

Executive Summary for Legislative Testimony

Started in 1992, the Hmong Cultural Center is one of the oldest Hmong organizations in Minnesota. The Hmong Cultural Center Museum currently includes the following exhibits: *Hmong Minnesota: Yesterday and Today*, a comprehensive exhibit on local Hmong culture and history, *The Hmong Folk Arts Experience*, an interactive exhibit teaching about major Hmong folk art forms and music instruments, a theater space which shows Hmong history documentaries as well as a research library which includes the largest collection of Hmong-related academic research in the United States. Our *Hmong Folk Arts Experience* exhibit has been awarded a Minnesota History Award by the Minnesota Alliance of Local History Museums. Our museum is open to the public on University Avenue in St. Paul and serves the 80,000 Hmong in Minnesota as well as members of the broader community seeking to learn more about their Hmong neighbors.

The funding we are requesting for the Hmong Cultural Center Museum will support the following activities over the next two years:

- Support for our new, expanded storefront museum location of 1,200 square feet opening at University and Western in St. Paul in the Summer of 2021
- Support for staffing to assist with museum marketing and to lead tours to school groups and the general public

To sum up, if this project is funded, Minnesota residents will have greater opportunities to learn about Hmong history in Minnesota, Hmong achievements in the state and Hmong culture more generally. The proposed project builds strongly on Hmong Cultural Center's heritage over the past 29 years teaching the public about Hmong culture and history. It is also strongly related to a key guiding principle of the Legacy fund: "Arts, history and cultural heritage programs will engage our diverse communities from every corner of the state in celebrating the richness of our differences while building greater understanding and connection to the values that bind us together."