

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: January 15, 2021

Minutes Prepared By: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Marcia Bierschenk, Sarah Clyne, Cratè Darden, Danisa Farley, Shannon Geshick, Raie Gessesse, Foua Choua Khang, Amanda Koonjbeharry, Adrián Mangaña, Kia Moua, Mariah Norwood, Adesola Oni, Lucas Petersen, Dr. Russell Pointer, Maria Sarabia, Sheree Steele, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, TaShonda Williamson, Alana Wright, Rep Rena Moran
- **DHS Staff:** De Anna Conover, Beth Dansie, Nikki Farago, Nicole Juan, Dr. Karen McKinney, Verona Mitchell, Lydia Pflugger, Rebeca Sedarski, Christa Spielman, Steven Wilson
- **Public Attendees:** Dr. Antonia Apolinario Wilcoxon, Sabrenia Young, Jean Lee

## Decisions Made

Review/approve today's agenda:

- Motion to amend agenda to move the closed session to immediately follow Dr. Antonia Wilcoxon's Remarks: Marcia Bierschenk
  - Second: Sarah Clyne
  - The motion passed.
- Motion to approve agenda as amended: Alana Wright
  - Second: Amanda Koonjbeharry
  - The motion passed.

## Agenda

- 1:05 Introductions and Welcome
- 1:15 Chair-elect Remarks
- 1:30 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda
- 1:35 DHS Updates

- 1:45 History of the CECLC and Grounding for 2021: Dr. Antonia Apolinario Wilcoxon
- 1:55 Adjourn Public Meeting
- 2:00 CECLC Member Discussion
- 4:00 Adjourn

## Chair-elect Remarks

Council Chair-elect TaShonda Williamson welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and shared a land acknowledgement. TaShonda acknowledged recent events and thanked members for what they have been doing in community and with the council.

## DHS Updates

### Community Relations Updates

Interim Community Relations Director De Anna Conover shared a number of updates from the Community Relations team:

- The CECLC Legislative Report is being finalized and will be sent to DHS leadership for review next week.
- Community Relations is preparing to fill the CECLC member vacancies next month. There have been 3 resignations and 2 members' terms are expiring.
- The CECLC website will soon be updated with 2020 information.
- Community Relations will be connecting with council members who have had multiple absences to check-in.
- The bulletin for CECLC members is restarting. Bulletins will be sent out on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month.

Nikki Farago is the new Interim Deputy Commissioner of Communications and Relations at DHS. Nikki was previously the Assistant Commissioner for the Children and Family Services Administration for 2.5 years, and has been at DHS for 8 years. Nikki shared that she is excited to support the work of the council.

### Equity Updates

Chief Equity Officer Dr. Karen McKinney shared that DHS started antiracism training for leadership at DHS. She is also working on developing an antiracism plan, which will include elements to operationalize antiracism, provide training, among others to make progress in this area.

## History of the CECLC and Grounding for 2021

Former DHS Community Relations Director Dr. Antonia Apolinario Wilcoxon shared background information about the origins of the CECLC and words of encouragement. The CECLC was preceded by a 30-member committee known as the Disparities Reduction Advisory Committee (DRAC) which was formed in 2010 and

included membership from various stakeholders and community members. This committee's purpose was to engage the communities impacted by disparities in access and outcomes in DHS services, and provide DHS leadership with recommendations and strategies to reduce disparities. The DRAC wanted community to have a more formal leadership presence at DHS beyond that of an advisory committee in order to ensure diverse communities are getting the attention that they deserve. This led to the creation of the CECLC in statute.

Antonia noted that it took significant effort for this work to be established and receive a high level of recognition at DHS. Antonia applauded members on their willingness to carry forward this important work, and reminded members that communities trust and depend on them to bring forward their needs and be a part of developing solutions to problems impacting their communities. Antonia acknowledged that this is difficult work, but encouraged members not to give in or give up.

### **1:55 Public Meeting Adjourned**

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: February 19, 2021

Minutes Prepared By: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Marcia Bierschenk, Cratè Darden, Danisa Farley, Foua Choua Khang, Brook Mallak, Kia Moua, Mariah Norwood, Adesola Oni, Lucas Petersen, Maria Sarabia, Jenny Srey, Sheree Steele, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, Petronellah Thomas-Shanobi, TaShonda Williamson, Rep Tina Liebling
- **DHS Staff:** Michaela Burton, De Anna Conover, Beth Dansie, Nikki Farago, Zechairas Hailu, Marissa Hinnenkamp, Nicole Juan, Connie Jones, Vimbai Madzura, Dr. Karen McKinney, Lydia Pflugger, Christa Spielman, Nelly Torori, Steven Wilson
- **Public Attendees:** Jean Lee

## Decisions Made

Review/approve today's agenda and minutes:

- Motion to approve today's agenda, December 2020, and January 2021 minutes: Lucas Petersen
  - Second: Petronellah Thomas-Shanobi
  - The motion passed.

## Agenda

- 1:05 Introductions and Welcome
- 1:10 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 1:15 Chair-elect Remarks
- 1:20 DHS Updates
- 1:30 DHS Retention and Discrimination Policies
- 2:00 Workgroup Updates
- 2:20 Community Open Space/Announcements
- 2:30 Adjourn Public Meeting
- 2:40 CECLC Closed Member Discussion

## Chair-elect Remarks

Council Chair-elect TaShonda Williamson welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and shared a land acknowledgement. TaShonda recognized that February is Black History Month and shared a quote from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Representative Rena Moran was no longer able to attend today's meeting. The plan is for her to attend in March to share racial equity work at the MN Legislature. Information about some of these efforts were sent to members.

## DHS Updates

Interim Deputy Commissioner of Communications and Relations Nikki Farago shared comments reflecting on the work of the CECLC and the important role it has played in the equity efforts at DHS. Nikki thanked members for engaging in these efforts and helping DHS to do its work better.

## Community Relations Updates

Interim Community Relations Director De Anna Conover shared updates from the Community Relations team:

- The CECLC Legislative Report is with DHS leadership. Once it is approved it will be sent to the legislature, posted on the DHS website, and sent to council members.
- The 2021 council appointment process have been developed. Council members will soon receive information about the appointment timeline and their individual term.
- The council website and roster is being updated.
- Council bulletins are sent out on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Thursdays of the month.
- Reach out to Nicole with questions or with updates that you would like included in the bulletin.

## Equity Updates

Chief Equity Officer Dr. Karen McKinney shared that the Training and Curriculum Committee of the Strategic Antiracism Team (StART) has completed Orientation to Antiracism Training and the Strategic Leadership Team has received this training. The Strategic Leadership Team had also taken the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI) and members are engaging in development activities.

## DHS Retention and Discrimination Policies

Equal Opportunity and Access (EOA) Division Director Zecharias Hailu shared information about the DHS Discrimination Policy, including the process for filing and submitting a discrimination complaint and determining if there is a policy violation. New employees are provided this policy, and EOA provides trainings.

Council members asked if there were going to be any significant changes to the Affirmative Action Plan related to percentage levels or the reporting period. The DHS 2020-2022 Affirmative Action Plan was recently approved

by Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB). The target goals have increased for BIPOC community representation, women, and individuals with disabilities in various position levels. Council members requested that this data be made available to them. Zecharias will share this information with council members once it is accessible. Before the next plan is submitted, DHS has promised to consult with the CECLC for input.

Human Resources (HR) Director Connie Jones shared information about the new DHS Diversity Retention Plan for 2021-2023 and strategies the agency is undertaking to create a more equitable and inclusive workplace. Connie provided an overview of the Framework for Policy Strategy, which includes efforts to review policies and implementation efforts using an equity and antiracism lens. This work has been a collaborative effort between Human Resources, the StART Team, Equity Coordinators and Directors, Employee Resource Group (ERG) Chairs, among others at the agency. DHS also plans to launch an HR dashboard so individuals can view where the agency is at in relation to its goals and measures. Council members requested copies of this plan and framework and these documents were sent to members.

Council members asked about accountability measures in place regarding the Diversity Retention Plan and workplace discrimination. Connie and Zecharias shared information about conflict resolution and mediation, and other policies and avenues that are available for employees to address concerns.

## **Workgroup Updates**

### **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

Cratè Darden and Kia Moua are now co-leads for this workgroup. At the recent meeting, members discussed updates and strategies related to supporting accountability of the implementation of the DHS Equity Policy and equity work at the agency. Members also engaged in discussions around development and training for CECLC members.

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

At the recent meeting, workgroup members received an update from the African American Child Wellbeing Unit and discussed how the workgroup can be more involved in this initiative. Members discussed refining the topics that they are interested in working on, as well as how they can be involved in actions moving forward. Members are interested in connecting with tribal nations and interested in having a representative be a part of meetings to learn about work in this area and how CECLC members can be involved.

### **Legislative and Policy Committee**

Members discussed CECLC legislative updates at their recent meeting. The CECLC legislation has been jacketed, and the language updates are moving forward in the process. The bill numbers are HF388 and SF760. The new interim legislative director for operations and other DHS legislative staff will be attending workgroup meetings when possible. Co-leads are setting up meetings with DHS legislative staff and bill authors and will share updates with members when they are available.

## Community Open Space/Announcements

Council members briefly discussed the COVID-19 vaccine response in members' communities. Council members noted that they want to further these conversations and discuss how the CECLC can lift up community concerns. Community Relations will set up a conversation with members in March meeting to concerns, strategies, and next steps.

Mariah Norwood shared information about some of the vaccine equity work happening at MDH. Individuals can request to have MDH share information about COVID-19 vaccines with their community by filling out the [COVID-19 Vaccine Speakers Request Survey](#).

