically around disability inclusion and choice. Details will be shared in the post-meeting email update.

Farhia Said and Abdi Ali-Mumin also shared their experiences and concerns around access to services due to cultural barriers, language barriers, mental health struggles, and for those with disabilities. Shawn Sorrell asked

the Topics and Issues Workgroup to further explore this conversation to bring to the CECLC at large, going forward.

Shawn briefly touched on the Cultural and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure Development Grant Program (CEMIG) Overview, which Nelly Torori planned for today's meeting but will be tabled for a future meeting.

2025 Legislative Session Engagement Prep

Helen Ghebre presented a high-level overview on preparations for the 2025 legislative session engagement. The DHS Legislative team will present more information at the council's July meeting.

Foua-Choua Khang added the CECLC is currently generously funded through the DHS Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI); however, that is not sustainable. The council needs to be intentional and strategic in devising and championing for its budget as we look ahead to session.

DHS High-Level Overview Continued

Since the last council meeting, Cratè Darden highlighted recent organizational changes within DHS. First, DHS will be separating the Behavioral Health, Housing, and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Administration into two separate administrations, creating the Behavioral Health Administration and the Homelessness, Housing, and Support Services Administration to allow for greater focus on these two important program areas. Also, the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services Division will move to the Aging and Disabilities Services Administration.

The Homelessness, Housing, and Support Services Administration will be responsible for policy and grant-making for all adults and youth experiencing homelessness in Minnesota, and they will administer adult income support services. The Shelter/Housing Programs team from the Office of Economic Opportunity in Children and Family Services will remain in DHS on July 1 and will report to this Administration as will the Housing and Support Services team currently in BHDH.

There were questions [about publicly available data](#); more information will be shared in the post-meeting email update.

Meeting adjourned at 3:37 PM