

Meeting Minutes: Cultural and Ethnic Communities Leadership Council

Date: September 20, 2024

Minutes prepared by: DHS Community Relations Staff

Location: WebEx and International Institute of Minnesota (Hybrid)

Attendance

- **CECLC Members:** Shawn Sorrell, Foua-Choua Khang, Paul Slack, Philip Gaye-Bai, Farhia Said, Tonia Lofton, Alex Abraha, Micaela Schuneman, Nelly Torori, Manuel Zuniga, Pa Chua Vang, Chris Green, Joanna Rosa, Kimetha Johnson, Josefina Geronimo, Senator John Hoffman
- **DHS & DCYF Staff:** Deputy Commissioner Nikki Farago, Cate Dymit, Laura Villarreal, Daisy Mairura, Dr. Karen McKinney, Kelly Barnebey, Christine Renville, Gaosheng Thao, Nate Carter, Hli Vang, Micah Tran
- **Public Attendees:** Dr. Richard Oni

Agenda

12:00	Lunch and Community Networking / WebEx Opens
1:00	Open Public Meeting and Land Acknowledgement
1:05	Introductions and Welcome
1:20	Review and Approve Meeting Agenda and Minutes
1:25	Community Celebrations and Shoutouts
1:35	Workgroup Updates & Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Legislative Workgroup• Topics & Issues Workgroup• Equitable Outcomes Workgroup
2:00	Break
2:10	Update on Tribal-State Relations Training
2:20	Update on DHS Equity Week
2:30	CECLC Legislative Summit Overview & Discussion
2:50	Administrative Updates
3:00	Adjourn Full Council Meeting

Welcome, Land Acknowledgement, and Introductions

Shawn Sorrell called the meeting to order and led the council through a land acknowledgement and introductions. He invited Deputy Commissioner Nikki Farago to introduce two new additions to DHS Community Relations: Laura Villarreal, Communication and Community Outreach Project Coordinator, and Daisy Mairura, Executive Pathways Program intern. Welcome!

Decisions Made

Review and approve August minutes and meeting agenda:

- Motion to approve meeting agenda and August minutes: Paul Slack
- Second: Philip Gaye-Bai
- The motion passed

Review and approve 2024 CECLC Legislative Priorities:

- A roll call vote was taken to adopt these legislative priorities.
- The motion passed unanimously.

Community Celebrations and Shoutouts

Shawn Sorrell opened the floor for members to share.

- Shawn recognized the September observances on the agenda: National Recovery Month, Hispanic Heritage Month, and Honoring National Deaf Awareness Month. He stated the Eliminating Racism in Substance Use & Community Care ECHO Fellowship application is currently open and closes on Friday, September 27. On Saturday, October 19 from 1:00-4:30 pm, an Immigration Resource Fair will be held at St. Stephen's Lutheran Church. More information will be shared in the post-meeting email update.
- Cate Dymit shared the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (CMAH) offered two tickets for council members to attend [the 2024 Asian Pacific Minnesotans Leadership Awards Dinner](#) hosted by the Council on Asian Pacific Minnesotans on Friday, October 18 from 6:00-8:30 pm at the Heritage Center of Brooklyn Center. The deadline to register is today, September 20. Anyone interested should contact Community Relations. Cate also mentioned The Welcome Fund is launching its 3rd [All for Us grant opportunity](#). More information will be shared in the post-meeting email update.
- Paul Slack and Philip Gaye-Bai invited everyone a community engagement event on Wednesday, October 2 from 6:00-8:00 pm at Ebenezer Community Church in Brooklyn Park.
- Kimetha Johnson invited everyone to the Residents of Color Collective (ROCC) Climbers event on Friday, September 27 at Thompson County Park on West St. Paul.
- Joanna Rosa shared a flyer about Healing in Practice (HIP's) fall program for youth, which takes place every Tuesday from October 1 to December 17 in Minneapolis. This program highlights identity, health, community, and conflict resolution as developmental focus areas when working with youth. Programming structure will consist of a combination working in both one-on-one and group settings. HIP has a total of three mentors and will be accepting 12-15 youth (ages 13-18 Black and Brown). Anyone interested should [register here](#).

