

Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: April 18, 2025

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx and International Institute of MN (Hybrid)

Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Shawn Sorrell, Chris Green, Philip Gaye-Bai, Manuel Zuniga, Pachua Vang, Liz Banini, Micaela Schuneman, Alex Abraha, Victor Obisakin, Tonia Lofton, Kimetha Johnson, Crate Darden, Lolita Davis Carter, Joanna Rosa, Angela Fields, Josefina Geronimo
- **DHS & DCYF Staff:** Helen Ghebre, Lola Muhammad, Steven Wilson, Kelly Barnebey, Clark Frederickson, Angie DeLille
- **Public Attendees:** Kelsey Delisle

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	DHS Legislative Update and Discussion
1:45	Workgroup Updates & Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislative Workgroup• Topics & Issues Workgroup• Equitable Outcomes Workgroup
	Administrative Updates
2:25	Break
2:35	CECLC Strategic Planning Retreat Subcommittee Announcement
4:00	Adjourn Full Council Meeting

Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, and Introductions

Shawn Sorrell called the meeting to order. He led the council through a land acknowledgement and introductions.

Shawn Sorrell reminded council members about the Tribal-State Relations Training opportunity to more effectively engage the DHS Office of Indian Policy (OIP) and the Minnesota Indian Affairs Council (MIAC) around Tribal Relations and addressing the needs of Urban Indian communities. Please contact Community Relations to register.

These upcoming trainings have gone to waitlist. The remaining 2025 sessions will be posted soon.

- May 14-15, 2025, Black Bear Casino in Carlton, MN (**waitlist**)
 - Hosted by the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- June 24-25, 2025, Grand Casino Mille Lacs in Onamia, MN (**waitlist**)
 - Hosted by the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe

Decisions Made

Review and approve March minutes and meeting agenda:

- Motion to approve meeting agenda and March minutes:
- Second: Victor Obisakin
- The motion passed

Review and approve dates of 2025 Strategic Planning Retreat:

- Motion to approve September 12-13 to hold the retreat: Shawn Sorrell
- Second: Joanna Rosa
- The motion passed.

Community Celebrations and Shoutouts

Shawn Sorrell opened the floor for members to share.

- Shawn recognized the April observances on the agenda: Autism Awareness Month, National Counseling Awareness Month, Celebrate Diversity Month, Testicular Cancer Awareness Month, and Sexual Assault Awareness Month. On April 17-18, [Restoration for All, Inc.](#) held an event in Inver Grove Heights to provide early childhood literacy and other early childhood support reaching various milestones via a program titled: [Follow Along](#). There are two upcoming events for our Spanish-speaking communities on Saturday, April 26 and Sunday, May 4. More details in the post-meeting email update.
- Clark Fredrickson shared two upcoming learning sessions at DHS:
 - In recognition of Autism Acceptance Month, the Office for Equity and Inclusion (OEI) will host a learning session with Nathaniel Dempsey on Tuesday, April 22 from 1:00-3:00 pm. Dempsey's

presentation “Autism and Neurodivergence: What Next?” explores the transition from awareness to acceptance, tolerance to belonging, and accommodation to systems change for people with autism, ADHD, and other learning differences.

- The Asian Heritage Employee Resource Group (AHERG) is hosting a virtual Karen and Karenni learning session with The Urban Village from 1:00-2:00 pm on Thursday, April 24.
- Check out the [Inclusion and Engagement events calendar](#) to view details and add to your own calendar.
- Manuel Zuniga mentioned May is AANHPI Heritage Month which is no longer federally recognized. He shared his article [“Act to celebrate #AANHPI Heritage Month after the US Federal government's elimination of 33 years of bipartisan celebration and recognition.”](#)
- Joanna Rosa shared upcoming trainings and events by the Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee (MIRAC): [MIRAC - Minnesota Immigrant Rights Action Committee](#).
- Micaela Schuneman shared [Latino Day at the Capitol](#) on Thursday, April 24 from 2:00-4:00 pm.
- Lolita Davis Carter shared an upcoming event titled A Discussion About Black Family Mental Health in Minneapolis on Saturday, April 19 from 10:00 am-1:30 pm. Details, including the link to register, will be in the post-meeting email update.

DHS Legislative Update and Discussion

Due to the Easter/Passover legislative break, DHS legislative staff are not in attendance but will provide a written update following this meeting.

DHS budget fact sheets: <https://mn.gov/dhs/media/fact-sheets/2025-session-fact-sheets.jsp>.

Workgroup Updates

Legislative and Policy Workgroup

The workgroup welcomed Angela Fields as new co-lead. In March, it participated in advocacy training with Bahea Manasra, Legislative & Policy Analyst in the Office of Equity and Inclusion to form a subgroup to cross-reference current bills with CECLC legislative priorities. That subgroup is setting up a workflow or framework to be used for future legislative sessions.

Topics and Issues Workgroup

The workgroup is focusing on outreach to Greater Minnesota and on collaborating with partners in immigrant and diaspora communities.

Manuel Zuniga would like to invite Abdi Mohamed from Office of New Americans to present to the council at a future meeting. Here is more information about that Office: <https://mn.gov/deed/about/what-guides-us/equity/ira/>.

Chris Green presented an event from stakeholders in NWMN, which involves offering a community meal and a meet and greet on June 5th. CECLC members are invited to attend.

Equitable Outcomes Workgroup

Using its charter, the workgroup is drafting a standard process to review agency programs, which it will share with the CECLC once finalized. DHS Equity Directors will attend the next workgroup meeting to discuss equity analysis.

Administrative Update

Helen Ghebre provided follow-up on Reena Shetty's presentation on Metro Meals on Wheels Senior Nutrition Program in last month's meeting. Equity analysis on the proposed policies is being pushed to the June DEIA Committee meeting. The delay is caused by changes at the federal level that impact the technical assistance received from regional administrators. Leonard Geshick, the Indian Elders Coordinator and DEIA Committee staff lead, will provide the June meeting details as the date approaches.

Once the revised policies are posted, Reena will have Leonard send them to Community Relations to share with the CECLC.

CECLC Strategic Planning Retreat Subcommittee Announcement

Helen Ghebre presented several venue options in Cass Lake, Carlton, Morton, and Mahanomen. The council asked Community Relations to add other venues to the list for consideration and to prepare a grid or 1-pager comparing the venue amenities, total cost, distance, etc.

After discussion on timing of the retreat, a motion was made to hold the retreat on September 12-13. The motion passed unanimously.

Craté Darden also presented a draft agenda for discussion. The agenda will be finalized closer to the retreat.

Meeting adjourned at 3:08 PM