



2010 BIENNIAL REPORT

The Minnesota Legislature created the Council on Black Minnesotans in 1980 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. This report reflects the policy priorities, functions and activity outcomes of the Council for the reporting period

Wright Building, Suite 426
2233 University Avenue West
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55114
Phone: (651) 642-0811
Fax: (651) 643-3580

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Lester Collins with youth benefactors of computers provided by the COBM

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COUNCIL ON BLACK MINNESOTANS MEMBERS

Public Members

Brother Michael Collins, Chair, Saint Paul
Martha Holton Dimick, Vice Chair, Shorewood
Donald Bellfield, Treasurer, Saint Paul
Lissa Jones, Secretary, Minneapolis
Ronald G. Brandon II, Golden Valley
Maurice Davis, Saint Peter
Veronica Wirekeo-Fobena, Blaine
Gloria Lamphear, St. Paul
Charity McCoy, St. Paul
Mohammud Noor, St. Paul
George C. Ogbonna, Andover
Lucky R. Rosenbloom, Minneapolis
Adrianna Smith, Minneapolis

State Legislative Members

Senators

David Hann, Eden Prairie
Linda Scheid, Brooklyn Park

Representatives

Carol McFarlane, White Bear Lake
Joe Mullery, Minneapolis

Minnesota Department of Human Rights Liaison

Michael Brown

Executive Director

Lester R. Collins

Research Analyst Specialist

Roger W. Banks

Executive Director, Minnesota African, African American Tobacco Education Network- Natalie Johnson Lee

Senior Office & Administrative Specialist – Rebecca S. Johnson



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COBM Rapid Turnover of Leadership

The Council lost Brother Michael Collins (Passed 2012), George C. Ogbonna (Passed 2011) and Roger Banks (Passed 2012) who all battled illnesses as they continued to contribute invaluable services. All three provided veteran leadership for the Council as we accomplished many initiatives that still benefit all Minnesotans today.



George C. Ogbonna



Brother Michael Collins



Roger Banks

COBM Organization Overview

Purpose of the Council on Black Minnesotans

The Minnesota Legislature created the Council on Black Minnesotans in 1980 to ensure that people of African heritage participate in and equitably benefit from the political, social, and economic resources, policies and procedures of the State of Minnesota. The duties of the Council are specifically set forth in Minnesota Statutes 3.9225; the statute is included as Appendix 1 to this Report. Generally, the Council is charged with the responsibility of:

- Advising the Governor and the Legislature on issues confronting Black people;
- Advising the Governor and the Legislature on statutes, rules and revisions to programs to ensure that Black people have access to benefits and services provided to people in Minnesota;
- Serving as a conduit to state government and agencies to Black people in the state;
- Serving as a liaison with the federal government, local government units and private organizations on matters relating to Black people in Minnesota;
- Implementing programs designed to solve problems of Black people when authorized by statute, rule or order; and
- Publicizing the accomplishments of Black people and their contributions to the state.

The Council in carrying out its mission collaborates with other state, county and local governmental agencies to compile information on expenditures, programs and policies that impact Blacks in Minnesota. The Council has traditionally worked with all Minnesota stakeholders to advance initiatives that improve the State's quality of life with the interest of Black Minnesotans at the forefront of those initiatives. The Council ensures organizations and experts within the Black community are at the table with planning initiatives. The Council use community forums to hear from its constituents on issues within the Council's scope.

The Council expresses its thanks to all individuals and groups that have worked with the Council during the reporting period. The Council, pursuant to its obligations under Minnesota law, submits the 2010 Biennium Report as part of its responsibility to advise the Governor, the Legislature and all interested individuals concerning the activities of the Council, the status of Blacks in Minnesota, and the goals of the Council for the next Biennium period.

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COBM Policy Board Structure 2009 - 2010

The Council is comprised of thirteen citizen-voting members. One citizen member must be a person of ethnic heritage from West Africa and another citizen member must be a person of ethnic heritage from East Africa. The Governor appoints all citizen-voting members of the Council. Additionally, the Minnesota Legislature appoints four legislative nonvoting members. The membership of the current Board of Directors is dedicated to addressing and resolving those conditions and problems impacting Minnesotans of African heritage.

The Council Board is a working and constituency-based Board. This means that in addition to its policy-making function, it is expected that Council members actively perform in leadership functions within the organization's committee structure and act as liaisons to agency constituencies.

In general, the Board and staff functions can be divided along the following lines: The Council Board sets broad policy, identifies priorities with constituency input, oversees staff, and engages in strategic issue planning. The Council staff implements and executes Council projects, pursues Council priorities and objectives, informs the Board of opportunities and problems of interest and concern to Black people, and handles the daily work of serving as a link between Black people and state policy processes. The Council's committee structure is fluent and is driven by an assessment of needs identified through community forums, research, and opportunities that develop outside of the information-gathering process of the Council. Each year, the Council's newly established priorities provide the opportunity for the Board to establish new committees that provide the guidance with the development of service referral, programmatic and public policy initiatives. The Council on Black Minnesotans has historically put into operations a four-point priorities process, and a corresponding substantive and operations committee infrastructure. However activities for the biennium were disrupted by investigations of administrative operation and administrators. The Council did its best to move forward with its mission and traditional approach, but the attention need to respond to information request, internal issue with key council leadership, and the state work stoppage made it difficult to maintain focus.

The biennium activities can be best summed up as swift organizational adjustments in response to the following:

- Unexpected health issues and eventual death of three of our most stable leaders,
- Administrative missteps discovered in our periodic legislative auditors reports and a Blue Cross Blue Shield audit,
- Finding in a State of Minnesota investigation of our executive director that eventually led to his dismissal,
- One board member resigning over disagreements with our strategic direction after the investigations and audit,
- State of Minnesota work stoppage, and
- Community perception of a dysfunctional organization and lackadaisical operations causing requiring a need for an immediate focus on the development of a community relations campaign.

The Council worked very hard under these circumstances to maintain a focus on our mission. However, the Council and its staff were not afforded the opportunity to heal or explain the circumstances that was confronting its operations, and many historical supporters became distrustful of Council leadership and pulled their participation in Council activities.

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The instability of organization operations and perceptions required the council members to redouble their efforts to right the operations to ensure a focus on the Council mission as best they could under the circumstances. As the Council weathered the storm of loss veteran leadership, administrative missteps, and abandonment, it was able to do a remarkable job moving forward implementing its statutory duties when most would have terminated operations.