- The Legislative Coordinating Commission (LCC) is seeking a contractor to develop and conduct Anti-Harassment & Discrimination/Respect in the Workplace presentation materials for group trainings. The contract term will be effective January 1, 2025 through either December 31, 2026, or March 31, 2027. More information will be shared in the post-meeting email update.

Workgroup Updates

Legislative and Policy Workgroup

At its last meeting, the workgroup invited Elyse Bailey, DHS Budget Director, to participate. There were technical issues, so she will be invited to a future workgroup meeting. The workgroup continues to discuss how to better align its work with the new DHS structure.

Shawn Sorrell added the council has not yet voted on its eight legislative priorities. He invited the council to discuss them and take a vote today, in anticipation of the October 1st CECLC Legislative Summit.

1. Promote equitable DHS investments in marginalized communities of color and Tribal Governments and people. (Ex. CEMIG, Opioid Epidemic Response Grant (OERAC), etc.)
2. Housing and Homelessness
3. MinnesotaCare expansion to undocumented immigrants' implementation
4. Disability Waiver Services: Increasing access
5. Elderly Waiver Services
6. Community Health Workers Systems Navigation
7. LGBTQIA+ Community Health Care Access
8. Resettlement Services for New Americans

Foua-Choua Khang suggested combining Elderly Waiver and Disability Waiver Services; however, Senator Hoffman recommended keeping them separate.

A roll call vote was taken to adopt these legislative priorities as written. There were no nays, and the motion passed unanimously.

The CECLC Legislative Summit will be an opportunity to take a deeper dive into these topics with agency staff – all council members are strongly encouraged to attend.

Topics and Issues Workgroup

The workgroup has been working to expand community outreach to different communities and is pleased to announce it secured a date for its first outreach session, which will take place on Wednesday, October 2 from 6:00-8:00 pm at Ebenezer Community Church in Brooklyn Park. Council members are invited to attend. Community members' ongoing engagement and collaboration can help inform policies and services that reflect their community's needs.

Equitable Outcomes Workgroup

At its last meeting, the workgroup heard from the DHS Fiscal Analysis & Results Management (FARM) Division and members of the University of Chicago National Opinion Research Center (NORC) Research Team on findings

from the Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) Evaluation of the Assessment for Racial and Ethnic Disparities (HEARD) Project.

The workgroup identified opportunities for community representatives on the council to provide guidance on further community engagement in the HEARD Project. To that, Shawn Sorrell invited the council to read the report findings and participate in the conversation.

The October workgroup meeting will be rescheduled to October 8 at 2:00-3:00 pm due to schedule conflict with the CECLC Legislative Summit.

The workgroup is seeking a co-lead.

Update on Tribal-State Relations Training

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

Community Relations held 15 spots for council members to attend. The next session occurs on October 23-24 at Treasure Island Resort & Casino in Welch, MN, hosted by the Prairie Island Indian Community. The November session has filled, and the October session is expected to fill soon.

Please contact Community Relations by Monday, September 23 if you wish to attend, and check the [TSRT website](#) for the 2025 dates, locations, and lodging details. Council members are responsible for arranging lodging and will be fully reimbursed for that.

Update on DHS Equity Week

Hli Vang, DHS Engagement Coordinator, gave details on next week's DHS Equity Week and invited everyone to engage in the vast array of sessions. More information will be shared in the post-meeting email update.

CECLC Legislative Summit Overview and Discussion

Deputy Commissioner Nikki Farago provided an overview of the CECLC Legislative Summit on Tuesday, October 1 from 12:00-4:00 pm, and invited everyone to RSVP. DHS staff consider this to be a valuable time to hear from council members and community prior to the next legislative session.

Administrative Updates

Deputy Commissioner Nikki Farago indicated the 2024 CECLC appointment process is wrapping up. In October, the council looks forward to officially welcoming its new co-chair and new members. She commended the caliber of nominees and their commitment to service.

Meeting adjourned at 2:55 PM