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: March 19, 2021

Minutes Prepared By: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Marcia Bierschenk, Danisa Farley, Foua Choua Khang, Brook Mallak, Kia Moua, Mariah Norwood, Amanda Koonjebearry, Adesola Oni, Dr. Russell Pointer, Alana Wright, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, Petronellah Thomas-Shanobi, Adrián Magaña, Linda Sloan, TaShonda Williamson, Rep Tina Lieblich, Rep. Jen Schultz, Kevin Parker on behalf of Senator Hoffman
- **DHS Staff:** De Anna Conover, Nicole Juan, Rebeca Sedarski, Beth Dansie, Nikki Farago, Diego Diaz-Rivero, Lisa Bayley, Justine Nelson, Vimbai Madzura, Marisa Hinnenkamp, Christa Spielman, Dr. Karen McKinney, Dave Hoang, Brian Balk, Verona Mitchell, Dr. Nathan Chomilo, Matthew Anderson, Jessica Hultgren, PJ Weiner
- **Public Attendees:** Jean Lee

## Decisions Made

Review/approve today's agenda and minutes:

- Motion to approve today's agenda and February 2021 minutes: Alana Wright
  - Second: Kia Moua
  - The motion passed

## Agenda

- 1:00 Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
- 1:06 Introductions
- 1:10 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 1:15 Chair-elect Remarks
- 1:20 DHS Updates
- 1:30 Representative Rena Moran
- 2:00 Managed Care Organization (MCO) Procurement and Contracting



- 2:45 Workgroup Updates
- 3:00 Improving the health & opportunity of Black & Indigenous Minnesotans on Minnesota Health Care Programs
- 3:55 Community Open Space & Announcements
- 4:00 Adjourn

## Chair-elect Remarks

## DHS Updates

- Deputy Commissioner Nikki Farago mentioned of Governor Walz’s supplemental budget
- DHS is planning for agency operations post-pandemic; working to get back to better rather than normal. Learning from experiences the last year and what changes should continue.
- The American Rescue Plan was approved last week: federal dollars approved to improve DHS programs

## Community Relations Updates

- The work translating DHS landing pages (Spanish, Somali and Hmong) underway
- Planning also underway for CECLC conversation on COVID-19 vaccinations

## Equity Updates:

- Chief Equity Officer Dr. Karen McKinney shared that the policy team approved the proposed DHS Anti-Racism training
- Office of Equity: team plan, including the hiring new people was approved by MMB
- The Strategic Anti-Racism Team (StART) finished reviewing a facilitators guide and is in the process of scheduling trainings with DHS human resources

## Representative Rena Moran

- Rep. Rena Moran discussed the Select Committee on Race and Justice. The report focuses not on individual racism but instead on institutional/systemic racism, embedded in policies and practices. DHS employees must have a consistent definition and understanding of equity. She shared the relevant recommendations and priorities for DHS.
- Rep. Moran chairs the House Ways and Means Committee. She talked about the power that each member of CECLC has on partnering with DHS to eliminate the disparities from child protection to senior care, etc. through their expertise. Everyone is needed to help do this work effectively.
- The CECLC legislation is moving through the process but everyone is still needed. Rep. Moran asked council members to build relationships and trust as a collective. “Remember why you are here and who you represent.”

- Representatives Tina Liebling and Jen Schultz also made comments for the work they are doing and asking the Council's support for communities in Minnesota.

## **Managed Care Organization (MCO) Procurement and Contracting**

- Community and Care Integration Reform Manager, Vimbai Madzura and Manager PJ Weiner presented on Managed Care Procurement and Contracting from the Health Care Administration. They shared the population DHS serves and the Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan. Ms. Madzura asked members what they hope to see from the procurement process.

## **Workgroup Updates**

### **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

- Working on the development plan coming from the survey from last month
- Following up on discrimination and retention plans
- Talking with Dr. McKinney regarding the equity policy, and the equity office at DHS

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

- Supporting the African American Preservation Act
- Office of Refugee and Resettlement will be making a presentation for their next meeting

### **Legislative and Policy Committee**

- Mariah Norwood mentioned that earlier this week two committees heard the CECLC legislation and three current CECLC members testified on the bill. The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in the human services omnibus bill.

## **Improving the health & opportunity of Black & Indigenous Minnesotans on Minnesota Health care Programs**

- Dr. Nathan Chomilo presented Racial Equity in the Walls of Medicaid: Improving the Health and Opportunity of Black Minnesotans. Looking through a COVID19 frame, data shows a lot about the health and opportunities of Black Minnesotans: poverty, employment, etc. Data is from the Department of Health. He spoke about opportunities for state agencies to lead with racial equity and how to build it into policies.

## **Community Open Space/Announcements**

- Reminder from Nicole: please send her the bios to update the roster by next week.

Motion to adjourn: Alana Wright

Second: Danisa

Motion Passed

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: April 16, 2021

Minutes Prepared By: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Marcia Bierschenk, Cratè Darden, Danisa Farley, Adrián Mangaña, Kia Moua, Mariah Norwood, Adesola Oni, Lucas Petersen, Alana Wright, TaShonda Williamson
- **DHS Staff:** Brian Balk, De Anna Conover, Beth Dansie, Marisa Hinnenkamp, Nicole Juan, Dr. Karen McKinney, Lydia Pfluger, Rebeca Sedarski, Christa Spielman, Steven Wilson, Victor Muthui, Dave Hoang
- **Public Attendees:** Jean Lee, Sebrenia Young (MDA)

## Decisions Made

Review/approve today's agenda and minutes:

- Quorum was not reached.

## Agenda

- 1:00 Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
- 1:05 Introductions
- 1:10 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 1:15 Chair-elect Remarks
- 1:20 DHS Updates
- 1:30 Discussion of DHS Equity Work
- 2:30 COVID-19 Vaccination Training
- 3:40 Workgroup Updates
- 3:45 Community Open Space/Announcements
- 4:00 Adjourn Public Meeting

## Chair-elect Remarks

Council Chair-elect TaShonda Williamson welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and shared a land acknowledgement. TaShonda acknowledged recent events, as well as the trauma and racism impacting communities and the need for change.

## DHS Updates

### Community Relations Updates

Interim Community Relations Director De Anna Conover thanked members for commitment to this work and perseverance during these times.

### DHS Equity Updates

Chief Equity Officer Dr. Karen McKinney shared updates on the equity and anti-racism efforts at DHS. The Strategic Anti-Racism Team (StART) was formed last July to carry out this initiative. There are 3 subcommittees of this larger group. They include the Intercultural Development Inventory (IDI), Curriculum and Training, and the Communications and Charter Subcommittees. Anti-racism training with the DHS Senior Strategy Team (SST) members has occurred over the last year. These leaders have completed the IDI and are working on their individual plans. Training is also occurring with leadership within administrations, and will soon occur with other areas within DHS, such as Human Resources (HR). The StART Charter has been submitted and approval is pending. The Commissioner has been receiving support in implementing communications to DHS staff regarding equity and current events. Equity leadership and StART are also working to align their efforts with the DHS and county Equity Partnership.

Approval has been given to create an Office of Equity and Inclusion at DHS where staff will be hired to carry out the Anti-racism Strategic Plan, including anti-racism training, employee engagement, and policy and data analysis. This plan will be sent to members. Equity Directors will continue their roles in their respective administrations. An Equity Director for Operations position has been created and filled by Verona Mitchell, former Children and Family Services Administration Equity Director. The department is working to fill other equity director vacancies.

Council members expressed interest in working in partnership in the creation of this office and the hiring of staff. Council members asked how this office will work to affect systems change at the agency, how Equity Directors and Coordinators are being supported in their work, and how Employee Resource Chairs are being consulted with regard to employee engagement roles and plans. DHS staff and council members engaged in conversation about these concerns.

## **COVID-19 Vaccination Training**

Council member and MDH Infectious Disease American Indian Liaison Mariah Noorwood gave a training on the COVID-19 vaccine. The training included information about vaccine development, safety, efficacy, and distribution.

## **Workgroup Updates**

### **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

The workgroup met with Dr. McKinney to discuss where DHS is at with Equity Policy updates, Anti-Racism Policy, and the Equity and Inclusion Office. This workgroup will have ongoing conversations with DHS regarding this work and will continue to hold the agency accountable to working in partnership with the CECLC.

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

The workgroup met with Devon Gilchrist from the African American Child Wellbeing Unit and discussed updates regarding the hiring of staff for this team and legislative updates related to this work. The Resettlement Programs Office at DHS met with the workgroup and shared information about the work that they do and how to partner with CECLC on issues regarding immigrants and refugees. The workgroup also expressed interest in working on issues of equity in aging and older services at future meetings.

### **Legislative and Policy Committee**

Members discussed CECLC legislative updates at their recent meeting. The CECLC legislation is in the house omnibus bill. CECLC members encouraged other members to contact their representatives personally to show support for the CECLC legislation.

## **Community Open Space/Announcements**

Engagement Opportunity: There is an opportunity for council members to provide input on new training curriculum being developed by the Minnesota Child Welfare Training Academy for county supervisors of child welfare workers, as well as the new worker foundation training. More information will be sent to members.

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: May 21, 2021

Minutes Prepared By: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Marcia Bierschenk, Cratè Darden, Shannon Geshick, Amanda Koonjbeharry, Mariah Norwood, Adesola Oni, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, Linda Sloan, Petronellah Thomas-Shanobi, Sheree Steele, Alana Wright, TaShonda Williamson, Senator John Hoffman
- **DHS Staff:** Michaela Burton, Dr. Nathan Chomilo, De Anna Conover, Tamir Elnabarawy, Susan Hall, Marisa Hinnenkamp, Nicole Juan, Kate Kunitz, Dr. Karen McKinney, Lydia Pfluger, Rebeca Sedarski, Christa Spielman, Victor Muthui, Dave Hoang
- **Public Attendees:** Jean Lee

## Decisions Made

Review/approve today's agenda and minutes:

- Quorum was not reached.