Minnesota 2010/2011 Legislature

COBM Administrative Missteps Legislative Auditors Findings

Background

The Council receives General Fund appropriations for its operations. In fiscal year 2008, the Council's appropriations totaled \$325,000. Additionally, the Council has acted as a fiscal agent for the Minnesota African / African American Tobacco Education Network, receiving two grants for tobacco cessation efforts since 2002; one grant totaled about \$250,000, and another one received in 2006 and amended in 2008 totaled about \$481,000.

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Conclusions

The Council did not have adequate internal controls over its payroll process to ensure that it paid employees accurately, recorded payroll transactions properly, and complied with certain payroll policies and procedures. Except for payroll, the Council's internal controls generally were adequate to ensure that it safeguarded receipts and other assets, accurately paid vendors in accordance with management's authorization, produced reliable financial information, and complied with finance-related legal requirements. For the items tested, the Council generally complied with finance-related legal requirements over its financial activities, except for payroll.

Findings Summary

- The council staff did not consistently review a key payroll report. In addition, staff did not review another key payroll report and did not control backup authorization to approve hours worked and leave taken.
- The council did not conduct performance reviews of the executive director, as required by statute.
- The council incurred expenses without adequate documentation to justify the public purpose of the expenses.

COBM Blue Cross Blue Shield audit

For three years (2008 – 2011) Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota (Blue Cross) contracted with the African/African American Health Alliance (AAAHA) formerly Minnesota African/African American Tobacco Education Network (MAAATEN), and its fiscal agent, the Council on Black Minnesotans (COBM) to address tobacco and obesity disparities in the African American and African immigrant communities. The most recent contract with Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota ended on December 31, 2011.

Audit Findings Summary

In early January 2012, Blue Cross became concerned about the validity of information received from AAAHA. At year-end, Blue Cross routinely requests that contractors provide estimates of outstanding expenses that the contractor has not yet invoiced. The estimate provided by AAHA was about four times the amount typically invoiced each month. In addition, Blue Cross learned that a state investigation of COBM found misuse of funds which resulted in the termination of the executive director. These events, in combination with concerns over fiscal stewardship of the Blue Cross contract dollars, prompted Blue Cross to stop activity with the program and conduct its audit which resulted in the contract being terminated.

Investigation of COBM's Executive Director

Investigation Report Council on Black Minnesotans Prohibited Expenditures of Council Funds

Procedural Background

This report documents an investigation conducted on behalf of the Minnesota Department of Administration. The subject of the investigation is Lester Collins, Executive Director of the Council on Black Minnesotans ("Council"), a governor appointed Council to which the Department of Administration provides payroll and accounting support. The Department of Administration initiated the investigation in response to the Council's submission of invoices for reimbursement of expenses incurred for car rental and food purchases made in contravention of state policies and procedures. The invoice submissions followed 2001, 2005 and 2008 Council audits conducted by the Office of the Legislative Auditor ("OLA") pursuant to which the Council, then and currently under the direction of Executive Director Collins, was cited in part for the expenditure of Council funds in violation of State

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policies and procedures. During the period June 20, 2011 to September 9, 2011, investigatory interviews were conducted and records were reviewed. The time period required to complete the investigation was due in part to the July 1 state shutdown, and thereafter, the time required for Executive Director Collins to compile the records and other information requested. On September 9, 2011 the investigation record was closed.

Findings of Fact

Finding 1: The record indicates that Council Executive Director Lester Collins is responsible for ensuring that all Council-related expenditures comply with State policies and procedures,

Finding 2: The record indicates that in Fiscal Year 2011, Executive Director Collins improperly authorized the expenditure of Council funds for the purchase of food and refreshments, expenditures that did not comply with the State's special expense policy - Collins acted despite repeated and clear direction from the Department of Administration and the OLA that all Council food and refreshments-related expenditures must comply with state policy,

Finding 3: The record indicates that in Fiscal Year 2011, Executive Director Collins authorized the expenditure of Council funds for rental car expenses incurred for Council-related business and his personal use. Collins did not document his personal use of the rental vehicles or reimburse the state for such uses as required by state policy. Collins acted/failed to act notwithstanding 2001 and 2008 OLA audit findings citing the Council's improper and undocumented use of state cars and rental cars for personal purposes and his assurance the Council will comply with state policy in the future.

Basis for Findings

Finding 1 - The record indicates that Council Executive Director Lester Collins is responsible for ensuring that all Council-related expenditures comply with State policies and procedures.

Collins' offered the following rationale for his actions and inaction:

Collins asserted that while he did not document his personal use of rental vehicles in the manner he assured the OLA and Department of Administration he would, he identifies in his Outlook Calendar the Council-related activities that justify his business-related use of rental vehicles. His personal use of rental vehicles is incidental to his business use.

A copy of Collins' Outlook calendar was obtained and Collins was asked to reconcile his rental car usage with his Outlook calendar entries. The calendar does not identify Council related activities on all of the days Collins utilized a rental car. Collins then reported that not all Council-related activities are identified on his Outlook calendar. Collins said it is his practice to periodically update his Outlook calendar to reflect Council-related activities about which is notified, which he acknowledged may include activities in which he does not participate.

Collins said his failure to track and reimburse the state for his personal use of Council-paid rental vehicles is an unintended oversight due in large part to work-related time constraints. In the future he will track and reimburse the state for all personal use of rental vehicles. Concurrently he will reimburse the state for his personal use of rental vehicles during the rental periods addressed during this investigation.

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COBM Activities - 2010

COBM Council Statutory Functions

One of the major functions of the Council on Black Minnesotans is to *advise the Governor, the Legislature and other policy makers on social, economic and political/policy issues impacting Minnesotans of African descent.*

The magnitude of the social, political and economic problems experienced by Black Minnesotans during this reporting period have changed very little over the past decade. And, the Council continues to be faced with addressing issues and making recommendations to address issues confronting the Black community with the ominous presence of racial and ethnic disparities; conditions caused, to a great extent, by individual racism and institutions poor application of civil rights and equal opportunity laws, rules, and policies.

In this reporting period, the Council made the poor application of civil rights and equal opportunity laws, rules, and policies the single most important recommendation for the Governor and legislature to address. The Council reported that the fact, present housing and economic conditions have further acerbated conditions for Black Minnesotans and perpetuating increase competition for resources, in the face of unequal access and opportunity for those resources.

