

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: November 15, 2024

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx and International Institute of Minnesota (Hybrid)

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Sorrell, Chris Green, Philip Gaye-Bai, Micaela Schuneman, Nelly Torori, Josefina Geronimo, Tonia Lofton, Lolita Davis-Carter, Pachua Vang, Abdi Ali-Mumin, Alex Abraha, Kimetha Johnson, Paul Slack, Angela Fields, Craté Darden, Farhia Said, Makrem Al-Amin
- **DHS & DCYF Staff:** Commissioner Jodi Harpstead, Helen Ghebre, Cate Dymit, Laura Villarreal, Kristy Graume, De Anna Conover, Steven Wilson, Kelly Barnebey, Redwan Hamza, Victor Gonzalez, Dr. Karen McKinney, Shelly Diaz, Hli Vang, Abdullahi Soyan, Yeeleng Vue
- **Public Attendees:** Janeth Nicandro, Pa Dao Yang, Victor Obisakin

## 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	Update from DHS Commissioner Jodi Harpstead
2:00	Workgroup Updates & Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Legislative Workgroup</li><li>• Topics &amp; Issues Workgroup</li><li>• Equitable Outcomes Workgroup</li></ul>
	Administrative Updates
2:20	Plan for 2025 Legislative Meet & Greet
2:50	DHS Legislative Update
3:10	Break
3:20	CECLC and Community Relations Partnership on Community Engagement
4:00	Adjourn Full Council Meeting

## 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 October minutes and meeting agenda:

- Motion to approve meeting agenda and October minutes: Abdirahman Ali-Mumin
- Second: Kimetha Johnson
- The motion passed

## Community Celebrations and Shoutouts

Shawn Sorrell opened the floor for members to share.

- Shawn recognized the November observances on the agenda: National Native American Heritage Month, National Family Caregivers Month, Diwali, and Veterans Day.
- Redwan Hamza from the DHS Grants, Equity, Access, and Research (GEAR) Division shared an update on a new funding opportunity to connect people to culturally responsive Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), and explained the eligibility requirements and eligible grant activities. More information will be shared in the post-meeting email update.
- Laura Villarreal gave details on an opportunity to partner with TPT Now to be featured in videos increasing awareness of MinnesotaCare public health insurance. Those videos are scheduled to be released in January 2025. More information will be shared in the post-meeting email update.
- Kimetha Johnson invited everyone to the ROCC & Dakota County Parks Resource Fair and Live Music event on Saturday, November 23 from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Dakota County Lodge at Thompson County Park. More information will be sent in the post-meeting email update.
- Lolita Davis-Carter mentioned an upcoming event "Exploring Reparations for Economic Equity: Minnesota Migration Act" on Tuesday, December 10 from 5:00-8:00 pm at the NorthPoint Conference Center in Minneapolis. [Register here.](#)

## Update from DHS Commissioner Jodi Harpstead

Commissioner Harpstead congratulated the newly-appointed and reappointed council members and Chris Green who as appointed co-chair of the CECLC.

DHS is preparing for the upcoming Legislative Session. In the past several months, it has been conducting intentional engagement with county, Tribal, and community partners to gather their input and feedback on legislative proposals. Commissioner Harpstead congratulated the council on holding its first ever CECLC Legislative Summit on October 1st. The summit was an important step in DHS's effort to engage community in the development of its legislative proposals. She also offered some insight into the potential impact of the recent election results.

To better support meaningful access to programs and services, the Central Communications team is adding capacity to translate information. DHS recently approved hiring for three new translation and communication specialist positions in Spanish, Somali, and Hmong to ensure translations are linguistically correct, culturally relevant, equitably meaningful, and accessible to the diverse communities we serve.

Commissioner Harpstead was asked if she has any insight which legislators will be assigned to the CECLC, given pending split chambers in the Legislature. That is still to be determined. We are not that far along.

Abdi Al-Mumin raised the issue he brought forth at the June CECLC meeting about Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS). Since then, there have been two incidents of child drownings and ongoing community conversations around inequity in service provision, language barriers, and fear among parents. Commissioner Harpstead responded HCBS is a top priority at DHS and is on the agenda in upcoming key meetings.

## **Workgroup Updates**

### **Legislative and Policy Workgroup**

At its last meeting, the DHS Budget Director and DHS Legislative team presented on potential proposals for the 2025 legislative session. Discussion is underway to narrow the scope of emerging legislative priorities and their alignment with the CECLC priorities. The proposed list is extensive. The workgroup may narrow it to a number of areas that align with the CECLC's top priorities and identify council members who are passionate about those particular areas and willing to take the lead on moving those efforts forward.

