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A Graceful Movement

# ANNUAL REPORT 2018

**ma** COUNCIL FOR MINNESOTANS  
OF AFRICAN HERITAGE

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## SECTION II: LETTER FROM THE CHAIR & VICE CHAIR

As the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage (“CMAH”; the “Council”), we are excited to inform you of the work the Council has engaged in 2017 and to frame the Council’s 2018 priorities.

The Minnesota Legislature has empowered the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage to ensure that people of African heritage fully and effectively participate in, and equitably benefit from, the political, social, and economic resources, policies and procedures of the State of Minnesota.

We take this call to action seriously, and in 2017 the Council engaged hundreds of Minnesotans across the State to fully and effectively carry out the Council’s mission. Working hand in hand with our partners, the Council advocated for policies that benefit and create opportunities not just for the African heritage community but for all Minnesotans. All this work positions the Council to take on the challenges and opportunities of 2018.

In 2017, the Council repositioned itself to more effectively execute its mission. The Council’s offices were moved from the 1st Bank Building to the Centennial Office Building. CMAH is now housed in the same building as our partner Ethnic Councils, and we are a short walk from the Legislature and Governor’s office. This allows us to have more presence and be a stronger partner.

CMAH has also added a vibrant new member to our team. In addition to Patrice Bailey, the Outreach Coordinator, the Council welcomed Justin Terrell as the Executive Director.

Justin comes to the Council with experience leading statewide issue campaigns and an expertise in Criminal Justice. Justin knows the legislative process and is skilled at bringing community members and decision makers together. The Council is excited for Justin to execute a new vision and direction for the Council.

In 2018, CMAH will focus on building our capacity to execute our mandate. As Director Terrell begins to launch a new work plan, our main focus will be on updating our staffing structure, recruiting and training new Council Members and working with community stakeholders, legislators and the Governor’s office to support policy efforts at the Capitol.

Regardless of our challenges and transition, the Council is focused on fulfilling our mandate to the highest of our ability. We invite you to join us this year as we advocate for policies that benefit all of Minnesotans by addressing the needs in our community.

Thank you,

**Nasser Mussa**

Chair of the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage

**Nerita Hughes**

Vice Chair of the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage

# SECTION III: DEMOGRAPHICS – WHO IS THE AFRICAN HERITAGE COMMUNITY?

The number of Minnesotans of African Heritage is growing and as a result changing the landscape of the state. In 2016, African Americans and African Immigrants (foreign born) accounted for a combined 6% of Minnesota’s population. This number will likely increase in the coming years.

**Statewide Population Breakdown**

Minnesota	5,489,594
People of Color	1,071,459 (19%)
White (non-Hispanic)	4,446,535 (81%)
African Heritage *Includes African Immigrant Population	317,130 (6%)

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center and U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, Population Estimates

The African Heritage community includes African Immigrants who account for roughly a third of the African Heritage population. The

following are the top five African Immigrant groups by population in 2016:

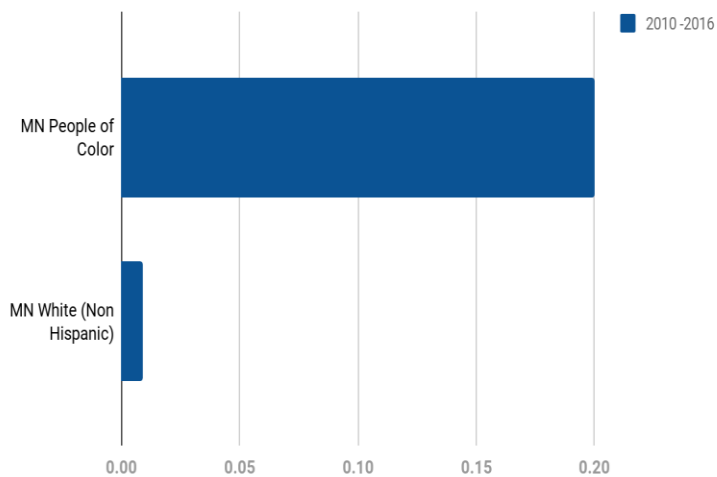
Somali	27,373
Ethiopian	17,536
Liberian	10,880
Kenyan	10,307
Nigerian	5,323

Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center and U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, Population Estimates, and Population Projections.