The Council did not make substantial change in plans and goals. The priority areas and goals of the Council remained the same in the reporting period. However, a more systematic and research based commitment to effectively addressing and resolving the social, political and economic conditions experience by Black Minnesotans was promoted. The ordering of the Council's priorities came from the Council's community issue identification process initiated during the latter stages of the 2007 and 2008 biennium. Three community listening forums were held. The results of the forums are contained in the remainder of this report.

Additionally, during this biennium, the Council focused on the issues of accountability and equity. A second statutory charge of the Council is to **“recommend to the governor and the legislature any revisions in the state's affirmative action program and other steps that are necessary to eliminate underutilization of Blacks in the state's work force” and policy making arenas** were pursued in earnest.

During the biennium, the Council attempted to work with various departments to conduct a systematic inventory to determine the ethnic and racial composition of state committees, councils, boards, commissions and initiatives. This includes an assessment of selected departmental working committees (e.g. groups from corrections, health, education, public safety, health and human services, and employment and economic development) that have the potential for impacting existing racial disparities. The dynamics and functions of these bodies were also to be delineated in an effort to promote choice and volunteerism. The ultimate goal was to increase the knowledge level of populations of color and American Indians and promote civic engagement opportunities for these populations.

The Council proposed to conduct a survey to discern the extent to which selected state governmental departments (e.g. corrections, health, education, public safety, health and human services, and employment and economic development) apply for federal funding and the outcomes for this process. The Council felt an effort of this nature would assist it with facilitating the connection between those resources leveraged by the state and communities of color in need of those resources. However, the task of establishing a proposal review schedule and work plan to achieve the aforementioned was **met** with stiff opposition.

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The above effort is mandated by a third statutory charge that is associated with reviewing grant applications. *“All applications by a state department or agency for the receipt of federal funds which will have their primary effect on Black Minnesotans shall be submitted to the council for review and recommendation at least 30 days before submission to a federal agency.”*

The Council believe it was the before mentioned proposal that led to the various investigation commenced by the State of Minnesota and the other partner organizations that led to the dismissal of the Council Executive Director and the loss of the Council's anti-tobacco initiative.

In addition to these efforts, The Council in 2009 and 2010 organized its goals in organizational priorities and established working committees to oversee the development of initiatives that correlate to the issue areas. They are listed below with a summary of accomplishments during the biennium:

- **The Council established a Commission on African American Youth.** The goals of the commission was to conduct a resource survey to determine the level and quality of programs that are offered to these constituents, which have had to experience systematic disinvestment in opportunities over the past decade. One of the major functions of the body is to promote civic engagement and increased knowledge levels regarding issues impacting Black Youth. In terms of intergroup relations, this committee will continue to support the efforts of the Council “Pan African Summit.” The commission was formed but limited resource hurt their ability to achieve its goals.
- **The Council hosted the Black Complete Count for the 2010 U.S. Census** and participated as a member of the 2010 Census Roundtable.
- **The Council continued its efforts with the Ombudsman for Corrections Working Group.** This is a legislatively mandated working group that works with the Commissioner of the Department of Human Rights. The goal of this effort was to reinstitute the office and functions of the Ombudsman for Corrections. A preliminary report was submitted to the legislatures in January 2008.
- **The Council continued to explore methods to promote economic development within the Black Community.** Special emphasis will be placed on assessing and monitoring the racial equity impact of the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Neighborhood Stabilization Program and other efforts.
- **Research Issues** - The Council continued to promote the creation of a more systematic, relevant and integrated information gathering, and reporting and utilization process. Such activity would include the involvement of data specialists from the following departments: Education, Health, Public Safety, Corrections (including the Juvenile Justice Alternative Initiative).
- **Black Families and Children Issues** – The Council focused on issues and policies at both ends of the age spectrum. This included out-of-home placement disparities, foster care and adoptions, and welfare reform issues. Collaborations occurred with, among others, Our Children Our Future, the State Ombudspersons Office for Families and Children, and the Commission on Minnesota's African American Children (COMAAC).
- **Criminal Justice Issues** – Along with its primary focus on Racial Profiling and Police Misconduct policies, the Council addressed the issues of disproportionate arrest and incarceration rates and equal treatment within the judicial system. Intense collaboration occurred with the Council on Crime and Justice, and the Dakota and Ramsey County Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiatives.

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COBM Criminal Justice Forum

- **Education Issues** –The Council monitored educational issues and conditions affecting Black students and their families and sponsored educational events such as community forums. This includes the “Achievement Gap,” “No Child Left Behind” early childhood education, public education finance, the school district integration revenue initiative and graduation, drop-out and truancy rates events. Collaboration occurred with MN Department of Education, the Saint Paul Public Schools, African American Leadership Council, Parents United, and several state-level committees.
- **Health Issues** – Direct Council efforts involved focusing on teen pregnancy and AIDS/STD prevention, tobacco usage reduction and smoking prevention and environmental health issues. Indirect efforts involved working through the Office of Minority and Multicultural Health and other organizations to deal with a wide range of health disparities and serving on several task forces including the University’s Med 2010 Project and the State’s Transform 2020 Health Initiative for Seniors. And the development of a Mental Health White Paper.



Criminal Justice Forum Participants

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Governor's Commission on the Dr. Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. Statewide Celebration and Recognition of Minnesotans of African Descent.

A fourth statutory charge is to, "Publicize the Accomplishments of Black People and their Contributions to this State" (MN Statutes Section 3.9225, Subdivision 3, and K):

Historically, Council Board Members and staff have been involved in a wide spectrum of activities that have had as their objective promoting the accomplishments of both Black individuals and events and highlighting contributions to the State of Minnesota, particularly to its Black communities.

The Council and staff have had both direct and indirect involvement in these promotions. More specifically, they have acted as sponsors for honoring individual accomplishments, promoted cultural honoring events or celebrations and provided cultural education and institutional support, solely or in collaboration with other parties. The Council has also been involved as a participant observer – with the goal of providing support, promoting the Council's image and building political capital and grounds for mutual support. The role most frequently played has been as collaborator in the planning and supporting such events. Listed below is a sample summary of these activities.

Individual Celebrations/Honoring Events

Over the past couple of years, there have been at least 100 events that focused on celebrating individual Black contributors and contributions to Minnesota and the Nation.