## Agenda

- 1:00 Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
- 1:05 Introductions
- 1:10 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 1:15 Chair-elect Remarks
- 1:20 DHS Updates
- 1:45 Integrated Services/Self-Service Portal and Social Needs Tool Project Engagement
- 2:30 Workgroup Updates
- 2:45 Community Open Space/Announcements
- 3:00 Adjourn Public Meeting

## Chair-elect Remarks

Council Chair-elect TaShonda Williamson welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and shared a land acknowledgement. TaShonda shared some of the work of the CECLC and accomplishments in recent months.

## DHS Updates

### Federal Legislation

Federal Relations Director Tamir Elnabarawy shared updates on federal legislation and activities.

- The Department of Homeland Security will no longer enforce the Public Charge Rule. Tamir thanked the CECLC for their involvement in the agency's efforts related to this rule and sharing information with their communities.
- Through the 2020 Census, Minnesota was able to retain its 8<sup>th</sup> congressional seat and protect the roughly \$15 billion that the census brings to the state. Tamir thanked members for the involvement and outreach during the 2020 Census.
- The American Rescue Plan Act has been signed into law which provides additional COVID-19 relief to states. President Biden has also asked Congress to prioritize passing his economic proposal, which includes additional relief. The proposal has two distinct parts. Below are some of the highlights of this plan. The prospects and timeline are currently unclear.
  - Part 1 – Infrastructure proposal
    - \$400 billion investment over 8 years for at-home services. This can include home health care services, home repairs, etc.
  - Part 2 – American Families Plan
    - \$225 billion investment in childcare to fully cover the cost of care for the lowest income families and limit family expenditures on child care for certain families. It would also offer funding to child care providers to cover the “true cost” of quality care (culturally and linguistically appropriate services, small class sizes, etc.)
    - \$45 billion investment in nutrition to extend summer pandemic EBT (P-EBT) to all children who receive free or reduced price meals at school. It would also extend Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (SNAP) eligibility to individuals who are formally incarcerated.
- Congress will soon begin the regular appropriations process for the upcoming federal fiscal year. Details regarding President Biden's budget request for discretionary spending was released a few weeks ago. Congressional appropriators will use that request as a guide to help determine those funding levels for agencies beginning on October 1<sup>st</sup>. A more detailed proposal will soon be released. Preliminary information indicates that health and human services will receive modest to substantial increases.
- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved Minnesota's plan to provide P-EBT to children in child care through at least June.
- Minnesota is projected to receive \$6.5 million per month from USDA to provide emergency SNAP benefits to families who were receiving less than \$95 per month in emergency SNAP benefits. The



Families First Coronavirus Response Act, the COVID-19 relief bill passed last year, allowed states to expand SNAP eligibility during the public health emergency. Previous guidance did not allow families already receiving the maximum SNAP benefit to receive additional emergency funding. This guidance has been reversed and Minnesota will now be providing emergency SNAP benefits to households that are already receiving the maximum benefit.

## **Minnesota Legislation**

The Health and Human Services Omnibus bill didn't pass during the regular session. The bill will be taken up during the special session. Senator Hoffman shared an update on the Health and Human Services Omnibus bill and current negotiation efforts. The legislature has until May 28<sup>th</sup> to negotiate the budget. An updated bill needs to be developed by June 4<sup>th</sup>, and then the legislature will reconvene on June 14<sup>th</sup> to vote on the bill. Community Relations will continue to share updates on the CECLC legislation.

## **Equity Updates**

Dr. McKinney is continuing to make progress on creating position descriptions and developing the DHS Office of Equity and Inclusion.

## **Integrated Services/Self Service Portal and Social Needs Tool Project Engagement**

Susan Hall and Kate Kunitz (DHS Business Solutions Office) and Rebeca Sedarski (DHS Community Relations) provided an update on the Integrated Services/Self Service Portal and Social Needs Tool (formerly Screening and Referral) Project. Project leads shared an update on activities to develop a website and a social needs tool to streamline access to DHS programs and connect individuals to community supports. Project leads discussed their engagement efforts with communities, stakeholders, and CECLC members. They also shared key findings from these engagement sessions, how they have implemented this feedback, and plans to conduct a survey in partnership with Wilder Research to further engage and obtain feedback from communities to inform this project. Sue, Kate, and Rebeca thanked council members for their involvement in the project and feedback thus far, and encouraged members to share the survey with their networks once it is made available in June.

## **Workgroup Updates**

### **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

The workgroup met with Dr. McKinney to continue the discussion on the creation of the DHS Office of Equity and Inclusion, the DHS anti-racism policy, Equity Policy updates and implementation, training for staff, and recent legislative proposals that have the potential to impact communities. Workgroup members engaged in discussions with Dr. McKinney regarding this work, and expressed their desire to work in partnership with DHS to create, review, and provide feedback on the anti-racism policy and these efforts at the agency. Council members will be reviewing and providing feedback on the position descriptions for the Office of Equity and

Inclusion. Workgroup members discussed the anti-racism training that staff will receive, and urged support for efforts to make the Tribal State Relations Training mandatory for staff.

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

The workgroup recently met with members of the Business Solutions Office to provide feedback on the survey they are conducting. The workgroup has recently been approached by the DHS Health Care Administration to potentially provide feedback on data collection efforts regarding microaggressions in the workplace. The workgroup is planning to explore this.

### **Legislative and Policy Committee**

The CECLC legislation is pending negotiations. The legislature is expected to vote on the bill June 14<sup>th</sup>. Community Relations staff will keep the committee members updated and the council at large.

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: June 18, 2021

Minutes Prepared By: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Cratè Darden, Foua Choua Khang, Brook Mallak, Kia Moua, Mariah Norwood, Adesola Oni, Lucas Petersen, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, Sheree Steele, Alana Wright, TaShonda Williamson
- **DHS Staff:** De Anna Conover, Diego Diaz-Rivero, Cate Dymit, Raie Gessesse, Dave Hoang, Nicole Juan, Dr. Karen McKinney, Verona Mitchell, Lydia Pfluger, Rosie Salem, Rebeca Sedarski, Christa Spielman, Caelyn Steele, Steven Wilson
- **Public Attendees:** Jean Lee

## Decisions Made

Review/approve today's agenda:

- Motion to approve today's agenda: Alana Wright
- Second: Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro

Review/approve March, April, May minutes:

- Motion to approve combined minutes: Alana Wright
- Second: Mariah Norwood
- The motion passed

## Agenda

- 1:00 Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
- 1:05 Introductions
- 1:10 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 1:15 Chair-elect Remarks
- 1:20 DHS Updates
- 2:00 Open Discussion

- 3:00 Adjourn Public Meeting

## Chair-elect Remarks

Council Chair-elect TaShonda Williamson welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and shared a land acknowledgement. TaShonda celebrated the recognition of Juneteenth as a federal holiday and reflected on how long it has taken for this to happen and the need for persistence to continue efforts to eliminate disparities.

## DHS Updates

### Juneteenth

Members collectively read a message from the DHS Operations Director of Equity and Inclusion, Verona Mitchell, about Juneteenth. The message recognized the holiday's history, significance, and meaning for communities today. DHS and participants shared information about Juneteenth celebrations in Minnesota.

### Legislative

If the legislature does not come to an agreement by June 30<sup>th</sup>, the state faces a government shutdown. DHS has been notifying staff and program participants of this and planning for a possible shutdown. However, conversations appear to be favorable. Community Relations will continue to keep the council updated.

### Community Relations

Interim Community Relations Director, De Anna Conover, welcomed Community Relations' Executive Pathways Interns for the summer, Raie Gessessee and Cate Dymit. Community Relations staff, Lydia Pfluger, shared that she will be transitioning to a new role at DHS. She is moving to the Child and Family Services Administration – Child Safety and Permanency Division. Lydia thanked members for opportunity to work with the council.

Nicole shared information about council appointments. CECLC appointments have been posted on the Secretary of State's (SOS) website. The SOS application is due June 30<sup>th</sup>. After applying on the SOS website, applicants will receive a supplemental application that is due July 7<sup>th</sup>. Eligible council members whose term is up need to reapply if they are interested in continuing another term. Please help Community Relations to spread the word about open appointments.

### DHS Equity Updates

Chief Equity Officer, Dr. Karen McKinney, introduced Caelyn Steele, the Office of Equity and Inclusions' Executive Pathways Intern. Dr. McKinney and her team are continuing to work on position descriptions for trainer positions.

## **Workgroup Updates**

### **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

The workgroup met with Dr. McKinney to continue providing feedback on trainer position descriptions for the DHS Office of Equity and Inclusion. The workgroup has also begun thinking about training needs for new and continuing members for the upcoming fiscal year, and the workgroup plans to start having those discussions with council members soon.

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

The workgroup met with Devon Gilchrist from the African American Child Wellbeing Unit and discussed ways the council can support this area's work. Council member Foua Choua Khang also led a discussion on Community Health Workers (CHW) at the last meeting.

### **Legislative and Policy Committee**

The CECLC legislation is pending negotiations. There have been a few questions on the policy language which DHS is responding to. Community Relations staff will keep the committee members and the council at large updated.

## **Community Open Space**

Ramsey County is having a Juneteenth event from 1:00 – 5:00 pm at Allianz Field. There will be activities and a mobile vaccination site present.

The Equity and Justice Black Caucus will be having a conversation around intersectionality for PRIDE month next Wednesday.