These groups are part of a growing community that will transform what our state looks like over the next 20 years. As a result, our workforce, neighbors and community leadership will be “brownier” and more diverse in the future. The State Demographer estimates that by 2035, people of color in Minnesota will constitute 24.8% of the statewide population and account for over 1.6 million Minnesota residents.

Among communities of color, Minnesotans of African Heritage are the second fastest growing group in the state. According to the State Demographer, the African Heritage population grew by 16% between 2010 and 2015; adding 45,000 people to the population. During the same time, White Minnesotans (non-Hispanic) grew by just 0.9%. Overall, communities of color added four times as many people to the state's population than White Minnesotans.

Statewide Population Growth by Race 2010 - 2016



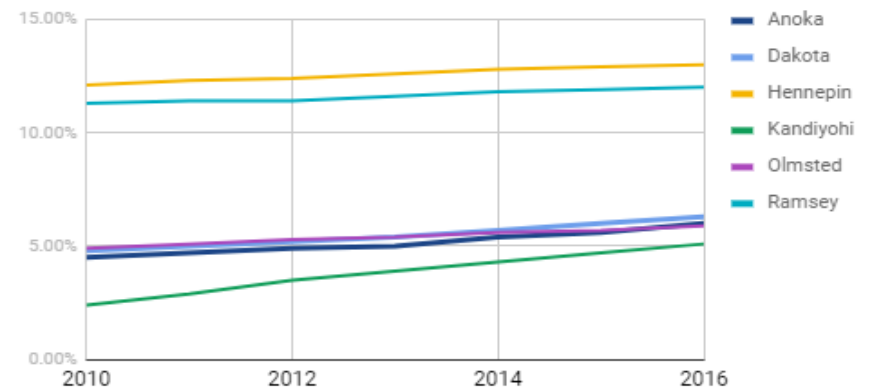
Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Population Estimates.

While the majority of people of color in Minnesota live in urban areas like the Twin Cities, here are 6 counties across the state where the population of Minnesotans of African Heritage is growing significantly. For example, from 2010 to 2016, the African Heritage population in Kandiyohi county more than doubled. While Ramsey County grew less

than 1%, Olmsted and Stearns counties also saw growth at higher rates than the Metro.



Minnesota Counties with Over 5% African Heritage Population



Source: Minnesota State Demographic Center and U.S. Census Bureau, Decennial Census, Population Estimates, and Population Projections.

Continued population growth from the African Heritage community will bring positive factors to our state, specifically in Greater Minnesota. For example, cities like Willmar and Austin, where companies like Jenny'O and Hormel provide manufacturing jobs, are seeing an influx of workers from the Somali and Sudanese communities. These workers fuel the economies of these towns as more young White Minnesotans migrate from Greater Minnesota to the Metro area or other states for continued education and work.

Over the next 20 years as our state grows browner, Minnesota will need to address the racial disparities Minnesotans of African Heritage face. For the African Heritage community, median income is too low, unemployment is too high, and racial disparities persist in education, healthcare, the justice system, and how the community engages with democracy. If Minnesota fails to address these issues, they will grow and derail the progress that is on the horizon. For this reason, the Council will be focused on supporting lawmakers with strategies to aggressively confront racial disparities in our state.



# SECTION IV: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Based on community engagement, shared policy positions between all three ethnic councils, and the guidance of Council Members, the Council identifies the following issue areas as opportunities to address disparities in the African Heritage Community for the benefit of all Minnesotans.

- **Economic Stability and Workforce**
- **Education**
- **Healthcare**
- **Criminal Justice**
- **Democracy**

**Economic Stability and Workforce:** Minnesota has the second largest unemployment gap in the nation. Minnesota ranks 49 out of 50 states in the economic viability of its African heritage communities, only second to Wisconsin. More specifically, there is a 21.3% difference between the workforce participation of Minnesotans of African Heritage and White (non-Hispanic) Minnesotans (U.S. Census Bureau 2017). This trend continues across every major economic indicator.

**Education:** Racial disparities also persist in Minnesota's educational system. In 2016, 65% of the African Heritage community graduated from high school in four years. Minnesota's statewide graduation rate (four years) was at 82%; with White (non-Hispanic) Minnesotans

graduating at a rate of 93% (Minnesota Department of Education 2016).

**Healthcare:** From birthweight to death rate, the African Heritage community is facing serious concerns. Birth weights for African Heritage children are more likely to be lower than White (non-Hispanic) Minnesotans, whereas death rates from cancer, homicide, and heart disease are much higher than White (non-Hispanic) Minnesotans (Minnesota Department of Health 2017). This follows the general poverty trends and is a major factor in why Minnesota must address the economic and health disparities in the African Heritage Community.