- Over the past ten years and during each annual event sponsored by the Governor's Commission on the State-wide Celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day, the Commission honored the legacy of Dr. King. It also honored others who had been involved in the civil rights movement and acknowledged others for their contributions to Minnesota and the nation. For example, in 2004, four recognition awards were given to five individuals for their contributions to the civil rights movement: Matthew Little, Bobby Hickman, Katy McWatt and Imani-Nadine and James Addington. These annual events include collaboration with the Post Master Generals of Minneapolis and Saint Paul to honor national Black dignitaries such as Oscar Micheaux, Charles W. Chesnutt, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall and singer Marian Anderson by unveiling commemorative postage stamps.



Postal Service Commemorative Stamps

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- At least three events honored Sharon Sayles Belton and her contributions as City Council Member and Mayor of Minneapolis. Council Member/Staff were part of two planning committees for these events.
- Numerous planning meetings were held by the Roy Wilkins Tribute Committee – of which council staff was a member.
- Several events were held to honor the contributions, accomplishments and retirement of Mahmoud El Kati, Macalester College History Professor and community educator and activist.
- The Council collaborated in planning and implementing honoring events for Black St. Paul Fire Chief and two Police Chiefs.
- The following individuals were honored in separate collaborations/events for their contributions to the Black community and Minnesota: Rev. Bill Smith, Rev. Ian Bethel, Kwame McDonald, Carol Fitzgerald, Lee Lambert of the MN House Information Office, Richard Copeland, CEO Thor Construction & Trucking, Life Source Award to Director/Staff of Southside Clinic, Dr. Josie Johnson, Joe Selvagio of PPL, Recognition for Dianne Binns, former **Council on Black Minnesotans' Board Chair**, from Limited Thirty/Black Women's Network, Dr. Aretha Clark-King, Spike Moss, Ramsey County Commissioner Toni Carter, and Clyde Bellecourt.



COBM MLK Award Winner

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Celebrating Black Community Events

The involvement of the Council and its staff in community events designed to promote Black institutions, Black history, culture and values and Black community interests is a critical function. A significant part of that function is celebrating being part of the African, African American Communities and their endeavors. Part of this function also includes creating and promoting a sense of community. Since 2002, hundreds of cultural promotional events have been presented in our communities. Listed below are samples of these activities.

- Kwanzaa Celebrations
- Juneteenth Celebrations
- Rondo Day Celebrations
- Black History Month Educational Series
- Freedom Jazz Festivals
- Brown v. Board of Education Events – including Family Day and Annual Celebrations
- MN Science Museum – Celebrating Blacks in Science
- The Gathering – An African, African American Women’s Exposition
- National Black United Front – Honoring Elders
- Pan African Student Leadership Conference at Mankato
- MN Council on Crime & Justice – Transitioning to Community from Prison
- African Nations’ Independence & Cultural Celebrations
- Spokesman/Courier Pan African Celebrations
- First Annual Celebration of the Minneapolis Federal Mediation process
- Luther College Cultural Competency Lectures, Decorah, Iowa
- Mankato State University Minority Graduate Student Association Lecture
- Saint Cloud Community Forum on Racism and Racial Profiling – including meeting with NAACP and subsequent forum sponsored by MN Department of Human Rights



MLK Celebration Audience and Martha Holton Dimick

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Degree to Which CBM Honoring Strategies Have Worked or Not Worked

It must be noted that the activities cited in this report all met their objectives of either:

- Promoting the accomplishments of Blacks in Minnesota
- Promoting individuals that have contributed to the well-being of Black Minnesotans, or
- Promoting events that contribute to the promotion of a sense of Black community.

It must also be noted that, with the exception of the Governor's Commission on the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Celebration, the Council has not developed a systematic and concerted strategy process of its own to accomplish this charge. Listed below are some staff suggestions that might be used to further accomplish this charge:

- Expanding the scope of the collaboration with Insight News and radio station KMOJ beyond providing a policy question of the week to include honoring or celebrating the accomplishments/contributions of identified individuals and organizations. This strategy could also include other media such as KFAI.
- Work out an arrangement with Time Warner Cable Television to feature a PSA on "contributors" on a quarterly basis.
- Use Partnering with William Mitchell Law School, Macalester College etc., in a state-other Black television cable/network shows to feature "contributors" e.g. the NAACP show, Art Cunningham Show, the Rondo/Booker Show, the Judy Carrero Show, the Ron Edwards Show, the Neal Murray Show.
- Use of COBM's website to feature individuals, community celebration and events, wide project recognizing Black accomplishments and contributions.
- Work with Kate Cavett of Rondo Days Oral History Project

COBM Community Issues Discussion Forums, Collaborations and Cooperation 2010

A fifth statutory function delineated in this biennial report is, **"Serving as a conduit/liaison to federal, state and local governmental units, agencies and private organizations on matters relating to Black people in Minnesota."** has been addressed through the practice of discussion forums, collaborations and cooperation.

The Council has essentially been involved in two types of collaboration. Performing the first type, Council staff engaged in providing supportive action on issues that were held in common with selected governmental and non-governmental entities. Hundreds of meetings were attended by Council Staff in an effort to affect needed change through the promotion of meaningful collaboration. The **Memorandum of Collaboration between the Minnesota State Legislature, the Councils of Color and the Ombudspersons for Families and Children** represent a significant effort to formalize relationships between the parties to the agreement and to maximize the utilization of these entities as resources in the legislative and public policy making processes.

In short, a collaborative process was used as a means to promote and formalize collaboration between ethnic/racial groups and policy makers. A formal declaration of cooperation was created for the purpose of institutionalizing a commitment to promote collaboration. This successful effort was guided by Senator Patricia Torres-Ray. Another successful effort was the Council's Legislative Day on the Hill. The

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Council, through collaboration, sought to increase its utilization as policy making resource through the sponsorship of a Black Resource Fair for members of the State Legislature.