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Mariah Norwood

Second: Adesola Oni

Meeting was adjourned at 1:45

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: July 16, 2021

Minutes Prepared By: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Cratè Darden, Shannon Geshick, Amanda Koonjbeharry, Mariah Norwood, Adesola Oni, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, Petronellah Thomas-Shanobi, Alana Wright, TaShonda Williamson, Foua Choua Khang, Kia Moua, Dr. Russell Pointer, Anjuli Cameron, Rep Jen Schultz, Linda Sloan, Adrian Magana
- **DHS Staff:** De Anna Conover, Nicole Juan, Dave Hoang, Cate Dymit, Steven Wilson, Peter Olson-Enamorado, Jane Davison, Beth Dansie, Rosanne Salem, Rebacca Melang, Autumn Baum, Matthew Burdick, Commissioner Jodi Harpstead
- **Public Attendees:** Jean Lee

## Decisions Made

Review/approve today's agenda and June minutes:

- Motion to approve today's agenda and June minutes: Alana Wright
- Second: Petronellah Thomas-Shanobi
- The motion passed

Motion to adjourn meeting:

- Motion to adjourn the meeting: Dr. Russell Pointer
- Second: Mariah Norwood
- The motion passed
- Meeting adjourned at 2:45pm

## Agenda

- 1:00 Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
- 1:05 Introductions

- 1:10 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 1:15 Chair-elect Remarks
- 1:20 DHS Updates
- 1:40 Presentation: Persona research and Development
- 2:45 Legislative Session Wrap Up
- 3:15 Workgroup Updates
- 3:25 Community Open Space & Announcements
- 3:30 Adjournment of Public Meeting

## Chair-elect Remarks

Council Chair-elect TaShonda Williamson welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and shared a land acknowledgement. TaShonda acknowledged recent events and shared encouragement for coming together to move forward with progress.

## Presentation: Persona Research and Development

Peter Olson-Enamorado, a fellow at DHS through Urban Scholars, presented on conducting Persona research as part of DHS efforts to modernize and simplify the application process for social services. Peter shared how in-depth interviews with targeted communities can reveal unknown barriers to accessing services as well as build empathy and articulate user requirements to build solutions. Peter discussed the research focus areas for persona research which included BIPOC communities, rural areas, tribal nations, LGBTQ community, and people experiencing English as a second language, limited access to internet/mobile devices, and housing instability. Council members were provided with a copy of the interview questions Peter will use for the Persona research. Peter noted it was important to share the Persona work with the CECLC council to receive feedback on the interview questions and process as well as to connect with community partners who may be interested in providing interviews.

## DHS Updates

### Community Relations Updates

Interim Community Relations Director De Anna Conover shared the Community Relations team is in the middle of the appointment process for 18 open positions on CECLC and a review panel will be meeting over the next few weeks.

### Commissioner Harpstead's Updates

Commissioner Harpstead joined the meeting to speak with the council and give updates on her recent involvement with DHS actions. The Commissioner started off by addressing recent events and issues concerning DHS. She addressed the progress DHS has made with new hires, prioritizing diversity within the agency, and the

creation and accomplishments of the Strategic Anti-Racism Team (START). Commissioner Harpstead stated the reason for her less presence with the council aside from her involvement with COVID-19 initiatives, the legislative special session and shut down planning, was to give space for the council to do its work.

The Commissioner addressed that going into a new fiscal year, DHS is moving forward from the challenges faced in the previous fiscal year that included COVID-19, the Tribal MAT and County IMD overpayments, shut down planning, and negotiating the new budget.

Commissioner Harpstead asked the council what their hopes for partnering with DHS moving forward were. A council member expressed interest in collaborative work on an anti-racism policy at DHS and at a state level. Council members suggested DHS should take a step back to look at the barriers that are put in place for people receiving services as well as work to remove these barriers such as supporting Persona research work to represent community voices and individual experiences with human services. A council member thanked the Commissioner for championing the work done to support the Age-friendly Minnesota project and advocate for older adults. A DHS staff member shared the work they were doing with the Northside Response project at DHS to reduce violence in the North Minneapolis community. The Commissioner shared that she is working with community leaders in North Minneapolis on how to best serve their community and connected council members to work going on with the Northside Achievement Zone.

The Commissioner commented on the new legislation reforms that were passed with the budget including the CECLC legislation. She noted the upcoming challenges with the major reforms of the new state budget including operationalization of things and hiring people to carry things out. Commissioner Harpstead also acknowledged DHS efforts to become an anti-racist, multicultural organization with the creation of the START and is looking to do more work with community engagement and co-creation work with the Community Relations team at DHS. The Commissioner closed by sharing her gratitude for the CECLC council's help and efforts.

## Legislative Session Wrap Up

Director of Legislative Relations Matthew Burdick shared updates on the Health and Human Services Omnibus bill that was passed during the special session.

Matthew gave context for the 2021 legislative session.

- This session was the first fully virtual legislative session which allowed for people to participate who wouldn't normally be able to.
- Governor Walz used emergency powers to call for a special session that meet every month resulting in an 18 month legislative session.
- There was an increase of federal money, almost 700 million dollars, for the new budget which resulted in the accomplishment of gains in almost every issue area for Human Services.

Matthew gave an overview of the major healthcare initiatives that were passed in the HHS Omnibus bill.

- To address infant and maternal health disparities, Medicaid coverage for women postpartum was extended from 60 days to 12 months postpartum.



- There was a massive increase in payment rates for dental care with structural reform to target quality care and promote access to care.
- A new benefit was added to Medicaid for children with asthma.
- Anyone enrolled in medical assistance living in an area with access to public transportation will have access to free public transportation.

Matthew also highlighted some of the reforms for Children and Family Services.

- For creating affordable and accessible childcare, there was an increase in rates for childcare assistance programs and significant federal investment.
- A long-term effort was passed to afford families going through the Child Protection System a Court-appointed council.

Matthew noted there was a historic investment in homelessness in the new budget with investments in emergency shelters and long-term investment in building resources in communities for outreach work with longer term housing.

Matthew addressed some of the major reforms for behavioral health services which included investments in diversifying the behavioral health workforce, removing barriers for getting into the workforce, and investing in culturally responsive providers. He also noted investment in redesigning the case management system.

For Disability Services reform, there was 680 million dollars targeted towards home and community-based services from the federal government. New disability services legislature included capacity building grants for local providers and investment in the Personal Care assistance system as an effort to build in a structure in how to support and sustain personal care workers.

There were two major reforms for background studies, first of which included aligning rules for foster care and adoption to promote equity for parents in the foster care system. The other major reform was the creation of a task force to work on reforming the background studies system.

Matthew noted the legislature approved a vast majority of the CECLC recommendations on policy. He thanked the council for their work and efforts. Matthew also mentioned that the CECLC council was extended to 2025 and although the sunset was not repealed, he stated he is hopeful for the future.

TaShonda asked Matthew what the deadlines were for the 2022 legislative session process. Matthew provided context for the 2022 session and noted that because of the special session, the next cycle will start in February and will focus on initiatives not tied to the budget such as investments in infrastructure. Matthew discussed the timeline for the next session stating the formal process for DHS will not start until later this summer and into fall. Matthew mentioned during the fall, he hopes to work with CECLC on discussing ideas and suggestions for the next legislation. Matthew also suggested that the council start thinking about the 2023 budget legislation cycle and planning for bolder initiatives. Matthew stated he wants to have consistent collaboration with the CECLC council and legislative workgroup going forward.

## **Workgroup Updates**

### **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

The workgroup members had a discussion on plans to move forward with the equity policy and anti-racism policy work at DHS. The workgroup shared they want to connect with DHS Operations Equity and Inclusion Director, Verona Mitchell, on how CECLC can collaborate with operationalizing the equity policy at DHS.

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

The workgroup members met with Devon Gilchrist who gave feedback on setting up his team and discussed ways the workgroup could further support his work. Workgroup members also discussed how to better utilize the time and space during workgroup meetings moving forward.

### **Legislative and Policy Committee**

The workgroup went over the HHS Omnibus bill that was just passed. The workgroup also had a discussion on preparing for the next legislative session and what CECLC would like to focus on.

## **Community Open Space & Announcements**

Dr. Russell A. Pointer shared that there is food distribution on Saturdays from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at Minneapolis Central Church of Christ (1922 Fourth Ave N, Minneapolis, MN).

Nicole Juan shared on behalf of Mariah Norwood that the Twin Cities Pride festival is on July 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> at Loring Park where there will be a stand for COVID-19 vaccines and vaccine information.

Petronellah shared about the grand opening of the Kesma Flame Lily LLC Behavioral Health and Disability Center located at 28000 Freeway Blvd, Unit 204, Minneapolis, MN. The center provides Autism assessments and assessments for other disabilities for adults and children.

Council members asked for an update on in-person meetings and Nicole stated the plan is to eventually return to in-person meeting but for the time being the council will continue to meet virtually.

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: August 20, 2021

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Sheree Steele, Shannon Geshick, Mariah Norwood, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, Petronellah Thomas-Shanobi, TaShonda Williamson, Senator John Hoffman, Brook Mallak
- **DHS Staff:** De Anna Conover, Rebeca Sedarski, Cate Dymit, Raie Gessesse, Rosanne Salem, Nikki Farago, Ladonna Morrison, Marisa Hinnenkamp, Beth Dansie, Christa Spielman, Diego Diaz-Rivero
- **Public Attendees:**

## Agenda

- 1:00 Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
- 1:05 Introductions
- 1:10 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 1:15 DHS Updates
- 1:30 Workgroup Updates
- 1:45 Reflection: 2019-2021 in Review
- 2:00 Looking Ahead: 2021-2023
- 2:30 Member Recognition
- 2:40 Community Open Space & Announcements
- 2:45 Adjournment of Public Meeting

## Chair-elect Remarks

Council Chair-elect TaShonda Williamson welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and shared a land acknowledgement.

## DHS Updates

### Deputy Commissioner Nikki Farago

Deputy Commissioner Nikki Farago was present at the meeting to speak with the council and gave an update on work being done in the External Relations Administration. Deputy Commissioner Farago acknowledged recent events with the delta variant with its impact across the world and in communities of color. Deputy Commissioner Farago thanked the CECLC members for their work and contributions to DHS, recognizing the members who had completed serving their final term on the council. She thanked the council for their work on reviewing the DHS Equity Policy, their engagement on the case management redesign process, and their work with Dr. McKinney on the development of the Office of Equity.