**Criminal Justice:** The African Heritage community makes up 6% of Minnesota's population, yet accounts for 35% of the adult prison population (Minnesota Department of Corrections 2017). With such a high disproportionate exposure to the Justice System, the African Heritage community has been significantly impacted by collateral consequences caused by the criminal justice system. When considering our States racial disparities in employment, education, housing, and



civic engagement, the impact of the justice system cannot be understated or go ignored.

**Democracy:** In 2016, 66.3% of Minnesotans of African Heritage participated in the election. This is an increase of 3% from 2012. White Minnesotans voted at 71%, a decrease of 3% from 2012, but still more than 5% ahead of the African Heritage community (MN Compass 2017).

The Council aims to work with community members and lawmakers from across the state to address these issues. During the legislative session, the Council will track bills in these areas to build an understanding of what a long-term policy agenda could look like. Over the summer the Council will engaged with community members from across the state to develop a plan to advance reform in these areas.

# SECTION V: REPORT ON 2017 ACTIVITIES

In 2017, CMAH focused primarily on two activities: engagement with lawmakers during the legislative session, and community outreach in the summer. Below are reports prepared by Patrice Bailey, who is the current Outreach Liaison, Kaade Wallace, who formerly worked for CMAH and led its legislative strategy.

## PART A: 2017 Outreach Report

In 2017, CMAH started a new outreach program. Under the leadership of Patrice Bailey, who began his tenure with the Council in February 2017, the Council set out to reach Minnesotans of African Heritage across the state. CMAH worked with local allies in city departments to set up meetings to learn more about their communities and how the Council can be a stronger partner.

Even during a time of transition in leadership, the Council was successful in its efforts to engage the community across the state. During the summer of 2017, CMAH visited seven cities. Between July and November, staff held community conversations in Duluth, Moorhead, Saint Cloud, Rochester, Minneapolis, Saint Paul, and Austin. All together, the Council held 27 meetings with 80 attendees across the state.

**Duluth Community Engagement:** In June, CMAH staff spent two days in Duluth and met with Duluth Mayor Emily Larson, Carl Crawford from

Duluth's Office of Human Rights, Ron Alston from Essentia Health, and Henry Banks from Wisconsin Public Radio. The focus of these meetings was to learn more about the African Heritage community and how the Council can be more engaged.

According to Mayor Larson, there are many challenges facing communities of color in Duluth (i.e. economic development and housing). The city continues to advocate for policies that address these concerns. Including a public and private partnership and a strategic plan the city is working on. One example of a current effort is through the Duluth Office of Human Rights. They are working with the police department to facilitate implicit bias training.

In 2018 CMAH staff plan to follow up on our visit to Duluth and begin building a list of community members we can work with on an ongoing basis.

**Saint Cloud:** This summer, CMAH staff visited Saint Cloud for meetings with local leadership. Police Chief William Blair Anderson, Mayor Dave Kleis, and Emmanuel Oppong, Community Engagement Coordinator. Staff also met with Officer Daniel McClure who manages the Community Outpost, an initiative by the Saint Cloud Police Department to engage the community.

The Council plans to expand our conversation in Saint Cloud around the issue of police and community relations. Over the summer of 2018 Staff will work to expand our list of contacts in Saint Cloud and develop a long-term plan to stay engaged.

**Moorhead:** CMAH staff visited Moorhead and met with Hakun Adow Abdullahi a member of the Council. Hakun took staff on a tour of Moorhead and Downtown Fargo North Dakota. The visit focused primarily on the African Immigrant community and the challenges people are facing as they try to open new businesses, find housing, childcare and community space to sustain the support and growth of their community. Staff also met with Clay County Social Services and the Moorhead Police Department to discuss community issues.

As a city in Greater Minnesota, CMAH is fortunate to have a Council Member who lives in Moorhead. This creates an opportunity for

increased engagement in the Moorhead area as the Council works with legislators on the issues community members raised during the visit.

**Saint Paul:** On July 13, 2017, CMAH staff held a listening session at the Amherst H. Wilder Foundation with nine community members in attendance. The conversation included a presentation on top legislators representing black economic interest. There was also a historical discussion of the history of the African American community and the impact of the destruction of the Rondo community.

