



February 14, 2023

Chair Melissa Wiklund
Senate Health and Human Services Committee
95 University Ave W, St Paul, MN 55103

Senator Wiklund and Members of Health and Human Services Committee:

We are writing in strong support of SF 402. Indigenous Visioning staff live and work in tribal communities, we have firsthand knowledge and experience of the challenges our children, parents and communities face. While there are many families who are doing well, there is a disproportionate number of families struggling. A large number of those struggling families are from black, indigenous and families of color. The need for family supports and resources couldn't be more dire. Those supports and resources have come to Minnesota in the form of Community Solutions. The Community Solutions funding was guided by BIPOC members for BIPOC communities and administered through the State. Thanks to the Community Solutions funding, Indigenous Visioning was able to collaborate with the White Earth Nation to bring a national evidence-based civic engagement curriculum and adapted it through a cultural lens. This community-led parent leadership initiative will soon graduate two cohorts for a total of 24 passionate and empowered parent leaders. These champions of change are committed to creating solutions to the challenges facing tribal communities, both rural and urban. These changes have started already started within their own family. The parent leaders are actively initiating changes within their community through community projects that benefit everyone. Two of the graduate were recently selected to be on a local board and a national committee to help improve systems through the parent voice and parent engagement that benefit all communities. This would not have happened without the Community Solutions fund.

We understand that in order for Black, Indigenous, and families of color to thrive, we must be innovative to tackle and close some of this country's worst disparities tied to child wellbeing for children of color and American Indian children such as health, education, infant mortality indicators. These disparities exist because our public policies don't leverage the existing strengths of communities. The Community Solutions Grant Program is a strategy by which we can begin to address the disparities in resources to specific communities. It leverages the assets in the communities to address their problems. It brings those who are most impacted into the decision-making process.

We support SF 402 because we believe it is a strategy that addresses inequality as well as amplifies the innovative solutions that leverage community assets, are culturally relevant, and center the experiences and dignity of those most impacted by inequity. Community Solutions Grant Program represents more than money, it is also recognition that communities of color, American Indian communities, and geographically dispersed communities have invaluable knowledge, and must be active and valued participants within the creation of solutions for their communities.



We strongly encourage you to support SF 402. Sustained funding over time will allow communities the opportunity to refine their solutions, extend their reach, and ultimately set up this generation of children for success.

On behalf of Indigenous Visioning, I want to thank you for your continued support for Minnesota's children, families and communities. Your support has had a huge impact that continues to help Minnesota lead when it comes to providing family resources and opportunities. Miigwech (Thank you).

Sincerely,

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