Deputy Commissioner Farago also shared an organizational update on the posting of two new assistant commissioner positions, Assistant Commissioner for Agency Effectiveness and Assistant Commissioner for Employee Culture. The Assistant Commissioner of Agency Effectiveness will oversee the operations of DHS Compliance Office, Financial Operations Division, Office of Strategy & Performance, Management Services Division, and the Equity Director for the Operations Division to consolidate and strengthen the control functions at DHS. The second position, Assistant Commissioner for Employee Culture, will report directly to Commissioner Harpstead and oversee the Human Resources Division to implement recommendations from the agency-wide cultural assessment and create an employee vision statement as well as work in collaboration with Chief Equity Officer, Dr. Karen McKinney and HR to ensure employee processes and procedures are being done with an anti-racism lens. Deputy Commissioner Farago asked the council to share these position openings with their networks as there will be an open hiring process.

### Community Relations Updates

Interim Community Relations Director De Anna Conover thanked the council for all their work and efforts this year and appreciated being able to work alongside and support the council with DHS. De Anna gave an update on the council's appointment process. The review panel met to choose applicants to move forward for interviews. Interviews will occur in the upcoming week and final applicants will then be reviewed and selected by the Commissioner before the next council meeting in September.

De Anna shared that the Community Relations team went on a retreat where they discussed working on equity goals, the results of the strength finder assessment, and the results of the group Intercultural Development Inventory assessment. De Anna shared about an upcoming community engagement project the Community Relations team has been working on called Community Empowerment Sessions. These sessions will be opportunities for community members to talk with DHS about topics and issues of community interest and build relationships with DHS. One component of the Community Empowerment Sessions will be looping back with the communities to follow up with how DHS has addressed or plans to address the points raised by the community. De Anna noted the sessions were originally planned to be in-person but because of the spread of the delta variant, the sessions are now being planned to be held online. De Anna also mentioned she hopes to work with the council on co-creating some of the sessions.

De Anna ended her update by thanking the two Executive Pathway Summer interns who have been working with the team.

## **Workgroup Updates**

### **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

TaShonda shared that the workgroup members met to go over and make edits for the new DHS Equity Policy.

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

During the last workgroup meeting, a DHS staff member with the African American Child Well-Being Unit gave an update on the work going on in their department. In addition, the workgroup agreed to bring in more topics for the workgroup to focus on that cover a broader range, allowing for better outcomes.

### **Legislative and Policy Workgroup**

There were no updates for the Legislative and Policy workgroup because the workgroup did not have a meeting last month due to the prolonged legislative session. Mariah shared that they are preparing a presentation for the newly appointed council members to introduce the work and goals of the legislative workgroup.

## **Reflection: 2019-2021 in Review**

*Time to look back and reflect on the work and accomplishments of the CECLC*

Council members were prompted questions to reflect and give feedback on. Council members were asked to share what was the most powerful learning moment they had this year working on the council and with DHS. One council member shared they had learned conflict resolution skills and how to build on the strengths of other members to bridge the community with DHS and legislative partners. Another council member shared they became more aware of cultural impact on cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

## **Looking Ahead: 2021-2023**

Council members were asked to reflect on opportunities for growth for the CECLC as well as what advice members would give to the incoming new council members. Council members commented on the need to remain grounded and focus on working for the needs of the communities they represent. Senator Hoffman shared his interest in serving as a liaison for the council with Senate Committees and working on building stronger relations with the CECLC and legislature to support the work of the council.

## **Community Open Space & Announcements**

There were no announcements shared.

Meeting Adjourned: 2:25pm

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: September 17, 2021

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Foua Choua Khang, Amanda Koonjbeharry, Kia Moua, Ken Ujifusa, Cratè Darden, Satasha Green-Stephen, Lolita Davis Carter, Sheree Steele, Jensina Rosen, Jackie Thomas-Hall, Meagan Hernandez, Paul Slack, Wesley Farrow, Shelia Lipsco, Shawn Sorrell, Macdonald Metzger, Larry Yang, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, Mariah Norwood, Brook Mallak, Rep. Jennifer Schultz, Sen. Hoffman
- **DHS Staff:** Nicole Juan, Rebeca Sedarski, De Anna Conover, Nikki Farago, Dave Hoang, Dr. Karen McKinney, Tamir Elnabarawy, Nathan Chomilo, Nelly Torori, Victor Muthui
- **Public Attendees:**

## Agenda

- 3:00 Welcome
- 3:05 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 3:10 DHS Updates
- 3:40 Workgroup Updates
- 3:50 Community Open Space & Announcements
- 4:00 Adjournment of Public Meeting

## Decisions Made

Review/approve July and August minutes:

- Motion to approve August minutes: Sheree Steele
- Second: Mariah Norwood
- The motion passed
  
- Motion to approve today's agenda: Cratè Darden

- Second: Paul Slack
- The motion passed

Motion to adjourn meeting:

- Motion to adjourn the meeting: Shawn Sorrell
- Second: Mariah Norwood
- The motion passed
- Meeting adjourned at 3:49pm

## **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement**

### **Introductions**

### **CECLC Orientation**

#### **Review Group Agreements/Values**

- Went over slides with agreements, values, and vision statement

#### ***Roles and Expectations***

#### **Community Relations Team Roles & Expectations**

- De Anna discussed the Commissioner's role which is to work with the council to co-create solutions, maintain the council, and coordinate policies at DHS.
- De Anna noted the Community Relations team serves as a bridge to connect council members to other administrations and DHS staff.

#### **CECLC Member Roles & Expectations**

#### ***Logistics***

- Communications through Community Relations
- CECLC Funding
- One-on-Ones to go through process
- Meeting Topic Suggestions



## CECLC Chair Progress and Next Steps

- Nicole gave an overview of the CECLC Chair process timeline and noted she will send out email with further information and details about the timeline.
- The council went over duties of the chair which can also be seen in the CECLC Bylaws.

## CECLC Workgroup Introductions

- Legislative Workgroup
  - o Meeting with legislature
  - o Working on CECLC legislature and other legislative matters
  - o Working with external group also working on Legislative issues
- DHS Internal Policies and Operations
  - o Any policies DHS has on equity and any equity processes, the workgroup is working on
- Topics and Issues Workgroup
  - o Space for members to dive into a particular issue or program
  - o Leadership opening (co-leads)
  - o Past topics of interest: African American Family Preservation Act, child protection services
- Leadership Team Workgroup
  - o Council chair and workgroup leaders
  - o Set agenda and plan
- There was a question raised about time commitment for the workgroups
- There was a question raised about the workgroup structure of the Topics and Issues workgroup

**\*\*PUBLIC MEETING BEGINS**

## Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes

### DHS Update

#### *Update from Federal Relations Director– Tamir Elnabarawy on Public Charge Determinations*

Federal Relations Director Tamir Elnabarawy shared an update on DHS involvement in current Public Charge rules. Tamir gave background on the public charge determinations:

- When an immigrant wants to enter the US or adjust their immigration status, public officials conduct a public charge determination to determine an individual's past use or likely future use of public services. The two public benefits considered in public charge are cash assistance programs (e.g. SSI or TANIF) or public determined long-term care.

- Last March, the Dept. of Homeland Security announced they would not expand public charge determinations to include other public assistance programs like SNAP or non-emergency Medicaid. President Biden issued an executive order for a review of public charge policies.

Tamir shared with the council that in response to the executive order, the Department of Homeland Security is asking the public for feedback on the current public charge determination process. Tamir provided a link in the chat for a public comment opportunity on the public charge determination process. Tamir mentioned that DHS will focus their public comment on the costs DHS has observed as a result of the public charge rule and information DHS has on the chilling effect of public charge determinations on DHS programs (i.e. disenrollment). In addition, DHS will comment on how to better clarify the role of public charge determinations and clearly communicate with community the impact of public charge. DHS also sees the public comment as an opportunity to advocate for the exclusion of state funds in public charge determinations.

Tamir shared with the council that there will be a listening session opportunity on October 5<sup>th</sup>, specific to state agencies but the public is welcome. DHS will share a copy of their public comment with the council once it has been prepared. Tamir mentioned he is available as a resource for any questions or on-going conversations and if the council would like to prepare their own public statement, he can provide additional background information and help to connect the council with others for additional information.

Nicole shared the previous council had sent in comments when the last administration updated the public charge. She also mentioned the council should consider if they would want to submit a comment as a general council or work on a comment within one of the workgroups as another option.

A council member asked for clarity if the inadmissibility rule under the 1999 act does not impact refugees, asylees, or other humanitarian immigrants. Tamir confirmed that public charge does not impact every type of immigrant but in the past, they have seen refugees and other types of immigrants not impacted by the public charge drop out of benefits out of fear of the public charge and losing their immigration status.

## ***Community Relations Update***

Interim Community Relations Director De Anna introduced the Community Relations team to the council and shared the team's mission statement. De Anna gave an overview of the work the team does at DHS and mentioned four big projects the team is currently working on:

- The Community Relations team leads an enterprise-wide Community Engagement Practitioner Group that has an upcoming meeting on September 23<sup>rd</sup>.
- The Community Relations team will be hosting the quarterly Community Engagement Open Forum for DHS staff, community partners, and the general public on October 7<sup>th</sup>.
- The team is launching a community engagement podcast called *The LoopBack*. The podcast will serve as a platform to explore topics and issues of community interest, engage in meaningful dialogue with community partners, and build trusting relationships with communities. De Anna mentioned she foresees the council's involvement in future episodes.

- The team is preparing for hosting the first Community Empowerment Session. These sessions will be opportunities for DHS to hear from community on topics and issues they want DHS to know about as well as have a dialogue with communities on how DHS can better serve its people moving forward. De Anna mentioned the original plan for these sessions was for them to be in-person, in community, with community; however, because of COVID, the first few sessions will be held virtually. DHS will also be looping back with these sessions in 6 months to give an update on what has been done with what the community has said.