While the construction of I-94 radically changed the landscape of the neighborhood, the community of Rondo still exists and its persistence and growth are celebrated through events like Rondo Days and the Jazz Festival. CMAH plans to continue to support these projects.

**Minneapolis:** CMAH hosted a Minneapolis Community Listening Session on August 7, 2017 and was held at University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach-Engagement Center (UROC). Eight people attended including Nasser Mussa, Chair of the Council. Rowzat Shipchandler, Assistant Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights (MNDHR) and Al Flowers, Mayoral Candidate for Minneapolis.

Much more input is needed from communities in Minneapolis and the Council plans to engage much more in 2018.

**Rochester:** On September 27, 2017, the Council conducted a community listening session in Rochester, MN held at the Area Foundation. The discussion focused on concerns members of the African Heritage community are navigating.

Rochester use to be home to a full time CMAH staff. In the recent years, that office was closed and CMAH aims to develop a new plan to engage in Rochester to work closer with the community.

**Austin:** CMAH visited Austin, Minnesota to learn more about the community and the growing Sudanese population. Staff met with leadership at Hormel foods who stated 18% of their workforce are people of color. Staff also met with the Police Chief Brian Krueger and Mayor, Tom Stiehm to learn about community policing efforts and barriers to transportation for low income communities.

**Lessons Learned:** After visiting 7 communities around the state, CMAH staff report a wide range of concerns from the African Heritage community. Transportation, housing, access to employment and resources to start a business are all themes that emerged repeatedly. Communities also requested more engagement from the Council.

Rochester requesting a full-time staff person and Moorhead suggesting starting a second volunteer Council in their area.

In 2018 we plan to expand our strategies in outreach and develop more tools to engage and build infrastructure that keeps relationships active with the ability to mobilize more communities on the issues they care about.

The following is a summary of 2017 activities:

- 27 conversations
- 80 people engaged across the state
- 7 cities visited



The following is a summary of areas of concern staff heard from community members:

- Economic development
- Public safety
- Police officers in schools
- Housing
- Child welfare
- African Heritage students in PSEO
- Credit issues
- Affordable childcare
- Discrimination from commercial landlords
- Need shared community space
- Diversify police force
- Investment in black businesses
- Support and investment in youth
- Diverse employers
- Equal Pay
- Ban the Box enforcement
- Homelessness
- Renters rights
- Incarceration to employment
- Retain minority professionals
- Reopen Rochester office

## PART B: 2017 Legislative Report

In 2017, CMAH led an active legislative effort focusing primarily on passing the Teachers of Color Bill (Senate File 1555/House File 2077). CMAH met with 27 legislators and worked with partners to host seven events at the Capitol. Through these events, CMAH engaged over 150 people.

The following is summary of CMAH activities and priorities from the 2017 Legislative Session.

### **Ethnic Councils Sponsored Legislation**

**Increase Teachers of Color Act of 2017 (Senate File 1555/House File 2077).** The Council in collaboration with the three other ethnic councils and the Coalition to Increase Teachers of Color and American Indian Teachers in Minnesota, worked to increase the diversity of teachers in the state. The bill was designed to offer opportunities for people of color who seek the teaching profession as an economic pathway and to serve as part of a comprehensive approach to address racial disparities in education. The bill raises the percentage of teachers of color from 4.2% to over 5%. In doing so, the state will move towards having the diversify of teachers needed to educate the states changing student demographics.

Introduced by Senator Carla Nelson (R-District 26) and Rep. Urdahl (R-

District 18A), the Increase Teachers of Color Act of 2017 was included in the 2017 Omnibus Education and Higher Education bills. Below are highlights of Council-endorsed provisions that were included in the bill signed by Governor Dayton:

- Continued support for “Grow Your Own” teacher programs that incentivized school districts to recruit and provide scholarships and stipends to district employees or community members of color who are interested in entering the teaching profession.
- Expanded funding to teacher preparation programs to include both public and private institutions throughout the state of Minnesota.
- Earmarked 32% of the state’s teacher candidates grant funding to student teachers of color and specified that the grant shall be up to \$750 per candidate.
- Modified Teacher Shortage Loan Forgiveness criteria of licensure and geographic areas shortage to include racial and ethnic diversity shortage. Loan forgiveness to teachers of color could be up to \$1,000 per year.

