



January 10, 2022

To whom it may concern:

Isuroon strongly supports the establishment of the Minnesota office for New Americans, which will promote inclusion and more equitable access to programs and services for the more than 472,849 immigrants and refugees who live in Minnesota, including approximately 78,846 Somalis. Minnesota is home to the largest Somali community in the United States. (Minnesota Compass)

Isuroon was founded in 2011 by Fartun Weli, CEO, to address a huge longing for Somali women to have space of their own to meet, rebuild their strength from post-war refugee camps, and draft a plan for upward mobility. Isuroon takes its name from a Somali word meaning “woman who cares for herself.” Because the strengths of Somali immigrant women were not being recognized by existing social services models, Isuroon developed strengths-based and holistic programs and services to meet the immediate and long-term needs of immigrant women and their families.

**Mission:** Isuroon is dedicated to building Somali women and girls’ social connectedness and self-sufficiency, so that they can lead healthier, more productive lives in Minnesota and globally.

**Vision:** Isuroon envisions a world where Somali women and girls are healthy, connected and empowered and their families are thriving in Minnesota and globally. In our vision, Somali women, girls and their families are exiting poverty, achieving economic self-sufficiency, building cultural bridges, addressing cultural & systemic barriers, and increasing access to preventative healthcare. They are financially, physically and emotionally independent.

The Office of New Americans (ONA) network provides a forum for state policy leaders across the U.S. to drive transformative policies and programs to ensure immigrants and refugees are welcomed in their communities and have meaningful access to programs and services. Because immigrants and refugees make up one out of twelve Minnesota residents and more than one in ten workers in the state, Isuroon strongly supports the establishment of an Office for New Americans in Minnesota. We stand ready to support its implementation and ongoing efforts.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

*Fartun Weli*

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Chief Executive Officer

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