## **Workgroup Updates**

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

The Topics and Issues Workgroup is currently open to leadership positions and there are not any current, on-going projects in the workgroup. Nicole informed council members if they are interested in joining the workgroup to reach out to her. Nicole also mentioned the workgroup could be a potential space to further discuss and work on the public charge comments.

### **Legislative and Policy Workgroup**

The Legislative and Policy workgroup did not meet over the last month due to the council member change over. The workgroup plans to meet with Senator Hoffman to work on future Legislative work as well as will be meeting the DHS legislative staff in early October. Nicole mentioned DHS is in the process of working on legislative proposals and getting ready to present proposals to the Governor. In the past, the council has worked with DHS throughout this process and the workgroup will be continuing with this work in the fall.

### **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

The Internal Policies and Operations workgroup is in the process of working with the DHS Equity Operations Director to identify areas for DHS to create evaluation metrics and measure outcomes on the work they are doing with Equity initiatives. The workgroup is also working with Chief Equity Director Dr. McKinney on the new Office of Equity and Inclusion. The workgroup is planning to work with DHS on their Diversity and retention plan for 2023 to 2025. The workgroup also is looking to work with One Minnesota and DHS to create an enterprise-wide Anti-Racism policy as well as update the CECLC By-Laws after the new legislation. One council member shared that the council has played an essential role in creating the DHS Equity policy as well as contributing to the creation of the new Office of Equity and Inclusion at DHS. Another council member shared about past work the workgroup has done partnering with DHS community partners.

## **Community Open Space and Announcements**

Mariah shared that the Minnesota Department of Health is using a federal platform called Docket, which is available on the app store, to help people access their vaccine records. Mariah shared the link to accessing

Docket and mentioned they were available to answer any questions regarding Docket. Link shared: <https://www.docket.care/>

Macdonald shared a link in the chat with information on outreach efforts on COVID-19 vaccine access and confidence for individuals with disabilities. Link shared: <https://publications.ici.umn.edu/frontline-initiative/17-1/dsps-are-critical-for-covid-19-vaccine-access-and-confidence-for-people-with-disabilities>

Shawn shared there is a virtual engagement challenge called 10 Days of Peace which encourages 10 days free from violence. Link shared: <https://twincitiesnonviolent.org/calendar/>

Crate shared about a celebration of wild rice, Native American culture, and the Minnesota Fall season on Saturday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. Link shared: <https://www.cityofroseville.com/1396/Wild-Rice-Festival>

Dr. Nathan Chomilo shared in the chat \$100 Covid vaccine incentives will be available at the CCC and community clinic events going forward (will include other incentives too). Link shared: <https://mn.gov/governor/news/#/detail/appId/1/id/499686>

Rebeca shared her and De Anna attended a celebration for Mexican Independence Day hosted by the Mexican Consulate.

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: October 15, 2021

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Foua Choua Khang, Amanda Koonjbeharry, Kia Moua, Ken Ujifusa, Cratè Darden, Lolita Davis Carter, Jensina Rosen, Jackie Thomas-Hall, Meagan Hernandez, Paul Slack, Shelia Lipsco, Macdonald Metzger, Larry Yang, Rep. Jennifer Schultz, Sen. Hoffman, Jesús Villaseñor, Tonia Lofton, Hibaq Dualeh, Wesley Farrow, Satasha Green-Stephen, Miguel Garate, Mariah Norwood, Rosa Tock
- **DHS Staff:** Nicole Juan, Rebeca Sedarski, De Anna Conover, Steve Reuter, Beth Dansie, Steven Wilson, Christa Spielman, Verona Mitchell, Dr. Karen McKinney
- **Public Attendees:**

## Agenda

- 3:00 Welcome
- 3:05 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 3:10 DHS Updates
- 3:30 CECLC Chair Update & Confirmation of Recommendation
- 3:40 Workgroup Updates
- 3:50 Community Open Space & Announcements
- 4:00 Adjournment of Public Meeting

## Decisions Made

Approve today's agenda:

- Motion to approve today's agenda: Amanda Koonjbeharry
- Second: Paul Slack
- The motion passed

Review/approve September minutes:

- Motion to approve August minutes: Lolita Davis Carter
- Second: Amanda Koonjbeharry
- The motion passed

Motion to Approve CECLC Chair Nomination

- Motion to approve Foua Choua Khang as the nomination for CECLC Chair: Wesley Farrow
- Second: Lolita Davis Carter
- The motion passed unanimously

Motion to adjourn meeting:

- Motion to adjourn the meeting: Shawn Sorrell
- Second: Mariah Norwood
- The motion passed
- Meeting adjourned at 3:49pm

## Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

## Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes

### DHS Update

Interim Community Relations Director De Anna shared with the council upcoming projects the Community Relations team has been working on. The Community Relations team is preparing for its first Community Empowerment session. De Anna explained these sessions will be opportunities for communities to share with folks at DHS topics and issues they want DHS to know about as well as have an open dialogue on how DHS can better serve Minnesotans moving forward. The first session will focus on the Legislative Budget. De Anna also mentioned the team will be launching a community engagement podcast called The LoopBack. The podcast will focus on continuing on-going conversations about topics and issues of community interest as well as following-up and looping back on the Community Empowerment sessions. Lastly, De Anna encouraged the council to make sure they attend the monthly meetings.

Chief Equity Officer Dr. Karen McKinney shared she hired a supervisor for the Office of Inclusion and Equity (Jacob Day) and is working on hiring and filing other positions including trainers, an administrative assistant, and a communications specialist.

Medicaid Medical Director Dr. Nathan Chomilo shared the Healthcare Administration is hosting two Community Conversation events on October 20<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> to discuss Minnesota Medicaid's upcoming report: Building Racial

Equity into the Walls of Minnesota Medicaid for U.S.-born Black Minnesotans. The Community Conversations are being held as an opportunity for community to participate in the co-creation of a report that will help guide policy decisions going forward in Minnesota's Medicaid program. Dr. Chomilo requested that the council share the event details with their networks.

## **CECLC Chair Update & Confirmation of Recommendation**

Nicole Juan gave a reminder of the Chair appointment process. The Chair position is appointed by the Commissioner of DHS and the Commissioner takes recommendations from the council. Foua Choua Khang was nominated by the council and has accepted her nomination. There were no other nominations. Foua Choua Khang shared with the council her dedication and excitement for the Chair position.

Wesley Farrow motioned to approve Foua Choua Khang as the nomination for CECLC Chair. Lolita Davis Carter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Workgroup Updates**

Cratè Darden reminded the council to submit their workgroup preferences to Nicole and she is working on gathering council member's preferences for workgroup meeting times.

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

Cratè Darden shared the workgroup is working on updating the bylaws for the CECLC and plans on sharing the bylaws with the full council soon. During the next workgroup meeting, members will decide on priority areas for the workgroup to focus on.

### **Legislative and Policy Workgroup**

Mariah Norwood is working with the DHS Legislative Director to create a presentation on the DHS policies that are going through the legislative process to share with the workgroup.

### **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

There were no updates for the Internal Policies and Operations workgroup.

## **Community Open Space and Announcements**

Jensina Rosen shared the Olmstead Implementation Office is hosting a community input event on October 19<sup>th</sup> for their Affordable, Safe, and Accessible Housing Workgroup. They are hoping to get information from the community on how the Olmstead Implementation Office can help make sure individuals with disabilities have affordable and accessible housing options. Jensina included a link in the chat to register for the event.

<https://mn.gov/olmstead/get-involved/index/accessible-housing-engagement/>

Macdonald M. Metzger shared the ICI Policy Research Brief: Predictors of Annual Turnover among Direct Support Professionals. <https://publications.ici.umn.edu/community-living/prb/28-3/main>. This brief contains findings from a recent study that was a first of its kind to look at both organizational- and state-level factors related to turnover among direct support professionals (DSP), using data from the National Core Indicators (NCI) Staff Stability Survey. The study showed that factors associated with higher annual turnover are not limited to the organizations that employ DSPs, but also include state-level policies and factors that may be beyond the organization's control.

Macdonald M. Metzger also invited the council to attend the upcoming 2021 Minnesota Gathering for Person-Centered Practices on October 27<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup>. The Minnesota Gathering for Person-Centered Practices is an annual two-day event for individuals with disabilities and their family members, advocates, business partners, educational and community-based organizations who are interested in person-centered practices and positive behavioral supports. This year The Gathering is online only.

[https://www.tickets.umn.edu/UMTE/Online/default.asp?BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::permalink=MNGPCP&BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::context\\_id=](https://www.tickets.umn.edu/UMTE/Online/default.asp?BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::permalink=MNGPCP&BOparam::WScontent::loadArticle::context_id=)

Cratè Darden shared the Overcoming Racism Conference is occurring on November 12<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> and included a link in the chat for more information. <https://overcomingracism.org/programs/conference/>



# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: November 19, 2021

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Foua Choua Khang, Ken Ujifusa, Cratè Darden, Lolita Davis Carter, Jensina Rosen, Paul Slack, Shelia Lipsco, Macdonald Metzger, Larry Yang, Sen. Hoffman, Jesús Villaseñor, Tonia Lofton, Hibaq Dualeh, Wesley Farrow, Satasha Green-Stephen, Mariah Norwood, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, Shawn Sorrell, Shannon Geshick (Kaythlyn Lundstrom)
- **DHS Staff:** Nicole Juan, Rebeca Sedarski, De Anna Conover, Beth Dansie, Steven Wilson, Christa Spielman, Nikki Farago, Elyse Bailey, Kate Kunitz, Dan Pollock, Carol Anthony, Susan Hall, Karen McKinney
- **Public Attendees:**

## Agenda

- 1:00 Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
- 1:05 Introductions
- 1:15 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 1:20 DHS Updates
- 1:40 Home and Community-Based Services/Enhanced federal FMAP Spending Plan Stakeholder Engagement
- 2:45 Integrated Services/Self-Service Portal and Social Needs Tool Project (formerly Screening and Referral) Engagement
- 3:10 Workgroup Updates
- 3:25 Community Open Space & Announcements
- 3:45 Adjournment

## Decisions Made

Approve today's agenda/October minutes:

- Motion to approve today's agenda: Shawn Sorrell
- Second: Lolita Davis Carter
- The motion passed

Motion to adjourn meeting:

- Motion to adjourn the meeting: Shawn Sorrell
- Second: Mariah Norwood
- The motion passed
- Meeting adjourned at 3:49pm

## Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

The newly elected Council Chair Foua Choua Khang welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and shared a land acknowledgement. Foua Choua noted that the land acknowledgement is a form of honor and that it is important to recognize our privilege in this space and time. Foua Choua shared with the council a Hmong proverb about uncovering the truth and the journey together.