During the legislative debate for the passage of S.F 1555/H.S. 2077, the Council staff met with the bill authors and legislative supporters to provide input and strategize about the passage of the bill. Throughout the 2017 legislative session, the Council and its coalition partners were called upon to assist and draft provisions of the bill as well as identify educators of color who served as testifiers in support of the bill. Furthermore, Council staff testified in support of the bill during both the regular committee and conference committee process. In addition to its legislative advocacy on the Increase Teachers of Color Act of

2017, Council staff participated in an hour-long interview on local radio station KFAI (90.3/106.7) and updated the community on the status of the legislation via its social media channels.

### **Legislative Activities**

Through its legislative efforts, the Council's also strengthened its relationships with the community and legislators. CMAH held a legislative breakfast for the People of Color and Indigenous (POCI) Caucus, a strategy session on how to support the Equity Bill with legislators of African Heritage, advocacy day at the Capitol, and co-hosted a New American Forum with Rep. Rena Moran and Senator Fong Hawj.

**New American Forum:** Held on April 5th, 2017, the forum was an opportunity for leaders in the African Heritage, Asian Pacific and Latino communities to share information about their respective communities with legislators and for legislators to hear about the challenges facing those communities. Legislators heard of the need for better employment opportunities to utilize the education obtained in the home countries of the emerging communities, cultural appropriate social services programs for immigrant communities and more affordable housing.

Thirty-two legislators, Republicans and Democrats from Greater Minnesota and the Twin Cities region attended the forum. The highest

ranked leader in the Senate, Majority Leader Paul Gazelka, was among the legislative attendees. Legislators heard from African Heritage leaders from the emerging Liberian, Oromo and Somali communities.

**Day on the Hill:** In March, the Council hosted an advocacy day at the Capitol. The event was a press conference to roll out the United Black Legislative Agenda, which was drafted by the Minneapolis Urban League, Black Lives Matter, Neighborhoods Organizing for Change and others. Keynote speakers included: Steve Belton of the Minneapolis Urban League, Louis Porter of the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage, and Micha Grimm, from Black Lives Matter Minneapolis. After the press conference, constituents were encouraged to meet one-on-one with their legislative representatives. The Council organized 11 representative visits.

In addition to advising legislative leaders in the enactment of legislation, the Council collaborated with executive branch agencies to provide input on bringing racial equity to state services, and administrative policies and practices. In 2017, the Council served as a liaison to the following executive branch bodies:

- Governor's Council on Law Enforcement and Community Relations
- Governor Workforce Development Board Equity Committee
- Ombudsperson for African American Families

## **Other Advocacy Engagement**

In addition to the activities mentioned above, CMAH staff provided input to legislative and executive branch agency leaders or advocated before the Minnesota Legislature on these issues:

**Senate File 1847/House File 2258 All Kids Count Act – Data Disaggregation.** In 2106, the Minnesota Legislature passed the All Kids Count Act (H.F 3042/S.F. 2597) requiring the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE) to disaggregate student data by ethnicity. S.F. 1847/H.F. 2258 modified the 2016 law to delay statewide implementation for two years, but allow for a pilot program at six school districts during the 2018 school year. These would represent a mixture of urban, suburban, rural and charter schools.

Additionally, the bill called for the establishment of a task force comprised of cultural and ethnic communities' representatives to advise the Commissioner of MDE in its development of best practices to disaggregate students' data. The bill passed and omitted, at the request of the Council and coalition partners, language that would require MDE to include students' immigration status in its data collection.

**Senate File 2175/House File 2448.** The Council worked with a bipartisan group of legislators to introduce legislation that

appropriated money to the Council to conduct a feasibility study for the development of a culture arts facility in communities in Rochester, Mankato, St. Cloud, Moorhead, and Duluth. In addition to the legislative support, the bill attracted a diverse coalition of support from the African Heritage communities in the respective cities. The bill did not pass, but the Council plans to revisit this topic.

**Senate File 2355/House File 2621.** The Council opposed this bill, the female genital mutilation (FGM) crimes expanded, raising concerns about the speed by which the bill was heard and passed in the House. During the legislative debate on S.F.2355/H.F. 2621 the Council requested a study on the prevalence of FGM in the State, and more focus on the education of parents about the harms and existing legal punishment for FGM crimes. Rep. Debra Hilstrom (D-40B) worked with the bill's chief author, Rep. Mary Franson (R-8B), to eliminate the expanded definition of egregious harm specified in the legislation, but was unsuccessful. The bill passed the House 124-4. However, the Council was successfully in appealing to the Senate author, Senator Karin Housley (R-39), and Senators Limmer and Abeler to dialogue with the community to find solutions that would empower parents, not punish them.