The second type of collaboration involved direct project/program activity by staff and their working on committees or initiatives. These actions generally resulted in specific products such as reports and recommendations to the Governor, Legislature or general public. Below are lists of activities that demonstrate the Council's collaboration and cooperation efforts for the biennium:

1. Education Disparities & Disproportionalities

- Race to the Top – State plan development for federal funding. Multiple meetings to develop state plan
- School District Integration Revenue Initiative
 1. State Advisory Council on Integration, Member
 2. Testified before two house committee hearings on status of program
- Governor's Early Childhood Education Advisory Group – Accountability Committee (Products: Ready for K Guidelines & Recommendations)
- African American Leadership Forum, Education Committee Member
- African American Leadership Council of Saint Paul, Education Committee
- Minnesota Minority Education Project (MMEP)
 1. Research Committee (Product: "Status of Minority and American Indian Students in Minnesota")
 2. Black Males Project; (Product: UMN Conference)
- CBM sponsorship of 3 Community Forums on Education with multiple partners

2. Criminal Justice

- JDAI State Advisory Group
- JDAI Hennepin County Advisory Group
 1. Review & Funding Recommendations for Mental Health Program
- Committee to Implement Recommendations of Juvenile Justice Data Act
- Juvenile Justice Coalition – Collaboration on Legislative Agenda
- Data Net & Gang Data Task Force on the structure and utilization of acquired data

3. Health Disparities

- Regional Office of Minority and Multicultural Health – Focus on Data Collection and Reporting – Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana
- Minnesota Department of Health – Office of Minority and Multicultural Health
 1. Representative to Indiana conference

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2. Evaluation Committee on Elimination of Racial/Ethnic Disparities Programs
3. MN Advisory Council on Health Disparities (Works with OMMH-Membership on Council part of initial legislative mandate)

- Take Action Minnesota – Black Health Issues Committee
- Organizing Apprenticeship Project – Health Initiative and Legislative Report Card
- The development of a Mental Health White Paper

4. Children and Families

- MN Office for Ombudspersons for Children and Families – Child protection, Adoption, Kinship and Out-of-home placement issues
- MN Department of Health and Human Services:
 1. Joint Health and DHS Committee on Data Collection and Reporting
 2. DHS Racial Disparities Group

5. Transportation and Economic Development

- Metropolitan Stability
 1. University, Southwest, North Minneapolis Light Rail Corridors
 2. University Light Rail Corridor Economic Development Coalition (Sen. Torres Rey)
 3. University Light Rail Corridor Community Involvement Organization – Metropolitan Council Recognized
- Councils of Color
 1. Employment & Training Project (Rep. Joe Mullery)



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COBM/Minnesota Humanities Center Grant Program

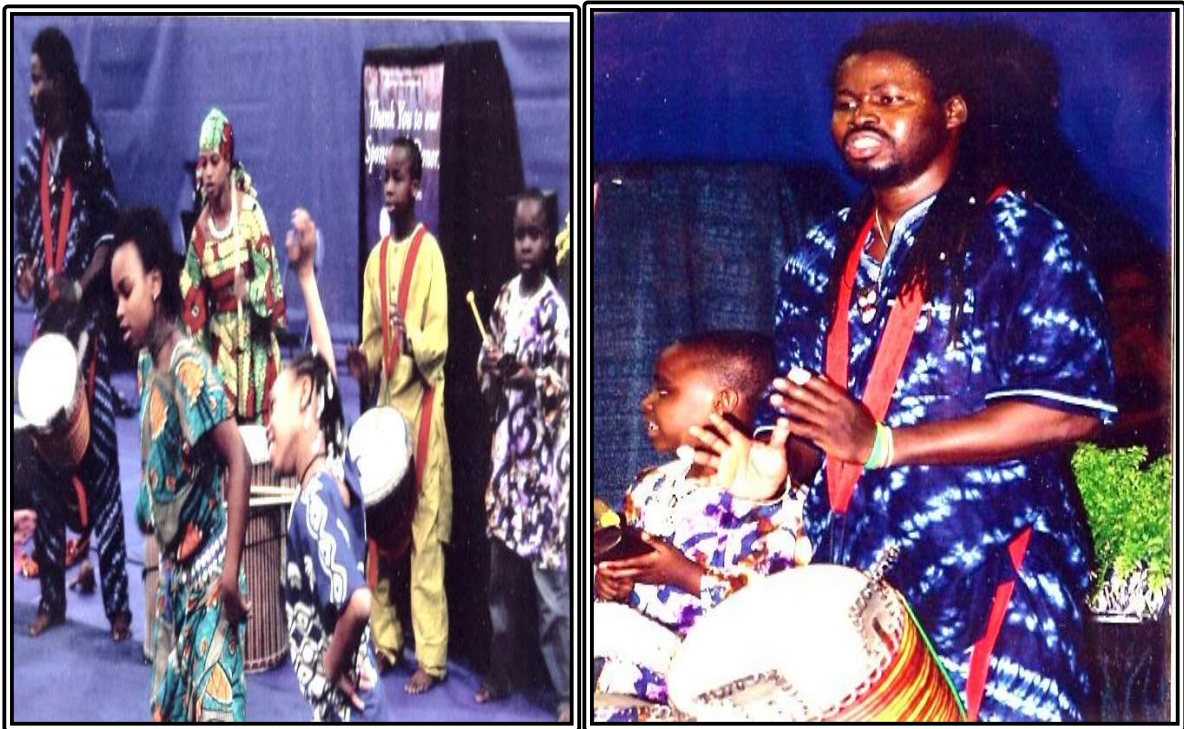
2010 Arts and Cultural Heritage Programming and Events Grants

In 2010-2011, the Minnesota Humanities Center, in partnership with the Council on Black Minnesotans, awarded 10 grants totaling nearly \$200,000 to African American and African Immigrant led organizations in Minnesota. A community stakeholder's selection committee oversaw the competitive application process. These grant awards support programs and events that preserve the artistic, historical, and cultural heritages of the communities represented by the Council. Grants were made possible by funding appropriated by the Minnesota State Legislature from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The following groups received awards:

- **Aurora St Anthony Neighborhood Development Corporation (ASANDC)** received a grant in the amount of \$17,500 to support the Points of Entry Players Program (POEPP) and its work in creating a mini museum for the preservation and promotion of the legacy of the historic Rondo Community in Saint Paul.
- **The Black Parent Group** received a grant in the amount of \$1,750 to host a local African American Author Night and Read-In in honor of Juneteenth 2011. A wide variety of books were available, participants met local African American authors, and African American males read to children from African American books.
- **Culture Brokers Foundation** received a grant in the amount of \$17,500 to support expansion of an interactive map, website content input, and content maintenance. The map is an online tool that allows people to find places of interest on Saint Paul's African American Heritage Corridor by location and type. Visitors to the website will be able to find local histories, reports, documents, links to speakers, media and programming, current events, and future plans – all for free.
- **Finote Tibeb Literary Art Center** received a grant in the amount of \$3,000 to provide a multidiscipline, intergenerational performing arts-dinner theater event “Yekneteebebaet Night” around the Ethiopian New Year “Enkutatash” to bring people together to honor traditions and to cultivate a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Ethiopian culture.
- **Mentoring Young Adults** received a grant in the amount of \$3,000 to support an initiative which places art work on Minneapolis and Saint Paul buses. The positive art, pictures, and quotes inspire youth to continue and further their education.
- **The Minnesota African American Museum and Cultural Center**, Minnesota's first black museum, received a grant in the amount of \$50,000 to support the creation of exhibits that enable visitors to discover Minnesota's African American heritage and culture, as well as programming and community outreach efforts to engage the community.
- **Sabathani Community Center** received a grant in the amount of \$17,000 to construct a Community Arts Exhibit consisting of the history of Sabathani and the people who were the key in creating and building this long-standing institution, community builders in South Minneapolis, and the restoration of an African American Arts Center. Through this story-telling exhibit, people throughout the metro area and beyond can learn about African American people in Minneapolis who have established a community legacy and be inspired to become active in their own communities and to embrace people from different cultures.