## DHS Updates

### Community Relations Updates

Interim Community Relations Director De Anna Conover shared she has recently accepted a new position as Assistant Commissioner of Employee Culture and they will be hiring a new Community Relations Director within the next six weeks. De Anna mentioned the council will be involved in the hiring process. De Anna also shared the Community Relations team will be hosting the first Community Empowerment Session on December 1<sup>st</sup> and encouraged all the council members to attend and share the session details with their networks. Additional updates on Community Relations projects were shared:

- The Community Relations team will be launching a community engagement podcast called The Loop Back early next year. The podcast will center on continuing the on-going conversations brought up during the Community Empowerment Sessions.
- The team is will be welcoming new Community Engagement Liaisons from each administration. The liaisons will assist with coordinating community engagement activities across the agency.

Assistant Commissioner Nikki Farago was present at the meeting and shared with the council her excitement for the new chair and to be starting a new chapter with everyone. Assistant Commissioner Farago acknowledged that we are still in a pandemic and it continues to be a challenging, stressful time. Assistant Commissioner

recognized the work the council does as critical and gave a gentle reminder to take moments for self-care. The Assistant Commissioner asked the council to help on the hiring panel for the new Community Relations Director and thanked the council for their help in sharing the position opening with their networks.

## **Home and Community-Based Services/Enhanced federal FMAP Spending Plan Stakeholder Engagement**

Assistant Commissioner of the Continuing Care for Older Adults Administration Dan Pollock and his team of DHS staff (Christa Spielman, Elyse Bailey, and Carol Anthony) shared with the council an overview on the enhanced federal FMAP funding and their spending plan (see slideshow for more information). Assistant Commissioner Pollock shared a key part of the spending plan is supporting people living in their own homes through Housing Stabilization services and technology support (i.e. Telehealth).

Assistant Commissioner Pollock also shared there is 25 million dollars in grants for expanding capacity of providers serving rural and underserved communities. The council was asked to provide feedback on the idea of doing more specific community conversations for engaging with communities and targeting BIPOC communities specifically.

- A council member asked how the team plans to build community buy-in for participating in community engagement efforts.
- Another council member noted community partner organizations and non-profit organizations do not have the capacity to have conversations and suggested using community members as partners and cultural experts for engagement.
- Several council members mentioned the importance of being transparent and using plain language in describing engagement efforts.
- One member asked if the team will be investing in community partners that are already established in communities and how the team is considering refugee communities in community engagement efforts.
- A council member noted grant making tends to prefer reimbursement methods over advancements and asked how the team will support BIPOC organizations that don't already have a cash flow for reimbursements.
- A council member asked about what policies and procedures will be put in place to improve services and simplifying the approval process for providers to receive support from the agency.

Assistant Commissioner Pollock shared the need to show support to our federal provider partners (Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services) that these grants are important and needed. Assistant Commissioner Pollock asked the council for help in communicating the urgency and importance of the grant funding initiatives.

A council member asked about the federal funding approval process and was told there is very little guidance for the spending plan and there is very little information about the approval or criteria used to judge project approval. The team encouraged CECLC members to submit their statements of approval sooner rather than alter as the timelines aren't clear.

Assistant Commissioner Pollock thanked the council for their time and shared his email for further questions and follow up.

## **Integrated Services/Self-Service Portal and Social Needs Tool Project (formerly Screening and Referral) Engagement**

Rebeca Sedarski from the Community Relations team as well as Kate Kunitz and Susan Hall from the Business Solutions Office shared updates on the Integrated Services/Self-Service Portal and Social Needs Tool Project with the council. The Integrated Services/Self-Service Portal and Social Needs Tool Project was in response to the problem that the human services system is difficult to understand and unfriendly to navigate. The plan is to create a system that is easier to navigate, easy to understand and uses technology to promote accessibility.

The team presented an overview of the project with updates on creating a new “front door” for the human services system including an accessible, interactive website and social needs referral tool (see PowerPoint for more information). Susan Hall also gave an update on the new MNbenefits application that streamlines the application of 9 different benefit programs. The team went over the project timeline and highlighted recent accomplishments on the project.

The team asked the council for any questions or feedback they had based on the information that was presented.

- Several council members shared their excitement and support for the project, noting it is needed in the community.
- A council member asked how long it will take to implement the tool to which Susan responded saying they hope to get some of these initial up front tools over the next 2-3 years.
- Another member asked how accessible and inclusive is the Self-Service Portal will be for people with disabilities and older adults from communities where English is not their first language. Several members expressed concern about language barriers presenting as accessibility issues. The team responded to these concerns stating the self-service portal has not been created yet but they are working to ensure it is accessible and easy to navigate.
- A council member asked if DHS plans on keeping paper forms for people who prefer or need to use forms and if forms will change to align with these new systems. The response was there is no plan to change the use of forms in the near future.
- Another council member brought up the importance of considering broad-band access and how access to broad-band internet influences use of different services. The team mentioned it is a priority for the governor in One Minnesota and federal priority in expanding broad-band access.

Rebeca shared an overview of the Wilder research conducted for the project and what has been done with the research and DHS partnership. Susan shared an overview of the findings from the statewide community web survey. The survey was offered in several languages, offering gift cards as incentives, and received over 2665 responses. Key findings highlighted community preferences that validated what the team had thought. The team will share with the council a response report from the survey that includes a comprehensive data book and a simple graphic summary.

Kate shared the team sees the CECLC as a critical partner for their work and for finding ways to build community voices into their work. Kate asked the council how they would like to be involved in this work moving forward. Council members expressed interest in continuing to work with the team on the project, especially within the Topics and Issues workgroup. A council member shared their interest in opportunities to personally partner on specific, smaller projects that may target specific community groups. Foua Choua noted the CECLC can be used to help develop a process of community engagement along with the Community Relations team.

Kate and the team thanked the council for their time and shared resources for following up.

## **Workgroup Updates**

Nicole Juan shared all workgroups have met with the newly appointment members and she was so appreciative of all the new ideas coming forward. Nicole will be sending out December workgroup meeting invites shortly.

### **Legislative and Policy Workgroup**

Mariah Norwood shared their excitement for all the new workgroup members and how they are looking forward to working together. During the last meeting, the workgroup chose Amanda Koonjbeharry as the new co-lead. There was a presentation from DHS staff on how the council can work with DHS through the workgroup. Mariah is working on setting up legislative workgroup meeting with Representative Schultz and Senator Hoffman to discuss how the council can achieve their legislative goals. Mariah will be sending out email invites once the dates have been confirmed for the legislative meetings.

### **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

The workgroup took time to get to know each other and review the past work with DHS policies including co-creating the Equity policy, reviewing the recruitment and retention plan, and reviewing the affirmative action plan as well as partnering with the new Office of Inclusion and Equity. The workgroup is also working on updating the CECLC bylaws. Cratè shared there was a review of a request for a presentation to the workgroup from the Health Care Administration on a cultural accountability work tool. The workgroup also discussed increasing membership of non-DHS staff in the workgroup for greater community representation and that joining the workgroup is an opportunity for community member to be involved in the internal operations of DHS.

### **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

Nicole shared there are a number of folks interested in leadership for co-leads. The leadership team will be meeting next week to decide on the co-leads for the workgroup. During the last meeting, the workgroup had a discussion on issue areas of interest. Nicole shared results of a survey on what issues/program areas the workgroup would like to focus on for 2022. Nicole will be sending out the results to the council in an email.

## Community Open Space and Announcements

Mariah shared November is Native American Heritage month. Mariah noted this time of year is an opportunity for people to make conscious decisions to talk about the meaning of the Thanksgiving holiday and talk about whose land we are on. Mariah encouraged members to consider cooking something that is not within your culture and encourage folks to have difficult conversations with family.

Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro shared in the chat an informational video of how some Indigenous folk hold events on Thanksgiving as a National Day of Mourning. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-okm80fap68>

Mariah Norwood also shared a data tool project they worked on called Native Data. The tool provides information on how to create data sharing agreements with Tribes and working with Indigenous communities. [https://natedata.npaihb.org/?blm\\_aid=844745357](https://natedata.npaihb.org/?blm_aid=844745357)

Macdonald Metzger shared a link in the chat to the ICI November Policy Research Brief on the DSP Workforce and COVID-19 Vaccinations. <https://publications.ici.umn.edu/community-living/prb/28-4/main>.

