

Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: October 18, 2024

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx and International Institute of Minnesota (Hybrid)

Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Shawn Sorrell, Chris Green, Philip Gaye-Bai, Farhia Said, Micaela Schuneman, Nelly Torori, Josefina Geronimo, Liz Banini, Christine Renville, MJ Lansana (CMAH), Tonia Lofton, Lolita Davis-Carter, Nina Vongphath, Makram El-Amin, Paul Slack, Manuel Zuniga, Angela Fields, Mozana Ebrahim
- **DHS & DCYF Staff:** Cate Dymit, Laura Villarreal, Steven Wilson, Angie DeLille, Kelly Barnebey, Nate Carter, Craté Darden
- **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	Co-Chair Update & New Member Introductions
2:15	CECLC Legislative Summit Update
2:30	Workgroup Updates & Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislative Workgroup• Topics & Issues Workgroup• Equitable Outcomes Workgroup Administrative Updates
2:50	Break
3:00	New Member Orientation & Onboarding
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. He welcomed Chris Green as new co-chair.

Decisions Made

Review and approve September minutes and meeting agenda:

- Motion to approve meeting agenda and September minutes: Micaela Schuneman
- Second: Manuel Zuniga
- The motion passed

Community Celebrations and Shoutouts

Shawn Sorrell opened the floor for members to share.

- Shawn recognized the October observances on the agenda: National Indigenous Peoples Month, National Coming Out Day October 11, Breast Cancer Awareness Month, ADHD Awareness Month, Domestic Violence Awareness Month, Filipino American History Month, German American Heritage Month, and Italian American Heritage Month. He added National Disability Employment Awareness Month, around which his employer Hennepin County has developed learning and development opportunities.
- Nate Carter gave a shoutout to Phillis Wheatley Community Center in North Minneapolis for having their 100th anniversary yesterday.
- Josefina Geronimo shared the [2024 Minnesota East Africa Banquet](#) will be held at the Norway House on Saturday, October 26 from 6:00-7:45 pm. There is a link to register on their website.
- Please join the Indigenous People's Day Community Family Event on Saturday, October 19 from 12:00-2:15 pm at the Minneapolis American Indian Center (MAIC) to meet and learn about Lac La Croix Indian Ponies, also known as The Ojibwe Pony, which was nearly driven to the brink of extinction. These ponies are presented by The Humble Horse. In addition, come create an Ojibwe Bandolier shoulder bag (while supplies last) and connect with valuable educational resources. Registration encouraged, no required.
- Manuel Zuniga celebrated [the 2024 Asian Pacific Minnesotans Leadership Awards Dinner](#) hosted by the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans happening tonight, October 18 from 6:00-8:30 pm at the Heritage Center of Brooklyn Center.
- Chris Green wished Philip Gaye-Bai a happy birthday.

Co-Chair Update and New Member Introductions

Shawn Sorrell welcomed the following new members and invited those present to share a brief bio.

- Alex Abraha
- Angela Fields
- Christine Renville

- Makram El-Amin
- Nina Vongphath

CECLC Legislative Summit Update

Shawn Sorrell provided a brief summary of the October 1st CECLC Legislative Summit. Materials from that meeting were shared with the CECLC prior to today's council meeting.

He identified next steps:

- 2025 CECLC Legislative Meet & Greet on January 23
- Co-chairs will continue to meet with the DHS Director of Legislative Relations on a recurring basis
- Create space for consistent legislative updates at CECLC monthly and Legislative workgroup meetings
- Develop and establish a sustainable feedback loop for continuous community engagement within the DHS Legislative process and timeline
- Identify additional opportunities to track and monitor progress on CECLC legislative priorities (ongoing engagement)
- Continue to invest in CECLC's development around the legislative process and technical skills to maximize council advocacy and leadership role

A new council member asked for background on the CECLC's work with legislative activity. The council has made strides in building greater influence in the legislative space, and its voice can elevate legislative priorities. DHS staff are invited to workgroup meetings and full council meetings to present on legislative topics. In addition to that, the Commissioner attends council meetings on a quarterly basis, and Deputy Commissioner Farago attends monthly.

Workgroup Updates

Legislative and Policy Workgroup

At its last meeting, the workgroup focused on legislative priorities. It sent a survey to the CECLC and asked participants to rank priorities. This resulted in more conversation with DHS staff.

There continues to be discussion on how to better align with the new DHS structure.

Topics and Issues Workgroup

The workgroup's first outreach session on October 2 at Ebenezer Community Church in Brooklyn Park was a success and had good turnout. There is a tentative date for its first follow-up meeting. Beyond that, the workgroup will focus on digesting what happened and where the CECLC and/or state entities can provide further assistance.

The workgroup will continue to focus on community outreach and how many businesses it wishes to engage and will set goals around attendance. It is important community members know what the CECLC is and how it can be a bridge to DHS.

Equitable Outcomes Workgroup

The workgroup is seeking a co-lead.

Administrative Update

Laura Villarreal invited council members to the 2024 Fall CLAS Conference, themed “ReCLASifying Sustainability – Legislative Strategies and Community Practices.” Attendees will explore why it is important for public health workers and healthcare professional to understand Minnesota’s legislative process and opportunities to provide input. More information will be shared in the post-meeting email update.

Shawn Sorrell reminded the council of an ongoing opportunity to participate in [Tribal-State Relations Training](#) (TSRT). It is a 2-day immersive in-person training scheduled throughout the year at various tribal locations. Minnesota state employees learn about American Indian tribal governments, histories, cultures, and traditions in order to empower themselves to work effectively with American Indians and to promote authentic and respectful relationships between state agencies and tribes.

The October and November sessions are full and have a waitlist. Please contact Community Relations if you wish to be added to a waitlist. Check the [TSRT website](#) for the 2025 dates, locations, and lodging details. Council members are responsible for arranging lodging and will be fully reimbursed for that.

New Member Orientation and Onboarding

New council members were led through an orientation and onboarding.

Meeting adjourned at 3:58 PM