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- **The Sierra Leone Community in Minnesota** received a grant in the amount of \$49,850 to support the Minnesota tour of the Bunce Island Exhibit. The exhibit is a presentation of Historic Bunce Island in Sierra Leone and its relationship to the history of African Americans.
- **SoulTouch Productions** received a grant in the amount of \$25,000 to support work on a tribute to the life and legacy of world renowned photographer, filmmaker, composer, writer and humanitarian Gordon Parks. The project will include the CHOICE of Weapons Artistic Activism Movement learning institute and fellowship initiative, public events, bronze sculptures, and CHOICE/Learning Tree Lecture Series.
- **TU Dance** received a grant in the amount of \$6,150 to provide an one-year scholarship to seven African American young people ages 16-18 at the new TU Dance Center in St. Paul. These scholarships provide youth with free access to pre-professional dance education classes and intensives for a full year, setting the participants on the path towards a professional dance career and engaging more young people of color in local dance.



COBM Minnesota African/African American Tobacco Education Network (MAAATEN) and African Community Outreach Partnership Report (ACOPP)

MAAATEN Summary

The Minnesota African/African American Tobacco Education Network (MAAATEN) was founded in 2000. It initially received three years of funding from ClearWay MN. MAAATEN is a program of the Council on Black Minnesotans (Council). This year-end summary report is of the first year of a two-year contract awarded to the Council --MAAATEN--in January 2009. This evaluation summarizes only work completed in the first year of that contract.

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Since its inception, MAAATEN has been composed of organizations and individuals representing diverse local, regional, and state interests in tobacco control for men and women of African descent. These members composed an advisory board and network which is led by MAAATEN's director, Natalie Johnson Lee. The board generally meets once a month. There are several board subcommittees, which meet quarterly, or more often when necessary. In 2009, MAAATEN was awarded a planning grant from ClearWay MN to do planning and organizing more formally in the diverse African immigrant communities in Minnesota. This planning was co-led by Sam Grant of Ujima Consulting and Natalie Johnson Lee. This work is an extension of MAAATEN's overall work. The overall goal is one network which is representative of all communities of African descent in Minnesota. Network is defined as a broad, diverse group of members formed for the purpose of taking actions on tobacco prevention and control through sharing resources and collective work and responsibility.

The MAAATEN mission is to engage African/African American communities throughout Minnesota to reduce the disease that tobacco causes to people of African descent. Health promotion and health disparities reduction in the African/African American communities is the entire scope of the organization's vision, mission, and work. Specifically, the network works to achieve a healthier, smoke-free community by engaging adults in developing and implementing evidence-based tobacco control interventions; developing partnerships and mobilizing African/African Americans local and state organizations; conducting educational programs and community forums; identifying gaps in knowledge and research around tobacco use and attitudes among the African African/American population, and working to fill those gaps; promoting cessation services in the community; being a centralized clearinghouse of communications via email newsletters, electronic forums, teleconferencing, mass media of tobacco control issues; and promoting policies to protect the public from secondhand smoke(Freedom to breathe), youth access to tobacco products, medical coverage for treatment, and other policy objectives.

The contract with Blue Cross and Blue Shield has four goals and several objectives within each. The four goals are: a) To strengthen and expand the MAAATEN Network; b) To raise awareness through education about tobacco use, reduction, effects of and the industry's influence in Minnesota; c) To tailor and implement an evidence-based tobacco intervention – PROMISE; and d) To advocate for community policies to reduce exposure to tobacco smoke.

As a network, MAAATEN and ACOP have chosen a participatory, interdisciplinary, and community partner approach to meeting these goals. They have an advisory board of health professionals, university researchers, former smokers, volunteers, lawyers, and many others that are representative of diverse black communities and have the people and organizations around the table to meet the goals.

More than ever before, considerable skill and finesse is required to partner with others in the community. Many organizations have multiple stressors in this poor economy. As never before, only one organization (North Point Health & Wellness Center) has direct funding for tobacco control efforts in black communities. They and most organizations have struggled with maintaining staff levels, greater community needs, and dwindling community resources, particularly foundation grants. It is not unusual for one staff to run several programs within an organization that had been run by two or more staff in better times. This effectively means that for people to prioritize MAAATEN's goals and objectives as shared work, they must buy into more than the mission - they must believe the outcomes will be substantial and worth their time. And they must have managers who do as well.

At this point in Year 1, the program is almost running on all cylinders. MAAATEN has not at the end of Year 1 hired another outreach worker to work with African immigrant communities. Nevertheless, the advisory board has full, diverse representation. ACOP has completed its planning year work and will soon begin one year of implementation. At the annual strategic planning session, advisory board

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members have rated the program highly and have reported satisfaction with MAAATEN. The partners are consistent and participate in most activities. And although there are some differentials in accountability, as each new partner presents possible services gaps and a learning curve to overcome, recruitment is strong and on-going.

Lastly, there is in place a year-strong relationships which exist only because of the work with network partners and funders, the work with thirteen different African community-based organizations, and many planning sessions and activities held throughout the years. MAAATEN is poised from strong program implementation in 2010.

ACOP Summary

In 2008, several organizations and individuals from African immigrant communities pressed for specific interventions and research on the harm of commercial tobacco in African communities. Towards this effort, MAAATEN worked with Ujima Consulting to submit a one-year planning grant proposal to ClearWay, Minnesota. The successful proposal began a convening and educational process across thirteen different African immigrant organizations.

