

Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: May 17, 2024

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

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

Attendance

CECLC Members: Kimetha Johnson, Philip Gaye-Bai, Foua-Choua Khang, Abdirahman Ali-Mumin, Alex Abraha, Pachua Vang, Shawn Sorrell, Sheila Lipsco, Paul Slack, Chris Green, Tonia Lofton, Joanna Rosa, Mozana Ebrahim, Crate Darden, Lizette Banini, Josefina Geronimo, Lashalle Campbell, Farhia Said, Muriel Gubasta

DHS Staff: Helen Ghebre, Cate Dymit, Steven Wilson, Dr. Karen McKinney, Kelly Barnebey, Malissa Adams

Public Attendees: Misty Coonce, Dr. Richard Oni, Angela Fields

Agenda

12:00	Lunch and Community Networking / WebEx Opens
1:00	Open Public Meeting and Land Acknowledgement
1:05	Introductions and Welcome
1:20	Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
1:25	Community Celebrations and Shoutouts
1:35	High-level Overview of DHS Conversation
2:05	Break
2:10	Workgroup Updates & Priorities • Legislative Workgroup • Topics & Issues Workgroup • Equitable Outcomes Workgroup
3:10	CECLC Strategic Planning (Part 1) • 2024-2025 CECLC Priorities
3:40	Administrative Updates • Upcoming Appointments • Training Development Opportunity Leadership Updates
3:50	Closing

Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, and Introductions

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

Decisions Made

Review and approve April minutes and meeting agenda:

- Motion to approve meeting agenda and April minutes: Foua-Choua Khang
- Second: Paul Slack
- The motion passed

Community Celebrations and Shoutouts

Shawn Sorrell opened the floor for members to share.

- Shawn Sorrell called out the various acknowledgements on today's agenda: Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, National Mental Health Awareness Month, Minnesota American Indian Month, and National Foster Care Awareness Month.
- Kimetha Johnson thanked Josefina Geronimo for supporting her Residents of Color Collective (ROCC) community event in April. She highlighted [two ROCC Juneteenth events](#):
 - BBQ Kick-Off on June 9 from 2:00-5:00pm at West St. Paul Sports Complex
 - Juneteenth Celebration on June 19 from 5:00-8:00pm at Dodge Nature Center
- Misty Coonce shared the [Office of the Foster Youth Ombudsperson](#) officially opened last week and is available to respond to inquiries, investigate complaints, and write reports. Tonia Lofton is now an investigator in that office.
- Foua-Choua Khang shared the [Hmong International Freedom Festival](#) at McMurray Field at Como Park on June 29-30. Free admission this year. Also, on Friday, July 12 from 9am-4pm is the [African Mental Health Summit](#) at the Heritage Center of Brooklyn Center. If anyone is able to sponsor, please reach out to Foua-Choua. The event is open to everyone. Registration details will be shared in the post-meeting email update.
- Shawn Sorrell gave a shoutout to Liz Banini and Cratè Darden for their participation and engagement on the council as representatives of DHS.
- Dr. Karen McKinney is happy to announce her team in the DHS Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) is finally fully staffed.

High-level Overview of DHS

Cratè Darden provided a current overview of DHS major programs: income assistance, food assistance, health care, and child services. She described the programs and divisions moving to the new Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) and what will remain at DHS. Cratè also presented on the council workgroup process flow. Her slide deck was shared with the CECLC prior to this meeting and will be included in the post-meeting email update.

This agenda item will aid ongoing conversation around alignment of council priorities and where its work lives within workgroups/CECLC and DHS.

Workgroup Updates

Legislative and Policy Workgroup

Joanna Rosa shared the workgroup met regarding recent developments on the African American Family Preservation Act. The workgroup sent an email to the council to vote on adding the CECLC to the letter of support of the bill, for which there was consensus to add it. The bill passed in the Senate and then was passed in the House this past week.

Foua-Choua Khang added the 2025 Legislative Meet & Greet is scheduled for the second week of session: January 23 from 9am-4pm in the Vault. DHS Community Relations will send a calendar hold. The workgroup seeks volunteers for next year's planning.

Topics and Issues Workgroup

Paul Slack shared the workgroup continues to focus on child protection/mandated reporter trainings. Renee Armstrong and Erin Klumper from the MN Child Welfare Training Academy and the Child Safety and Permanency (CSP) Division presented on recent outreach efforts around the mandated reporter training.

At its next meeting, the workgroup will discuss creating equitable hiring practices; how do we ensure HR managers are being equitable; and moving past perpetuating systemic barriers.

Equitable Outcomes Workgroup

At its last meeting, Foua-Choua Khang noted participation has increased, which has been a goal of the workgroup. Liz Banini shared an overview of her division at DHS, Fiscal Analysis and Results Management (FARM) which oversees the county implementation of aging and disability services waiver programs. She supervises a team of program evaluators. Her presentation included two public dashboards that display data and metrics on waiver programs: Long-Term Services and Supports (LTSS) Performance Measures and Long-Term Services (LTSS) Demographic Dashboard. The FARM team uses those dashboards to compare county census data with dashboard data for trends or gaps in program implementation and to inform outreach strategies.

The council then transitioned to small breakout groups to discuss the following three questions related to workgroups and reported out their responses.

1. Where are you seeing alignment with CECLC 2024-2025 priorities and workgroup activities?
2. What opportunities do you see? What do you see as immediate next steps?
3. How to bring along more community to get involved in this work?

CECLC Strategic Planning (Part 1)

Due to the time, this agenda item was tabled for a future meeting.

Administrative Updates

Upcoming Appointments

Beginning in June, DHS Community Relations and council leadership will begin seeking nominations for co-chair to replace Foua-Choua Khang who is transitioning out of that role.

Training Development Opportunities

Helen Ghebre said funding is still available for those who wish to register for the 16th Annual Community Empowerment Through Black Men Healing Conference on June 20-21. A survey will be sent after today's meeting to gauge interest. If there is sufficient interest, the council could potentially adjust its June meeting. More to come.

The CECLC has the opportunity to showcase its work on Thursday, August 22 as part of DHS Office of Employee Culture's Employee Engagement Day. Details will be shared in the post-meeting email update.

Meeting adjourned at 3:26 PM