# SECTION VI: 2018 OBJECTIVES

In 2018, the Council has repositioned itself to ensure it can effectively execute its statutory duties. The Council has new leadership, a new office space, and a new vision to work with elected officials (new and old). The Council's priorities for 2018 will be focused on completing this transition by developing a new policy framework, developing new tools to engage at the legislature, hiring new staff and recruiting new Council Members. In doing so, CMAH hopes to write a new narrative for the African Heritage community.

The Council will be focused on building relationships, listening to the community, and advocating for policy beneficial to the African Heritage community. The Council will begin exploring new ways to show up at the Capitol and talk about the African Heritage community. By way of hosting community groups for training, meeting with legislators to talk about issues, and sharing our position on policy publicly. At the end of 2018, the Council aims to have structures in place to build an agenda, advise lawmakers, mobilize community members and tell a compelling story about why this work matters.

The following is a closer look at the Council's objectives for 2018.

This year the Council will focus on five strategic areas that reflect consistent themes raised by Council Members and stakeholders. As mentioned earlier in the report those categories are as follows:

- Economic Stability and Workforce
- Education
- Healthcare
- Criminal Justice
- Democracy

These categories represent areas where racial disparities threaten the future stability of the state. The Council aims to consult with lawmakers and the community to identify and track policies from these areas through the legislative process.

The Council will also focus on three capacity goals:

**Goal 1:** Develop tools to advise the Legislature and Governor's office on issues that impact the African Heritage Community:

- Develop a memo strategy to make inform the Governor's office and Legislative leadership on the Council's position related to policies moving at the Capitol.
- Provide weekly legislative updates to community members through social media tools.
- Hold at least 100 meetings with legislators.

**Goal 2:** Build the Council's Staff team. Recruit new Council Members and volunteers. Develop a Coalition with Statewide community partners and Recruit Legislators and Staff at the Governor's office as partners:

- Hire 1 FTE Office Manager/Communications
- Hire 1 FTE Legislative Liaison
- Recruit 2 Council Members to be appointed by the Governor
- Recruit 3 Legislators (2 Senate, 1 House)
- Build a statewide coalition of organizations led by members of the African Heritage community (10 organizational members)

**Goal 3:** Develop the African Heritage community's narrative and communication tools to honestly and effectively tell the African Heritage community in Minnesota.

- Work with members of the Council to write a narrative that frames the strengths of the African Heritage Community and highlights the work needed to address Minnesota's racial disparities.
- Engage 10 community organizations to assist with writing the Council narrative (interviews).
- Hire a consultant to assist in memorializing the narrative and in producing a documentary that the Council can use to develop talking points for spokespersons and inform our public documents.



# SECTION VI: 2018 OBJECTIVES

## Governor Appointees

Nasser Mussa, Chair  
[Muss0086@umn.edu](mailto:Muss0086@umn.edu)

Nerita Hughes, Vice Chair  
[nerita.hughes@gmail.com](mailto:nerita.hughes@gmail.com)

Mustafa Jumale, Secretary  
[mustafajumale@gmail.com](mailto:mustafajumale@gmail.com)

Olivia Jefferson  
[livjefferson@gmail.com](mailto:livjefferson@gmail.com)

Fatima Tanni Lawson, Ph.D.  
[Fatima.lawson@spps.org](mailto:Fatima.lawson@spps.org)

Atty. Amran Farah  
[farah.cmah@gmail.com](mailto:farah.cmah@gmail.com)

Walter L. Smith III, Treasurer  
[walter.smith@everybodyinmn.org](mailto:walter.smith@everybodyinmn.org)

Hukun Adow Abdullahi  
[hukun@aadevassoc.org](mailto:hukun@aadevassoc.org)

Vacant Member (2)

## Legislative Members

Rep. Rena Moran (DFL)  
[rep.rena.moran@house.mn](mailto:rep.rena.moran@house.mn)

Vacant House Member

Vacant Senate Member (2)

## CMAH Staff

Justin Terrell, Executive Director  
[justin.terrell@state.mn.us](mailto:justin.terrell@state.mn.us)

Patrice Bailey, Outreach Liaison  
[patrice.bailey@state.mn.us](mailto:patrice.bailey@state.mn.us)

Vacant Office and Communications Manager

Vacant Legislative Liaison

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Photos by Emily Terrell

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