The purpose of this outreach project was to organize diverse organizations as partners in an outreach strategy to: a) do one-to-one outreach to 50 individuals per organization to gather perspectives on tobacco; b) bring some of these stakeholder together to discuss findings from the outreach and develop a strategy to reduce tobacco harm; and c) write up a formal intervention strategy based on the findings.

Key Lessons: a) To engage 12 African immigrant led organizations in community planning around tobacco control requires more planning time than a year and produces the better outcomes when led by a trusted facilitator. b) Face-to-face, one-to-one time is essential in providing technical assistance and in holding organizations accountable. c) Different organizations do have drastically different proficiencies, staffing and histories. d) Typically, tested community planning processes are adaptable to and useful to African immigrant communities. e) Saturdays are the best days to meet to get work done, four hour meetings are typical.

While it is unlikely that there will be any sustain changes to Minnesota tobacco control overall, there is one lesson that is profoundly transferrable. Africans of all ages are already greatly targeted by the industry. African youth quickly pick up many of the habits of most American youth. The problems of tobacco on the African continent or in the United States cannot be solved without the generous work of Africans and African immigrants. The communities are ripe for mobilization.

Introduction - Beginning in 2009, 12 community organizations serving African immigrants met every month to plan to gather data from their respective communities about tobacco smoking, secondhand smoke exposure, and knowledge of the harm that tobacco causes, specifically -

- To improve relationship between Clearway MN, MAAATEN and the African immigrant organizations;
- To strengthen relationships among diverse African organizations and communities;
- To address lack of funds available for health promotion efforts within African immigrant communities;
- To move beyond individual organizations competing for the few resources that do exist, and most organizations that have been able to establish health education initiatives have only been able to engage and sustain small-sized interventions;
- To address tobacco hard with longer term interventions that is holistic;
- To increase community-wide collaboration;

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- To increase knowledge about the extent of tobacco harm, among whom in our communities it is spreading, and what intervention and prevention strategies will work best.

Lessons Learned – There are five specific lessons that have informed the on-going implementation work of the 12 organizations are:

1. Repetition and multiple avenues to address training and technical assistance needs are essential elements if the planning process is to succeed.
2. Often, what is shared publically, when the organizations are together, differs from what is shared privately, when alliances, differences, cultural norms, language, size of the community, expertise, gender, and a multitude of factors far more subtle issues are raised, if not debated. Perhaps, half of the planning work is in turn addressing these issues as they come up.
3. People are not going to organize around paper, reports, or other various shared writings. It is welcomed and expected that there will be, as was in this planning process, 4+ hours of face-to-face meeting time, one-on-one time, and weekly phone contact in order to complete the work.
4. There are probably a thousand and one assumptions that cannot be taken for granted as these organizations move from planning to implementation. For example, while there may be deep understanding of individual level interventions like cessation, community and structural interventions like policy are not well understood or the usual cultural norm.
5. Money holds people around the table but it is *not* an incentive beyond attendance.

Next Steps - Specifically, African immigrant communities want for their communities: norm change, applying the following strategies to reduce tobacco harm in their communities:

- a) Develop and implement a faith-based intervention, engaging churches and mosques in educating members about commercial tobacco harm;
- b) Partner with health professionals in the African immigrant communities to support them in making it a priority to educate their clients and community networks about tobacco harm and resources to reduce it;
- c) Develop and implement a community education campaign, directly addressing second-hand smoke to reduce its impact on our populations;
- d) Develop peer-to-peer support group strategies for smokers to support each other in reducing use and getting support to quit;
- e) Foster norm change in the community by designating specific areas in communities where people can smoke, getting parents involved in supporting young adults in quitting smoking and preventing under-age youth from ever starting.

2010 Biennium Report Conclusion

The Council worked very hard under tough circumstances to maintain a focus on our mission. However, the Council and its staff were not afforded the opportunity to heal or explain the circumstances that was confronting its operations and many historical supporters became distrustful of Council leadership and pulled their participation in Council activities. The instability of organization operations and perceptions required the council members to redouble their efforts to right the operations to ensure a focus on the council mission as best they could under the circumstances. As the Council weathered the storm of loss veteran leadership, administrative missteps, and abandonment, and was able to do a remarkable job moving forward implementing its statutory duties when most would have terminated operations. COBM

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actively engaged the community to listen to concerns and problems, worked with many of those individuals to help gain access to needed state services, worked with various state departments to look at how services were being delivered to ensure better access for Black Minnesotans, framed the information obtained from the community, where possible, into legislative recommendations for the governor and the legislature, worked with departments and community based groups to advocate for legislation of interest to the Black Community, and worked with the community to celebrate their accomplishments and those ironic figures that have had an impact on the way we live in Minnesota and the world.

The next biennium will see COBM restructuring its administrative operations and its approach to working and listening to the community. It is expected that we will work with less resources as austerity become a reality for us all. COBM will deploy an agenda that brings our state closer together through **the** eradication of disparities that keep us apart and exist because of the negligent compliance with equal access and opportunity laws in the administration and policy action of the state.

We believe our state can reach new heights with ensuring absolute inclusion of its residents in the affairs and opportunities this great state has to offer. Like the giant step the state took in 1980 to form the state councils, a model for nation states to assure participation and access for underrepresented groups in state policy decision-making and service delivery, we believe another giant step can be taken to ensure all decisions of the state benefit and not disadvantage any Minnesotan. COBM believes the next step is grounded in **Minnesotans living a human existence and ensuring compliance with the administrative application of human/civil rights and equal opportunity laws, rules and policies. This needs to occur at all levels of government and within all corporations anchored in Minnesota proper.** We expect nothing less from the great State of Minnesota but to evolve a state with no disparities and provide a new model of absolute equal access and opportunity for other nation states.

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COBM Financial Report for the Biennial.

