



February 2, 2023

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of Youth Intervention Programs Association (YIPA) and Hmong American Partnership (HAP) historical and continued joint advocacy of Minnesota's youth programming. As a partner agency to YIPA, we have always worked together to emphasize the importance of investing in our youth and their potential. We ascribe to the core tenets of YIPA: youth work and workers matter, adequate funding is necessary to properly cultivate tomorrow's leaders, and investing in our young people of our communities' benefits everyone.

HAP works with over 18 different refugee and immigrant populations across our organization, including Hmong, Karen, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian and Lao. We also serve a growing East African (primarily Somali) population. We leverage the skills, experiences, and cultural assets of our 100+ staff—among whom 90% identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color), primarily Southeast Asian (SEA), and 84% speak a language other than English—to serve our clients and communities with an unparalleled degree of cultural responsiveness. HAP is recognized as a thought leader and change agent in addressing health and socio-economic disparities for SEA communities.

Since 1998, HAP has served youth in a variety of capacities. Currently, we serve over 550 youth in out of school time, community-based and in-school programming, focusing on positive youth development principles of leadership, pride in identity, critical thinking, and self-advocacy. Our program supporting SEA girls and women at risk of—or currently experiencing—domestic violence and sexual exploitation and assault saves lives and make visible the importance of addressing gender-based violence and girls' empowerment. In our recovery programs, we support youth fighting daily to maintain their sobriety and build new futures. Our programs are successful because we meet young people where they are and in whatever capacity they arrive, seeing their innate potential for contribution and leadership.

The extraordinary stressors impacting urban youth in recent years are even more profoundly felt by those in the immigrant and refugee communities we serve. Although the complexity of engaging our youth continues to increase, we remain steadfast in honoring our commitment to compassionately support our young people and meet their needs. YIPA is a key collaborator in this commitment.

The Youth Intervention Program (YIP) grant is essential to our provision of youth-centered services and on behalf of HAP's youth programs. We support a strong investment in YIP as an investment in the power and potential of our collective future.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "mine-za", written in a cursive style.

May yer "mine-za" Thao

President & CEO

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