The workgroup is forming a sub-planning group for the 2025 Legislative Meet and Greet and is seeking volunteers. The first planning meeting takes place the week of December 2nd (tentatively on Thursday, December 5). If anyone would like to be a part of the planning subgroup, please contact Community Relations.

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

Following the success of its first outreach session on October 2, the workgroup is discussing how the council will follow up with Ebenezer Community Church and further engage DHS around the needs and feedback gathered from that listening session. The topics raised included increasing mental health crisis and resource needs; health literacy needs; and supports for faith leaders and small community-based organizations.

The workgroup is also considering how the CECLC can develop a community engagement framework to engage other community groups moving forward.

### **Equitable Outcomes Workgroup**

The workgroup has been working on developing a workgroup charter to define its purpose and scope.

The workgroup co-leads and CECLC co-chairs recently met with the DHS HCBS Evaluation of the Assessment Process for Racial and Ethnic Disparities (HEARD) Project team to discuss opportunities for collaboration with the CECLC around outreach and engagement for phase III of the HEARD project. This meeting was follow-up from when the HEARD Project team presented at the September workgroup meeting.

Finally, the workgroup is pleased to announce Alex Abraha as co-lead with Nelly Torori.

## Administrative Update

Shannon Geshick, Executive Director of Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC), has invited the council to attend the next quarterly MIAC Board meeting on Thursday and Friday, November 21-22, hosted by the Minneapolis American Indian Center. Meeting agendas are posted on the [MIAC website](#). Community Relations will send more information in the post-meeting email update.

This is a friendly reminder if any council member has not registered as a state vendor to receive council compensation and reimbursements, please work with Community Relations to complete your W9 form.

Council members are invited to participate in the Tribal-State Relations Training (TSRT), a 2-day immersive in-person training about American Indian tribal governments, histories, cultures, and traditions. It aims to empower state employees to work effectively with American Indians and promote authentic and respectful relationships between state agencies and American Indian tribes.

If anyone was unable to register for the October training but would still like to attend the training, the next opportunity will be January 29-30, 2025 in Mahnomon, MN, hosted by White Earth Nation. Please email Community Relations if you would like to be added to the registration list.

## Plan for 2025 Legislative Meet & Greet

On January 23, 2025, the CECLC will host its annual Legislative Meet & Greet at the Minnesota State Capitol (Vault room) to engage state legislators and representatives on the CECLC's legislative priorities. This annual event provides an opportunity for council members to interact and build relationships with state legislators and representatives.

## DHS Legislative Update

Shawn Sorrell welcomed Kristy Graume, DHS Director of Legislative Relations, to provide a legislative update. Her team is working on forecasting as a result of recent election results. Policy proposals will be coming in the next couple weeks; budget proposals will be ongoing in the next month. Draft proposals are now with the Governor's office for review.

At the federal level, President-elect Trump will have a legislative trifecta which will impact the Minnesota Legislature's proposals and initiatives. There is concern at the federal level what this will mean for Medicaid and other DHS-administered programs.

Kristy also provided a brief overview of concerns at the state level which her team will continue to track. There is a lot of work ahead, and the CECLC will receive regular updates.

Shawn reiterated the council's legislative priorities to keep on the DHS Legislative team's radar:

- Promote equitable DHS investments in marginalized communities of color and Tribal Governments and people., e.g. CEMIG, Opioid Epidemic Response Grant (OERAC), etc.
- Housing and Homelessness
- Disability Waiver Services: Increasing Access

- Elderly Waiver Services
- Community Health Workers Systems Navigation
- LGBTQIA+ Community Health Care Access
- Resettlement Services for New Americans

Nicole Juan will provide support to the council in advance of the January 23rd CECLC Legislative Meet & Greet. Kristy plans to attend and offer support.

## **CECLC and Community Relations Partnership on Community Engagement**

Helen Ghebre led discussion on ways to build understanding and alignment with how the CECLC approaches community engagement to advance the vision and mission of the council. The discussion included how the council can be a pathway by which communities can elevate its priorities to DHS; shared principles around community engagement; and what will partnership look like between the CECLC and Community Relations in future community engagement efforts.

A council member added the council should formalize a process so that when information is gathered and questions are asked, we can respond and follow through.

Helen suggested honing in on trusted community messengers who can be resources/conduits for DHS staff in these endeavors.

**Meeting adjourned at 3:58 PM**