APPENDIX

EXPENDITURES FY 2009-2010

REVENUE

GENERAL FUND	\$622,866
MLK FUND	56,807
BLUE CROSS BLUE SHIELD GRANT	148,669
CLEARWAY, MINNESOTA	62,363
TOTAL REVENUE	<u>\$890,705</u>

EXPENDITURES

General Fund

Payroll	\$456,929
Other Benefits	17,857
Space Rental, Maintenance, Utilities	51,635
Repairs, Alterations, & Maintenance	676
Printing and Advertising	8,804
Professional/Technical Services	3,032
Computer and Systems Service	3,089
Communications	15,054
Travel & Substance – In-State	6,210
Travel & Substance – Out-State	0
Supplies	15,153
Equipment	9,136
Employee Development	4,465
Other Operating Costs	24,094
Statewide Indirect Costs	<u>873</u>
TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES	\$617,007

DR. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CELEBRATION

Rent, Maintenance, Utilities	\$ 2,439
Communications	1,372
Printing/Advertising	6,945
Professional/Technical Services	26,421
Travel & Substance – In-state	598
Travel & Substance – Out-state	494
Supplies	1,573
Equipment	5,071
Other Operating Costs	<u>12,843</u>
	\$55,756

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BLUE CROSS GRANT

Salaries & Benefits	\$89,869
Overtime Pay	2,614
Rent, Maintenance, Utilities	14,667
Printing/Advertising	3,212
Professional & Technical Services	12,043
Computer & System Services	704
Communications	1,994
Travel & Substance – In State	838
Travel & Substance – Out-State	1,078
Supplies	6,541
Equipment	2,000
Employee Development	1,000
Other Operating Costs	8,702
Statewide Indirect Costs	<u>6,407</u>
	\$148,669

CLEARWAY MINNESOTA

Salaries & Benefits	\$ 4,451
Space Rental, Maint, & Utility	250
Professional & Technical Services	54,890
Supplies	2,740
Equipment	<u>32</u>
	\$62,363

TOTAL EXPENDITURES FOR FY 2009 & 2010 **\$883,795**

Note: The receipts and expenditure data for the 2009-2010 Biennium in Appendices 2 are based on unaudited figures received from the Office of Fiscal Services of the Department of Administration, which provides administrative services to the Council as provided under Minn. Stats. Section 3.9225, subd. 5.

Under grant expenditures, (Blue Cross and Blue Shield), all funds not expended by the end of the grant period are returned to the grantor.

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2011 Minnesota Statutes -3.9225 COUNCIL ON BLACK MINNESOTANS

Subdivision 1. Creation.

A state Council on Black Minnesotans consists of 13 members appointed by the governor. The members of the council must be broadly representative of the Black community of the state and include at least five males and at least five females. One member of the council must be a person whose ethnic heritage is from West Africa, and one member of the council must be a person whose ethnic heritage is from East Africa. Membership terms, compensation, removal of members, and filling of vacancies for non-legislative members are as provided in section 15.0575. Because the council performs functions that are not purely advisory, the council is not subject to the expiration date in section 15.059. Two members of the house of representatives appointed by the speaker and two members of the senate appointed by the Subcommittee on Committees of the Committee on Rules and Administration shall serve as nonvoting members of the council. The council shall annually elect from its membership a chair and other officers it deems necessary.

Subd. 2. Definitions.

For the purpose of this section:

- (1) "Black" describes persons who consider themselves as having origin in any of the Black racial groups of Africa
- (2) "East Africa" means the eastern region of the continent of Africa, comprising areas occupied by the countries of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda, and Somalia; and
- (3) "West Africa" means the western region of the continent of Africa comprising areas occupied by the countries of Mauritania, Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, and those parts of Mali and Niger south of the Sahara.

Subd. 3. Duties.

The council shall:

- (a) advise the governor and the legislature on the nature of the issues confronting Black people in this state;
- (b) advise the governor and the legislature on statutes or rules necessary to ensure that Black people have access to benefits and services provided to people in this state;
- (c) recommend to the governor and the legislature any revisions in the state's affirmative action program and other steps that are necessary to eliminate underutilization of Blacks in the state's work force;
- (d) recommend to the governor and the legislature legislation to improve the economic and social condition of Black people in this state;
- (e) serve as a conduit to state government for organizations of Black people in the state;
- (f) serve as a referral agency to assist Black people to secure access to state agencies and programs;
- (g) serve as a liaison with the federal government, local government units, and private organizations on matters relating to the Black people of this state;

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- (h) perform or contract for the performance of studies designed to suggest solutions to problems of Black people in the areas of education, employment, human rights, health, housing, social welfare, and other related areas;
- (i) implement programs designed to solve problems of Black people when authorized by other statute, rule, or order;
- (j) review data provided by the commissioner of human services under section 260C.215, subdivision 5, and present recommendations on the out-of-home placement of Black children. Recommendations must be presented to the commissioner and the legislature by February 1, 1990; November 1, 1990; and November 1 of each year thereafter; and
- (k) publicize the accomplishments of Black people and their contributions to this state.

Subd. 4. Review of grant applications.

All applications by a state department or agency for the receipt of federal funds which will have their primary effect on Black Minnesotans shall be submitted to the council for review and recommendation at least 30 days before submission to a federal agency.

Subd. 5. Powers.

- (a) The council may contract in its own name, but no money shall be accepted or received as a loan nor indebtedness incurred except as otherwise provided by law. Contracts shall be approved by a majority of the members of the council and executed by the chair and the executive director. The council may apply for, receive, and expend in its own name grants and gifts of money consistent with the power and duties specified in subdivisions 1 to 7.
- (b) The council may solicit and accept payments for advertising, use of exhibition space, or commemorative videos or other items in connection with publications, events, media productions, and informational programs that are sponsored by the council. These revenues must be deposited in an account in the special revenue fund and are appropriated to the council to defray costs of publications, events, media productions, or informational programs consistent with the powers and duties specified in subdivisions 1 to 7. The council may not publish advertising or provide exhibition space for any elected official or candidate for elective office. The council must report by January 15 each year to the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate funding divisions with jurisdiction over the council on the amount and source of each payment received under this paragraph in the prior fiscal year.
- (c) The council shall appoint an executive director who is experienced in administrative activities and familiar with the problems and needs of Black people. The council may delegate to the executive director powers and duties under subdivisions 1 to 7 which do not require council approval. The executive director serves in the unclassified service and may be removed at any time by the council. The executive director shall recommend to

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the council, and the council may appoint the appropriate staff necessary to carry out its duties. Staff members serve in the unclassified service. The commissioner of administration shall provide the council with necessary administrative services.

Subd. 6. State agency assistance.

Other state agencies shall supply the council upon request with advisory staff services on matters relating to the jurisdiction of the council. The council shall cooperate and coordinate its activities with other state agencies to the highest possible degree.

Subd. 7. Report.

The council shall prepare and distribute a report to the governor and legislature by November 15 of each even-numbered year. The report shall summarize the activities of the council since its last report, list receipts and expenditures, identify the major problems and issues confronting Black people, and list the specific objectives which the council seeks to attain during the next biennium.