Macdonald Metzger also shared that the University of MN is seeking participants with disabilities for a research study of new HCBS outcome measures. Participants must be 18 years or older, have a disability and receive services or supports for it, provide participation consent or assent (if not their own legal guardian), and be willing to take part in a 60–90 minute interview. Participants will be interviewed three times over a year period. Each participant will receive a \$10 gift card. Those interested or who have questions about this work can email Matt Roberts [robe0290@umn.edu](mailto:robe0290@umn.edu)

Meeting adjourned 3:33pm

# Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: December 17, 2021

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx

## Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Foua Choua Khang, Lolita Davis Carter, Jensina Rosen, Paul Slack, Larry Yang, Sen. Hoffman, Tonia Lofton, Hibaq Dualeh, Wesley Farrow, Satasha Green-Stephen, Mariah Norwood, Elizabeth Taylor-Schiro, Kia Moua, Rosa Tock, Amanda Koonjbeharry, Brook Mallak
- **DHS Staff:** Nicole Juan, De Anna Conover, Beth Dansie, Dr. Karen McKinney, Cate Dymit, Whitney Terrill, Jacob Day
- **Public Attendees:**

## Agenda

- 1:00 Welcome and Land Acknowledgement
- 1:05 Introductions
- 1:15 Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
- 1:20 Chair Remarks
- 1:30 DHS Updates
- 1:55 Workgroup Updates
- 2:30 DHS Equity Work Overview: Office of Equity and Inclusion
- 3:15 Community Open Space & Announcements
- 4:00 Adjournment

## Decisions Made

Approve November minutes:

- Motion to approve today's agenda: Mariah Norwood
- Second: Tonia Lofton
- The motion passed

Approve today's agenda

- Motion to approve today's agenda: Tonia Lofton
- Second: Paul Slack
- The motion passed

## **Welcome and Land Acknowledgement**

Council Chair Foua Choua Khang welcomed members and attendees to the meeting and shared a land acknowledgement. Foua Choua shared her hopes to meet in peace for the New Year and encouraged the council to think about goals for the first half of 2022 including goals for the upcoming legislative session.

## **DHS Updates**

### **Community Relations Updates**

Assistant Commissioner of Employee Culture De Anna Conover shared the Community Relations team is still in process of hiring the new Community Relations Director. The first round of interviews was recently completed and they are planning to have a new director hired in January. Assistant Commissioner Conover also shared there is a new Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Achievement Award at DHS.

The Community Relations team held the first Community Empowerment Session on December 1. De Anna thanked the council members who attended and encouraged council members to take a feedback survey was recently sent out. A Loop Back Session will be held in June of 2022 to follow up with community on what DHS has done with the information gathered at the first Community Empowerment Session.

The Community Relations team also hosted the quarterly Community Engagement Practitioners Group meeting yesterday. The event was enterprise-wide in which community engagement practitioners gathered to problem-solve, network, and share resources.

Assistant Commissioner Conover introduced Whitney Terrill from the Office of Equity and Inclusion who is momentarily filling in for Wendy Plager. Whitney introduced herself and said she is looking forward to working with the council.

## **Workgroup Updates**

Nicole Juan shared workgroups will have their monthly meetings the first week on the month in January. All workgroups had follow up questions for members to work on before their next meetings in January.



## **Legislative and Policy Workgroup**

Mariah Norwood shared Chris Zempel from the DHS legislative staff gave proposals and discussed upcoming session priorities. Council members will receive a follow up email from Nicole and Mariah asked the council to read and respond to the email to help the workgroup prioritize initiatives.

The workgroup met with Senator Hoffman and his team to discuss future collaborative work. Mariah will be creating a list of areas and bills the council is passionate about and wants to support that will be shared with Senator Hoffman. The list will be completed and shared by January 6<sup>th</sup>. Nicole also shared the DHS legislative team is working on connecting with other ethnic group councils who are working on legislature that the CECLC could provide support for and/or work together on.

## **Internal Policies and Operations Workgroup**

Nicole shared the workgroup has several projects on their plate. For the next workgroup meeting, members will look a draft of updated bylaws for CECLC. The workgroup discussed working with Chief Inclusion Officer Chris Taylor on enterprise-wide equity initiatives. The workgroup also will be working with the Office of Equity and Inclusion on various initiatives including the Anti-Racism Policy.

## **Topics and Issues Workgroup**

The workgroup discussed the list of topics they want to focus on and talked about priorities for the group including how to work well together. The workgroup listed several goals the group wants to pursue and will be working through the list to create an agenda that supports everyone's ideas.

## **Other**

Nicole mentioned the Community Relations team is working on the 2022 CECLC legislative report. The team is getting ready to share drafts with the council leadership team to get feedback and edits on the report. Nicole asked the council to reach out to her if members have any particular messages or information they want to include in the report. A major part of the report is the Annual Equity Review that looks at equity projects occurring in each administration at DHS. Nicole noted the report is a useful tool and has helped with advocacy work at the legislature.

One council member asked if DHS keeps data on employee retention at DHS. Assistant Commissioner Conover responded that they do keep data and that there is a retention plan that Dr. McKinney will be reaching out to the council to provide feedback on.

Council Chair Foua Choua shared she met with Commissioner Harpstead. Foua Choua mentioned the Commissioner is looking forward to working with the council and hearing what work the council has to give her. The Commissioner plans to meet with the council on a quarterly basis to give updates and insight on equity work occurring at DHS.

## DHS Equity Work Overview: Office of Equity and Inclusion

The Office of Equity and Inclusion Supervisor Jacob (Jake) Day introduced himself to the council and gave an overview of the Office of Equity and Inclusion. The office emerged from a goal set by the Strategic Anti-Racism Team (START). The office has 15 positions including the supervisor, trainers, a communication specialist, an IDI Coordinator, a community engagement specialist, a policy specialist, and a data specialist. Jake discussed the importance of alignment within DHS around moving equity work forward and how the Office of Equity and Inclusion can support divisions in equity work including creating trainings for DHS employees.

Jake asked the council how the Office of Equity and Inclusion can align with CECLC to further equity work at DHS.

- A council member noted their interest in working with the office to provide community input on projects and asked what the office's end goal was. Jacob responded saying one main goal is to have DHS become an anti-racist organization and to have DHS engage with communities, embracing multiculturalism. Jake shared with the council a personal story about a culturally responsive community partnership he witnessed in the Leech Lake community.
- A council member asked how DHS and the Office of Equity and Inclusion defines equity at DHS. Jake responded by saying the office is creating a dictionary that will be implemented agency wide and shared with one of the state work groups. Council members expressed interest in partnering with the office on reviewing and supporting this work.
- A council member asked what it means to be anti-racist organization and what the criteria is. Jake discussed the importance of transformational justice for anti-racism and creating a system that removes barriers and provides supports for individuals accessing services. Council members expressed excitement and support for transformational justice at DHS.

Jake asked the council if they would like to have more involvement in the Strategic Anti-Racism Team and expressed his interest in future collaborative with the CECLC. Jake mentioned he wants the Office of Equity and Inclusion work with CECLC to identify and champion positive pieces of legislation.

- A council member asked if DHS uses an anti-racism tool when reviewing policies. Jake noted there was a tool but was unsure of the consistency of the tool's use.
- A council member asked if Dr. McKinney and Jake be invited to the next CECLC leadership meeting. The council member expressed interest in the leadership team being more involved in work going on with the Office of Equity and Inclusion. The council member also asked if there was a timeline for the DHS anti-racism policy. Dr. McKinney explained that the office is waiting to hire the policy specialist(s) to work on the anti-racism policy. Dr. McKinney discussed training DHS Human Resources staff to review internal policies through an equity and anti-racist lens. There is currently not a timeline but Dr. McKinney noted creating the anti-racism policy and reviewing internal policies in a high priority for the office. Council Chair Foua Choua expressed interest and commitment to following up with the Office of Equity and Inclusion in working on the Anti-racism policy and providing community input.
- A council member mentioned that the Director of Human Resources is leaving their position and asked how we can make sure that work doesn't get lost in the transition. Assistant Commissioner Conover provided insight on the situation and noted that she is working on finding the best person for the

Director of Human Resources role. Dr. McKinney assured the council that the Office of Equity and Inclusion will not lose the initiative of reviewing internal policies and that McKinney has confidence in De Anna to hire someone who will want to take the policy review work on.

## Community Open Space and Announcements

Council Chair Foua Choua shared the collaborative work she is doing with the Community Health Workers Alliance and DHS on care coordination and supporting community health workers. Foua Choua invited council members to reach out if they are interested in getting involved. Foua Choua also shared the Hmong New Year is happening and wished everyone health and wealth for the New Year.

Mariah Norwood shared a holiday event the Native American Community Clinic (NACC) is hosting.  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/383258553556150?ref=newsfeed>

The Ombudsperson for Asian Pacific Families Brook Mallak gave an update on the Ombudsperson Office for Families.

- The Office of Ombudspersons for Families works on complaints related to the child protection services, including investigations on allegations that meets violation of applicable statues and is related to an open case. The office also monitors cases to ensure social services are being culturally sensitive and culturally responsive.
- The Office of Ombudspersons for Families consists of three people: the Ombudsperson for Spanish Speaking Families, the Ombudsperson for African American Families, and the Ombudsperson for Asian Pacific Families. The past legislative session created a separate agency for the Office Ombudsperson of Native American Families.
- The Office of Ombudspersons for Families works parallel to DHS, sometimes referring folks to DHS and working with DHS to discuss policy changes.
- A council member raised the issue that families sometimes don't receive notice of the opportunity to appeal their case until after their case has already been closed.
  - Brook responded to the comment that her office has limited power in responding to that issue but what the office can do is create a report that highlights the issue and advocate for policy change. Brook noted the Office Ombudsperson for Families does not have the power to change individual cases. The office advocates for compliance with the law.
- Brook highlighted an issue she is working regarding data collection practices, especially regarding data collection on race and ethnicity. Several council members agreed with Brook's statements sharing their frustrations and insight on data collection practices for race and ethnicity including data on multi-racial individuals is not disaggregated.
- A council member highlighted the previous issue raised about delayed notifications going out to families in the child protection services system and asked if the council could advocate for a technical change regarding the issue. Several other members expressed interest in working on supporting solutions for issues with the child protection system.

Meeting adjourned 2:58pm